

### *'...and Who carers for the Carer?'*

I've always said my wife Susan is one in a million. Statistically, she is one in *two* million, coping as she has done for 30 years with Primary Lateral Sclerosis (PLS) a rare form of Motor Neurone Disease (MND). Now age 81, I am still her full-time carer...

...or I was until six weeks ago, when *I* was diagnosed with Lymphoma (cancer of the lymphatic system) and am now on an 18 week course of chemotherapy. And who's going to care for me, her carer?

Everyone's situation is unique, but there are many things which are common and shared; bewilderment, confusion, not enough or too much information, *'I don't know what I don't know.'* *"Who do I turn to first?"* *"What can I still do and what do I need help with?"*

Don't keep it to yourself. *"A problem shared is a problem halved."* Talk to the one you care for, members of your family, your friends and your neighbours. People are more ready to help than we often realise. You may need help with GP or hospital transport, shopping, cleaning, preparing meals, or just sitting and chatting with you or the one you care for.

Find out which professionals can help; this copy of *'Care Matters'* is a mine of information. Start with Social Services. Which charity is there to support you? Don't be afraid to pick up the 'phone, and tell them you don't know which way to turn. They have vast experience and they will listen and help.

Then there is the question of finance, benefits, paperwork and form filling. It is confusing, but you are not on your own. *"What am I entitled to?"* *"Is it means tested?"* *"What is it all going to cost?"* 'Age Concern visited and helped to complete a lengthy form for Disability Living Allowance. A Macmillan nurse completed an application form for Attendance Allowance.

Take a deep breath and pick up the 'phone, or ask someone to do it for you. You will be surprised what help there is waiting for you. If you don't do anything else, please sign up for Emergency Care.

Best wishes

Howard Brayton