

Carers Legislation – Consultation on Proposals

Response to Scottish Government consultation on proposals

1 Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Health Council was established in April 2005 to promote improvements in the quality and extent of public involvement in the NHS in Scotland. It supports and monitors work carried out by NHS Boards to involve patients and the public in the planning and development of health services and in decisions that affect the operation of those services. The Scottish Health Council has a network of 14 local offices across Scotland (one in each health board area) and a National Office in Glasgow. The Scottish Health Council is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

2 General

- 2.1 The Scottish Health Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to this Scottish Government consultation. Predominantly our interest relates to carer involvement in service design and delivery including care planning and support and access to information and advice. Our comments therefore relate directly to chapters 5 and 6 of the consultation document.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government's acknowledgment of the need to continuously look at how support to carers and young carers can be improved is welcomed as is recognition of the needs of carers who tend to be more 'hidden' than others, for example, Black & Ethnic Minority and Gypsy Traveller carers. We also welcome an acknowledgement of emerging health and social care integration and the need to ensure that support to carers is not affected in any way by new arrangements for delegated resources.

3 Response to the proposals

Chapter 3 Information and advice

- 3.1 The Scottish Health Council welcomes acknowledgement of the importance of carers being able to access relevant information and advice. We support the proposal that further impetus should be given, through law, to the provision of both information and advice and specifically related to those areas of the carer's assessment and options under self directed support.

- 3.2 Moreover, the Scottish Health Council supports the proposal to introduce a duty on local authorities to establish and maintain a service for providing people with information and advice relating to the Carer's Support Plan and support for carers and young carers. The Scottish Health Council's offices work closely with local branches of the *Living it Up* programme which is mentioned in the consultation document as a means of providing a personalised and integrated menu of services, information, products and social activities to support social, health, care and personal interests which keep people connected. In our view, *Living it Up* is an excellent local community resource which could be well used for providing information albeit that the programme does not have a presence in all areas in Scotland.

Regardless of the provider(s), we would advocate a one stop shop approach to providing information and, in that context, the Scottish Health Council encourages the Scottish Government to consider how to set up a single gateway or single point of access for information for carers.

- 3.3 Whilst the document specifically mentions the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011 and the provisions about patient advice, the Scottish Health Council would advocate for specific reference in any emerging proposals to the important role the Patient Advice & Support Service (PASS) operated through Citizens Advice Scotland can provide to carers and young carers.

Chapter 6 Carer engagement

- 3.4 It is noted that arrangements will be made under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill for the involvement by integration authorities of both service users and carers and carers' organisations in the planning and design of services. Nonetheless, the Scottish Health Council feels that this section is somewhat scant in terms of details and arrangements for public engagement particularly since not all services of health boards and local authorities will be within the scope of integration. We welcome, however, proposals to establish a principle about carer and young carer involvement in care planning and look forward to hearing more.
- 3.5 It would have been helpful in this section to have outlined how carers and young carers are currently involved in the planning, shaping and delivery of services as well as what progress has been made in terms of involving carers in strategic planning. Through its local office network, the Scottish Health Council is aware that in some areas public involvement in the Reshaping Care for Older People's Programme Change Fund could be improved with earlier involvement of local communities (by NHS Boards). Such early involvement and at the start of the process would lead to the public and local communities experiencing more meaningful involvement in change fund projects.

- 3.6 The Scottish Health Council welcomes the Scottish Government's intention to make provision for carer involvement in the planning, shaping and delivery of services for the people they care for and support for carers in areas outwith the scope of integration. We feel it should include similar provision for carer's organisations. Given our experience in public involvement and community engagement, the Scottish Health Council would welcome further discussions and input to shaping those arrangements.
- 3.7 The Scottish Health Council has significant experience both in terms of gathering the views of young people to help shape planning and delivery of services and has a range of tried and tested methods for engaging with them. That experience undoubtedly demonstrates that young people bring a unique and valuable viewpoint so would strongly advocate that provision be made for young carer involvement in the planning, shaping and delivery of services for cared-for people and support for young carers.
- 3.8 Given our experience in public involvement and community engagement, the Scottish Health Council would welcome further discussion and input on shaping carer involvement structures.

4 Further information

Further information about the Scottish Health Council can be found on our website www.scottishhealthcouncil.org Any queries regarding this response should be directed in the first instance to Christine Johnstone, Community Engagement & Improvement Support Manager, Scottish Health Council, tel: 01592 200555 or email: christine.johnstone@scottishhealthcouncil.org

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