

# Online forum and Connect: breaking isolation

#### Gavin Macgregor Director of Membership and Engagement

#### Who we are

- Started in 1965 by Mary Webster
- Organisation of carers, run by carers for carers
- Carers are at the heart of everything we do
- Supportive community and a movement for change





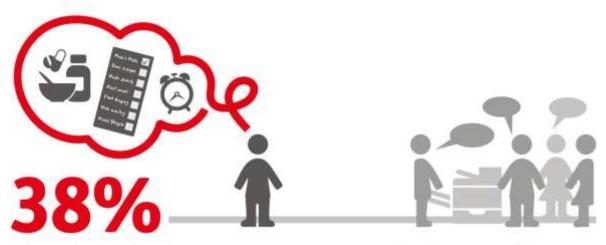




carers have felt **lonely or socially isolated** as a result of their caring responsibilities



57% of carers have lost touch with friends and family as a result of caring



of carers in full-time employment have felt **isolated from other people at work** because of their caring responsibilities

## We connect carers **so no-one has to care alone.**







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The feeling of isolation crept up on me when I started to lose friends because I was never free to go out with them



## Jess's Story



#### **Success factors**

- Part of our membership
- Peer led
- Light touch with rules
- Simple tech





#### Future

- Expansion
- New volunteer roles
- Improving support for volunteers
- Integrate with advice and other support
- Measure impact



## Connect





#### London Fire Brigade

- 5629 Operational staff
- 1015 Non uniformed staff
- 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest in world







### Why engage?

- Staff welfare
- Staff motivation and productivity
- Staff retention



#### Key challenges

- Staff not recognising themselves as carers
- Staff uncomfortable with advising about caring
- Staff based at remote locations
- Caring seen largely as traditional child care
- Managers unaware of carers in their team and little appreciation of their difficulties



#### **Engaging with staff**

# Research Access to information





#### Home

Welcome to Carers Connect!

Carers Connect is a website and interactive network designed especially for LFB staff who are carers. It provides information, support and advice on issues related to caring.

Carers Connect has been developed by the London Fire Brigade in collaboration with Carers UK and the support of Employers for Carers.

Carers Connect offers an easily accessible way to find information quickly and to connect with other colleagues with caring responsibilities.

Remember this is your website! We have tried to provide information on most of the key aspects of caring, but if you have any suggestions about topics that you would also like to see included please contact us.

#### Who is a carer?

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









Search



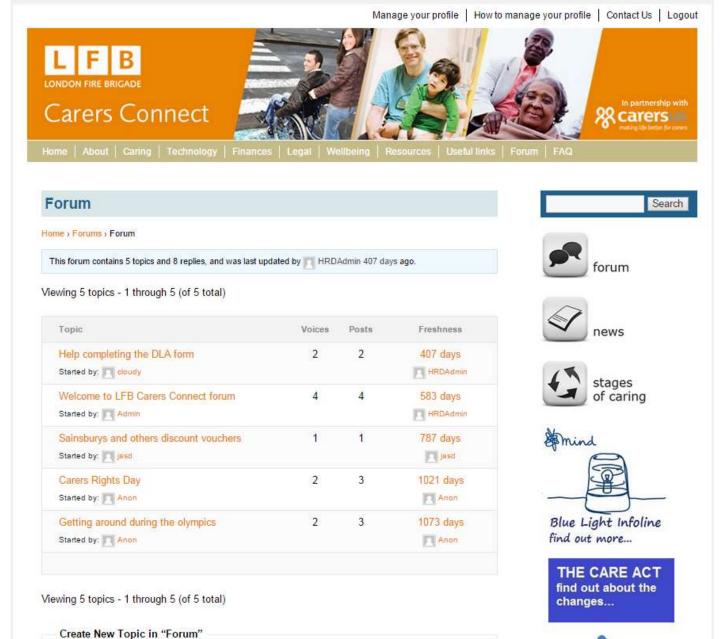




Blue Light Infoline find out more...

THE CARE ACT find out about the changes...







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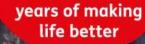


### No one should have to care alone

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