

Carer research and knowledge



Utilising carer-related research and knowledge:
a scoping review and information resource



“ 6.5 million people in the UK are carers and this number continues to rise... 3 in 5 people will be carers at some point in their lives. ”

(Carers UK, 2015)



Utilising carer-related research and knowledge: a scoping review and information resource

Project

Headlines such as these point to the growth in recognition of the ever-increasing numbers of carers and that caring affects most of us. There is now a wealth of national and international carer-related material and research. This body has helped raise awareness of carers' lives and caring issues, accessing and using it is difficult because there are many sources of knowledge and information located in different places. This fragmentation impedes the capacity of the existing body of knowledge to inform research and social care practice, and improve outcomes for carers and those for whom they care. Although the Care Act 2014 offers new and enhanced opportunities for carers, its implementation will be considerably strengthened if information and knowledge can be easily accessed by carers and those working in social care.

Aims and focus

This project aims to make a significant contribution to addressing this deficit. Its main focus is a comprehensive review of national and international carer-related knowledge and evidence. This will include policy and practice documents, research findings/summaries, national surveys, information from carer charities, carer-related websites, relevant reports and consultations, and academic work including journal papers. The review will be written up into a report that will, for the first time, pull together all carer-related knowledge providing an overview of its range, type, and nature and offer a synthesis of evidence. The review report will also inform:

1. The direction and nature of future research relating to carers and what we need to know.
2. The development of effective ways to support carers. To help achieve this aim the review outcomes will be publicised through a wide range of relevant networks. This will also involve use of the following strategies:
 - regular consultation with carers, those who use services, social workers, carer organisations, GPs, and a range of social care practitioners throughout the course of the project
 - use of the report findings to complement other accessible sources of information about carers that may have been developed, for example those developed by carer organisations, research networks and NHS funded information networks
 - in partnership with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), develop a new fully accessible carer digital resource, entitled '*Care Act 2014: a directory for carers and practitioners*'. This will be launched in June 2017.

These strategies will ensure that the scoping review informs commissioners, care workers, social workers, carers' organisations, carers' support workers, carers, people who use services and personal assistants, thereby supporting improvements in social care practice with carers

Funder NIHR School For Social Care Research

To find out more about this project contact Dr Mary Larkin: mary.larkin@open.ac.uk

Find out more or want to work with us – email: WELS-Research-Admin@open.ac.uk

For more about the School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care visit: wels.open.ac.uk