

CARERS UK
the voice of carers



life after care



www.lifeaftercare.eu

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With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme
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Life After Care

A lifelong learning partnership
for former carers



Carers provide unpaid care by looking after an ill, frail elderly or disabled family member, friend or partner.

A former carer is someone who has ceased caring in the past two years.

Caring can isolate carers from family, friends and their local community. Over time this isolation can mean that carers lose their confidence, and getting back out into the world can seem a daunting prospect when caring comes to an end.

Life After Care aims to support former carers find new directions and a way back into that world.

The issue

There are an estimated 100 million unpaid carers in Europe– 25% of the overall European population. In spite of the vital contribution carers make to families, communities and society, they are a group at risk: at risk of poverty, social exclusion, and physical and psychological ill health.

Carers are at risk not only while they undertake their caring responsibilities, but when that caring ends with the loss of a loved one.

In addition to the process of grieving, carers can often experience difficulties in re-engaging with society – in finding a new direction for example in paid work or voluntary activity.

This is often the result of lack of confidence and low self-esteem: former carers are not aware of the skills and experience they have gained through caring, which with appropriate support could be transferred to other areas. For those not looking for a paid job, the skills gained through caring could help them engage in voluntary activities such as community based social services for dependent people or peer support services for current carers.

The Life after Care partnership aims to promote ways in which former carers can be supported to take these steps towards a new life. It will exchange ideas, experience, and good practice, and develop tools to strengthen local and national strategies looking at support for family carers to re-engage with society when caring comes to an end.

The project

Activities

The partnership will focus on strategies for empowering former carers through recognising and enhancing the skills and experience they have gained through caring to support their transition to post-caring. These can be soft skills such as organisational skills, communication and negotiation skills, stress management and empathy; or technical skills such as moving and handling, administering medication and behaviour management.

Through field work and networking in the four countries involved, partners will develop and/or promote innovative strategies for recognition and enhancement of the skills and experience gained through caring and their transfer in three areas:

- (re)entry into the formal labour market
- volunteering in community services
- involvement in carer support

Planned outcomes

These will include:

- an overview report on caring and post-caring in Europe
- a handbook to support the transition from caring to post-caring
- a final report of results
- a Carers' Day which will be promoted in Italy and Greece to raise awareness of caring issues and as an opportunity to disseminate the project's results.

Outcomes from the project will also be disseminated through the annual Carers Week held in Ireland and the UK.

To learn more about Life after Care, the partners and the field work they will undertake, go to: www.lifeaftercare.eu

The partnership

Co-ordinator

SOFIA is a social cooperative based in Modena, Italy, working in residential care services and community programs to support older people and their paid and unpaid carers.

Partners

ARCO is a private company based in Cesena, Italy, and was established in 1996 by a group of professionals working in social sciences and community work.

CARERS UK is a national charity based in the UK, and was established in 1965 by carers. It is both a campaigning and advocacy organisation, and provider of services to carers and professionals working with carers.

CARE ALLIANCE IRELAND is a national network of voluntary organisations supporting family carers in Ireland. It was established in 1995 by a number of voluntary organisations as an umbrella group to represent family carers' organisations.

ATHENS ASSOCIATION OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DISORDERS is a non-profit organisation based in Athens, Greece and founded in 2002 by the families of dementia patients', doctors, psychologists and other health professionals interested in Alzheimer's disease.