

Introduction and general comments

This response is from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and was established in 2001 by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act. We are responsible for registering people who work in social services, regulating their education and training and the collation and publication of data on the size and nature of the sector's workforce.

Our work increases the protection of people who use services by ensuring that the workforce is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated. We aim to protect people who use services, raise standards of practice, strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce and improve the outcomes and experience of people who use social services and their carers. The social service workforce provides care and support for some of the most vulnerable people in Scottish society. These workers often deal with complex care needs and make a real difference to the lives of individuals and their carers.

Our vision is that our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. Our purpose is to raise standards and protect the public through regulation, innovation and continuous improvement in workforce planning and development for the social service workforce.

The SSSC and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) were commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop the Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) core principles for working with carers and young carers.¹ The core principles are based on six key outcomes for carers. These include the following:

- carers are identified
- carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring role
- carers are recognised and valued as equal partners in care.

The principles are identified at three levels, ranging from level 1 ('carer aware') to level 3 ('planning with carers as equal partners'). We have also developed a series of learning resources to support the promotion and use of the core principles. We have referred to the core principles throughout our response.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The Carer's Assessment: Carer's Support Plan

Question 1: Should we change the name of the carer's assessment to the Carer's Support Plan?

Yes

No

¹ The principles are located on the Social Services Knowledge Scotland website: www.sks.org.uk/equalpartnersincare. The project is currently funded until March 2015.

We asked a number of stakeholders (including carers) for their views on these two terms as part of a consultation on the EPiC core principles. These stakeholders told us that they prefer the term 'Carer's Support Plan'. The use of the term 'assessment' can create misconceptions around potential barriers to support.

Question 2: Should we remove the substantial and regular test so that all carers will be eligible for the Carer's Support Plan?

Yes

No

The EPiC core principles are based on six key outcomes for carers. One of these outcomes notes the need to ensure that carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring role. The removal of the substantial and regular test is consistent with this outcome. The early identification of carers and signposting them to appropriate support will potentially avoid more costly intervention at a later stage.

Some consideration will have to be given to the workforce implications associated with increased eligibility for the Carers' Support Plan. An extension to eligibility criteria will impact on the capacity of the workforce to develop carer support plans.

Question 3: Should we remove that part of the existing carer assessment process whereby the cared-for person is a person for whom the local authority must or may provide community care services/children's services?

Yes

No

We welcome this proposal.

Question 4: Should we introduce two routes through to the Carer's Support Plan – at the carer's request and by the local authority making an offer?

Yes

No

We welcome this proposal. The introduction of two routes will remove any ambiguity caused by the existing legislation.

Question 5: Should we remove from statute the wording about the carer's ability to provide care?

Yes

No

The removal of this wording will support the move towards a focus on carers' outcomes. The use of 'ability' can add to the perceived barriers in relation to assessments. The removal of this term should improve access to carer support

plans.

Question 6: Should we introduce a duty for local authorities to inform the carer of the length of time it is likely to take to receive the Carer's Support Plan and if it exceeds this time, to be advised of the reasons?

Yes

No

We make no comment on whether a duty should be established. We would welcome any moves to update carers on the length of time that it will take to develop their support plan. This would fit with a number of the outcomes in the EPiC core principles such as the need to ensure that carers are recognised and valued as equal partners in the delivery of care.

Question 7: How significant an issue is portability of assessment for service users and carers?

We make no comment on this question.

Question 8: Should the Scottish Government and COSLA with relevant interests work together to take forward improvements to the portability of assessment?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question.

Information and Advice

Question 9: Should we introduce a duty for 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?

Yes

No

We make no comment on whether a duty should be established. We would welcome any moves to improve the information and advice relating to the Carer's Support Plan. These proposals fit with a number of the outcomes in the EPiC core principles.

Question 10: Should we repeal section 12 of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 about the submission of Carer information Strategies to Scottish Ministers, subject to reassurances, which are subject in turn to Spending Review decisions, about the continuation of funding to Health Boards for support to carers and young carers?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question.

Support to Carers (other than information and advice)

Question 11: Should we introduce a duty to support carers and young carers, linked to an eligibility framework?

Yes

No

We make no comment on whether a duty should be established. We would note that changing this power from a discretionary one to a duty is likely to have financial and workforce implications.

Question 12: Alternatively, should we retain the existing discretionary power to support carers and young carers?

Yes

No

See our answer to the previous question.

Question 13: Should we introduce a duty to provide short breaks?

Yes

No

We make no comment on whether a duty should be established. We would welcome any moves to promote the provision of short breaks. One of the EPiC core principles is about the need to ensure that carers are enabled to have a life outside of caring. The principles note that workers should be able to contribute to planning and delivering a range of quality, creative, flexible person-centred short break opportunities in partnership with other agencies. We would recommend the development of guidance and best practice which could be used to promote consistency around the provision of short breaks.

Stages and Transitions

Question 14: Should we issue statutory guidance on the Carer's Support Plan which will include guidance for those undertaking the Carer's Support Plan on managing stages of caring? This would apply to adult carers only. (For young carers, practice guidance will be developed to support management of a Child's Plan through the stages of caring).

Yes

No

Statutory guidance would support the workforce to achieve consistent good practice in relation to Carers' Support Plans. We welcome the proposals to develop guidance for adult carers and young carers. One of the EPiC core principles is about the need for carers to be supported and empowered to manage their caring through various transitions such as children's to adult services and from caring to post-caring following bereavement.

Question 15: Should new carers' legislation provide for young carers to have a Carer's Support Plan if they seem likely to become an adult carer? Any agreed support recorded in the Carer's Support Plan would be put in place after the young carer becomes a (young) adult carer.

Yes

No

This approach is consistent with the EPiC core principles. The principles include an outcome about the importance of ensuring that carers are free from disadvantage or discrimination related to their caring role. This outcome specifically addresses the way that providers work with other agencies and young carers to make the transition from children's to adult services and ensure that they receive continued support.

Carer Involvement

Question 16: Should there be 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?

Yes

No

We welcome moves to increase carer involvement in these areas. The need to ensure that carers are fully involved in the planning, shaping and delivery of services is identified in a number of resources including the Carers' Strategy and the EPiC core principles. These proposals are also consistent with the Standards of Best Practice for Engaging Carers developed by the Coalition of Carers in Scotland.

The need to ensure that carers are involved in the planning, shaping and delivery of services remains a key challenge. These challenges are relevant for a number of groups such as

- carers involved in the provision of intensive or demanding care
- carers who combine their role with employment or other responsibilities
- carers in remote or rural areas
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) carers
- other groups where the data on carers has been underdeveloped, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) carers.

The need to develop improved data on a number of carer groups is identified in the Carers Strategy 2010-2015. An improvement in this data will help to secure greater carer involvement in the planning, shaping and delivery of services.

Question 17: Should we make provision for the involvement of carers' organisations in the planning, shaping and delivery of services and support falling outwith the scope of integration?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question. We support effective partnership with all relevant stakeholders. The national carers' organisations were a key partner in the development of the EPiC core principles.

Question 18: Should we establish a principle about carer and young carer involvement in care planning for service users (subject to consent) and support for themselves in areas not covered in existing legislation?

Yes

No

We would welcome any moves (subject to carers' consent) to support the involvement of carers and young carers in care planning. Guidance will need to be developed to support this work. This involvement must be meaningful and workforce development will play a key role in supporting this aim.

A principle about carer and young carer involvement in care planning is consistent with the EPiC core principles, particularly the outcome about the recognition of carers and ensuring that they valued as equal partners in care. The EPiC project will be developing a new resource in 2014/15 which will support the workforce to work with carers as equal partners.

A balance is required to ensure that young carers are involved in a way that is appropriate to their age. The Young Carer's Authorisation Card may be a useful example as it can be used to allow young carers to receive information about medication, diagnosis and the prognosis for the person they care for.

Question 19: What are your views on making provision for young carer involvement in the planning, shaping and delivery of services for cared-for people and support for young carers?

These proposals are consistent with the EPiC core principles. Any arrangements must be age-appropriate and address potential barriers which prevent young people from becoming involved. Any provision should also reflect the Golden Rules for Engaging Young Carers developed by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP).

Planning and Delivery

Question 20: Should we introduce statutory provision to the effect that a local authority and each relevant Health Board must collaborate and involve relevant organisations and carers in the development of local carers strategies which must be kept under review and updated every three years?

Yes

No

We make no comment on whether a duty should be placed on local authorities or health boards. The involvement of carers in the development of local carer strategies is consistent with the EPiC core principles which note the importance of ensuring that carers are fully involved in the planning and shaping of services.

Question 21: Should we introduce statutory provision to the effect that local authorities with Health Boards must take steps to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that a sufficient range of services is available for meeting the needs for support to carers and young carers in the area?

Yes

No

We make no comment on whether statutory provisions should be developed. The availability of a sufficient range of services is consistent with the EPiC core principles which note the importance of ensuring that carers are free from disadvantage and discrimination related to their caring role. The EPiC core principles also note the importance of ensuring that services are culturally appropriate and accessible to a diversity of carers, particularly those in hard to reach groups such as those living in remote and rural areas, lesbian gay bisexual and transgender carers, carers from minority ethnic communities, carers with disabilities and others.

Identification

Question 22: Should there be no legislative provision for GPs or local authorities to maintain a Carers Register in order to support the identification of carers?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question.

Question 23: Should the Scottish Government ensure that good practice is widely spread amongst Health Boards about the proactive use of Registers of Carers within GP practices?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question.

Question 24: Should the Scottish Government ask Health Boards to monitor compliance with the core contractual elements of the GP contract?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question.

Carer and Cared-for Person(s) in Different Local Authority Areas

Question 25: What are the views of respondents on the lead local authority for undertaking the Carer's Support Plan and agreeing support to the carer where the carer lives in a different local authority area to the cared-for person(s)?

We make no comment on this question.

Question 26: What are the views of respondents on which local authority should cover the costs of support to the carer in these circumstances?

We make no comment on this question.

Question 27: Should the Scottish Government with COSLA produce guidance for local authorities?

Yes

No

We make no comment on this question.