

BRANCH CIRCULAR 35/09

Care First

Following a decision at our Annual Conference 2009, the contract between NARPO and Care First will terminate on 31st October 2009. This means that from that date the service of 'Care First' will not be available to NARPO members. Members can however continue to use the service up to that date. We have also agreed with Care First that any member currently receiving advice or counselling at the contract termination date, will continue to receive that service in relation to the then specific current issue beyond the termination date but within the terms and limits of the contract.

Care First provided a 24 hour, 7 day a week telephone counselling service on a variety of subjects, with follow up face to face counselling available in certain circumstances. During a lively debate delegates considered the type of enquiry made by members, regularity of enquiry and overall cost of the Care First service to the organisation during the nine months of its operation with NARPO. By a clear majority delegates chose not to continue with this service. This decision is in no way critical of Care First but delegates believed that welfare services, of the nature of those provided by Care First, could and should be provided by NARPO Branches with support, where available, from force welfare departments, charities, Government Departments and other local and national resources providing care support and available to members.

A presentation at Conference on welfare focused on many of the issues branches will need to consider in the provision of welfare support to its members. This presentation was well received by delegates. The NEC recognise that there are many examples of good practice within the organisation and are currently drawing up a template for welfare provision to recommend to branches, drawing on best practice from across all NARPO branches. We want branches to engage in this process.

We will be announcing to members through the usual channels, NARPO News and our website at www.narpo.org the termination of our contract with Care First. We will be advising that in future members in need of welfare support should seek that support in the first instance through their local branch. Branches may wish to reinforce this message through local news letters or by other means. Naturally, where we are able and within our resources, we will continue to advise branches and members on welfare matters. I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Clint Elliott
Chief Executive