



PRESS RELEASE

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6 million funding goes to 'lifeline' carer service in Birmingham

A carer service which provided a "lifeline and a gateway to crucial services" to a mother of a disabled teenager has been awarded £6 million funding.

The three-year contract has been awarded to Forward Carers, allowing it to continue operating the Birmingham Carers Hub services.

Shaine Mumtaz, from Saltley, is a full-time carer to her teenage daughter Esha who has a rare condition called Marinesco Sjogren which means she is wheelchair bound and has the mental capacity of a five-year-old.

The 42-year-old said: "It can be difficult having a child with a physical disability as getting out and about is challenging. Forward Carers has provided me with a lifeline and a gateway to crucial services, which all people who are in a caring role should know about.

"I think it's brilliant this service has been recognised and more funding has been allocated for another three years. Their help can really make a difference to people caring for somebody who might feel completely alone and isolated.

"I went to a Hub services event recently and they told me about funding I'm entitled to and where I can go for specific services which has helped make life that little bit easier for me when it comes to looking after Esha."

Shaine is not alone, as it is thought one in four households is home to a person caring for a family member or friend in Birmingham.

In delivering the new contract, Forward Carers will continue to work closely with Birmingham City Council, Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Birmingham Children's Trust to empower local carers. In doing so, Forward Carers will

help the Council meet its statutory duties to carers, including undertaking carer assessments.

Forward Carers is made up of a unique partnership of many West Midland based not-for-profits, all of whom have a stated aim to improve the lives of family carers. Through its partnership, Forward Carers has operated the Birmingham Carers Hub for the last five years.

In this time it has built up an effective contact point for carers to access a wide range of services including: information and advice; assistance with welfare entitlement; emergency back-up care; training; support groups; online resources and much more.

Simon Fenton CEO of Forward Carers said "Three in every five of us will care for a loved one at some point in our lives. A caring role is usually very fulfilling, but it can also affect our mental and physical health if we don't take time to look after ourselves properly.

"We're proud that we have made a difference to the lives of thousands of carers over the past few years, and we now look forward to supporting thousands more in the future.

"Our statutory partners have demonstrated a strong commitment to prioritising carers in the city, so we intend to play an integral role in making Birmingham truly 'Carer Friendly'."

Forward Carers was launched to make a real difference to the lives of people caring for older frail people, sick or disabled friends and family members. Its aim is to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of carers, young and old, including parent carers, so that families stay healthier and happier together, for longer.

Notes to editors

- For further details, to arrange an interview or more photographs, email fiona.bailey@ojpr.co.uk or call 0781 3988247 or 01604 882342.