

CARERS STILL LOOKING FOR A BREAK

Friday 13th will be an unlucky day for some as Shared Care Scotland publishes its latest analysis of Audit Scotland's performance information relating to local authority provided or arranged respite care. The figures once again reveal a wide disparity in the level of overnight and day based short break (respite care) services available across Scotland. The most unlucky group appears to be carers looking for services which provide overnight breaks where last year we saw an overall loss of nearly 6,000 nights, with overnight services for children being the hardest hit with a 10% cut. Day services, on the other hand, are showing an increase with an additional 453,400 hours last year, provided across all age groups.

Don Williamson, Chief Executive of Shared Care Scotland commenting on the analysis said, "Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the Audit Scotland data is the wide variation in the figures across local authorities. In almost every category we are seeing as many local authorities reducing services as increasing them. At a time when the Scottish Government and COSLA are prioritising support to carers, including investing in short breaks and respite care, we would certainly expect to see carers in all parts of Scotland benefiting. The shift away from providing overnight breaks is also of concern as we know many carers, particularly those caring 24/7, benefit from a good night's sleep. We'll be bringing this information to the attention of the Scottish Government and local authorities."

Shared Care Scotland's summary report and detailed breakdown can be downloaded from the organisation website: www.sharedcarescotland.com/news/index3.php

For further information, please contact Don Williamson on 01383 622462 or 0795 255 0048.

Notes to Editors:

Shared Care Scotland is a Scottish charity which exists to promote and support the development of short break services (respite care) for carers and the people they care for. Getting the right break at the right time is a big priority for many carers. Short breaks help to strengthen and sustain caring relationships and promote health and well being. Breaks also help those with care needs to maintain or make new relationships, learn new skills and be included in the wider community.

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care to a family member, partner or friend who may be ill, frail, disabled or dependent on drugs or alcohol.

The Scale of the Issue

- 1 in 4 of the population are carers, or cared for
- There are between 480,000 and 660,000 carers in Scotland*
- If recent estimates of 660,000 carers are correct, the annual savings to the NHS in Scotland are estimated at almost £8 billion
- 115,000 people work for more than 50 hours a week unpaid providing care
- 3 in 5 of us will become a carer at some point in our lives
- It is estimated that by 2037 there will be more than a million carers in Scotland
- 40% of carers have not had an overnight break in the last 2-years
- 75% of carers have no access to regular respite care provision

* Figures quoted are a combination of the 2001 census, and estimates contained within the most recent Scottish Community Care Statistics.

** Source: Care 21 report into the future of unpaid care in Scotland

*** Source: Carers Scotland