



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Assistive Technologies: *sustaining caring and employment*

Professor Sue Yeandle

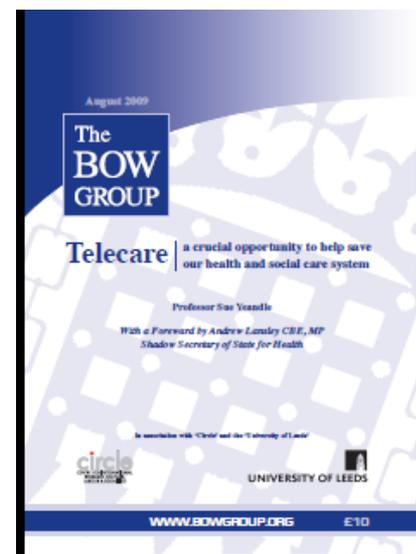
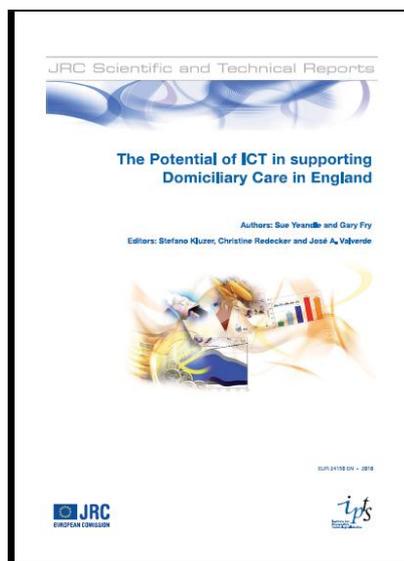
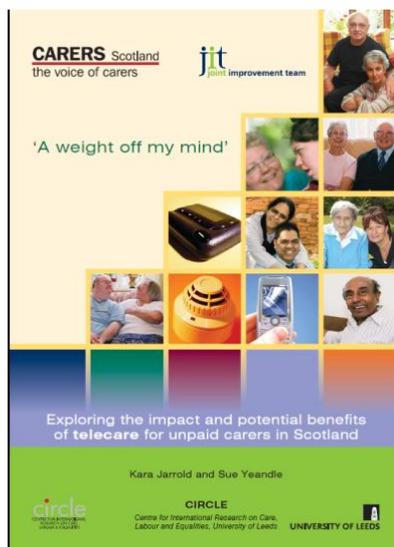
***5th International Carers
Conference***

8-11 July 2010, Leeds

circle
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
RESEARCH ON CARE,
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CIRCLE's research on carers and their support

- Carers, Employment & Services study 2005-7
- Evidence-based government advisory work 2007-8
- CIRCLE's research agenda from 2008
 - English Local Authorities' Use of Carers Grant
 - Regional Profiles of Carers (England, 2009, 9 regions)
 - Evaluation of 2008 National Carers Strategy implementation
 - Telecare / ICT and carers - CIRCLE's 2009 reports:



Key themes in the evidence on care and caring

- ***Carers – unpaid family and friends – pivotal to current system***
 - Research highlights the scale, contribution and centrality of carers
 - Pressures on carers threaten the sustainability of their care - they pay financial, health and social exclusion penalties for the care they give
- ***Demographic/ labour force change this century add new challenges***
 - Worldwide population ageing; huge shift in younger/older balance
 - Longevity intrinsically linked to rise in prevalence of disability / LTCs
 - Employment across ‘working age’ essential to raise tax /fund pensions
- ***Already 75% carers are people of ‘working age’***
 - Combining work and care is crucial for personal/family wellbeing
 - Employer/managerial support and flexibility is essential
 - Inadequacies/inflexibilities in services add pressure and risks
- ***Home care arrangements have been struggling to adapt***
 - Recruitment and retention continuing problem for providers
 - ‘Short bursts of care’ approach wasteful of resources
 - More flexible care worker roles require training, technology, support

HOW CAN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND TELECARE HELP?

Caring and paid work: key issues (1)

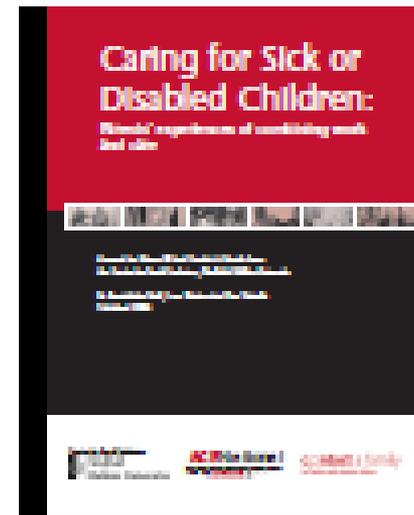
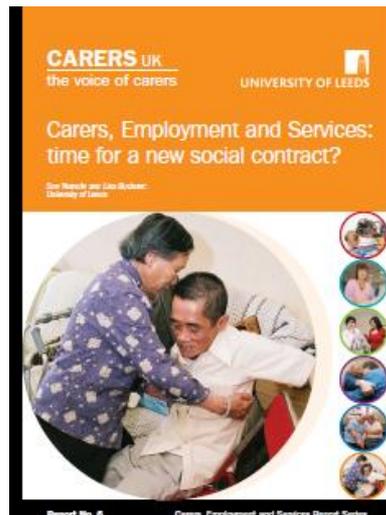
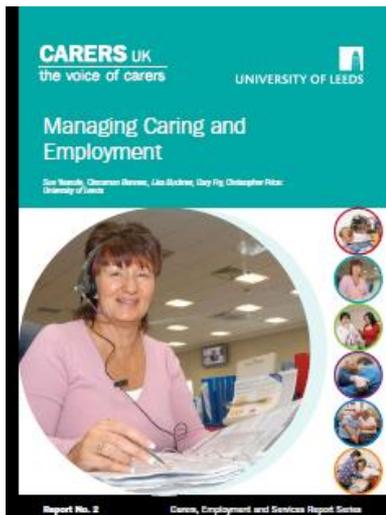
■ *Carers' own views: we found:*

- 40% of full-time carers would prefer to be in paid work
- Those who give up work are the most disadvantaged/ dissatisfied carers
- Many in PT work are only in low paid jobs because of their caring role
- 75% think available care services do not support them to work

■ *Caring is increasing, yet pressures to extend working life*

- More women in jobs and careers in middle and later life
- Raising women's state pension age (to 65) (happening now)
- Retirement for both sexes likely to go to 66, 67 or above
- Shift in balance between working age / older people goes on
- Many more people will have to combine work and care

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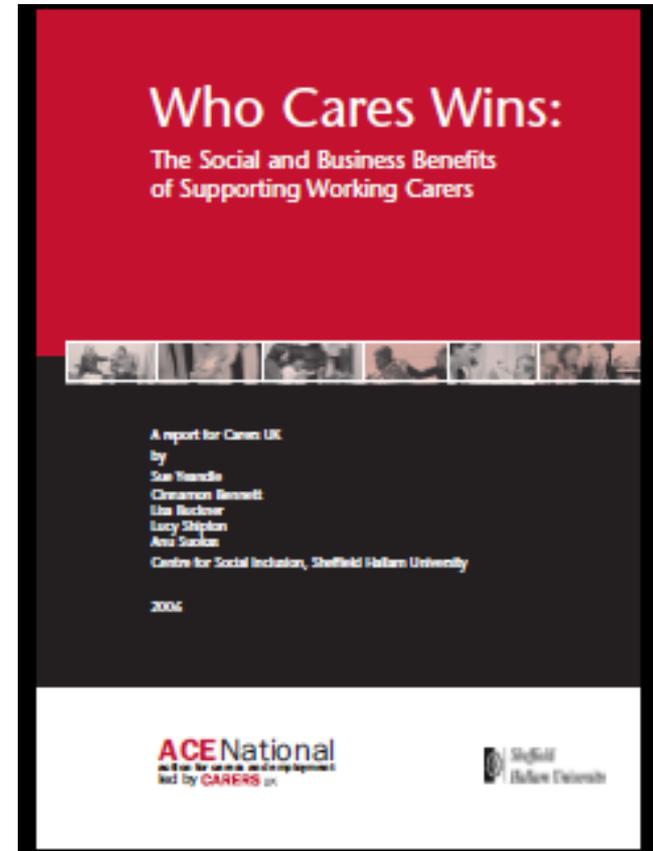


Caring and paid work: key issues (2)

■ *Research also shows:*

- Employers of all types can provide a supportive environment for carers
- Flexible working helps by addressing each carer's individual situation
- Effective flexible/remote working depends on organisational culture
- Good communication / team working help when caring emergencies arise
- Telecare gives some carers the 'peace of mind' to continue in paid work
- Constant carer attendance can be avoided by having technology in place

HOW CAN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND TELECARE HELP?



Some critical questions for the caring and employment agenda

1. Can AT / telecare really support people in *combining work and care*?
2. How can AT / telecare help in the provision of *care services* which can support working families?
3. Can technology support *flexible ways of working*, to enable families to juggle multiple responsibilities?
4. What effect will this have on people's *caring relationships* and on the *quality of care*?

1. Carers' perspectives on AT / telecare

- Engagement with carers during assessment, installation, review is important:
 - Carer 'involvement' and a partnership approach work best, are valued by carers in telecare projects / initiatives
 - Carers find running costs of telecare arrangements reasonable
 - Support is available 24/7, so it works for carers in a very wide range of jobs (unlike many traditional services)
- Review of a wide range of evidence shows most carers are positive about the benefits of telecare *for themselves*
 - Carer anxiety and stress reduces, sleep patterns improve
 - Relationship with cared for person improves
 - Carers have more freedom to 'do other things' – including paid work
- Anxieties about telecare (as intrusive, alienating, costly, unwieldy) are almost always dispelled once appropriate AT / telecare is in place

Jarrold & Yeandle (2009) "A Weight off my Mind" report for Carers Scotland

2. Useful in the provision of services to support working families?

- ***Offers cost-effective support***
 - Low running costs, modest installation costs
- ***Potential to enhance 3-way caring relationships***
 - Between health and social care providers; persons needing care / support and their carers
- ***Telehealth care offers preventative support***
 - Designed to reduce caring crises
 - Crisis responses are key disruptions for working carers/families
- ***AT and telecare can 'spread the load' between family members***
 - Alarms/alerts are linked to several people, reducing reliance on a single family member

3. How does telecare support flexible working?

- ***With support in place, carers can focus on their job when at work***
 - Carers are reassured that the person they are away from is OK – accidents prevented/promptly responded to; everyday risks reduced; the autonomy and independence of the person cared for is enhanced
- ***Telecare can make part-time work possible***
 - Even for those with ‘heavy end’ caring roles
- ***New innovations enable continuous real-time contact***
 - Remote communication is possible as and when needed around the clock
- ***Makes flexible working possible for people who cannot work from home***
 - Flexible working is not limited to those who can work from home – telecare opens up options for those who must normally be at their worksite (office, factory, shop, meeting)

One carer's story: Andrew

Who has cared for Carol (his wife with MS) for 20+ years

- *Telecare and environmental controls were recently introduced in their home*
 - Andrew reported that both he and his wife noticed real improvements in their relationship
 - Carol regained control over many aspects of her everyday life: changing the TV channel; turning lights on/off; safely letting someone into the home when Andrew was not there
 - Andrew and Carol both valued the partial independence they each regained
 - Trivial daily tensions and irritations were minimised
 - Andrew could concentrate on his own tasks and activities without repeated interruptions to assist Carol
 - Carol felt her choices /quality of life had changed for the better

Positive signs / a note of caution:

ICT, telecare and care at home

- **Recent public investment and innovations in private sector technology** mean telecare is increasing in home-based caring situations in the UK
- **ICT is now gaining acceptance** as a way of supporting carers
 - on-line information and helplines for carers
 - telecare and assistive technology to support caring roles
- **New types of support are emerging for both carers and paid care workers**
 - This needs development /further innovation
- **The pace, scale and range of developments is constrained**
 - By limited funding, expertise and awareness
 - Carers of older, disabled and sick people will be very important in stimulating demand / take-up of assistive technology and telecare
 - Care sector (and care workers') perspectives /engagement remain mostly hidden and untapped

Yeandle & Fry (2009) Domiciliary Care & ICT / telecare, report for IPTS, Seville

CIRCLE

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