Carer Friendly Communities

are places where Carers feel supported to look after their family or friends and recognised as individuals with needs of their own.

VSA Carers Resource Service
38 Castle Street
Aberdeen AB11 5YU

Tel # 01224 212021
Email: Carers.Info@vsa.org.uk
The Whole Community

Every high street, every community service, every leisure facility has a role to play in making sure they are accessible to Carers. Many are in a perfect position to make a difference by recognising Carers and connecting them to the help and support available.

The most important step any organisation or individual can take towards being Carer friendly is to adopt a Carer friendly attitude. Such an attitude recognises the contribution Carers make to their families and communities and seeks to remove the barriers which can leave Carers feeling excluded, whoever and wherever they are.
Local Businesses

Whether you run a local café or work in the high street bank, there’s lots you can do to help Carers. Are you aware that at least 1 in 8 of your customers will be a Carer? As a business do you:

- Ensure your business is disability and dementia friendly. This really helps to improve Carers’ lives.

- Advertise the things you do have, such as flexible home delivery, free entry for Carers if they are with a disabled person, or different or flexible appointment times.

- Have information about Carers services available for your customers.
Community Groups

Around 1 in 8 members of your community group could be caring at any given time. These numbers will be higher if you have older people or women in your group, though 4 out of 10 Carers are men.

Many people with caring responsibilities don’t think of themselves as Carers, and they can often miss out on advice and information.

- Talk about caring for relatives and close friends at one of your meetings.
- Provide leaflets at your next group meeting.
- Send around email links to support and information.
- Invite someone along to talk to the group about caring.
- Recognise that some of your group members might have difficulty attending meetings or taking part in activities. Are there ways that you could help make it possible? Could you offer lifts to and from meetings? Could they happen at different times to make it possible for them to attend?
Families and friends are an essential source of support for Carers, providing emotional and practical help with their caring role.

Not all Carers find it easy to talk to relatives and friends about the care they are providing, and the strain it places on them. The stresses and pressures of caring can make it difficult to maintain relationships with friends and relatives.

If the family member has taken on a caring role, you may feel a mixture of guilt and relief that they are doing that role rather than you. These feelings and relationships are complicated and can be awkward.
But if you avoid them by withdrawing from the relationship or pretending that caring has no impact on your family member, then it is time to get things out in the open.

As Carers’ friends and family members, take the opportunity to talk to them about their caring role, understand what they do and its impact on them, practically and emotionally. Find out about simple things you can do to help:

- Ask a simple question to a Carer among your friends and family members. What is caring like for you? Then listen.

- Find out about the technology available to help coordinate care among larger groups of people, or enable caring to take place at a distance.
VSA Carers Resource Service can be contacted at the following locations:

**Adult Carers Service**
VSA Head Office
38 Castle Street, Aberdeen, AB11 5YU
01224 212021 | Carers.Info@vsa.org.uk

**Royal Cornhill Hospital**
Clerkseat Building, Royal Cornhill Hospital
Aberdeen AB25 2ZH
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www.vsa.org.uk

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