



Good news for local carers

Good news for local carers, despite national concerns

More local unpaid carers than ever are getting the help they need, as the number of people receiving support from Sheffield Carers Centre is up nearly 20%. The number of carers currently accessing advice, information or support from the Centre has cleared the 10,000 mark for the first time.

It is good news for some of the estimate 65,000 adults in Sheffield who provide practical or emotion support for an adult or child with a disability, frailty, illness, mental health issue or substance misuse problem.

The local results come in the wake of a major national report released this week by the think-tank Social Market Foundation that found that there are 7.6 million family carers over the age of 16 in the UK. The issue of employment is particularly concerning with many carers earning less than non-carers, but significant numbers being out of paid work due to the pressures of their caring role.

The report estimates that unpaid carers provide an estimated 149 million hours of care a week to vulnerable family members, this means that carers are an essential part of the social care system despite their role often being taken for granted, overlooked or hidden from view. With so many people not formally identified as 'carers' – either by professionals or themselves – they can miss out on their legal right to receive support and potentially, financial assistance.

There are positive signs however: more than 400 carers have registered with Sheffield Carers Centre in the last 3 months, their highest figure since winning the contract to deliver services to carers for the City Council.

Chief Executive Pauline Kimantas said "it is really positive that we are reaching more and more carers, but we can do even better if we take a partnership approach across the city."

"Identifying carers and helping them access support is everyone's responsibility, from GPs and health workers asking patients if they look after someone, to employers enabling working carers to strike a balance between their responsibilities at home and work."