

Carers and Learning

“It keeps my mind working and active.”

Wendy Maxwell



This is one of a series of small portraits of carers talking about the impact learning has on their lives. The carers featured face particular barriers to accessing learning; carers from minority ethnic groups; carers who are disabled; young adult carers (16-25) and carers who live in rural areas. Their stories highlight the importance of access to education for all. Under the Carers Equal Opportunities Act (2004) carers have a right to have their learning and work needs assessed as part of the carers' assessment procedure.

Wendy had always wanted to do a creative writing course. However, due to her restricted mobility and caring responsibilities for her son, the choice of courses she could access was limited.

Then a friend told her about a creative writing course run by the National Extension College (NEC). This on-line, distance learning course is specifically designed for carers: *They listen to carers' needs. I like the flexibility of the course, the way it is set out and the use of the Internet. There is 1:1 tutor support and mentoring, which is very helpful because I can talk to them like a friend.*

The course gave Wendy the confidence to set up a private website for carers across the UK where she can share things with other carers: www.chill4us.com

She plans to go on to an Introduction to Counselling course with the NEC.

For further information about access to learning and training for carers, visit www.niace.org.uk

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