

# Marketing Carers Oxfordshire 2011 - 2112

## Introduction and current position

Carers Oxfordshire is a partnership between Oxfordshire County Council's Customer Service Centre (CSC) and Age UK Oxfordshire (AUKO) established in April 2011 to provide a new, integrated information and support service for adult carers of adults in Oxfordshire. The new service has the ambitious aim of identifying up to 45,000 of the county's estimated 60,000 carers within three years. By identifying carers much earlier in their caring lives and ensuring they are in contact with preventive services, the service aims to reduce then likelihood of crises and carer breakdown. Carers Oxfordshire replaces long established and widely respected services provided by three geographically based Carers' Centres, believed to have been in contact with approximately 9,000 carers.

The new Carers Oxfordshire service has four elements:

- **CSC** provide a **first point of contact** telephone and web-based information service (this includes responsibility for developing and maintaining the Carers Oxfordshire website)
- **AUKO** are responsible for delivering the remaining three elements of the service – an outreach based **support** service, a network of **peer support groups** and **marketing**.

There is a very high degree of interdependence between the two service providers – CSC depends on AUKO for successful marketing and AUKO depends on CSC to provide an effective front door to the service, including an attractive and user-friendly website. This necessitates a strong working relationship and high levels of trust across the two organisations.

This paper focuses on marketing, 6 months in to the development of the new service.

## Marketing aims and key messages

The over-riding aim of the marketing is **to encourage carers to identify themselves as carers and to enable them to access the services and support available to them as carers**. To do this we need to establish Carers Oxfordshire as a strong brand. Key marketing messages are:

- What is a carer? Are you a carer? Or are you in contact with a carer?
- Benefits of carer identification - gateway to services and support (including Emergency Carers Support Service (ECSS), financial entitlements including Carers Grants, Confidence 2 Care training, quarterly Newsletter, peer support)
- Where to go for services and support: call 0845 050 7666 or check out [www.carersoxfordshireorg.uk](http://www.carersoxfordshireorg.uk)
- Or sign up for an Information Pack and a Newsletter (low level entry).

## Who are we trying to reach?

**Our primary audience is adult carers of adults** in Oxfordshire. This is by no means a homogeneous group and includes:

- Children, parents, wives, husbands, relatives and friends who are **providing care but do not identify themselves as carers**
- **Known carers** - already identified as carers and on the database

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- **Carers 'lost to the system'** - identified as carers but did not consent to the transfer of their details to the new service
- **Carers with diverse experience of caring** – parent carers of disabled children, people caring for a friend or relative with a long term condition or mental health need, people caring for a parent or older relative, older carers of an adult with a learning disability, older people caring for a spouse, people caring for someone with a terminal illness, carers juggling employment and caring responsibilities, carers who have given up employment to care and are struggling to make ends meet, carers from minority communities, people caring at a distance, carers providing 24/7 care, carers providing 10 – 50 hours care, etc.

**Our secondary audience** is anybody who is in touch with a carer – either professionally or personally, including:

- **General public**
- **Cared for**
- **GPs / Primary Health Care Teams**
- **Social Services Locality Teams** – care managers, OTs etc
- **District Councils** – via Partnerships: Val Johnson in city, Debbie Haynes in West, Toby Warren in Vale and South, etc
- **Politicians** – County and District Councillors and MPs
- **Parish and Town Councils**
- **Employers** – **ROBIN**, and large employers (starting with Unipart, Brookes, OCC & NHS) and small (via Business Directory)
- **Acute Trusts** – via Jan Cottle at ORH and other carers leads
- **Oxford Health** – including Community Hospitals, Locality Teams etc
- **Ridgeway Partnership**
- **Vol sec / partner organisations** – including Alzheimer's Society, Autism Oxford, CABx and Advice Centres (via Gill Tischler), Crossroads Care, Daybreak, Guidepost (including Dementia Helpline), Mencap, Mind, Oasis, Oxfordshire Family Support Network, Oxfordshire Family Voices, Rethink, S&V Carers, MS / Stroke / PD etc (condition specific) Societies etc British Legion, SSAFA, WRVS, WI
- **Support Brokers** – Age UK and Advance
- **Age UK Oxfordshire** – managers and key personnel and existing networks

One marketing method will not reach this diverse audience – a multiplicity of methods is essential.

## Reaching our audiences – marketing plan

1. **Building the foundations** has been the priority for the first 6 months. This has included:
  - **Developing a strong brand identity** – logo, design, rules for compliance etc. This was achieved during the first month and there has been very positive feedback from carers and professionals about the logo and the use of bright colours – carers like the positive image
  - **Developing a suite of marketing materials** - a generic leaflet and ECSS leaflet and a 'call us' poster have so far been developed. This has involved working closely with CSC to clarify the message and to agree on timing for disseminating materials to ensure sufficient call handling capacity. 40,000 generic leaflets, 30,000 ECSS leaflets and 1000 posters have been widely

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disseminated through GP Surgeries, Acute and Community Hospitals, Libraries, Resource Centres, fetes and fairs and statutory and voluntary sector partners.

- **Developing a range of regular communication mechanisms** – a monthly email to a growing list of over 400 professionals, a monthly email to carers on the database, a quarterly Carers Oxfordshire Newsletter, a blog, Facebook and Twitter feeds.
- **Developing links with local media** - to ensure that they 'think carer' and when they think carer they think Carers Oxfordshire. Our ultimate aim is to have something in the local media every week – we are still some way off achieving this
- **Developing a marketing plan for our Outreach Team** – Outreach Workers have a monthly target audience of local organisations and events for disseminating marketing materials (see above) and the Newsletter. This includes GP Surgeries, Pharmacies, flu clinics and electric blanket testing, supermarkets and Post Offices, talks to local groups (eg. branches of MS Society etc) and one-off events such as Canal Day in Banbury. Ongoing evaluation is built into the plan - half day stands at supermarkets have proved particularly effective (over 140 new carers identified at two recent events).
- **Developing a programme of talks** - Outreach Workers each have a programme of talks to local organisations and target groups to deliver. This includes condition specific groups, local WIs and other community groups and minority groups (including BME groups). Talks to Partnership Boards are also included.
- **Marketing materials in local acute and community hospitals** – we now have two display boards in the majority of Community Hospitals and are working on the others and posters and leaflets at 10 of our 11 acute hospitals.
- **Developing a model for working with employers** – we have worked with senior management, Communications, HR and Occupational Health at **Unipart** to develop and evaluate a model for working with large employers. Direct marketing to all employees through the intranet followed by a Roadshow with information and advice and face-to-face support proved highly effective (50 new carers identified)
- **Developing links with local Newsletters and community websites** – most villages and many local clubs, groups, societies have their own newsletters and websites which should carry (or update) information for carers. We have identified contacts and are working our way through this list.

2. **Next steps:** amongst the highlights planned for the next 6 months, building on the foundations outlined above, are:

- **Supermarkets** – building on the success of the pilot stands at supermarkets our aim is to have regular stands at all major supermarkets across the county, a minimum of 6 supermarkets every month. **Target** of 40 supermarkets before April 2012, identifying a minimum of 2,000 new carers.
- **Large employers** – our model for supporting carers in employment through working with employers is now ready to roll out to other major employers. **Target** of 6 major employers before April 2012, identifying a minimum of 300 new carers – Brookes University and OCC next.

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- **Images of Caring photographic competition** – already launched the aim of the competition is to raise the public profile of caring and to create some strong local images for marketing purposes.
- **Regular communication mechanisms** – continuing to develop all the mechanisms identified above (monthly mailings, quarterly Newsletter, etc). Target of monthly mailing to 500 professionals, organisations and groups and 2 editions of Newsletter with distribution of 8,000 copies for each edition.
- **Programme of talks** – continuing to develop this programme. **Target** of 6 talks per month to a minimum of 800 people.