

New Carers Support Service

Following months of planning by carers, NHS Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Voluntary Organisations, the single carers support service goes live on 1st October serving all of Bedfordshire (excluding Luton).

National carer's charity and policy group, Carers UK, praised local voluntary support for carers in their 2009 report on Bedfordshire carers. At a Carers Rights Day event in 2010, carers told us that while the range of support available was good it was often difficult to know who the right organisation was to approach. Since then, partnership work has been underway to design a single carers support service that will make it easier to access help while still offering the range of support that had previously been offered by several organisations.

From 1st October, Carers in Bedfordshire will provide support to carers of all ages across Bedfordshire (excluding Luton) including:

- Telephone, email and web advice and information
- Specialist one to one support (such as for people caring for someone with a Mental Health problem)
- Group support
- Support to enable carers to be confident, active partners in the decision making processes of all partner organisations
- Administering the NHS Carers Break and Training Grant service
- Running Carers Cafes at weekends across Bedfordshire

Lianne Bowskill, Public Health Coordinator from NHS Bedfordshire says 'this is an exciting time for carer's services. The setting up of the single carer's service is an excellent example of partnership working between NHS Bedfordshire, Local Authorities and voluntary sector organisations with the main aim being to make things easier and less stressful for carers'.

If you or someone you know provides unpaid support to someone who is ill, frail, disabled or who has a mental health or substance misuse problem - that makes you a carer. For advice, information and support contact Carers in Bedfordshire on 0300 111 1919, email contact@carersinbeds.org.uk or visit www.carersinbeds.org.uk

You can also find useful information in the carers section which has just been launched on the NHS website www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk