

# 2016 Newsletter

## The Project

Helpcare is working with carers and companies that provide care to identify the main issues affecting recruitment and retention of workers and to develop learning materials and accredited qualifications that will help professionalize care. The research phase of the Helpcare project is nearly at completion, ready for the work of the team to start improving the recruitment, retention and professional development of care workers across the European Union. This will ensure that those vulnerable in our communities have access to well-trained carers, passionate about providing care. In order to spread the word about the project and help all those affected, we need to let as many people as possible know about our findings, and collectively we can make a difference to the lives of many care givers and those they care for. The Helpcare team from across the EU, including the U.K., Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Italy, has made a strong start and this newsletter will provide an update on the efforts of the team.

## Who We Are

The project is managed by Lancaster University in the U.K. in collaboration with the following partner institutions:

- Lancaster & Morecambe FE College, U.K.
- Commune de Ortona, Italy.
- South East European Research Centre, Greece.
- Znanie Association, Bulgaria.
- University of Lodz, Poland.

Besides this excellent support from partners across Europe, we have been very fortunate to have a strong support [network](#).

## What have we been up to?

### Helpcare Come Together in Ortona, Italy

Held in the imposing music library in Ortona, the Helpcare team made an impact across the region thanks to the large audience of civic leaders, social workers, carers and care users in attendance. To spread the message further, Dr Carolyn Downs was interviewed by the attending TV crew regarding the importance of the project to ensure the quality of life for the vulnerable.



Special thanks must go to the Mayor of Ortona, and the head of social services that made poignant presentations about the necessity of care work.



## Meet Lancaster & Morecambe's Co-Researchers!

A warm welcome goes to LMC's co-researchers:

- Kathy Pierson: Senior Carer in a large residential care home
- Becky Townend: Health and Social care student and part-time care worker
- Caitlin Davis: Care assistant

They are now in the process of interviewing vulnerable people. So far, the interviewees have been positive about the care that they receive, yet are worried about the lack of recognition that their carers receive from government. There seems to be a theme of uncertainty regarding the future of care due to funding cuts, poor training and the risk of a loss of dignity, especially towards the end of a service user's life. The one thing seems to be certain is that people prefer to stay in their own homes wherever possible. A video of our training session can be



viewed on You Tube, as you can see we had a really interesting and interactive day where we learned a lot about the work done by carers. Our co-researchers developed their own questions to ask the older people they will interview. All co-researchers also had training in research ethics and received certificates to recognise their new skills.

## SEERC's Co-Researchers are Ready to Interview!

In Greece we are delighted that four busy carers have volunteered to help our project by acting as co-researchers, these are:

- A. Kostantinidis: nurse at the psychiatric clinic for adolescents, and also an informal carer.
- S. Papadopoulou: nurse at the Day Care program for seniors, and also an informal carer. Skouri, A., social worker at the Day



Center in Thessaloniki, also used to be an informal carer.

- K. Karatouri: nurse at the Day Center in Thessaloniki, also an informal carer.

We held an interactive training session towards the end of January at the South East European Research Centre, where we developed our ideas about the needs of older people requiring care and the role of carers in Greece.

The co-researchers found the event useful as it was a great opportunity to share ideas and experiences, giving hope for a better future of the industry. The co-researchers are now each going to interview several older people about their experience in the care industry. This information is really important in developing our understanding of the expectations of care among older people.

## Lodz are Answering the Most Important of Questions

January was a busy month in Poland, the team in Lodz held a workshop with the carers of the Center for Rehabilitation and Care in Lodz. At this meeting the team explored the question:

***What are the expectations of the ideal carer of the elderly?***

The importance of this question was how we can develop training to fulfil these expectations. To recognize the valuable work of the participants, the team at Lodz presented them with certificates to say thank you for helping to define the modern role of care for the elderly. Co-researchers for Lodz have been recruited solely



from nursing homes which will provide us with detailed insight into the Polish care industry with a focus on the elderly. Helpcare's Polish Facebook page is now in action and lots of useful information is available [there](#).

## Znanie

Our Bulgarian team has been busy recruiting and training some brilliant co-researchers with a broad range of experience and a collaborative experience, a warm welcome and thanks goes to:

- Tsvetanka Petrova: A social project coordinator and director of Directorate for social and welfare in Berkovitsa. Also acting as a social assistant in Italy for the Telecare project and a social assistant in Mobile teams for independent life projects.
- Veneta Gogova: An experienced director in



Dupnitsa, now working in Bulgaria and Israel as a carer and social assistant in Mobile teams for independent life projects.

- Maria Georgieva: A student in Non-formal education in Sofia University who is acting as an informal carer, also an active volunteer in different initiatives.

Our project manager, Valentina Georgieva, and our researcher, Vasilena Simova, were present to facilitate the training which was well received was delivered in an open and friendly manner, using our preferred method of the Ketso kit to discuss the topic of: "My ideal carer". All of our participants had no doubt that the ideal carer should:

- Be a good person who cares for their client.



- Possess a solid level of education or broad interests to engage their client and provide companionship.
- Be able to behave in a professional manner that maintains their client's dignity and respect their rights.
- Be able to understand the condition of the clients and know how to respond in emergency situations.