

Who Cares

It has been an incredibly busy start to the year for local charity organisation Carers Outreach Service – in the first half of January 2019, 75 unpaid carers registered to receive our support and information; the statistics for February look set to follow a similar trend. This is not too surprising when you consider that it is estimated that 15% of the population now juggles paid employment with an unpaid caring role. This rise in the number of unpaid carers is thought to be partly due to the ageing population. Over the years Carers Outreach has seen the average age of unpaid carers registered with the organisation decrease from 60+ to the current average age of 50-65, meaning that the majority of unpaid carers are now of working age!

Many carers are keen to continue with their paid employment, finding the job satisfaction and independence to be both rewarding and satisfactory. However, the challenges of balancing paid employment with a caring role can become stressful.

According to a recent report from Carers UK, more than 600 people leave their paid employment every day as a result of the demands of being an unpaid carer, this equates to almost half a million in the last 2 years. Carers UK says that not enough employers are offering carers flexibility over working hours or offering carer's leave.

Unpaid carers have the right to request flexible working according to the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2010 (England and Wales). This must follow a specific procedure; the request must be submitted to the employer in writing and the employer then has a set window of time in which to reply. If the request is refused, the employer must have a valid reason for doing so.

Carers Outreach Service can provide this type of information to unpaid carers and can support them to request their rights and entitlements. Our staff will visit employers, if they request it, to provide training on the issues that unpaid carers face and to promote carer friendly working practices.

For more information contact Carers Outreach on 01248 370797 or email help@carersoutreach.org.uk or visit www.carersoutreach.org.uk.