

## Introduction

### **Are you looking after someone? Does someone depend on you?**

If you answered yes to either of these questions you are quite likely to be a carer.

Carers can be parents, brothers or sisters, sons or daughters, partners, relatives, friends or neighbours of all ages who take responsibility for the care of someone who is finding it difficult to manage or cope at home without help.

The person you care for may be a child or adult with a:

- long term illness;
- physical disability (including eyesight or hearing problem);
- mental health problem;
- learning disability;

or someone who is elderly and infirm.

People become carers for a variety of reasons. It may be because:

- a relative or friend has gradually become more dependant on them;
- a relative or friend suddenly becomes ill;
- they are parents with a child who has a physical or learning disability;
- they choose to support someone who they feel is vulnerable;
- of a sense of love and duty;
- they feel they have no choice.

There is no standard picture of a carer. Caring can be a short or long-term activity lasting from a few weeks to decades. The help carers provide is essential and can vary from weekly shopping to looking after someone 24 hours a day. The tasks carers undertake can include housework and personal care, as well as providing company and emotional support. Caring is often very hard work and stressful.

Carers often make major sacrifices to look after a person they care for; caring can have consequences for their career, finances, social life and freedom.

It is not known exactly how many carers there are in Pembrokeshire but it is thought that there may be at least 13,000. Neither is it known exactly how many young carers (people under 18) there are in the area who care mainly for their parents or other family members. Child Care and Community Care are working together to help children & young people in these situations. See *Young Carers Section for more details*.

Many carers are isolated. This pack aims to help carers living in Pembrokeshire with many of the issues and problems they may be facing.

## **How the Carers Pack can help you?**

This pack is full of information about a whole range of topics. Not all of the subjects will be directly relevant to you and your situation, so to begin with it may be best to look at the contents page at the beginning of the pack. You can then read about the topic that most interests you.

All of the organisations mentioned in this pack are there to help so do not be afraid to contact them. These are listed alphabetically in the contact sheets at the end.

Information in this pack is up-to-date at the time it was printed. However, changes are taking place all the time. You can make sure you are kept up to date by receiving pack updates.

For a copy of this publication in Braille, in larger print, audio tape or an alternative language, please contact Pembrokeshire County Council on (01437) 776613.

This handbook is also available on line at [www.pavs.org.uk/carers](http://www.pavs.org.uk/carers) and [www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

This pack has been produced with the assistance of a cross section of carers and organisations including Pembrokeshire Carers Outreach, Pembrokeshire Crossroads, Alzheimers Society, Age Concern Pembrokeshire and Paul Sartori Foundation. Special thanks must also go to the Rhondda Cynon Taff Carers Support Project whose help has been invaluable.