

# AUTUMN CARERS FORUM 2016

## Carers Hot Topics

*"I said, I listened and I learnt"*



## Acknowledgements

*Care for the Carers would like to thank all who contributed to making the autumn 2016 Carers Forum a success.*

*This included our speakers on the day, partners that planned and delivered the workshops or supported marketplace activities and Care for the Carers colleagues who worked hard to ensure the day ran smoothly and the carers who shared their experiences, opinions and ideas openly and without whom the day could not have been as positive and enjoyable.*



## Autumn Carers Forum 2016 - Carers Hot Topics

### Final Report

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## Key Messages from Carers to Service Providers & Decision Makers

**About health professionals** – a small gesture and a little respect make all the difference. Carers sited being offered a cup of tea, being shown gratitude for putting themselves out and having their own pain, distress or anxiety recognised by a look, kind word or a hug made difficult circumstances so much better.

*“My husband was in hospital for a long time with dementia. I had a car accident and turned up crying. The cared for was angry, so the ward sister came and gave me a cuddle and tea. She was very kind at the right time.” (Carer)*

*“My son is in hospital frequently, he was rushed in, the doctor put a hand on my shoulder, human contact meant a lot, it shows kindness.” (Carer)*

However some carers spoke about how their own health is not prioritised

*“I was not taken seriously by my GP so I rarely went. I told them how I felt and explained that I was caring for my son who was 25. I was told I could carry on caring as I had done it for 25 years. I was not offered anything, GP didn’t listen and was dismissive.” (Carer)*

**About health provision** – experience is not consistent across the county. Some GP surgeries and hospital wards are excellent, recognising and valuing carer’s experiences and the challenges they face and putting steps in place to make their lives just a little easier. Others have seen little change, struggling to get appointments and feeling ignored and excluded from decision making.

*“Health workers are too busy to take on Carers worries”*

*“This is nothing new, I’ve been in East Sussex for 23 years and there are too many systems, they are not working better together.” (Carer)*

*“Did care passport with the physio (LD), I took document into hospital and the staff loved it but it’s not across the board, there are different systems.” (Carer)*

*“I’ve had bad experiences with mental health services. Nobody listened to my warnings so ended up with my son being sectioned.” Other carers agreed. “I can’t see things improving. You have to wait for a crisis. Nobody listens.”*

Carers felt that health and social care professionals were not ‘carer aware’. They did not understand the challenges they face or the expertise they held and that this should be addressed

**About support after leaving hospital** – not all carers feel that support on leaving hospital is adequate or joined up leading to a significant impact on carers.

*“My hospital has been brilliant but the after care is not good enough when you’re a Carer, you need more support. They don’t think about the impact on you as you are still expected to care.” (Carer)*

*“There is no follow-up after appointments or emergencies. I have to follow or chase up.”*

This was also highlighted in the benefits workshop where the facilitator said

*“I have taken back the details about the apparent lack of support and information for carers on hospital discharge to see where HARC could potentially help in this area.” (Facilitator)*

**About residential care** – a number of carers discussed how difficult it can be accessing information and being included in decision making when the person they care for is placed in residential care.

*“There is a change in how health professionals see carers when the cared for is in residential home/independent accommodations.”(Carer)*

*“My husband is in a nursing home so I now find it difficult to access the GP, physio, OTs who are now caring for him – she just turns up at the home but because there are no appointment times I don’t get to see her. Practicalities are a barrier.” (Carer)*

**About Adult Social Care** – Carers expressed that some ASC Practitioners no longer see them as a Carer when the person they care for is in a residential home.

*“Adult Social Care stop seeing me as a carer but I’m still expected to care.” (Carer)*  
*“I agree with this – Adult Social Care won’t discuss things with me.” (Carer)*

**About cared for people’s mental health**– carers identified that urgent care services (111, 999, A&E) are not equipped to support people with mental health issues and that Carers knowledge is often not being listened to. This has a significant impact on Carers, the people they care for and service providers. Police are being involved unnecessarily, referrals are not being made to the mental health crisis team appropriately and rooms available at hospital A&E departments for people with mental health issues are not supervised.

*“I told A&E staff that my partner has mental health issues when they had a physical health issue but they didn’t listen. It ended up with police having to attend due to a crisis. It didn’t need to escalate like that.”(Carer)*

*“The crisis team tell you to call 999, when you do that the police come and take the cared for. Whilst in police care, the cared for doesn’t get their needs met. It’s a failing pathway – it’s crazy.” (Carer)*

*“I have problems talking to mental health professionals as the person I care for can feel disempowered e.g. a CPN might interview my partner and whilst I am there I am not free to express my views and this can cause problems for my partner.” (Carer)*

**About accessing benefits**- carers made it clear that understanding the benefits system, filling in the forms and generally worrying about financial and legal issues such as wills and lasting Power of Attorney have a big impact on them. They also highlighted that GP letters are required.

*“I would advise other Carers to contact HARC if they have any worries about benefits or if they need help. (Especially with forms) They can take a great weight off carers shoulders and will do all they can to get carers and those they care for the benefits that they are entitled to”. (Carer)*

**About confidentiality** – Carers expressed frustration around confidentiality and how, as a Carer, they can be excluded by health professionals who are not able or willing to speak to them about the people they care for. This was highlighted in health, mental health and drug and alcohol workshops.

*“Confidentiality - why are health professionals isolating this with such impurity? Surely the carer / cared for persons relationship is paramount” (Carer)*

*“I find communication is a problem between the person I care for, the GP and myself. They won’t share any details about their treatment with me.”(Carer)*



## Section 1: Introduction

### Purpose of Report

This report aims to highlight the key issues that carers identified and the views, needs and experiences they wish to be shared with services providers, decision makers and other carers. This will be explored in **Section 1** of this report.

An action plan will be produced and key issues shared widely with the aim of ensuring carers' voices are heard and acted on to improve the day to day experience of unpaid carers in East Sussex and the people they look after.

**In Section 2** this report will also explore how successful the forum was at reaching out to carers, enabling them to both attend and contribute while also building on social networks and their understanding of local support available.

Feedback from evaluation forms (32 carers and 18 professionals) and post event communication will be used throughout the report to support analysis of issues, experiences and findings. A data pack including notes taken in workshops and full evaluation feedback is available on request.

At the end of the report supporting information from the workshops (contact details for information etc.) is provided.

### Background to Carers Forums

The East Sussex Carers Forums are public meetings that take place twice a year and explore issues that unpaid carers have identified are important to them.

The forums are free and open to all East Sussex carers. No membership or long term commitment is required and they enable those carers who are unable or unwilling to attend regular groups or contribute to formal consultations to have a voice.

They provide a range of opportunities that enable carers to enter into dialogue with key decision makers and influence issues that impact on their lives.

Through presentations, table discussions, workshops and consultations carers' views, opinions, experiences and ideas are gathered and recorded. This information then forms the basis of a report that is shared widely, feeding into and receiving responses from, East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS, Carers Partnership Board and the related sub groups and other relevant service providers and decision makers in Health and Social Care across the county.

Alongside providing information about services and support available, and new initiatives being developed, Carers Forums also offer the opportunity for carers to meet with other carers, exchange experiences, information and support and increase their networks. Often new carers (those not already in touch with carer support services) are identified through forums and as a result access support for the first time.

The autumn Carers Forum 2016, Carers Hot Topics, was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

## Section 2: Carers Voices

### How Carers Voices were captured.

As previously identified all workshop facilitators and marketplace stalls were encouraged to use this opportunity to listen to carers' views and experiences and use this to enhance service delivery and development.

Using the workshops Care for the Carers Carer Support workers took notes with the brief to capture carer's voices and evaluation forms also encouraged carers to share their views.

There was also a range of opportunities for carers to share their views and experiences outside of the workshops this included:

- Care for the Carers - Activities Survey (39 responses at the Forum with the most favoured activities are trips to theatre, cinema and art exhibitions/museums)
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – Talking Heads (awaiting feedback)
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – Carers Survey (awaiting feedback)

Later in this report the key themes that came out of workshops and evaluation forms will be explored and a full data pack is available on request.

## What Carers said in the workshops.

This section provides an overview of some of the issues and themes that carers shared throughout the day. How this evidence is presented varies depending on how notes were recorded on the day by workshop note takers.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Key messages from Carer to service Providers and Decision makers on page 3 and 4 of this report summarise this section.

### Talking with Health Professionals – facilitated by Jessica Town and Chan Maher (East Sussex Better Together)



Carers often put their own health needs at the bottom of the priority list, after the needs of the cared for person. Carers were asked for their own feedback.

#### Positive comments from Carers about health care experiences

*"I have no problems whatsoever – the GP and consultants listen to my views."*

*"I've had a positive experience when CPN gives me the opportunity to discuss the cared for's condition separately."*

*"My GP knows now that our son who has learning disabilities needs us to communicate for him. This has come from a detailed discussion about respect and the correct language to use."*

*"Paralympics have had a positive impact on how disability is viewed."*

*"It's positive when Adult Social Care and health have a joint meeting with me and my partner, and we make decisions together. Although where notes are shared is a concern – I ask for information to be sent by email as this is easier"*

#### Negative comments about health care experiences

*"Continuing Healthcare took a long time to get in place (3 years) but now it is in place, my life is so much better."*

*"Most of the problems I have with health professionals are to do with them not being able/willing to speak to me about the health of my daughter – I'm treated like I'm not there."*

*"Like I don't exist." "I have to force health professionals to accept that I am a partner in their care."*

*"I have problems talking to mental health professionals as the person I care for can feel disempowered e.g. a CPN might interview my partner and whilst I am there I am not free to express my views and this can cause problems for my partner."*



*"My husband is in a nursing home so I now find it difficult to access the GP, physio, OTs who are now caring for him – she just turns up at the home but because there are no appointment times I don't get to see her. Practicalities are a barrier."*

*"There is a change in how health professionals see carers when the cared for is in residential home/independent accommodations."*

*"Adult Social Care stop seeing me as a carer but I'm still expected to care."*

*"I agree with this – Adult Social Care won't discuss things with me."*



*Visual aids were provided and carers were asked how useful they would be in helping carers make shared decisions around health care packages.*

*"They are no good for people with learning disabilities, of which there are about 12,000 people in East Sussex."*

Jess advised that they are working with the Learning Disability Partnership Board and Autism Partnership Board, so other versions are likely to be developed.

*"I think I would rather speak to the GP."*

*"I would rather the health professional made the decision."*

*"I see the value in the aids, however the limited time for a GP appointment doesn't give you enough opportunity to have an informed / detailed discussion."*

Chan said the aids will be online and be able to be printed at the surgery, so it helps you to consider your options – more things can be covered face to face.

*"Factsheets useful to take home and go back to."*

*"Visual aids are helpful – the pictograms don't add to the text on the examples."*

*"They need to be more informative."*

*"The text is understandable."*

*"I wonder how these would work for more complex topics."*

*"Plenty already available on the internet – my GP already uses these at Little Common surgery."*

*"Can it be for more than GPs? It would have been helpful to have it for PVNS (elbow condition) when I saw my consultant – detail re operation."*

Chan said that they are looking to roll out the visual aids to secondary care.

*"My daughter who has learning disabilities was diagnosed with cancer and there was no information from the consultant. He told us to speak to our GP, who also had no information on this specific cancer type. We were left in the dark."*

*"It will be important for GPs etc. to have training in using the aids, as many are not good at communicating."*

*"You need to consult on colours etc. for visual impairment, dyslexia, dyspraxia."*

### **Carers were then asked about Urgent care – what's important?**

*"I want access to my own GP the same day." (3 carers)*

*"I want to access a GP in my own town." (1 carer)*

*Six carers had used the 111 service with mixed experiences.*

*"It takes too long to go through the questions, I have to repeat myself a lot, then an ambulance is sent. We are all told not to call an ambulance."*

Jess and Chan assured carers that they should call an ambulance if it's a life threatening situation.

*"111 staff need extra training regarding mental health. I don't think they know that they can make referrals to the mental health crisis team."*

*"The crisis team tell you to call 999, when you do that the police come and take the cared for. Whilst in police care, the cared for doesn't get their needs met. It's a failing pathway – it's crazy."*

*"There is supposed to be a room for people with mental health issues (S.136) at the hospital but there is no one to supervise the room."*

*"I told A&E staff that my partner has mental health issues when they had a physical health issue but they didn't listen. It ended up with police having to attend due to a crisis. It didn't need to escalate like that."*

Would an urgent needs website be useful? Carers said yes and information advertised e.g. banners in town centres, community centres, chemists, hairdressers, letting shops, day centres, on buses, in libraries, in supermarkets, on Google, Care for the Carers website and websites re mental health needs.

*"People are put off using services when they are difficult to access."*

*"The way GP surgeries operate (9-5, Monday – Friday), is ludicrous. We're stuck with old contracts that don't work."*

*"111 checklist doesn't ask the right questions about the condition. It takes too long, it's a drawn out process."*

**Talking with Health Professionals– facilitated by Scott Durairaj and Jacqueline Clarke - Mapp (Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust).**



**Positive and negative experiences with the NHS – carers said...**

**Positive**

*“My husband was in hospital for a long time with dementia. I had a car accident and turned up crying. The “cared for” was angry, so the ward sister came and gave me a cuddle and tea. She was very kind at the right time.”*

*“When I go to meetings about the person I care for who has mental health issues, it’s nice to be asked if I want a cup of coffee – like the professionals.”*

*“My son is in hospital frequently, he was rushed in, the doctor put hand on my shoulder, human contact meant a lot, shows kindness.”*

*“My husband is on oxygen and I was given a health appointment in the early morning which I accepted and said I would juggle things around. The professional was very grateful.”*

*“My experience of hospitals in East Sussex is pretty good. I’ve been treated well as a person.”*

*“I was put top of the list to fix my broken leg because I was a carer.”*

*“I’ve never felt excluded by the GP services. No huge need yet.”*

*“I belong to the PPP Group at my GPs. They have been awarded for being a good practice.”*

*“I can go into my GPs and am always able to see or speak to someone about my daughter.”*

*“My GP has a green file system, all important information goes into it. It’s a marker.”*

*“I generally get a same day appointment to see my GP.”*

*“Did care passport with the physio (LD), I took document into hospital and the staff loved it but it’s not across the board, there are different systems.”*

## Negative

*"In hospital, trying to introduce Butterfly System, they were asking too many questions about food choices for patient with dementia, they wouldn't listen to me when I tried to explain he couldn't understand and choose."*

*"Carers passport is not taken any notice of, no regard for it." Scott to raise this issue with Jennifer and Adrian, CEO of Sussex Trust.*

*"In the beginning it was positive, thought I got listened to. Was sent to the memory clinic and told got dementia, then go away and get on with it. Discharged from memory clinic, then where?"*

*"111 told me to call my GP for advice, I didn't get through for 3 hours."*

*"There is no follow-up after appointments or emergencies. I have to follow or chase up."*

*"Health workers are too busy to take on carers worries".*

*"I've had a bad experience which makes me frustrated, there is a lack of training for carer awareness."*

*"This is nothing new, I've been in East Sussex for 23 years and there are too many systems, they are not working better together."*

*"Changing hospital appointments is difficult as I have to arrange respite for cared for."*

*"I was not taken seriously by my GP so I rarely went. I told them how I felt and explained that I was caring for my son who was 25. I was told I could carry on caring as I had done it for 25 years. I was not offered anything, GP didn't listen and was dismissive."*

*"Ignorant assumptions, tactless."*

*"Need a comprehensive family tree to follow to access all services."*

*"My hospital has been brilliant but the after care is not good enough when you're a carer, you need more support. They don't think about the impact on you as you are still expected to care."*

## Mental Health – facilitated by Jane Lawrence (ICE Project).

**“Well worth attending, very helpful, interesting” (Carer)**



Carers explored what are the signs of mental health problems. These included behaviour changes, less able to cope with normal, everyday situations. Mood is an indicator. Carers need to watch for these signs in themselves as well as the people they care for. Carers were asked **if anyone had tried to seek help for a mental health issue and had their caring responsibilities affected their mental health.**

*“If the cared for person is okay then it helps my mental health. If cared for is not doing well it can affect me.”*

*“I got told to get out more which was not helpful.”*

*“I was given sleeping tablets so I could get*

*enough rest to be able to carry out my caring role.”*

Jane asked the carers what they thought of medication for mental health.

*“When I came off my medication I got worse.”*

*“I have seen studies that show anti-depressants are placebos.”*

*“I know someone who took anti-depressants and made them dulled down.”*

*“Doctors just give you the tablets with no additional information, then I can’t get a follow-up appointment with my doctor to discuss this.”*

Some carers were suspicious of mental health medication.

*“The person I care for was referred to a psychiatrist and they helped with getting the right medication.”*

Jane asked about the carers experience with GPs regarding mental health – this varied. Jane said it is worth asking at your surgery if they have a GP that specialises in mental health.

*“I found help from other services myself not from my doctor.”*

*“My GP specialises in mental health and they were very good.”*

*“I had a GP referral for counselling but I did not find it helpful as they just asked me how I felt. It’s difficult to know what type of counselling is right for you.”*

Jane asked if the carers had heard of Health in Mind which is a cognitive behavioural service that GPs can refer straight to. A couple had heard of them.

*“It helps if the carer is in a good place when supporting the person we care for.”*



*"The person I care for has seen the same specialist on a regular basis – seeing the same person is helpful."*

Jane said that the GP can ask for an urgent referral if things are very bad which means you must be seen within 4 hours by a mental health specialist. One carer did this but was told it would be within 5 days not 4 hours.

*"I took my son to A&E. He was given a quiet room and seen quickly."*

Jane said that A&E should be the last resort and it should be an emergency. The crisis team will come to your home for treatment but need a GP referral for this to happen. Jane spoke about cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). She said it only helps if the person is in the right state of mind to accept it. It tries to change what you say to yourself inside your head. It is different to counselling. She said carers could contact CFTC for our counselling service.

*"I have learnt to use coping strategies to help with my mental health and I am aware of what can trigger problems. I use distraction for example I listen to music to help focus my mind so I can sleep. I am self-aware so I know when to avoid certain situations."*

Jane said it's good to find things that help you when you start to feel changes.

A carer asked if it's possible to access mental health services without a GP referral. The speaker said only through A&E when it's a real emergency. You can also self-refer to Health in Mind but this is usually quicker with a GP referral. Health in Mind deal with mild to moderate mental health issues. For moderate to severe mental health issues then you need to be seen by the secondary mental health teams.

*"When I was feeling suicidal someone held the door open for me and that act of kindness made me feel worth something and stopped me. I now try to do simple acts of kindness to others as you never know how that can help someone."*

Jane spoke about self-harm and said this is a symptom of an underlying issue.

*"I find communication is a problem between the person I care for, the GP and myself. They won't share any details about their treatment with me." The speaker said that Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has a policy on talking to family members that deals with confidentiality.*

Jane said that carers are under pressure and have more to cope with day-to-day than most people.

*"I've had bad experiences with mental health services. Nobody listened to my warnings so ended up with my son being sectioned." Other carers agreed. "I can't see things improving. You have to wait for a crisis. Nobody listens."*

*"Reception staff can also be very insensitive."*

*"There is a new scheme involving STEPS and the mental health team. They have been very good dealing with my husband who has dementia. They have Guiders which is where they match you up with one person who comes to help the cared for person. They try to match up similar personalities and it will always be the same person. It's only been going for about 6 months, I think it might be from Adult Social Care."*

*"I volunteer at the Dementia Memory Clinic in Peacehaven. I can draw on my own experience of caring for my husband with dementia to help others."*

*"I was turned down for a job because of mental health issues I had in the past but were no longer a problem. Luckily I was a member of Mind and they found that I was discriminated against. I have found that counselling has helped me to stop thinking negatively."*

*"The person I care for will not see a psychiatrist or counsellor because of bad experiences in the past."*

*"I took my son to see a psychiatrist and he was late for the appointment and then told me he had to cut the appointment short. I told him he could look after my son and walked out. The psychiatrist relented but I had to fight for that. I shouldn't have had to fight."*

*"I went to counselling at CFTC but cancelled it after 3 sessions as it was no good for me. The problem is my husband not me and what we really need is couples counselling but where do I go for this? I booked my husband in for respite care for a few weeks but he hated it and came home 1 week later so I can't get a break."*

Asked if any of the carers worried about their own mental health they said ...

*"I worry about being labelled."*

*"I've found it's good to accept that it's okay not be okay."*

*"I sometimes wish I didn't have to care for my loved one but then feel immediately guilty for thinking that. I think it's important to talk to other carers about these feelings."*

*"Things can improve"*

The speaker said that they should give themselves permission to do what they need to do to stay well.

**Drug and Alcohol Use – what carers said- facilitated by Vivien Anderson (Carers Groups Facilitator) and Vicki Gravell (ESCC Adult Social Care)**

*“I’m interested in the effect of alcohol on the medication of the person I care for” (Carer)*

*“I’m interested in the signs and indicators of substance misuse” (Carer)*

The group explored the reasons people use alcohol and drugs:

- It starts as fun
- Social
- To escape
- To numb feelings

It was said that it is difficult for carers to understand that STAR (East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service) is a confidential service and so unless written permission is given the carer won’t be able to access information about the person they care for or their treatment

Issues around withdrawing from alcohol were discussed as were issues around labels for example better to use ‘problem drinker’ or ‘alcohol dependant’ rather than ‘alcoholic’. It’s important to withdraw from alcohol carefully as it can cause death if there is a sudden withdrawal. The person needs to detox in a planned way and to plan the aftercare.

*“How can a friend help someone with an alcohol problem?” (Carer)*

It was also discussed how people need to want to be helped – the same as with smoking –it is a process – a cycle of change. It may be helpful to show them or their carer the cycle of change or talk about stopping smoking as a comparison.

**Scam Prevention Workshop – what carers said - facilitated by Elaine Bowdery, Hayley Barnes, Rebecca Beesley and Lucy Spencer (National Trading Standards Scams Team East Sussex Trading Standards)**

*“How important it is to be aware of scams as it is so easy to be taken in by the scammers and the consequences can be devastating” (Carer)*

The workshop covered what to look out for, why and how people become victims, how to protect yourself, those you care for and others.

There are many types of scam e.g. people should be alert to potential email scams purporting to be from official organisations e.g. HMRC or councils, requesting urgent payments or wanting to make refunds if people could provide bank account details. Never respond; instead contact the relevant organisation directly and talk to them first (do not use the contact details or telephone numbers provided). If people are receiving scam calls, then call blockers can help reduce the number of these. If people have Lifeline installed, this will not be affected by installation of call blockers (which will need caller ID to be set up beforehand).

Carers shared their own experiences/ experiences of people they know and said:-

- *it isn't easy to go to the police station as they are busy*
- *you don't get anything for nothing these days*
- *they didn't trust anyone*
- *if you live in social housing you get calls , how can you tell who is genuine*
- *it was stated that anyone that was genuine would leave a message*
- *their mother in law had been involved in a scam. Her husband had died 10 years before and it was an insurance scam*
- *they had someone knock at the door and ask to use the toilet – it was advised not to answer the door*
- *a neighbour had experienced a royal mail scam*
- *they knew someone who paid a ransom when scammers locked his computer*
- *they were talking to a legitimate business when they were asked for a pin number. They refused, called back the company and flagged it up. This then went to court.*



*This was the first time I have ever presented on this topic and all the workshop participants seemed to find it very interesting and worthwhile. Getting the message across to people about taking a stand against scams is just so important and our own feedback indicated the presentation was very successful on that point*

*(Elaine Bowdery Workshop Facilitator)*

## Benefits Workshop - what carers said - facilitated by Teresa Andrews (HARC)

This workshop ran twice and below is combined feedback from carers. Detail around benefit entitlements etc. is not included in case of error however details of how to get the information you may need as a carer or a professional are included below

*"I would advise other carers to contact HARC if they have any worries about benefits or if they need help. (Especially with forms) They can take a great weight off carers shoulders and will do all they can to get carers and those they care for the benefits that they are entitled to". (Carer)*



*Wills: Carers asked about wills –with a specific question about leaving money to their son would affect his benefits as he has mental health needs*

*Benefits: carers asked questions about the different benefits, eligibility, what is the difference between them and forms to be completed.*

*DLA (Disability Living Allowance), SDA (Severe Disability Allowance) (no longer possible to apply for this) , SDP (Severe Disability Premium) , PIP (Personal Independence Payment), AA (Attendance Allowance), ESA (Employment Support Allowance)*

*A lot of information was shared about the different tiers of benefits and changes in benefit rules, Universal Credit and tribunals were also discussed*

*A carer discussed having to gather more evidence from their GP and being told they had to pay £10 for a letter. Teresa from HARC is talking to GP's about this amongst other things to find other ways of providing this evidence and to see if the GP charge can be addressed.*

*"Really good day. I have taken back the details about the apparent lack of support and information for carers on hospital discharge to see where HARC could potentially help in this area." (Teresa Andrews HARC – Facilitator)*

*"Really relevant for client group. Saw nearly 40 carers at the 2 sessions and took 8 new referrals for HARC support. Still surprises me that there are so many carers who know about the £250 one off carers grant but do not know about claiming carers allowance." (Teresa Andrews HARC – Facilitator)*



## Section 3 : Planning and Delivery

### Forum Theme, Structure and Location

The theme of Carers Forums should always be relevant to the needs of local unpaid carers and based on what evidence tells us they feel it would be valuable to explore further.

The spring 2016 Carers Forum 'Taboo subjects' proved very successful and provided a wealth of feedback that was utilised to decide on the structure, location and content of the autumn forum.

Ultimately what carers said was they wanted something very similar to the forum they had just attended. They asked for another countywide event, with a market place, workshops on issues important to them and an accessible venue.

It was clear that carers wanted to share their views, and find out more about, financial issues including benefits relevant to carers, interactions with health professionals and wider issues that impacted on their own their own health and wellbeing and that of the people they cared for.

**Based on this, discussions at the Carers Partnership Board and through the Carers Voices Network the following was agreed:-**

- A countywide forum would be held but located in Hastings to encourage attendance from that part of the county
- More opportunities for carers to spend time in the market place and speak with other carers would be built in and a venue chosen to enable this
- More time would be allocated to workshops
- Workshops would pick up on key issues identified at the last forum and identified in the spring forum action plan (more on mental health, drug and alcohol use, benefits, speaking with health professionals and scam prevention)
- The theme of 'Carers Hot Topics' was agreed
- A key note speaker around the new NHS England toolkit – An integrated approach to identifying and assessing Carer health and wellbeing would be identified
- All facilitators and market place stall holders would be fully briefed and understand that the forum is underpinned by outcomes around carers voices

The Hastings Centre was identified as the venue for the autumn Carers Forum due to its location, accessibility and available space. The offer of mini bus transport was made to carers that had to travel the furthest to attend.

The following was shared with all workshop facilitators and market place stall holders.

The prime focus of the Carers Forum is carer engagement, enabling carers to express their views and influence services that impact on their lives. Therefore the following outcomes are required of all workshops:-

Carers will leave the workshop having had the opportunity to:-

- share their views, experiences and needs
- learn more about the support available to them and feel more confident about accessing opportunities
- contribute constructive ideas about how services and support could be improved

Alongside this there were further anticipated outcomes around carers building strong social networks and professionals becoming more carer aware, networking and strengthening partnership working.

### On the day the agenda was as follows:-

- Arrivals and Market place
- Welcome – Jennifer Twist Care for the Carers CEO
- Keynote Speaker Dr Neil Churchill- Director of Patient Experience at NHS England an overview of NHS commitments to identifying and supporting carers
- Tamsin Peart - East Sussex County Council Strategic Commissioning Manager (Carers) The local perspective - the new NHS Toolkit
- Workshop One (5 choices)
- Lunch and marketplace
- Workshop Two (5 choices)
- Final chance to socialise, explore market place and complete evaluation form.



Carers were asked to choose, and were allocated, workshops in advance to aid planning.

On arrival carers were given bag of promotional information and an evaluation form and were encouraged to pick up resources from the market place stands.



The day was chaired by Jennifer Twist CEO Care for the Carers and the Key Note Speaker was Neil Churchill. Neil spoke about the new NHS toolkit “An integrated approach to identifying and

assessing carer health and wellbeing”. This can be read or downloaded at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/commitment-to-carers/carers-toolkit/>



He described how the toolkit has been designed to help with the challenges of:-

- Maintaining the independence, physical health and emotional well-being of carers and their families;
- Empowering and supporting carers to manage their caring roles confidently and safely;
- Empowering and supporting carers and their families to maintain and participate in their social networks;
- Developing a shared understanding of “wellbeing” across health and social care.

He explained how the toolkit outlines the benefits of an integrated approach and includes a template Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help articulate the local vision for carers. It also includes many examples of positive practice in supporting carers. Neil shared some examples he has seen working well.

Neil's full presentation can be viewed on the Care for the Carers website .....



Tamsin Peart East Sussex County Council Strategic Commissioning Manager (Carers) discussed how locally work is being implemented around ensuring more joined up working across Adult Social Care and Children's Services (a Whole Family Approach) and between Health and Social Care. Tamsin's full presentation can be viewed on Care for the Carers website

More information about East Sussex County Councils support for unpaid carers can be seen at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/carers/>

Care for the Carers can offer local support and contacts if you wish to discuss your own situation email [info@cftc.org.uk](mailto:info@cftc.org.uk) or telephone 01323 738390 text 07860 077300

## Forum Promotion and Communication

### Promotion of the event

The spring 2016 forum proved the value of early planning and promotion. The following actions were taken:-

Personal invitations were sent to:-

- All Carers who had attended previous forums (2014 -2015)
- All Carers on the Carers Voices Network Mailing List
- All new Carers (referrals) on the Care for the Carers database from July 2016
- All Carers who receive a Careline magazine by email
- All Carers who came into reception in the months between forums / attended Care for the Carers AGM and/or the evening members event

Forum invitations were also given to Care for the Carers Carer Support Workers and put on website and in e Newsletter.

A Save the day email was sent to all Carers and professionals

- All professionals invited to have a marketplace stand were sent posters to display and distribute
- Partners with information sharing sites and/or newsletters were contacted such HVA, 3VA and RVA and ESCIS,
- Care for the Carers eNewsletter promoted the forum and encouraged sign up to attend
- CftC website promoted the event
- The September Carers Voices Engagement pack, circulated widely to individual carers, Care for the Carers Carer Support workers and partners who also facilitate carers groups, focused on the forum and the theme of 'Hot Topics for Carers'
- Every opportunity to promote the forum was taken by CftC staff including at Carer Awareness training, Network meetings and information stands.
- The regular carers voices section of Careline promoted the next forum
- Posters were delivered by CftC Carer Support workers along with CareLine deliveries

### Evaluation forms - what carers and professionals said about promotion of the forum.

Carers that completed evaluations told us that 8 heard about the Forum from Carers groups, 2 Careline, 14 from CftC/email and 5 other sources. No one identified social media, possibly reflective of the demographic that attended the event.

All professionals that completed an evaluation form rated promotion as good or excellent.

### Communication with carers prior to the forum

The invites that were sent to carers as detailed above included information on the venue, time of forum, lunch, proposed workshops, parking and information regarding minibuses running from Peacehaven and Heathfield.

When Carers booked a place on the forum, they were sent a confirmation of their booking, a map, a running order, travel directions and parking information. Access and dietary requirements were confirmed. If they also wanted to book the minibus they were then sent confirmation along with pick up and drop off information.

Two to three weeks before the forum all Carers that had booked a place were sent the workshop choices and were asked to choose them in order of preference. Allocated workshops were then confirmed either on the phone or by email.

### Evaluation forms - what carers said?

30 of the 32 carers that completed evaluation forms said the communication before the day was excellent

### Communication with professionals prior to the forum

A wide range of professionals/organisations were contacted either directly or through network events and mailing lists and invited to attend the forum.

**Marketplace-** Professionals who were providing an information stand in the market place were given clear information about the theme of the forum and that this was an opportunity for carer engagement. Ongoing communication was maintained and any issues or requests dealt with promptly.

**Workshops –** All facilitators were met prior to the forum. Alongside basic information about the shape of the day and clarifying resources required, briefing information was provided to include expectations around confidentiality, interaction, outcomes and engagement.

Facilitators were asked to provide an overview of their workshop prior to the day and any concerns or queries on either side were addressed.

Information about parking and the format of the day was shared and questions answered in the months leading up to the event

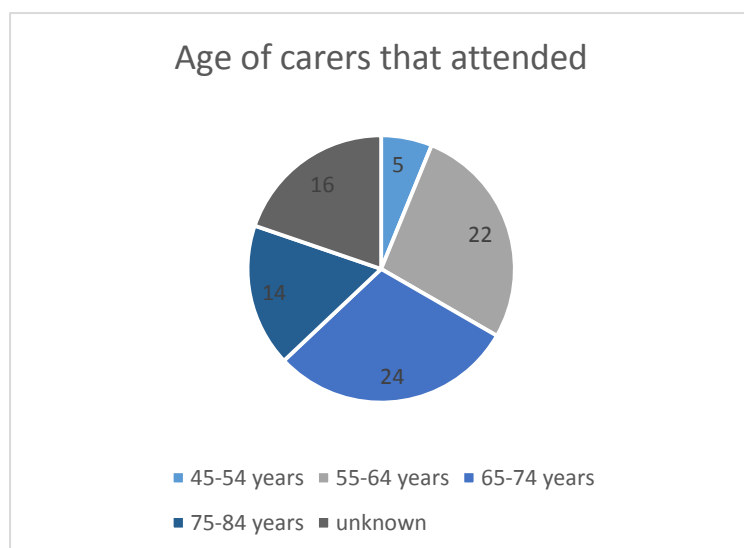
### Evaluation forms - what professionals said?

16 professionals said the communication and planning before the day was good or excellent 2 people said average but they appear to have attended on behalf of the main contact rather than receiving information directly.

## Forum Attendance

### Carers that attended

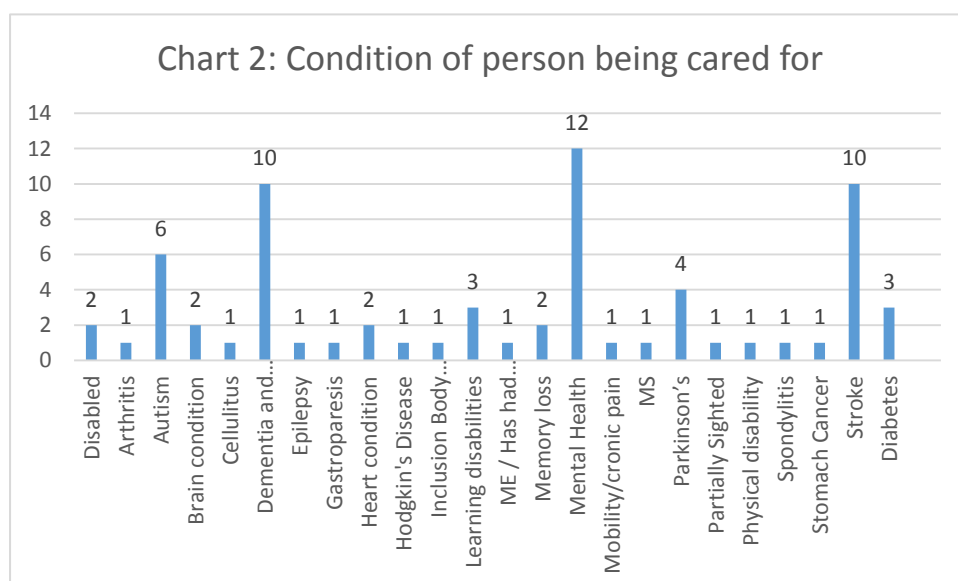
81 carers attended the event on the day, 58 of whom were female and 23 male



Of those for whom an age is known all were over the age of 45 as can be seen in the pie chart opposite.

This raises questions about how to attract a more diverse range of carers or consider alternative events to meet the needs of that demographic.

16 carers cancelled prior to the event and 12 did not arrive on the day. Follow up work is underway to see if anything could have been done to reduce these numbers.



Caring responsibilities of those that attended were diverse as can be seen in the chart below

Attendance from across the county was more balanced than the spring event.

- 21 carers attended from Eastbourne Hailsham and Seaford
- 42 carers from Hastings and Rother (2 of these from Rye)
- 18 came from High Weald, Lewes and Havens (16 of whom used the minibus described below)



Carers groups who had the furthest to travel were offered the opportunity of sharing transport to attend. Of the 18 carers that attended from High Weald, Lewes and Havens 16 took up the offer and used a minibus from Peacehaven (with a pick up at Seaford) or shared taxi from Heathfield – proving the value of this investment.



Information was provided to carers prior to the day around transport, parking and access issues. Any additional needs were identified and, when required, additional support offered. Information about additional needs was shared with workshop facilitators.

### Professionals that attended

24 information stands were staffed on the day often on a rota basis staff - The following organisations had stands in the market place:-

Healthwatch East Sussex, HARC - Hastings Advice and Representation Centre , Brighton & Sussex Medical School – Centre for Dementia Studies, The Stroke Association, Community Stroke Rehab Team , Possability People Organisation, Terrence Higgins Trust, Hate Crime Co-ordinator- Safer East Sussex Team, Alzheimer's Society, Safeguarding Adults Board, Age UK, The Samaritans, SEAP Advocacy, Sussex Community Development Association – SCDA, Association of Carers, Ambitions, National Trading Standards Scams Team, ESCC ASC - Adult Social Care Information and Guidance Team, Disability Inclusion CIC, RVA - Rother Voluntary Action Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Public Reference Forum for East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) programme, NHS Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG & NHS Hastings and Rother CCG, Ice Pro – Improving Carers Experience Programme and Care for the Carers.

*“Very good to have this well-appointed facility and particularly good that market place could share the same large auditorium as the plenary sessions - enable us to feel a part of everything and carers/other professionals to access our table for a larger part of the time available”( Association of Carers)*

Ten workshops were facilitated by:-

- NHS Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG & NHS Hastings and Rother CCG (x1) Jessica Town and Chan Maher (Speaking with Health Professionals)
- HARC - Hastings Advice and Representation Centre (x2) Teresa Andrews (Benefits)
- Ice Pro – Improving Carers Experience Programme (x2) Jane Lawrence (Mental Health)
- National Trading Standards Scams Team (2) Elaine Bowdery, Rebecca Beesley, Lucy Spencer and Hayley Barnes (Scam Prevention)
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (x2) Scott Durairaj and Jacqueline Clarke – Mapp (Speaking with Health Professionals)

- Vivien Anderson (Voluntary Carers Group Facilitator) and Vicki Gravill ESCC Substance Misuse Team. (x1) (Drug and Alcohol Dependency)

15 Care for the Carers Staff ensured the day ran smoothly including escorting carers to workshops and problem solving.

They also acted as workshop note takers and took photos to support the recording of the day and capture carers' voices.



*"Friendly people, made to feel welcome and nothing was too much trouble, questions answered as fully as possible and thoroughly spoilt with a lovely lunch"* **(Carer)**

*Overall enthusiasm and approachability of the staff and volunteers. You can see how much they really care about and value carers!!!* **(Luke Drunis Terrance Higgins Trust)**

*Superb organisation. Networking with everyone attending the conference.* **(Dave Leworthy – Samaritans)**

## Overall Feedback about the Day

Overall feedback about the event from both carers and professionals was very positive.

*First forum I have been to and really enjoyed it (carer)*

*An enjoyable day, thank you (carer)*

### Evaluation forms - what carers and professionals said about the event overall

All 32 carers who completed evaluation forms said the theme of the forum and the organisation of the day was good or excellent

29 carers rated the choice of workshops and speakers as good or excellent

32 carers rated accessibility of venue as good or excellent and all rated refreshments average or above.

All professionals that completed an evaluation form rated the forum theme, organisation of the day and the overall experience as good or excellent

Carers and professionals were asked for feedback on two further questions on the overall experience (full list of answers included as appendix 1)

### Question 1: Overall what was the best thing about the day for you?

Feedback made it clear that carers valued the opportunity to meet with other carers, socialise, share experiences and gain access to information and support

*"Meeting and discussing with other carers and professional people, problems encountered in your caring role".*

*"Having the chance to see other carers I have not seen for ages. Time to catch up!"*

*"I said, I listened and I learnt"*

*"Getting out of the house "*

*"All of it and meeting others"*

Professionals had very similar feedback

*"Great to see so many people together, sharing experiences. Fantastic opportunity for me to network with carers and with other support groups" - Laura Bottomly - Research Assistant in Dementia Studies - Brighton & Sussex Medical School*

*The variety of services that were there and the variety of carers who could not have accessed that information any other way. Having HARC there was very useful. Jane Lawrence Ice Pro*



## Question 2: Is there anything that would have improved the day for you?

The biggest issue identified by carers was the acoustics in the main room where workshops were held in each corner.

*“Using areas of the main hall for workshops meant that it was difficult to hear providers - need more breakout rooms”*

This was a compromise that was made to address some of the issues from the spring forum such as having to move between floors to get to workshops. Venues within budget, with enough break out rooms to accommodate the amount of workshops needed are just not available but feedback will be taken into account and every effort to improve acoustics for the next forum.

A few carers commented on the food or location of venue. Location is always going to be a challenge for county wide events but by changing the venue each time and exploring offers of transport for carers who live furthest away we hope this can be minimised.

## Carers Feedback about the workshops

Carers also had the opportunity to feedback on the individual workshops they attended and this is what they said. They were asked 2 questions specifically about the workshops

- **Did the workshop meet your needs and**
- **Did you feel listened to and able to share your views and experiences?**

### **Speaking with Health Professionals (Hastings and Rother CCG and Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG)**

12 carers completed the evaluation form over the 1 workshop that was held. All rated the workshop average and above for meeting their needs and being listened to. Comments included:-

*"Changes proposed to health services sound promising, but I am still concerned that it will take some time to be implemented especially in light of budget cuts"*

*"I wish you well with joint working with Health & Social Care. This really would be the answer to all our prayers. It's been tried before and failed!!!!"*

*"From the debate following the presentations from the carers it is obvious that there is an educational problem in getting many doctors and consultants to understand and appreciate the important part that carers play in maintaining the health of the people they care for."*

*"An excellent talk on health"*

### **Speaking with health Professionals (Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)**

9 carers completed evaluation forms over the 2 workshops

All rated the workshop average to excellent for meeting their needs and good to excellent for being listened to. Comments included:-

*"Confidentiality - why are health professionals isolating this with such impunity? Surely the carer / cared for persons relationship is paramount"*

### **Scam Prevention**

11 carers completed evaluation forms and feedback varied depending on the Carers needs and expectations rating the experience between poor and excellent which is reflected in the comments below.

*"Very informative and helpful"*

*"How important it is to be aware of scams as it is so easy to be taken in by the scammers and the consequences can be devastating."*

### **Mental Health**

17 Carers completed evaluation forms over 2 workshops. All rated the workshop good – excellent for meeting their needs and average to excellent for being listened to. The only negatives expressed was around acoustics (also the facilitator had lost her voice) not the workshop content

*"Well worth attending, very helpful, interesting"*



## Benefits

13 carers completed evaluation forms over the two workshops and all rated the workshop good or excellent for meeting their needs and average to excellent for being listened to.

Comments included:-

*"Information on benefits given was excellent"*

*"You feel you know about this subject but a lot more was covered in more depth"*

*"A bit of a minefield. Thank goodness for HARC!!!"*

*"I would advise other carers to contact HARC if they have any worries about benefits or if they need help. (Especially with forms) They can take a great weight off carers shoulders and will do all they can to get carers and those they care for the benefits that they are entitled to"*

## Drug and alcohol dependency

This workshop ran once and 5 carers completed evaluation forms and feedback varied from very poor to excellent. Comments included

*"Sounds very bad - needs improving. Lovely people leading workshop"*

## Overall Workshop feedback

Carers really valued the workshops with the majority finding the content appropriate to their needs and enjoyable. The main concern raised was around acoustics in the main hall which is discussed above. A few carers felt the workshops did not quite meet their needs but as can be seen by the evaluation data this was a minority. Facilitator briefings which stress that workshops should be carer focused and offer a carer engagement opportunity and promotional information about the workshops for carers try and address any misunderstandings in advance of the day. Full feedback from workshops will be shared with facilitators

## Section 4: Next steps

### Information sharing

This report will be shared widely with partners who attended the forum and wider with those who should have an interest in the issues discussed. The accompanying data pack will be available on request.

Feedback will be presented to the December Carers partnership Board and the report distributed through the Carers Services Network.

The report will also be available on the Care for the Carers website, reported on in the next Careline Magazine and linked to the CftC eNewsletter, promoted through social media and shared through the Carers Voices Network.

We ensure that, through the Carers Voices Network, all carers who have attended forums have the opportunity to share their views on an ongoing basis.

### Taking Action

An action plan will be produced picking up on key issues identified by carers. It will also take into account feedback from professionals who attended the forum to staff the market place and facilitate workshops who listened to what carers were saying and fed back through the evaluation process. Feedback from surveys etc. undertaken on the day will also contribute to the plan.

Follow up meetings will be arranged and shared actions agreed and taken forward by relevant partner organisations.

Progress will be reported on to Carers partnership Board and through a range of communication platforms as identified above.

### The next forum

**The next Forum theme** has already been identified as: **‘What makes a Carer Friendly Community?’** Carers were asked, on their evaluation forms, what they thought should be included. This proved much more successful than asking a similar question but without a title for the forum to stimulate ideas. **Full feedback can be seen in the data pack however, here is a sample of what carers said.**

#### **Transport, access and communication issues**

*“Provision of transport for carers and cared for person and accessibility, improvement of public places”*

*Supported by feedback about parking, travel, phone networks etc. heard at CftC.*

#### **Legal and Financial issues**

*“Legal & Financial matters related to caring”.*

*Supported by feedback in benefits workshop*

## **Health Provision**

*"Some involvement by local GP practices and pharmacies. Use of local community centres for carer utilities possibly in conjunction with other local groups". "Perhaps people who can help make 'carer friendly communities' possible, represented at the forum, e.g. GP's receptionists, ways to help carers who are isolated by their caring role".*

*Supported by feedback in benefits workshop and by workshop facilitator*

## **Raising awareness and building carer friendly communities**

*"Is the community aware of the problem? E.g. Harmony in Town/village", "Spreading a good understanding of 'caring", "How to build communities", "Organising meetings at carer friendly times", "Understanding and awareness from members of the community - awareness sessions for them".*

## **Socialise and support**

*"Peer support and availability", "How to keep your own identity not just to be known as someone's carer", "Opportunities to share and socialise with other carers"*

## **Severe mental health issues**

*"More about severe mental health issues and illness"*

*Supported by workshop notes and facilitator*

Other key comments that are cross cutting to the above include:-

*"Carers' should be considered like 'parents' .....children in so far as they are indispensable part of a disabled / sick person's life (vice versa), although not having authority as a parent has for a child"*

*"Accessing Healthcare. Social activities that carer and cared for can access together"*

**Key themes from this and previous forums** are support for **dementia carers and carers of people with learning disabilities and autism** all issues that would fit well with looking at how communities could be more carer friendly.

On the day some professionals identified they wished to take action based on their experience and some of their comments are included in the workshop feedback. Others are included below.

*As we develop more carer focused research, it would be useful to have the opportunity to speak to a bigger group. Perhaps we could speak at one of the breakout sessions. (Laura Bottomly - Research Assistant in Dementia Studies - Brighton & Sussex Medical School)*

*More than happy to help again in the future. (Teresa Andrews HARC)*

*It would be interesting to hear what experiences / activities that happen in other countries around work with carers - how are we performing? Can we learn anything? (Carleton Astley SCDA)*

**An accessible venue has been identified** and booked in Eastbourne which will allow a very similar set up to this autumn forum. Feedback re acoustics in some of the workshops at this forum will be taken into account whenever possible taking into account budget, space and access requirements, with workshops being located where we hope there will be less likelihood of sound travelling.

## Appendix 1: Further Information

### Themes of Opening Speeches

An integrated approach to identifying and assessing carer health and wellbeing can be read or downloaded at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/commitment-to-carers/carers-toolkit/>

Tamsin Peart East Sussex County Council Strategic Commissioning Manager (Carers)  
Tamsin's slides can be viewed on Care for the Carers website

More information about East Sussex County Councils support for unpaid carers can be seen at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/carers/>

Care for the Carers can offer local support and contacts if you wish to discuss your own situation email [info@cftc.org.uk](mailto:info@cftc.org.uk) or telephone 01323 738390 text 07860 077300

### Speaking with Health Professionals

#### Supporting Information

**East Sussex Better Together** website <https://news.eastsussex.gov.uk/east-sussex-better-together/> has information about how the programme is progressing and how to get involved. This programme covers Hastings and Rother and Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG areas.

**Connecting 4 You** is a new programme which is being developed in partnership (High Weald, Lewes and Haves CCG and East Sussex County Council) to address the specific needs of the population of that area. For more information visit their website page <http://www.highwealdleweshavensccg.nhs.uk/our-programmes/connecting-4-you/>

**Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust** website has information for patients and a specific page for carers <http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/advice-and-support-carers>

**Healthwatch** are the local watchdog for health and social care services, and are here to represent your opinions at a local and national level. They also provide a free information and signposting service. More information can be found by looking at their website <http://www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/> or calling our enquiries line on 0333 101 4007, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm.

### Mental Health

**The Improving Carers' Experience (ICE) Project** is funded by East Sussex County Council to

- Offer information to Carers across East Sussex, usually this takes the form of courses or workshops.
- Provide training for staff and volunteers around carers' needs.
- Involve Carers in supporting the project and to become actively involved in monitoring and developing mental health services locally

Visit their website at <http://iceproject.co.uk/>

Call or email if you would like more information. Tel: 01273 617100

Email either [alan.icepro@btconnect.com](mailto:alan.icepro@btconnect.com) or [jane.icepro@btconnect.com](mailto:jane.icepro@btconnect.com)

**Talking to your GP about a mental health problem** – if you would like more information visit <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/treatmentswellbeing/talkingtoyourgp.aspx> Mental

Health Information: Talking to your GP about a mental health problem: how to get help if you are worried about yourself or someone else.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk) has very useful information on most topics within mental health under their Health Advice section. If you can't download these leaflets you are welcome to contact ICE and they will print/post them.

### Health in Mind

Health in Mind is an NHS organisation providing courses and other types of therapies that help with stress, anxiety and low mood. Whatever the reasons are for feeling down, relationships, money or work, we offer a service that may help you feel positive again.

Health in Mind has qualified Counsellors, CBT therapists, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners and Primary Care Mental Health Practitioners. We also have practitioners qualified in EMDR, Interpersonal Psychotherapy and Mindfulness.

If you are struggling with work and relationships because of how you are feeling, if you have a lot on your plate, find it hard to motivate yourself and wish things could be different then click on 'what we do' to see how we could help.

Call: 44 (0) 300 00 30 130 or email: [spnt.healthinmind@nhs.net](mailto:spnt.healthinmind@nhs.net)

Website: <http://www.healthinmind.org.uk>

### Samaritans

Talk to the Samaritans at any time you like, in your own way, and off the record – about whatever's getting to you. You don't have to be suicidal.

Telephone: 01323 735555 (local call charges apply)

National telephone: 116 123 (this number is free to call)

Email Samaritans: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Visit the local branch - Samaritans Eastbourne, The Haven, 13 Bolton Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3JT. Usual hours open to receive callers at the door: 10:30 am - 10:30 pm every day. Facilities for visitors with disabilities: By arrangement.

### Drug and Alcohol Dependency

**Services that were identified as there to support those using drugs or alcohol included:-**

**East Sussex 'Change, grow, live' (CGL, formerly Crime Reduction Initiatives / CRI) and East Sussex Adult Social Care offer drug and alcohol treatment, recovery and wellbeing support to all adults affected by alcohol and other drugs, their loved ones and communities, across the whole of East Sussex.** All services are free, and we work in partnership with a range of organisations to ensure those we work with are fully supported.

**STAR (East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service)** operates from Hastings and Eastbourne, and offers 'outreach support' to people who find it difficult to access services, e.g. those in more rural areas or who are affected by mobility issues. STAR services supports all adults in East Sussex to make positive choices and changes to their drug and alcohol use, whatever the level of use.

Hastings Hub, Thrift House, 13 Wellington Place, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1NY  
Eastbourne Hub, Lift House, 6 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3UH



Website: <http://www.changegrowlive.org.uk>

For advice, support, services and self-tests for the public and professionals in Kent and Sussex visit [www.thinkdrinkdrugs.com](http://www.thinkdrinkdrugs.com).

**Seaview Project** – an open access wellbeing centre at the heart of St Leonards-on-Sea. Seaview's range of support services help marginalised people with addiction problems, mental health issues, ex- and at-risk offenders and rough sleepers achieve personal growth and fulfilment.

The open access wellbeing centre provides a warm and welcoming building where people can find help, comfort, friendship and inspiration.

The dedicated housing team help those in need of housing get a home, including short-term crisis accommodation to prevent rough sleeping.

Personal development is offered through a range of personal and group activities to help and encourage people to realise their full potential.

Contact details: Seaview - Practical Services for Complex Lives, Southwater Centre  
Hatherley Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6LB  
Tel: 01424 717981 Email: [admin@seaviewproject.org.uk](mailto:admin@seaviewproject.org.uk)

### Scams Prevention workshop

For Trading Standards support & advice on scams, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0345 4040506 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

For suspected abuse, call Adult Social Care on 0345 60 80 191

For an immediate Police response, call 999; for a non-emergency response, call 101

To report a fraud, or suspected fraud, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

If you would like to find out more about 'Friends Against Scams' and learn how to protect yourself and others from becoming a victim visit the Friends Against Scams website  
<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

### Benefits workshop

#### **Hastings and Rother and Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford CCG areas**

Residents and professionals from the **Hastings and Rother and Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford CCG areas** can get advice over the telephone through the Welfare Benefits Helpline Tel: 03333440681. Address: Welfare Benefits Project, HARC Advice Centre, The Community Hub, Renaissance House, London Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN37 6AN.

If more detailed advice is required then home visits and appointments can be given either at the office or at our various outreach drop-in sessions that are offered around the county. Advice covers full benefit checks, assistance claiming, form filling and appeal representation on ALL benefits.

#### **High Weald, Lewes and Havens CCG area**

Residents and professionals in **High Weald, Lewes and Havens CCG** area can get advice by calling Lewes district Information Hub on 01273 517375 or the CAB Advice Line on 03444

111444. You can drop in at your local CAB in Lewes, Crowborough or Uckfield or at the Advice Hub in Newhaven above Lidl.

**Alternatively email [info@harcuk.com](mailto:info@harcuk.com)  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) has information on benefits, eligibility and online application forms.**