



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Carers Week 14 - 20 June 2010

Celebrity backs campaign for hidden carers in Barnsley

11 June 2010, Barnsley - Presenter Maggie Philbin, alongside national alcohol and drugs charity Swanswell, is backing a campaign in Carers Week to help the often overlooked carers of people with a drug and/or alcohol problem.

Carers Week celebrates the exceptional contribution of carers and pays tribute to the incredible individuals who provide unpaid care for a family member or friend who are unable to take care of themselves. Currently the UK's carers save the economy £87 billion, the same cost as running the *NHS* (www.carersweek.org online, 2010)¹.

Unfortunately carers efforts often go unrecognised and they can end up missing out on parts of their own lives. Maggie Philbin and Swanswell would like to highlight a hidden group of carers who perhaps don't realise they can access support and are entitled to help.

Caring for someone with a drug and/or alcohol problem can be very worrying, isolating and have a profound effect, with carers often finding it difficult to admit someone close has a problem. Even then they don't view themselves as carers.

There are currently 748 alcohol users in treatment in Barnsley and 1,318 drug users in treatment (Barnsley DAAT, 2010)².

[MORE]

There is usually at least one carer for every person with a drug and/or alcohol problem which means a huge number of people are not accessing the help they deserve.

Swanswell operate a service in Barnsley offering emotional and practical support for carers. Each carer receives a tailored programme to meet their needs. Services range from financial advice regarding applications for carers allowance, to counselling and help with their friend's/relative's treatment programme and recovery if possible.

Maggie Philbin, presenter and trustee of Swanswell, who has personal experience of supporting a loved one through alcohol misuse said: *'If you've lived with an addict you have a perspective which people on the outside, however kind and well meaning, cannot hope to have. It was a very hard, isolating experience for me but it has given me some useful insight and in recent years I've been able to help friends who've gone down the same painful path. Swanswell's carers support service offers good, knowledgeable support and advice which can really make a difference to peoples' lives.'*

Carers can access Swanswell's support service through a telephone helpline **01226 705932**, self referral or referral from their GP.

[ENDS]

References

1. Carers Week. 2010. Newsroom.[Online]. Available at: http://www.carersweek.org/newsroom_pr.asp?sub=215&id=8 [Accessed 03 June 2010].
2. Barnsley DAAT. 2010. *Drug and alcohol performance report*. Quarter 4. Barnsley DAAT.

Notes for editors

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About Swanswell

Swanswell is a national charity that helps people overcome drug, alcohol and other problem behaviour. We believe that everyone deserves the chance to change and to be happy. We help them to remove the things that stand in their way, whether physical, emotional or practical. So, as their lives improve, they can feel well, do well, and stay well. Swanswell has a reputation for innovation and is a leading developer of new services which help people to change their lives for the better.

www.swanswell.org

About Maggie Philbin

Maggie Philbin has worked in radio and television for 30 years on a wide range of science, medical and technology programmes. Currently providing analysis and comment on technology and a regular reporter on BBC 1's "Inside Out", she has a unique resonance with audiences, having grown up with them on much loved shows like "Swap Shop", "Hospital Watch" and "Tomorrow's World". Maggie has personal experience of the effect alcohol misuse can have on an individual and their family.