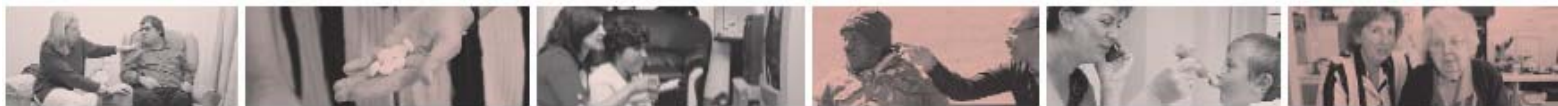




Campaign toolkit



Support families: Don't cut Care

Urgent action needed NOW!

We need you to lobby your local council, write to local politicians, join up with other groups and campaign to support funding and services for families that need support with caring.

This February and early March, councils across the UK will be meeting to decide their budgets for the coming year. With funding from the Government cut, many councils will look to cut care services to make savings.

This includes services like:

- the day centre placement that gives Elsie a change from her routine and allows her daughter Carol a day off from being a 24/7 carer
- the care worker who gets Paul up every morning and helps him dress and shave
- the week long respite placement for Aisha who has severe learning disabilities, that allows her parents to have a much needed holiday.

It's too late to persuade the Westminster Government. The Government has already cut the money that they give councils. But councils are deciding where the axe will fall. Time is running out. We have to take the message to local councils right now: "Support families – don't cut care".

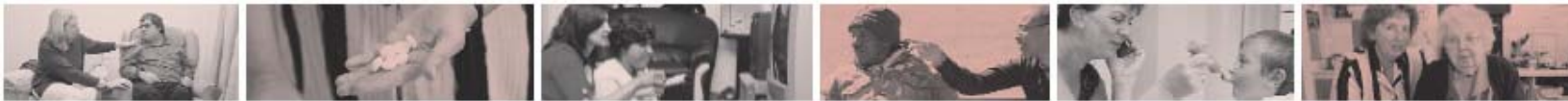
Why is local action needed now?

This year's Spending Review settlement from Government has seen unprecedented cuts of up to 28% to public services; this means that some local authorities are losing out on ten's of millions of pounds. With frontline services at risk, we need to ensure that local councils continue to support families by prioritising spending on social care.

But didn't the Government give extra money for social care?

We campaigned hard to get extra funding for social care and we got an additional £2 billion to support adult social care by 2014-2015. But social care is still at risk because:

- spending on care has not kept pace with demand for years. £2 billion extra by 2014-2015 is not enough
- the scale of the cuts means even with extra investment, councils still face shortfalls
- the social care money is not ring-fenced so councils could spend it on street cleaning or rubbish collections if that's what they think the voters want.



Why is social care important?

These services support families – supporting older people, people with disabilities and long term conditions and disabled children. These services often support people's basic needs like eating, getting out of bed and washing – not only offering quality of life and independence to disabled and older people but also giving support to the people that care for them. Without investment, carers will be forced to give up work and their health and well-being will suffer.

Take action NOW – here's what you can do

Act now! In February and early March decisions will be made locally as to which services will see the greatest cuts. Within a few weeks it will be too late to do anything. It is critical that you act now and contact your local elected councillors to make the case for "Support families: Don't cut care".

1. It is critical you **find out the date of the council budget meeting** by phoning your council or checking the council website.
2. Be clear about the impact cuts will have on real people's lives. Think about the ways life would be worse without the services. **Read our guidance on how to make the case for care (details on page 4).**
3. Ask your council how you go about asking a 'public' question at the council meeting. **Check out our list of sample questions, our guidance on asking a question and our 'who's, who' guide to the council (page 5/6).**
4. Attend the budget meeting. Whether you go alone, take a delegation of carers or join up with other local groups it is vital that people attend and make their voices heard. **Print out some flyers to hand out at the meeting (sample flyers are included at the end of this pack).**
5. Write to the leader of the council (usually a Councillor appointed by the political party with the most councillors or in some areas a Mayor) and the chief executive and find out what is the investment in care in your local area. **Use the sample letter for individuals and groups to write to your council (page 9/10).**
6. **Write to your local MP** and let her/him know what you are doing, ask for their help and find out what they are doing to support investment in carers. **Use the sample letter for individuals and groups to write to your MP (page 11/12).**
7. **Contact the local media** and let them know why services are important. You could also set up a blog, facebook page or twitter account so that people can be kept up to date with your campaign. Using the internet is easy and free!
 - **Write to the editor of your local paper using our template letter for individuals (page 13).**
 - **Use the sample media release for groups (page 14).**
 - **Read our quick guide to using social media (page 8).**



8. Organise a petition and present it to the council. **Use our sample petition template or set one up online (page 15).**

Carers UK will continue to campaign and lobby but we need you to be the eyes and ears of what is happening for carers in your area. We need you to tell us about the positive things happening locally as well as your stories about the effects that the cuts or changes to local services are having on you and your local community. **Please let us know the impact of your campaigning by using the feedback form (page 17), by emailing us directly info@carersuk.org, or by calling us on 0207 3784999.**

9. **Keep us updated on cuts** – Carers UK have a Cutswatch section on our online forum, if you hear about cuts in your area please post details at www.carersuk.org/Forums in the relevant section. This is crucial so we can build up a picture of what is going on around the country.



How to make the case for care

- Make it personal, tell your story! How will it feel if you lose a particular service?
- Invite others to join you and work together to your strengths, for example speak to the local Age UK, Mencap or other disability and carer groups about their campaigning and how you could work together at a local level.
- Be clear who your audience is and what you want them to **THINK, FEEL AND DO** as a result of what you are telling them.
- Carers UK has a great deal of research and evidence available about carers and the wider impact to their independence, health and well-being when services are reduced or cut. For further information check out our website www.carersuk.org

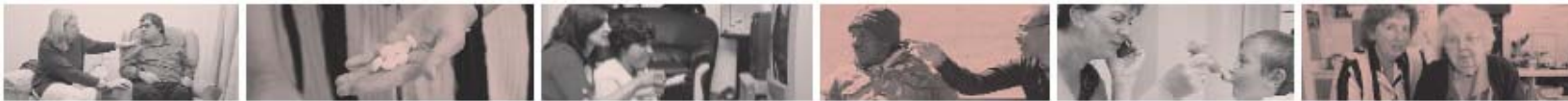
Examples

- I look after my 85 year old husband at home, he has Alzheimer's. I am 74 myself and don't know how long I can carry on without needing care myself.
- Without the extra help from careworkers, I would have to admit my wife into a residential home.
- I will not be able to go to the shops to buy food or to bingo which is my only night out.
- I care for my disabled son full time but could not cope without the support of the careworker who gets Jim up every morning and helps him dress and breakfast so I can get my other two children to school.

What we know:

If councils cut care and support services:

- Families who care will be pushed to breaking point and their health and life chances will suffer.
- Older and disabled people will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner.
- Carers juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care full time for loved ones.



Asking a ‘public’ question at the council meeting

Another way of gaining extra publicity for your campaign and raising awareness is to ask a public question (this means that your question and the response will be formally minuted in the council’s public records) at the council meeting.

Most councils hold a meeting every month. Phone the council switchboard and ask them to put you through to the right person. Find out what the procedure is to ask a question. Don’t worry if you can’t make the budget setting meeting, it will be just as relevant to ask a question at a later meeting. **Please also refer to ‘How to make the case for care’.**

- It can be daunting speaking in public but don’t worry, you can have friends in the lobby and councillors are respectful and understand that you might be slightly nervous.
- The Cabinet member will then respond to your question.
- This is also good for media publicity; make sure you let the local paper know what you are doing.

Some sample questions

- What will you be doing to maintain and improve support for families like mine with caring needs?
- Government has allocated an additional £2 billion to support adult social care by 2014-2015, how will you use your allocation for this year to support families like mine with caring needs?
- Have you assessed the impact cuts are having on carers like me and on the loved ones we care for?



A quick guide to who's who in the council

Your council

- A 'local authority' is another term for a local council. Local councils are central to many public services such as welfare, education, housing, transport and leisure.
- The structure of local councils varies depending on the part of the UK you live in. Examples: county, city, district, borough.
- All councils are made up of **elected councillors** and **paid employees**.

The 'WHO' questions: 3 key questions to ask

Who makes the decisions? Who holds the budget? Who holds them to account?

Local constituents

This is all of us, including carers. We:

- Elect councillors.
- Pay council tax.

Local politicians

Local politicians include councillors, Members of Parliament and other legislators who represent your views locally, and in the case of MPs, at national level. They:

- Are elected by local people.
- Represent different small local areas – 'wards'.
- Hold regular surgeries for local people to raise issues.
- Sometimes take responsibility for particular services – eg carers, older people – called 'lead' or 'cabinet members'.

Your MP or legislator

Your local MP can be a key contact if your council is being obstructive or unhelpful. They can often help to move things along.

Cabinet

- Oversee community-wide services – eg social care, transport, and housing, and hold officers to account.
- Set budget.
- Agree big changes to services – eg day centre closures and policy – eligibility criteria.

Directors of services

- Eg Adult care services.
- Identify changing needs.
- Make recommendations to councillors.
- Execute plans with agreed budget.



- Legal duty to consult with people – eg carers – over services.

.Chief Executive

- In charge of the whole local authority – ensures all the council departments carry out the work the councillors have decided needs to be done.
- Manages all the senior council officers so a useful contact.

Carers Lead Officer

- Responsible for coordinating carers' services locally.
- May have special carers' budget – eg Carers' Grant/breaks.
- Convenes carers' strategy group.
- Works across council to get change actioned and improve performance.



How to set up an online petition

All local authorities are now required to provide a facility for an e petition, check out www.mysociety.org/2010/12/15/local-e-petitions-see-if-mysociety-is-providing-your-local-system/ to see if My Society is your local provider or check your council's website.

This means that on council sites across England you should now be able to make petitions which will be formally considered by the councils, in accordance with their chosen policies.

If you prefer to use a paper based petition, you will find a sample petition at the back of this guide.

Our quick guide to using 'social media'

The media is a vital means of communication with the wider world. Deciding to go to the press is an individual choice, but it's a very powerful way to get your message heard. **But remember anything you publish is public!**

Write a press release to try to get some publicity. Remember to send it to local radio stations as well as newspapers. Include your contact details. You'll find a sample media release at the back of this guide.

Your campaign doesn't have to be glossy and gimmicky. Modern campaigning tools such as **blogs, facebook, twitter** and email make it relatively cheap and easy to organise a petition, or design a leaflet.

- **Setting up a blog is Free!** A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world.

In simple terms, a blog is a website where you write stuff on an ongoing basis. Read more here www.blogger.com and check out www.carersuk.wordpress.com

- **Setting up a facebook page is free!** Facebook can be a really easy way to connect to people and let them know about your campaign most local politicians also tend to use facebook. Read more here <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=111549768622>
- **Setting up a twitter account is free!** Twitter is a great tool for attracting new supporters and getting your message out virally. You can **use** your **twitter** feed to create a newsletter, practically in real time, about your **campaign**. Read more here <http://www.twitip.com/how-to-set-up-a-twitter-account/>



Letter to Council from individuals

Insert name of Council Leader (Councillor Joe Smith)
Leader of the Council
Address Line 1
Address line 2
Post code

(Insert date)

Dear (insert name of Council Leader)

I am backing Carers UK's campaign to "Support families: Don't cut care".

I understand that local councils like ours have had their settlement from Government greatly reduced and I am fearful that support for families like mine will be cut as a result.

Insert personal story, eg I care for my disabled son full time but could not cope without the support of the careworker who gets Jim up every morning and helps him dress and breakfast and so I can get my other two children to school. **NO more than five lines.**

I recognise that these are tough times but I want to urge you to make good decisions and "Support families: Don't cut care" in our community.

If councils cut care and support services:

- Families like mine will be pushed to breaking point and I fear my health and quality of life will suffer.
- Older and disabled people in our community will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner.
- Carers in our community juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care full time for loved ones.

Please let me know:

- What you will be doing to maintain and improve support for families like mine with caring needs?
- Government has allocated an additional £2 billion to support adult social care by 2014-2015, how will you use your allocation for this year to support families with caring needs?
- Have you assessed the impact cuts are having on carers like me and the loved ones we care for?

I look forward to your response and reassurance that you will "Support families: Don't cut care".

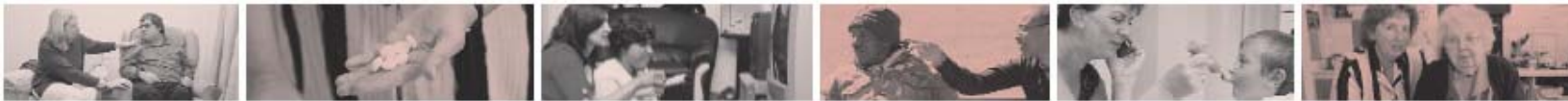
Yours sincerely

(Insert name and signature)

In order for this to be copied to other key people in the council add:

Cc. insert name of Chief Executive Officer

Insert names of your local ward councillors, eg Cllr Jones, Cllr Dobson.



Letter to Council from groups

Insert name of Council Leader (Councillor Joe Smith)
Leader of the Council
Address Line 1
Address line 2
Post code

(Insert date)

Dear (insert name of Council Leader, eg Dear Cllr Joe Smith or Mayor Smith)

We are backing Carers UK's campaign to "Support families: Don't cut care".

We understand that local councils like ours have had their settlement from Government greatly reduced and we are fearful that support for families with caring needs in our community will be cut as a result.

Insert community story, eg Many carers in our community could not cope with the impact of services being cut or reduced. Carers rely on careworkers that help them with everyday tasks that we take for granted, like help getting dressed, eating and respite care for people like Jan who has severe learning disabilities, that allows her parents a much needed break. **NO more than five lines.**

We recognise that these are tough times but we want to urge you to make good decisions and "Support families: Don't cut care" in our community.

If councils cut care and support services:

- Families in our community will be pushed to breaking point and we fear their health and quality of life will suffer.
- Older and disabled people in our community will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner.
- Carers in our community juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care fulltime for loved ones.

Please let us know:

- What you will be doing to maintain and improve support for families in our area with caring needs and how does this compare with investment in previous years?
- Government has allocated an additional £2 billion to support adult social care by 2014-2015, how will you use your allocation for this year to support families with caring needs?
- Have you assessed/Will you assess the impact cuts are having on carers and the loved ones they care for?

We look forward to your response and reassurance that you will "Support families: Don't cut care".

Yours sincerely

(Insert organisation name, name and signature of spokesperson)

In order for this to be copied to other key people in the council add:

Cc. insert name of Chief Executive Officer

Insert names of your local ward councillors, eg Cllr Jones, Cllr Dobson



Letter to MP from individuals

Insert name of Member of Parliament (Joe Smith MP)
House of Commons (unless they have a constituency address)
London
SW1A 0AA

(Insert date)

Dear (insert name of Member of Parliament, eg Dear Joe Smith MP)

I am backing Carers UK's campaign to "Support families: Don't cut care".

I understand that (insert name of council) council has had their settlement from Government greatly reduced and I am fearful that support for families like mine will be cut as a result.

Insert personal story, eg I care for my disabled son full time but could not cope without the support of the careworker who gets Jim up every morning and helps him dress and breakfast and get my other two children to school. **NO more than five lines.**

I recognise that these are tough times but I want your support to urge councillors to make good decisions and "Support families: Don't cut care" in our community.

If councils cut care and support services:

- Families like mine will be pushed to breaking point and I fear my health and quality of life will suffer.
- Older and disabled people in our community will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner.
- Carers in our community juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care fulltime for loved ones.

Please help me find out:

- What our council will be doing to maintain and improve support for families like mine with caring needs?
- Government has allocated an additional £2 billion to support adult social care by 2014-2015, how will our council use their allocation for this year to support families like mine with caring needs?
- Have our council assessed the impact cuts are having on carers like me and the loved ones we care for?
- What will you do/have you done to encourage Ministers to maintain and improve support for families with caring needs?

I look forward to your response and reassurance that you will "Support families: Don't cut care".

Yours sincerely

(Insert name and signature)



Letter to MP from group

Insert name of Member of Parliament (Joe Smith MP)
House of Commons (unless they have a constituency address)
London
SW1A 0AA

(Insert date)

Dear (insert name of Member of Parliament, eg Dear Joe Smith MP)

We are backing Carers UK's campaign to "Support families: Don't cut care".

We understand that (inset name of council) council has had their settlement from Government greatly reduced and we are fearful that support for families with caring needs in our community will be cut as a result.

Insert community story, eg Many carers in our community could not cope with the impact of services being cut or reduced. Carers rely on careworkers that help them with everyday tasks that we take for granted, like help getting dressed, shaving and respite care for people like Jan who has severe learning disabilities, that allows her parents a much needed break. **NO more than five lines.**

We recognise that these are tough times but we want your support to urge councillors to make good decisions and "Support families: Don't cut care" in our community.

If councils cut care and support services:

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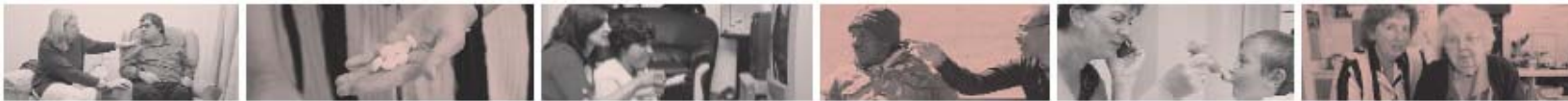
Please help us find out:

- What our council will be doing to maintain and improve support for families in our community with caring needs and how this compares with investment in previous years?
- Government has allocated an additional £2 billion to support adult social care by 2014-2015, how will our council use their allocation for this year to support families with caring needs?
- Have our council assessed the impact cuts are having on carers and the loved ones they care for?
- What will you do/have you done to encourage Ministers to maintain and improve support for carers?

We look forward to your response and reassurance that you will "Support families: Don't cut care".

Yours sincerely

(Insert name of organisation and spokesperson signature)



Letter to the editor – from individuals

The Editor
Newspaper
Address 1
Address 2
Town/City
Postcode

(Insert Date)

Dear Editor

I understand that local councils like ours have had their settlement from Government greatly reduced and I am fearful that support for families like mine will be cut as a result.

Carers/I will lobby (Area) Council's Budget setting meeting to urge Councillors to "Support families: Don't cut care".

Insert personal story, eg I care for my disabled son full time but could not cope without the support of the careworker who gets Jim up every morning and helps him dress and breakfast and get my other two children to school. **NO more than five lines.**

If councillor's cut care and support services:

- Families like mine will be pushed to breaking point and I fear my health and quality of life will suffer.
- Older and disabled people in our community will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner.
- Carers in our community juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care full time for loved ones.

I am backing Carers UK's campaign to "Support families: Don't cut care". To find out more about the campaign and the carers' agenda please visit www.carersuk.org

Yours sincerely

(Insert name and signature)



Media release

Media Release

For immediate release (insert date here)

Carers tell (Insert name) Council “Support families: Don’t cut care”

Thousands of carers looking after sick or disabled relatives in our community are living in fear that following the devastating reductions to our council’s budget from Westminster Government, support for families with caring needs will be cut.

(insert name of your organisation) will be campaigning on the town hall steps on budget night to urge councillors to make good decisions and “Support families: Don’t cut care” in our community.

If councillors cut care and support services: families who care will be pushed to breaking point and their health and life chances will suffer; older and disabled people will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner; carers juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care full time for loved ones. The impacts on council budgets, families and society will be far greater in the future.

(spokesperson’s name), (position, e.g Chair) of (organisation name) said: eg “Many carers in our community could not cope with the impact of services being cut or reduced. Carers rely on careworkers that help them with everyday tasks that we take for granted, like help getting dressed, shaving and respite care for people like Jan who has severe learning disabilities, that allows her parents a much needed break.”

(Insert name of organisation) are backing Carers UK’s campaign “Support families: Don’t cut care”. To find out more about the campaign and the carers’ agenda please visit www.carersuk.org

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

For further information please contact **(insert Contact information)**



Petition to council

Contact details of the petition organiser (the person the Council will contact with a response to the petition)	
Name:	
Address:	
Signature:	
Tel:	Work
	Home
	Mobile
E-mail:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please tick the box if you are also running a linked e-petition on the Council's website	

<p>We, the undersigned, petition the Council to:</p> <p>Make good decisions, "Support families: Don't cut care" in our community.</p> <p>Thousands of carers looking after sick or disabled relatives are living in fear that following the devastating reductions to council budgets from Westminster Government, support for families with caring needs will be cut.</p> <p>If councillors cut care and support services: families with caring needs will be pushed to breaking point and their health and life chances will suffer; older and disabled people will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner; carers juggling work and care will be forced to give up work to care full time for loved ones. The impacts on council budgets, families and society will be far greater in the future.</p> <p>Please present the petition to your local Ward Councillor(s) find details on council website/telephone council or send it direct to: Council address</p>
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SUPPORT FAMILIES: DON'T CARE

If councils cut care and support services:

- families who care will be pushed to breaking point and their health and life chances will suffer.
- older and disabled people will lose their independence and need higher levels of care sooner.
- carers juggling paid work and caring for loved ones will be forced to give up work.

Support families: Don't cut care
www.carersuk.org

CARERS UK
the voice of carers

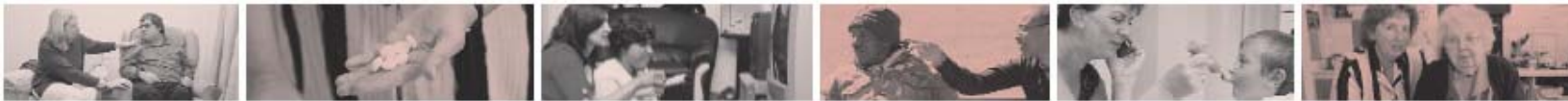
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- carers juggling paid work and caring for loved ones will be forced to give up work.

Support families: Don't cut care
www.carersuk.org

CARERS UK
the voice of carers



Feedback Form

Support families: Don't cut care

Please return to info@carersuk.org or post to Carers UK, 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX.

Thank you for your support and action. Please help us to lobby for better care and support by being our eyes and ears on the ground. We need you to tell us about the positive things happening locally as well as your stories about the effects that the cuts or changes to local services are having on you and your local area.

Please tell us about the impact of your campaigning by using this feedback form.

Name	Email	Council name	Organisation or group name (if applicable)

What did you do? Please tick relevant box

- Letter to council Letter to Editor Petition
 Letter to MP Press release Social media
 Question in council chamber

What was the response? (Please send copies of letters, emails, media coverage).

Has anything changed as a result of your campaign?

What did you find useful about the toolkit and what would help you to better campaign?

Thank you again, please keep in touch by regularly checking www.carersuk.org

