

# Carers Matter – Everybody's Business

an introduction to supporting carers better  
through learning and development of staff



## minister's foreword

Many of us will be a carer at some point in our lives; this may be for a short time while supporting someone through illness, or for longer period, perhaps for many years caring for a spouse, partner or disabled child. Most of us will face the challenge with little help or training in how to care for someone. It is therefore remarkable that, over six million of us take on this challenge in order to help and maintain the health and well being of those we care for.



## minister's foreword

**Once someone takes on a caring role, they may come into contact for the first time with a range of professionals whose primary focus is to provide support for the person they care for. It is critical that these staff are also aware of the needs and wishes of carers. Health and social care services in particular, have a vital role to play in ensuring that carers are at the heart of the social care system and are treated as expert partners in care. Of course, carers also deal with everyday services like everyone else, except that now they can have a direct impact, for good or ill, on how life is for them as a carer.**

Many local authorities and health services have already begun the process, working in partnership with carers and carers' organisations. Because this is not just about health and social care; other organisations, such as Post Offices, Housing Associations and banks will also need to challenge themselves to ensure they are meeting the needs of their customers who are also carers.

This Coalition Government has demonstrated its commitment to improving carers lives by publishing 'Recognised, Valued and Supported: Next Steps for the Carers Strategy' (November 2010), building on the Carers Strategy (2008). We have heard from hundreds of individual carers and many organisations representing carers about what they saw as the priorities for carers. The Strategy focuses on the key activities upon which the Government – working in partnership with carers, local authorities, the NHS, employers, the voluntary sector and local communities – can focus on from April 2011.



**Paul Burstow MP**  
**Care Services Minister**

To support many of these outcomes, all staff that come into contact with carers as part of their work need to be aware of the needs a carer may have. Those supporting carers need information, understanding and commitment to perform their role in a way that makes a real difference to carers. Organisations too need to challenge themselves to understand better the role that they have in offering their employees opportunities to learn and develop these skills, but also to be an employer who involves and supports carers at every level. In this way, carers do become 'everybody's business'.

With this in mind, I welcome 'Carers Matter – Everybody's Business', a learning and development framework with supporting resources for those that work with carers. This framework has been funded by the Department of Health and developed by Skills for Care and Skills for Health working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.

Based on a set of Common Core Principles for Working with Carers, Carers Matter – Everybody's Business provides employers with a clear framework and supporting resources that encourage the learning and development of staff who come into contact with carers. It provides guidance and practical assistance to employers to gain knowledge and improve the behaviours and attitudes of their workforce towards carers.

I urge employers to use this resource, so we can work together towards supporting and enabling carers to get the help and support they need and deserve.

# Carers Matter

## – Everybody's Business

is guidance for employers and organisations to ensure that carers are at the heart of the health and social care system with the people they care for, and are recognised and supported by all sectors of society.

**The complete guidance, which comes in three parts provides information about:**

- who carers are (as distinct from care workers)
- why carers are important
- how you can support the learning and development of your workforce to improve and enhance your services for the people who use them, and their carers.

The guidance is based on a set of **Common Core Principles for Working with Carers**, see page 14.



# Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business is divided into three parts:



## part one

This introduction you are reading is aimed at chief executives and senior managers who are responsible for the strategic direction of their business and its priorities. It is also relevant for those involved in commissioning services and workforce development. It covers who carers are, why your organisation needs to be aware of their needs and the Common Core Principles for Working with Carers.

## part two

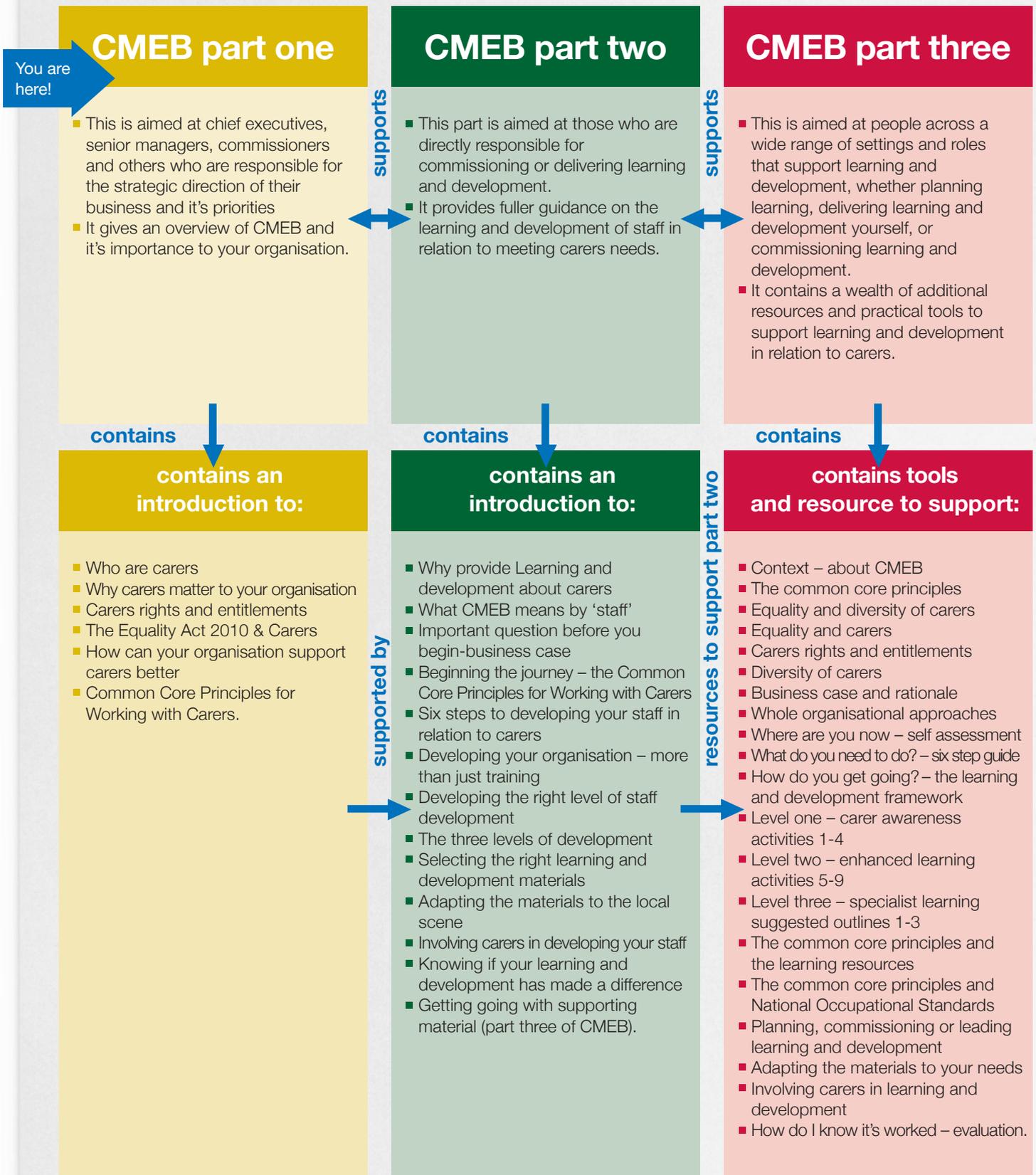
This is aimed at people who are directly responsible for commissioning or delivering learning and development. It provides guidance on how to identify learning and development needs within an organisation and offers a framework that will enable you to select learning at the right level to enable any given workforce to provide effective services and support to carers.

## part three

Contains a wealth of additional supporting resources relevant to people across a wide range of settings and roles that support learning and development. The supporting materials give more detail on areas within this guide and also include practical materials that support the three levels of development described in part two. These materials can be used flexibly, whether to plan learning, to deliver learning and development yourself, or to commission learning and development.

# Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business (CMEB)

## is also explained by the following diagram:



## who are carers?



Although there is no single definition of ‘carer’, a carer is generally described as a person of any age providing unpaid care to an ill, frail or disabled family member, friend or partner. This may include physical care or emotional support, advice and advocacy. **It is important to note** that a carer is **not** a volunteer who has been placed in a caring role by a voluntary organisation, **nor** someone who is paid as a care worker or personal assistant.

Carers often feel they have no choice about taking on a caring role. They provide care because they want to help the people they care about and because their child, partner, relative or friend could not manage without that help.

Carers often end up having to juggle the support they give with their other responsibilities, in a difficult balancing act. For many carers, looking after their own health, combining caring with work, getting access to training or simply having time to take a break or go away for a weekend can be a major challenge. Government research on carers shows that people who provide a substantial amount of care tend to have lower incomes, poorer health, and are less likely to be in work than their counterparts (DH 2008)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources given in brackets in the text are detailed in the references section at the end.

## Campaigning body Carers UK says:

“The difficulties experienced by carers can be highlighted by the following three statistics:

- carers lose an average of £11,050 pa by taking on significant caring responsibilities
- over half of all carers have a caring-related health condition
- carers represent one of the most socially excluded groups of people.”

(Carers UK 2009)

Many carers do not recognise themselves as carers. They simply see themselves as husband, wife, parent, son, daughter or friend. The majority of carers do not access formal services and therefore could be missing out on valuable support. For example, when Barrow Borough Council launched a campaign to target ‘hidden carers’ in 2010 they estimated that two thirds of the 8,674 people in the borough who care for someone do not class themselves as carers and are not accessing the help available to them (North West Evening Mail, 1 Feb 2010).



It is also important to recognise that carers come from diverse backgrounds. The Home Office identified six strands of diversity that categorised or grouped together common human differences; these are age, gender, race, disability, religion and sexual orientation.

The law currently makes discrimination in relation to these six ‘protected characteristics’ unlawful (The Equality Act 2010).

**Many public bodies, including some local authorities, have incorporated these six strands into their equality and diversity frameworks, policies and practice. However, carers should be recognised explicitly as existing within each of these strands and deserving of particular attention in the planning and delivery of services. For more information about The Equality Act 2010 and carers, see page 10.**

*Quality of life for carers is generally poorer than for society as a whole (Equalities Review 2007). This means that they are disadvantaged from participating fully in society and their local communities in terms of, for example, paid employment or leisure.*

Click this link to find more detail and guidance on duties towards carers, including carers and The Equality Act 2010 in ‘Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business’ part three, where you can also find useful information on the diversity of carers.



## why 'carers matter' to your organisation

According to the 2001 census, there are an estimated six million carers in the UK and this is set to increase to nine million by 2037. Every year, two million people move in and out of caring. This means that employees in all kinds of organisations are increasingly likely to have contact with carers in the course of their work. Indeed, they may well be carers themselves too.

Organisations that deliver health and social care services have specific responsibilities for supporting carers. Carers UK estimates that carers save the economy £87 billion per year (Carers UK 2007), so providing them with the right support is crucial to the health and social care economy and makes good business sense for organisations in other sectors.

For organisations in sectors outside of health and social care services, recognising, valuing and supporting carers is important because:

- **carers are customers and consumers** who have the right to expect and receive a courteous and responsive service in their dealings with organisations and their staff
- **many carers are actual or potential employees** – one in five carers gives up work to care full time, meaning that employers are losing valuable staff.

Providing a good service to carers can also benefit your organisation or business, your local community and your staff, as well as carers themselves and the people they care for.

### **Organisations and the people who work for them will potentially benefit by supporting carers, through:**

- improved performance against key performance indicators, business plan targets and standards of service delivery
- enhanced community reputation
- improved customer satisfaction
- increased customer loyalty – customers will keep coming back
- new business opportunities
- fewer complaints.

### **Carers and the people they care for will benefit through:**

- being served and supported by staff who recognise and understand what it means to be a carer
- having access to a full range of services as equal members of their local communities
- services that are responsive to their specific requirements
- support that enables them to continue to live in their own homes within local communities
- lower levels of stress and improved well-being.

Click this link for further details about this in Carers Matter – Everybody's Business part two, that provides learning and development about carers and important questions to consider before you begin.



## carers' rights and entitlements

Carers were first mentioned in legislation in 1986. In the first 15 years the legislation focused on how carers should be supported to carry out their caring role; more recently, and particularly with the introduction of the Carer's Equal Opportunities Act 2004 and the Work and Families Act 2006, there is an increasing requirement to view carers as individuals with a right to a life beyond caring and a right to their own support.

Most significantly **The Equality Act 2010** creates a seventh strand to the equality framework described above, by requiring public authorities to undertake impact assessments to ensure their policies do not have a detrimental effect on carers. An equality impact assessment is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a public bodies' policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community, including carers.

These equality impact assessments are likely to provide an important mechanism for increasing awareness of carers' needs and rights through large parts of the public sector. They may prove to be valuable tools for carers' organisations challenging circumstances where they feel that carers' needs have been overlooked (Carers UK 2009).

**The Equality Act 2010** also means that carers cannot be directly discriminated against or harassed by their employer because they are caring for someone who is disabled. The new rights protect carers in situations where they are provided with a poorer service than someone who is not caring for a disabled person, as well as protecting carers where they are discouraged or prevented from using a service because they are caring for a disabled person.



Previous carers' legislation and guidance places more specific obligations and good practice expectations upon health and social care organisations.

For example:

- Social services departments must inform carers of their rights to an assessment of their own needs and the services that are available to support them.
- Social services departments must consider carefully how they address a carer's needs where a 'critical' level of risk has been identified through a carer's assessment.
- It is good practice for primary health care providers (GPs) to identify carers, keep a register of all carers in their practice, and provide support to maintain their health.
- Hospitals must ensure patients are 'safe for discharge' in order to return home and cannot ignore the risks to the carer.
- The regulations for providers of adult health and social care services encourage them to understand, value and respect the important work that carers do, and urge them to work cooperatively with carers when meeting the needs of the people who use their services (Care Quality Commission 2009).

For all the above reasons, it makes sense for your organisation to make sure it is aware of the carers it comes into contact with, support them well and meets its legal obligations. Much of this is possible through the learning and development of your staff.



Click this link to find more information that can be used to set the context and build the business case for undertaking learning and developing in this area. You can find more about this in Carers Matter – Everybody's Business part three.



## in what way can my organisation support carers better?

There are a number of things you can do to review and improve the ways in which you support carers who come into contact with, and access goods and services from, your organisation.



### how can staff support carers better?

Thinking about the goods and services your organisation provides will help you to clarify the frequency and nature of your employees' contact with carers and whether they have specific responsibilities for supporting them.

If your organisation's core business is outside of health and social care then your employees are less likely to know whether their customers and consumers are carers. Employees will no doubt come into contact with carers but won't necessarily know how their caring responsibilities affect their ability to access your goods and services.

Click this link to find more information about how to establish the nature and frequency of your organisations contact with carers.



Carers are more likely to have a positive experience of your organisation if the staff they come into contact with understand their issues and concerns and respond appropriately. You will need to help your staff provide good information and support to carers. Health and social care staff may require access to a range of training and development activities, depending on the nature of their roles and responsibilities for supporting carers.

Click this link to find more information about learning and development of staff, including a learning framework in Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business part two.



Most importantly, your organisation and its staff can support carers better by knowing about the Common Core Principles for Working with Carers and using them in your organisation. Feedback from employers has indicated that the Common Core Principles for Working with Carers provide a useful benchmark for employers to assess and understand how well their staff and the organisation as a whole supports carers.



# applying the common core principles for working with carers

**Skills for Care and Skills for Health (the workforce development bodies for adult social care (England) and for health (UK) have worked with key stakeholders, including carers, to develop the Common Core Principles for Working with Carers (CCPs).**

They should reinforce, challenge and help to change practice of those working with carers. The intention is to ensure carers are at the heart of the health and social care system with the people they care for, and to be recognised and supported by all sectors of society.



The eight Common Core Principles for Working with Carers underpin the whole of Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business and set the national standards for England that your workforce and your organisation should be aiming to achieve.

The common core principles describe the attitudes, behaviours, actions and outcomes that need to be achieved by staff, whatever their role. You can apply them in your organisation to help you improve how you work with carers to ensure they have a positive experience of your organisation and its workforce. For example, they can be incorporated into training specifications to help you design and commission appropriate learning solutions. More widely, the common core principles can be integrated into performance management processes and activities, including individual and team supervision and appraisal.

Click this link to see the Common Core Principles for Working with Carers and their full context in Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business part three.



Click this link for guidance on how to use them, please see Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business part two, ‘beginning the journey’ – the Common Core Principles for Working with carers.



## where to go from here?

Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business is divided into three sections in order that people in varying roles can make use of it’s different parts.

This is part one of Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business. It is designed to give you an overview of what Carers Matter – Everybody’s Business aims to do and why you should think about the learning and development needs of your staff in relation to carers.

Part two is guidance, suggested levels of development and planning advice on how to develop your workforce to support carers better.

Part three contains a broad range of sample learning and development materials, together with good practice examples, encompassing different methods and presentation styles. They aim to help you and your colleagues to develop or commission your own learning and development programmes for staff who work either directly or indirectly with carers.

All this material is freely available to download from:

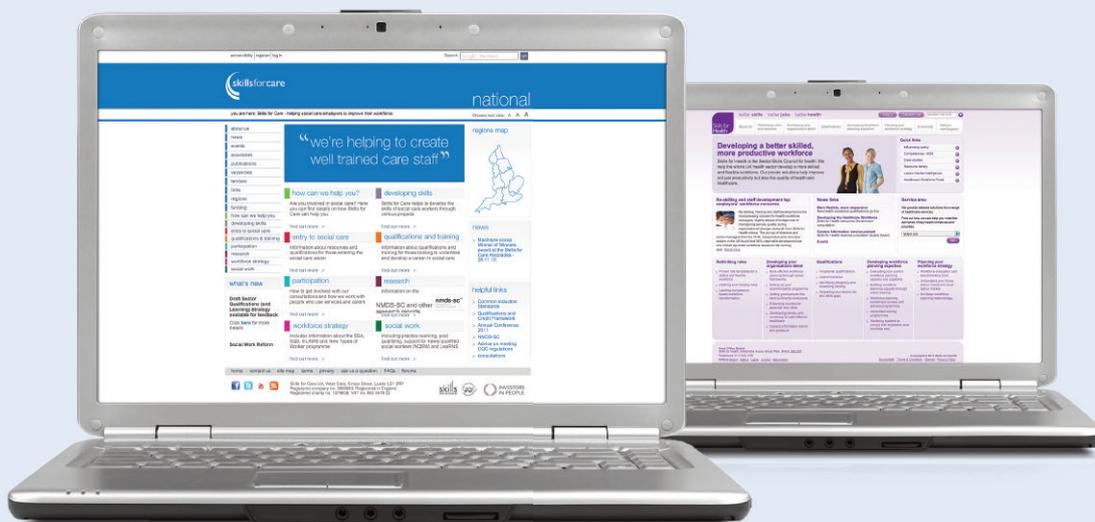
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/carers](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/carers)

[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/carers-matter](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/carers-matter)

Click this link to part two.

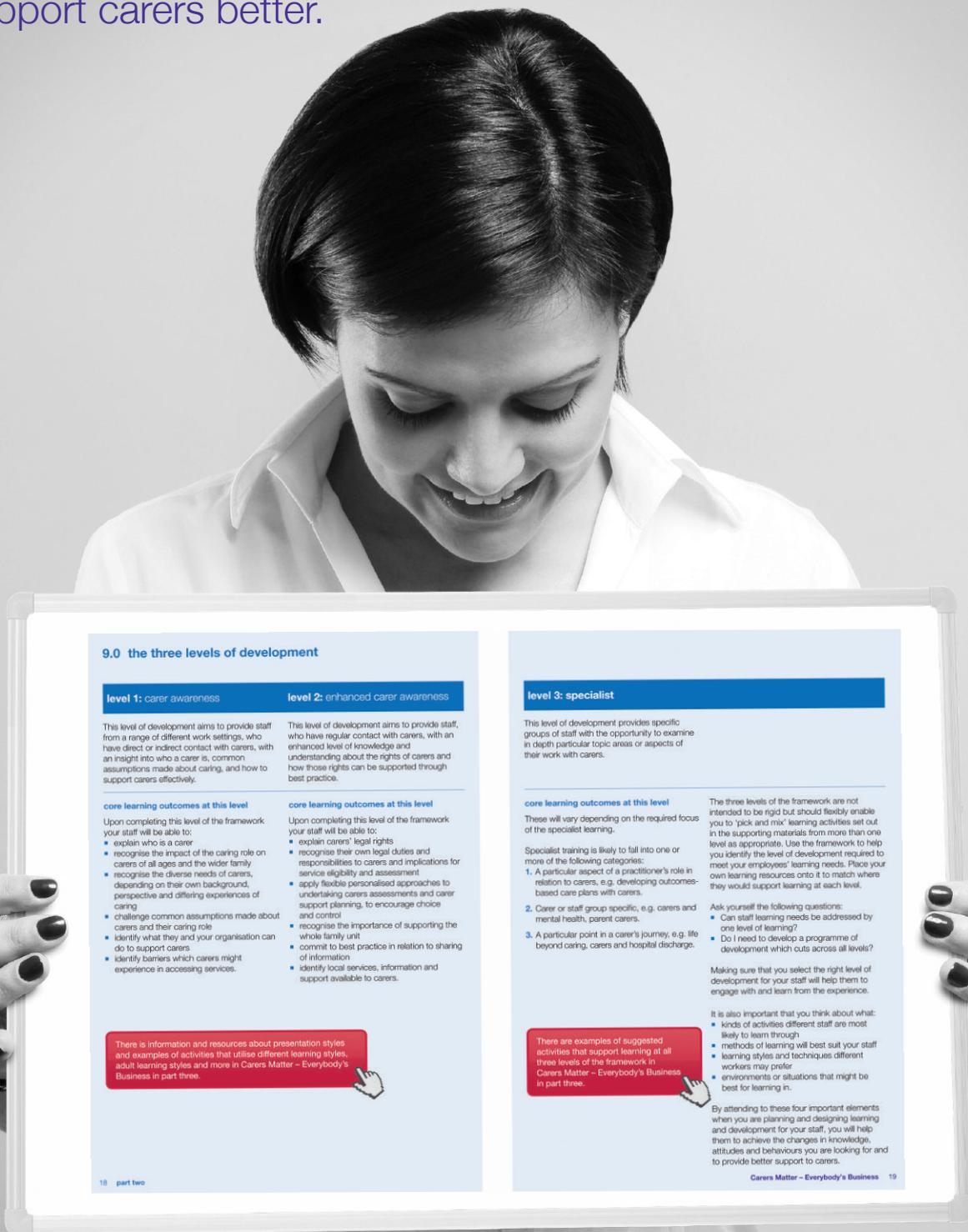


Click this link to part three.



# what is part two?

Part two is guidance, suggested levels of development and planning advice on how to develop your workforce to support carers better.



## 9.0 the three levels of development

### level 1: carer awareness

This level of development aims to provide staff from a range of different work settings, who have direct or indirect contact with carers, with an insight into who a carer is, common assumptions made about caring, and how to support carers effectively.

#### core learning outcomes at this level

Upon completing this level of the framework your staff will be able to:

- explain who is a carer
- recognise the impact of the caring role on carers of all ages and the wider family
- recognise the diverse needs of carers, depending on their own background, perspective and differing experiences of caring
- challenge common assumptions made about carers and their caring role
- identify what they and your organisation can do to support carers
- identify barriers which carers might experience in accessing services.

There is information and resources about presentation styles and examples of activities that utilise different learning styles, adult learning styles and more in Carers Matter – Everybody's Business in part three.

### level 2: enhanced carer awareness

This level of development aims to provide staff, who have regular contact with carers, with an enhanced level of knowledge and understanding about the rights of carers and how those rights can be supported through best practice.

#### core learning outcomes at this level

Upon completing this level of the framework your staff will be able to:

- explain carers' legal rights
- recognise their own legal duties and responsibilities to carers and implications for service eligibility and assessment
- apply flexible personalised approaches to undertaking carers assessments and carer support planning, to encourage choice and control
- recognise the importance of supporting the whole family unit
- commit to best practice in relation to sharing of information
- identify local services, information and support available to carers.

### level 3: specialist

This level of development provides specific groups of staff with the opportunity to examine in depth particular topic areas or aspects of their work with carers.

#### core learning outcomes at this level

These will vary depending on the required focus of the specialist learning.

Specialist training is likely to fall into one or more of the following categories:

1. A particular aspect of a practitioner's role in relation to carers, e.g. developing outcomes-based care plans with carers.
2. Carer or staff group specific, e.g. carers and mental health, parent carers.
3. A particular point in a carer's journey, e.g. life beyond caring, carers and hospital discharge.

There are examples of suggested activities that support learning at all three levels of the framework in Carers Matter – Everybody's Business in part three.

The three levels of the framework are not intended to be rigid but should flexibly enable you to 'pick and mix' learning activities set out in the supporting materials from more than one level as appropriate. Use the framework to help you identify the level of development required to meet your employees' learning needs. Place your own learning resources onto it to match where they would support learning at each level.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Can staff learning needs be addressed by one level of learning?
- Do I need to develop a programme of development which cuts across all levels?

Making sure that you select the right level of development for your staff will help them to engage with and learn from the experience.

It is also important that you think about what:

- kinds of activities different staff are most likely to learn through
- methods of learning will best suit your staff
- learning styles and techniques different workers may prefer
- environments or situations that might be best for learning in.

By attending to these four important elements when you are planning and designing learning and development for your staff, you will help them to achieve the changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours you are looking for and to provide better support to carers.

## what is part three?

Part three contains a broad range of sample learning and development materials, together with good practice examples, encompassing different methods and presentation styles. They aim to help you and your colleagues to develop or commission your own learning and development programmes for staff who work either directly or indirectly with carers.



## references

### **Carers UK 2007**

Valuing Carers – calculating the value of unpaid care, Carers UK 2007, see [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) under professionals > research library > profile of caring

### **Carers UK 2009**

The Equality Bill and Carers, Carers UK 2009 see [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) under professionals > resources & briefings > policy briefings

### **CQC 2009**

Guidance about Compliance. Essential Standards of Quality and Safety. [www.cqc.gov.uk](http://www.cqc.gov.uk)

### **Equalities Review 2007**

Equalities Review, Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review, 2007

### **GEO 2010**

[www.equalities.gov.uk/equality\\_act\\_2010/equality\\_act\\_2010\\_what\\_do\\_i\\_n.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010/equality_act_2010_what_do_i_n.aspx)

### **DH 2008**

Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own, Department of Health, 2008  
[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_085345](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085345)



## **Websites**

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/carers-matter](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/carers-matter)

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