Carers and Public Health: How do we improve carer wellbeing?

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What is Public Health?

• ‘The art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society” (Acheson, 1988; WHO)

• It focuses on the entire spectrum of health and wellbeing, not only eradication of particular diseases

• Includes provision of personal services such as vaccinations, behavioural counselling, or health advice…

• IPSOS MORI research, 2018: public *most* interested in supporting A&E, *least* interested in public health and prevention!
What is population health?

Carers = 10% of the population

Carers *look after* 10% of the population

(That’s 20% of the population we can help by improving the health of carers)
What happens if carers feel at risk of breakdown?
What do we know about stress?

- Carers are stressed
- Carers lack autonomy (linked to stress: Marmot)
- Carers benefit from the wellbeing 5 a day like everyone else
- Helping carers access informal support in the community can address many of these wellbeing needs
- But first they have to be identified

- Breaks can reduce stress and improve health outcomes (Zarit et al)
- Sense of purpose and autonomy, having choices are key to reducing stress
- Sense of belonging (opposite of ‘loneliness/social isolation’) associated with better health
Impact of Adult Day Services on carer stress

- **Ads**
- **Non-ADS**

- Wake
- 30 MIN
- Lunch
- Evening
- Bed

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We can make a difference

Current annual data: still reducing risk of depression by 23%

Make a Difference for Carers
Risk of Depression Scores
2009-2015

Percentage at risk

- Population normal
- Carers Pre break
- Carers post break

Estimated net saving of £255 per carer helped

www.carersinherts.org.uk
Experience of carers: what does GPPS data tell us?

Who are carers?

18% say they care for someone due to physical or mental disability or ill health.

49% non-carers
56% carers are more likely to be female.

48% of carers are between 45 and 64 years old.
31% of non-carers are between 45 and 64 years old.

61% of carers are in full-time or part-time paid work, compared to 61% of non-carers.

Access to GP services

85% of carers report a positive overall experience of their GP surgery – the same as non-carers.

People with caring responsibilities are more likely to have seen a GP or nurse in the last 12 months.

Long term health conditions

Carers are more likely to have a long term health condition than non-carers.

This is related to age (carers are older in general), but young adult carers are more likely to have a long term condition than young non-carers. This is not the case for those aged 65+.

Carers are more likely to report problems in a variety of areas:

- Anxiety/Depression: 30% carers, 39% non-carers
- Pain/Discomfort: 39% carers, 57% non-carers
- Usual activities: 57% carers, 45% non-carers
- Self-care: 9% carers, 22% non-carers
- Mobility: 26% carers, 22% non-carers
- Report mobility problem: 11% carers, 7% non-carers
- Suffer pain and discomfort: 46% carers, 50% non-carers
- Suffer anxiety/depression: 35% carers, 31% non-carers
- Problems with usual activities: 45% carers, 46% non-carers

Young adult carers are more affected by these problems than young non-carers, but this difference is less apparent amongst those aged 65+.
Public Health England Commitments

Cross Government Action Plan

1.6 PHE working with partners, including a carers' organisation, to develop a ‘productive healthy ageing’ action plan, with a focus on reducing health inequalities. This action plan will promote productive healthy ageing and dementia risk reduction messages, including those that impact on carers.

PHE 2018/19

4.13 PHE will be running a national public mental health campaign, using interactive content, including videos, to support and encourage self-help and support of others, including signposting to organisations who can provide advice and support on factors which may influence their mental health, including being a carer.

PHE 2018/19
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