

REGISTER OF CARERS

Many people who fulfil a caring role do not realise that they are carers and they are consequently unaware of the support services available to them. While the Health Board or the Council Social Work Dept. have records of most family carers there are some – those referred to as “hidden carers” – who are unknown to either organisation. Our aim is to provide as many carers as possible with relevant information and it follows that, in order to do that, we first need to identify them. That can be done through organisations, but relatives, friends or acquaintances can also provide us with information provided that that is acceptable to the carer concerned. The consent of the carer must be obtained before contact is made with the WICCF as confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

The task of the compilation of a Register of Carers has been undertaken by the WICCF so that information on benefits, allowances and services can be circulated to carers. The aim is to make carers aware of their rights and to direct them to organisations which will provide them with support and represent their interests. The project has been jointly funded by the Social Work Department of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Western Isles Health Board and by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers. The methods being used to compile the Western Isles Register are based on those which have been employed successfully by the PRT to identify carers in the Central Belt of Scotland. To be of assistance the Register will depend largely on the co-operation of

One definition of a CARER is anybody who is looking after a relative, partner or friend who, because of illness, old age or disability, may not be able to manage at home without them. The contributions of carers are, in fact, so diverse that they cannot be adequately dealt with in one sentence. If you are in any way unclear as to whether you are a carer, then contact the WICCF for clarification. Contact details inside the front cover.

Together with health professionals and social services, carers form a vital part of the caring team, but all too frequently their role within that team is overlooked.

National research shows that as well as the need for respite care, carers also need:

- ◆ Contact with other carers;
- ◆ Opportunities to discuss problems with sympathetic listeners;
- ◆ Participation in group activities to provide an opportunity to be recognised as an individual;
- ◆ Training in the administration of medication, handling and other special care requirements as necessary; and
- ◆ Inclusion in consultations with health practitioners so that they know what care is necessary for the person that they care for.

It is estimated that there are 500,000 carers in Scotland and that the saving throughout the UK for the Government amounts to £57 billion per annum.

**ALL ENQUIRIES WILL BE TREATED
IN STRICT CONFIDENCE**