From: PKAVS (Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service)

Date: 07/11/13

**Rights, advice, and support: Three steps to knowing your rights as a Carer**

Caring for a loved one suffering from physical or mental health issues, is disabled, has substance misuse problems or has a long term or life limiting condition can be tough enough without having to fight for financial or practical support. To acknowledge Carers Rights Day on Friday 29th November, here are three steps that every Carer should take to support them in their role:

**1. Check if you can get practical support**

Did you know you have a statutory right to access an assessment of your needs as a Carer? Commonly known as a Carers Support Plan (or Carers Assessment), it is carried out by the Council workers based both in community and hospital settings. A Carers Support Plan assesses whether you would benefit from support and can guide you in accessing support groups, respite, complementary therapies, training and counselling etc. You can still receive support even if the person you care for refuses help for themselves.

*To request an assessment of your needs as a Carer, please contact the Community Care Access Team on 0845 30 111 20 or* *accessteam@pkc.gov.uk*

**2.** **Get a Benefits Check**

Providing support for a loved one can often incur extra costs such as for extra travel or services to support your loved one. Making sure you get a Benefits Check is crucial to determine whether you are entitled to financial support. Carer’s Allowance is the main benefit available. If you have given up work to care, your National Insurance can also be covered. Even if you are not eligible, you should still make sure you get a full Benefits Check as you may get Council Tax discounts, Tax credits or help with fuel costs.

*For more information, contact the Perth & Kinross Council Welfare Rights Team on 01738 476900 or* *WelfareRights@pkc.gov.uk* *or Perth Citizens Advice Bureau on 01738 450580.*

**3.** **Make the most of technology**

Perth and Kinross Council has a Tele-care service which provides and installs equipment for you, or the person you support, to help make living at home safer. Examples include movement and flood sensors, fall, door and personal alarms. These can help you get out of the house, get a good night’s sleep or even juggle work and care.

*To find out if you, or the person you care for, are eligible for telecare assistance, please contact the Community Care Access Team on 0845 30 111 20 or* *accessteam@pkc.gov.uk*

There are lots of services and project in Perth and Kinross dedicated to support carers. Please contact Kerry Donaghy on 01738 567076 or kerry.donaghy@pkavs.org.uk to obtain a copy of the Useful Contacts for Carers. To receive regular emails on what policies are being developed to support Carers, and to be given the chance to have your voice heard, please visit the Carers Scotland website [www.carersuk.org/scotland](http://www.carersuk.org/scotland) to register your details. Perth & Kinross Council’s Carers Webpage will also provide a lot of information for local support [www.pkc.gov.uk/carers](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/carers)

END OF PRESS RELEASE

Notes for the Editor:

1. This press release has been sent on behalf of the Carers Project Partnership. The CPP is a collective group of carer projects working in Perth & Kinross-shire that aim to work together to reach more carers, share information between projects and organisations, jointly host a range of events for carers, undertake wide consultation and identify gaps and develop new initiatives/services.
2. For further information contact Kerry Donaghy, CPP member, on 01738 567076 or kerry.donaghy@pkavs.org.uk