INTERACTIVE SESSION - DISCUSSION GROUPS
CARERS WEEK 2015: “BUILDING CARER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES”

**Question 1:** What are some of the issues that carers face in their caring roles?

- Not enough social interaction
- Not enough time to look after yourself
- Isolation, loneliness, stress, mental health and physical issues
- Financial hardship
- Not being listened to properly
- Organising time, finances, crisis management
- Filling in forms
- Knowing their rights
- Feeling guilty - are you doing enough?
- Pressure on your own lifestyle. Juggling care/work/family life
- Finding the right support
- Communicating effectively with people
- Worrying/Anxiety about the future and what will happen to cared for when carer is no longer around
- Support for long term planning for the cared for in time of crisis or austerity
- Personal budget / DP - being able to afford the right care
- Assumption from agency staff that family will fill the gaps
- Not having time or energy to fight for their rights
- Child carers becoming adults before their time
- Teachers don’t understand what it is like for a child carer
- Long time to complete school work
- Not enough time to do it all - like learning and caring
- Health problems - physical and emotional - worrying about people they care for
- Feeling inadequate

**Question 2: How could we build a carer friendly community in Reading?**

- Improve communication
- Disability deaf awareness - all kinds
- Develop better relationship, activities
- Support each other
- More funding for carers support groups - being able to socialise and connect to other carers via local support groups
- Support group for carers who have lost a loved one - bereavement support for carers
- Better publicity of needs and preferences of carers and the person they care for
- Publicise via local churches
- Creating a better understanding of the carer’s role
- Carers need more time out for themselves
- Respite care breaks with carer nearby
- More support for those caring for someone with dementia
- Understanding carer’s roles
- Awareness of carers
- Training professionals to understand the carers
- Caring long-term and short-term
- Incentives for carers
• Hearing the carer’s views and understanding
• Practical support
• Embed carer’s voice
• Carer’s publicly treated as heroes, saving the country millions, while giving up their own lives to someone else
• ‘Drop in’ in town centre - somewhere to go with/without the person you care for
• Schools understanding carers needs - offering support - home schooling
• Neighbourhood Care Scheme - offer of help to carers - similar to neighbourhood watch - look out to offer help

**Question 3: What works well for carers in Reading?**

• Agency support (when it’s working well!)
• Good publicity for events and reaching out to carers from various ethnic groups
• Reaching out to Nepalese community
• When GP’s, community mental health, social services link
• RBC - being allowed to go on Carer’s Training
• Events organised - User Panel RBC
• Berkshire Carer’s Forum / Magazine
• Lots of good voluntary organisations (helping with problems associated with autism/stress/strains of parent carers)
• Reading Carer’s and support conference
• Berkshire Specialist conferences
• Care about each other
• District nursing - home visits for their needs
Question 4: What could be improved upon for carers in Reading?

- Set up more local carers support groups
- Improve communication
- Medical and genuine information for new carer going into caring role
- More training for paid carer - CRB check
- Not finding it easy who to contact when there is a problem
- Not having to fight for their rights - once accepted as a carer, you should be told about rights automatically (one to one carer-social worker)
- More local groups - Caversham/Tilehurst etc......
- Mental health carer group
- Simplified and easy to complete forms
- Assistance to complete forms
- Where to look for information - a centralised place
- Flow charts to know where to go and what order to do things in
- Timely training - i.e. Care Act / Universal Credit
- Lack of face to face talking - especially if you are not online / don’t like online
- Personal contact
- Peer to peer support
- Embedding carers into processes
- Wear ID and CRB checks
- All GP’s / Hospitals - to have access to sign language (disability/deaf awareness