

# Carers

BANCHORY · STONEHAVEN · WESTHILL · INVERURIE · ELLON · PETERHEAD · BANFF



The service provides support, practical help, information, advice and training for family members and other Carers of people experiencing mental ill-health. Both one-to-one sessions and regular Carers' support meetings are offered. The groups encourage and facilitate mutual support from Carer to Carer – people understand each other's difficulties and draw on their own experiences to help each other to find ways to cope, overcoming the sense of isolation that so many Carers feel.

Shared concerns are channelled to decision makers who have the power to change things, and Carers are enabled to have their say in the strategic planning arrangements that will affect them and those they care for. Newsletters and mail shots keep people who might otherwise be isolated "in the picture".

When mental ill-health strikes, the impact is felt by partners, children, other family members and friends. They may witness acute distress, confusion, erratic behaviour, aggression – and their own feelings towards the loved one whose behaviour has changed may be mixed and hard to manage. Familiar relationships can become very stressed and practical consequences such as low income and debt can flow from inability to work or erratic budgeting. Without warning, people may find themselves thrust into a very different and complex role – that of Carer.

This abrupt change can be overwhelming. Carers need help to cope with it – to meet their own needs, while they in turn help the recovery process. MHA can help!

MHA's support for Carers is currently concentrated in Aberdeenshire – but our simple and effective model can be put into practice elsewhere as soon as we secure funding.

*Until you become a Carer yourself, no one can appreciate the personal strain and anxiety that exists in dedicating yourself to caring fully and unstintingly for a loved one.*

*What a relief to be able to share caring concerns with other people in similar situations*

*It has lightened my load being able to draw strength from the Carers' Group*