



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Are you caring for a loved one's children and need support?**

22 November 2011, Coventry/Warwickshire – Relatives involved in caring for a loved one's children because of problems at home are being encouraged to be part of a new support and advocacy group being developed by Swanswell.

The national charity, which helps people overcome drug, alcohol and other problem behaviour, wants to set up a new group in Coventry and Warwickshire, bringing together grandparents or other relatives in a kinship caring role.

A survey by Grandparents Plus in 2010 suggested there were at least 200,000 grandparent carers in the UK (Saunders, H., and Selwyn, J., 2008)<sup>1</sup>, of which 46% were caring for children because of substance misuse problems affecting their parents (Wellard, S. and Wheatley, B. 2010)<sup>2</sup>.

Their caring is often done with little support or financial help, so Swanswell wants to find out from them what they want and, with their help, raise the profile of their important caring role both locally and nationally, so they get the recognition they deserve.

Problematic alcohol or illicit drug use is one of the most common causes of kinship caring and it's thought that an estimated 1.3 million children have parents who are affected by substance misuse (Cabinet Office, 2004 and Department of Health 2007)<sup>3</sup>.

With that in mind, Swanswell's asking grandparents, aunties, uncles, older siblings and other family members to get in touch with the charity to register their interest in getting involved with the group, which will be led by the carers themselves.

Chris Robinson, Swanswell's Director of Services, said: *'The actual number of people in a kinship care role in the UK isn't known because not all cases are brought to the attention of social services.'*

*'But grandparents and other relatives involved take on a massive responsibility, not knowing where to turn for support or feeling too ashamed to ask for help.'*

*'However, there's nothing to be ashamed of and it's ok to ask for help with what can be an incredibly difficult situation.'*

*'So Swanswell's looking to identify how many people in Coventry and Warwickshire are kinship carers and to form a regular support and advocacy group that they will lead on the development of, so it becomes a useful tool to anyone in the same situation as them.'*

*'Therefore, we'd encourage as much input as possible from the people who need our help, which will of course be treated confidentially.'*

To find out more about getting involved in Swanswell's kinship carers support group, please call Adele Farr on 02476 226 619 or for more information about Swanswell visit [www.swanswell.org](http://www.swanswell.org).

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#### 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 behaviour for the better.

Swanswell has a number of offices across the country including Rugby, Coventry, Leamington, Birmingham, Nuneaton, Barnsley, Sandwell, Leicestershire and Rutland. Visit Swanswell at: [www.swanswell.org](http://www.swanswell.org).

Join the conversation, follow Swanswell on twitter at [www.twitter.com/Swanswell](http://www.twitter.com/Swanswell).

### References

1. Family Rights Group cited in Saunders H. and Selwyn J. (2008) Evaluation of an informal kinship care team, *Adoption and Fostering*, Summer Vol 32:2, pp31-42.]
2. Wellard, S. and Wheatley, B. (2010) *What if we said no? Survey Findings Report, Family and Friends Care, Grandparents Plus.*
3. Cabinet Office. (2004) and Department of Health (2007) as cited by Alcohol Concern (2009) *Knowledge Set 2: Parenting.*  
<http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/publications/otherpublications/embrace-knowledge-set-two-parenting>