

(REGIONS) HIDDEN PROFESSIONAL CARERS WHO 'LIVE-IN'*National Carers Week runs from 11 to 17 June 2007***(CASE STUDIES AVAILABLE)**

National Carers Week will draw attention to the 6 million voluntary/family carers who save the country an estimated £57 billion each year. It is also a time to highlight the job that professional live-in carers do in the (region). This little known group of carers live with their clients in order to offer round the clock support and allow them to continue living independently in their own homes. Research suggests that lack of awareness of the important job that these live-in carers do could lead to people in (region) choosing care options that they then feel unhappy or guilty about.

With a quarter of British adults facing the prospect of organising care for a relative or friend no longer able to cope at home alone, and this figure set to rise dramatically, the research shows that most people are only aware of limited care options (becoming a carer themselves or residential homes) which they believe would leave them feeling unhappy or guilty. Research has shown a huge lack of awareness of the full range of care options meaning people aren't aware of services which they may feel are more appropriate for their loved ones. For instance, while live-in care can allow people to live independently in their own homes for longer and is the preferred care option of the elderly, awareness of this service is low (4%).

While most people felt they would try to care for a loved one themselves, the research showed that only 57% would feel happy about their decision. This is backed up by a report from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers which found that over half of carers have felt like walking away from their responsibilities. Care homes were the next most likely option for people to choose, with 18 per cent believing they would choose this as an option, yet over half thought they would feel guilty about their choice. In contrast 76 per cent of respondents thought that live-in care would be a preferred option to a residential home yet only 4% were aware of this as an option.

There are now companies, such as Helping Hands Homecare that can provide this service throughout England and Wales. The service can be funded privately or through social

services (subject to assessment). Their professional carers are able to step in when caring for a relative or friend becomes too much for a relative as in John McAdams case.

John McAdams mother received live-in care from Helping Hands Homecare: “My mother needed 24 hour care, and my two brothers and I managed between us for a while but it became obvious that we could no longer look after her. My mother and I were very keen for her to stay in her own home because lots of her family and friends lived nearby, she has a social life and she wasn’t ready to move into a residential home. Live-in care from Helping Hands Homecare enabled my mother to keep her job in the bookshop, which she does one day a week. My mother is very relaxed and it is no coincidence that she did not suffer one stroke while her carer, Kathy, was looking after her.”

Comments Paul Cann, Director of Policy and Research at **Help the Aged**: “Professional live-in care is a vocation requiring a special kind of person and sometimes attracting extraordinary ones. It is concerning that there is still a lack of awareness of the full range of options that are available, and we hope that this new research will lead to an increase in awareness of options such as live-in care and also encourage others to join what can be a very rewarding profession.”

For further information on live-in care please see www.live-incare.co.uk or call 0808 180 9488.

HELPING HANDS HOMECARE – Background

Helping Hands Homecare provides care for people in their own homes – whether this is live-in care (where a carer lives with the client) or hourly care (where the carer visits the client at agreed times) Helping Hands Homecare can provide the live-in care option throughout England and Wales. Hourly care is available in parts of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire.

Helping Hands Homecare was established in 1989, it is based in Warwickshire and is a family owned and run company. It is regulated by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and is a member of the United Kingdom Home Care Association (UKHCA)

The live-in care service is generally provided on a long-term basis, however, it can be booked for short periods of time (for example to provide care when the usual family carer is going to be away, or to provide care when someone is coming out of hospital)

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