

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

Comments: Changing the name to 'Carer's Support Plan' suggests more of a progressive process than the use of the traditional term 'assessment'. Locally, the assessment has proved to be the gateway for carers to access further support, by identifying their individual needs and then planning out support to ensure their personal outcomes are achieved. Therefore by changing the name to a Carers Support Plan would more aptly detail the process, and reflect the aim of ensuring that carers can be provided the support to help manage their caring role and live a life outwith.

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

Comments: Within Stirling we currently do not take account of the substantial and regular test when offering and/or undertaking a Carers Assessment. All carers who receive 1:1 support with Stirling Carers Centre, whether that be a benefit check or listening ear are made aware of and offered the opportunity to receive a Carers Assessment. We also ensure that this is undertaken as an anticipatory measure; to enable support to be planned in a way that prevents the carer reaching crisis point and therefore a greater cost at a later stage. It is for this reason that we believe that it is important that the substantial and regular test is removed as all carers should have access to a Carers Assessment and this 'test' could perhaps prevent that for many. There would however be a need to ensure that sufficient resources are provided within carer centres to ensure that any increase in demand can be met.

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

Comments: As above, Stirling Carers Centre does not currently take account of this when offering Carers Assessments, as we see value in this process to ensure

that all carers, no matter the condition or care needs of the person they care for, has access to the right support at the right time. By defining that the cared for person is a person for whom the local authority must or may provide community care services/children's services, may prevent some carers from receiving an assessment which should not be the case. We know from experience that in some cases the cared for person may not need such services or might refuse the support, however this should not prevent the carer from receiving a Carers Assessment. We also know that many services provided to carers by the Carers Centre supports retain carers' mental health & well-being and avoid crisis for them. These services i.e. peer support groups, singing groups, computer training, comp therapies etc. are provided through private funding streams and not statutory funding therefore many carers never have the need to go near social work services – their needs are met by the Carers Centre and other third sector partners in the local area. Therefore we agree that this part of the existing process should be removed.

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

Comments: It is imperative that carers have the opportunity to request a Carers Support Plan to ensure that they receive the support they require. However, from experience many carers who access our services for the first time are unaware of what a Carers Assessment/Support Plan is and that they can receive this. Therefore it is also important that the local authority have a duty to make carers aware of their ability to receive an assessment to identify the needs and plan support around their personal outcomes. There may be a requirement for the local authority to 'offer' the assessment, however we believe that the undertaking of the assessment sits best with independent organisations such as Carers Centres. We work closely with the local authority to ensure that carers both receive an assessment and that support is planned which addresses their individual needs. We definitely see benefit in the duty to be placed on local authorities to inform carers about the Carers Support Plans and also think that this should be extended to acute NHS Services and to new integrated primary health and social care. This way many more carers will be assisted much earlier in their caring journey.

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

Yes

No

Comments: We agree with the information in the proposals that the 'ability to

provide care' should be removed, and that there should be the introduction of an outcome based approach. As an organisation we routinely promote the benefits of Carers Assessments/Support Plans to carers and professionals, and believe that this process can truly identify the best way forward to meet the carer's individual needs. Therefore by removing the wording 'ability to care' would hopefully reduce any negative connotations in relation to the carer's competence or skills.

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

Comments: Within Stirling, Stirling Carers Centre is commissioned in part to carry out Carers Assessments, and is therefore the largest provider of these locally. Appointments are made with carers on request of an assessment, and are usually undertaken within one to two weeks maximum. However a "duty" may impact on us as far as waiting times are concerned for carers to complete a support plan (assessment) but - if enough resources are ring-fenced for allocation to carers centre delivering these then we are confident that any issues around this can be overcome.

Also, we do feel that this would be good practice nationally for this to take place and would hopefully reduce any uncertainty over timescales and long waiting periods for an assessment to be undertaken. It is crucial that carers are kept informed, and therefore it would be beneficial to have a reasonable agreed timescale to ensure that carers do not reach crisis point before they receive support.

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

Comments: As an organisation this is not something that we have found to be a significant issue, but we have come across this in some cases. When portability of assessment has occurred, we have not come across any issues in relation to the undertaking of the Carers Assessments when the cared for lives within the Stirling Council area but the carer lives outwith. However the issue can arise when a cared for person moves into the area and requires statutory input. A lot of the time the community care assessment is not the same (perhaps services are reduced) for the person being cared for – which in turn impacts on the carer.

From experience we have found that it can be much easier to ensure that services are implemented for the carer/cared for when they are to be delivered within this local authority rather than outwith.

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

Yes

No

Comments: With the shift in the balance of care, we anticipate that families will have to take a greater responsibility for caring for a loved one. Therefore in response to this we would expect more cross-boundary caring thus additional emotional strain.

Due to the nature of the Forth Valley area having one health board but three different local authorities, we would anticipate that portability of assessment could potentially be pertinent going forward due to the geographic nature of the local area. It is for this reason that we see importance in ensuing that the Scottish Government and COSLA with relevant interests work together to take forward improvements to the portability of assessment.

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

Comments: It is imperative that both adults and young carers have access to appropriate and accurate information and advice when they require it. We agree with the proposals that this can sit with a third sector organisation, and doesn't necessarily need to be the local authority themselves who are providing the service.

We acknowledge that not all local authority areas have existing carers services, however where applicable, we feel that there is a role here for Carers Centres to lead on the provision of information and advice relating to the Carer's Support Plan and support for carers and young carers. As a service, we ensure that we work closely with relevant statutory, independent and third sector partners who may also directly or indirectly support carers to ensure that they are equipped with the information they require. We do this through our Newsletter and regular updates, to support the carers they come into contact with. It is important also that carers are aware of their rights and can access information and advice to ensure they can access the support they require. Therefore, we strongly believe that it is important that there should be the introduction of a duty for local authorities to establish and maintain a service for providing people with information and advice, and that where applicable the local Carers Centre should be supported by the local authority to provide this service.

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

Comments: Even though we see benefit in this being covered within the wider

integration of health and social care, there would still need to be structures in place to ensure that Health Boards are continuing to fund carer support. As with the current funding through Carer Information Strategies, on-going funding would need to be ring-fenced to ensure that current services delivered through CIS Funding for carers is maintained – for many local authority areas this funding has provided the resource to set up and develop structured Carer Support Services – if this funding is removed then the basic infrastructure developed in many areas – including Stirling will collapse and unpaid carers would lose out on vital support.

Locally the Health Board, through Carer Information Strategy Funding has ensured that we as a Carers Centre are involved at strategic level in the planning of support and services for carers – it is crucial that this remains to ensure carer representation and engagement in any relevant local planning processes.

Therefore due to the uncertainties over funding and the involvement with local planning, there would need to be further reassurances and clarity on how the system would be shaped if section 12 of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 was repealed.

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

Comments: Introducing a duty to support carers and young carers is essential and ensures a clear process from assessment right through to services/support being provided. However, even though we appreciate there may be a requirement for an eligibility framework to manage and control delivery of services to carers, this must be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders – most importantly carers directly. Also by taking a national approach it may reduce the ‘postcode lottery’ of differing criteria for accessing support and services depending upon where you live in Scotland. Any eligibility criteria would need to outline clear timescales for support to be accessed, and shouldn’t be set too high in order to ensure that where possible preventative and anticipatory support is put in place to prevent carers from reaching crisis point.

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

Yes

No

Comments: It is crucial that supporting carers and young carers is a duty, and therefore something that local authorities must do rather than can do.

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

Yes

No

Comments: Short breaks ensure that carers can recharge their batteries and have some regular 'me' time which in turn can result in improved health and well-being. As the shift in the balance of care continues, there is an anticipation that more care will be provided in the community by family members, therefore ensuring that carers have a regular and sustainable break from their caring role is crucial. A duty to provide short breaks would support this and highlight the importance of this key service for carers.

We support the proposals within this duty for local authorities to publish a Short Breaks Statement.

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

Comments: Guidance should be issued for those undertaking the Carer's Support Plan on managing stages of caring. However there also needs to be a degree of flexibility within this guidance in relation to both the delivery of a Carers Support Plan and the subsequent planning of support, to ensure that any sudden or unanticipated changes in the caring role are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. This will ensure that caring has as minimal an impact as possible on the carers own health and well-being.

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

Comments: The transition from Children's to Adults Services for young carer is often not a smooth and stress free one. From experience, many young adult carers find themselves in a position where the support they once received is no longer available to them due to this transition. Therefore by ensuring that young carers have a Carer's Support Plan if they seem likely to become an adult carer, will hopefully address this. However, resources should also be targeted to ensure that age and stage appropriate support is available locally for young adult carers following the Carer's Support Plan, as this would appear to vary throughout

Scotland.

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

Comments: In order to ensure that services are fit for purpose and are outcome focussed, it is crucial that there is carer involvement in the planning, shaping and delivery of services for the people they care for and support for themselves. This should take place both within and outwith the scope of integration, to truly ensure that carers have an equal and active role in care planning and decision making.

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

Comments: As a carers organisation we have established mechanisms to ensure that the carers we support are informed of any proposed service changes, and have the opportunity to be consulted on this. Local carers' organisations are the collective voice of carers, many of whom would be unable to commit time due to their caring role to the wider involvement in the consultation and planning process. Therefore, with the relevant expertise that carers' organisations possess and having the collective voice of carers within their local area, it is crucial that there is a provision for the involvement of carers' organisations in the planning, shaping and delivery of services and support.

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

Comments: Carers have the lived knowledge and experience, and should therefore be considered as the experts in the planning of services for the person they care for and identifying the support they require themselves. By involving carers this ensures that they are treated as an equal partner in the provision and delivery of care, and are supported to both continue within their caring role and sustain a life outwith. It is for these reasons that we fully support establishing 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.

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?

Comments: From experience, we have found that many young carers report that they are often not acknowledged by key health and social care professionals for the role they play in providing care for a loved one – it is for this reason that we piloted the Young Carers Authorisation Card locally. Like adult carers, the knowledge and expertise of young carers should also be recognised and valued in care planning. However, mechanisms for involving young carers must be different from adult carers, ensuring that they don't feel overwhelmed or put off from providing their views. Therefore, there is a role here for local Young Carers Services who build up relationships with individual young carers, and can ensure that they are supported in the planning, shaping and delivery of services for cared-for people and support for themselves – but we need to ensure that we manage the balance in the best interests of the young carer.

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

Comments: We agree that it is essential that local strategies are developed for carers, and that there is a duty on local authorities and health boards to involve carers and carers organisations as key partners in the development of these. The strategies should identify local action areas that are linked in with the national Carers Strategy. In addition, we agree that young carers' needs must also be considered and this can be incorporated and achieved within a single carer's strategy – i.e. it may not be relevant to have a separate document.

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

Comments: It is essential that a range of services are available for carers, and that these are identified within the local action/implementation plans from the Carers Strategies. In many areas this can be achieved through the continued support and resourcing of existing carers' centres and services which provide free, confidential, and impartial support to carers. The local authority and health boards, should also ensure that as well as having a range of services, that these are appropriately promoted and highlighted to carers to ensure that they can access the support they need to continue within their

caring role and to sustain a life outwith.

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

Comments: GP's are best placed to identify carers and therefore it would be beneficial for a Carers Register to be maintained to ensure that the need to identify carers is maintained. However, it must go further than this and cannot just be seen as a box ticking exercise. Therefore a register should also involve a record of outputs, such as informing the carer of the opportunity to receive a Carers Support Plan, or referring them on for additional support.

There may be less of a need for local authorities to maintain a register, as some carers may not require the support of Social Work Services, and therefore this may not be very reflective of local needs. However, like above it would be more beneficial to find out statistics on the type of support offered by the local authority to the carer and the personal outcomes achieved.

Through the Integration of Health & Social Care, any registers should be combined to ensure that there is no duplication and that the focus is on carer identification and support.

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

Comments: From experience, there can be a variance in the level of identification and recognition of carers through the use of a Carers Register between various GP Practices within one local authority, let alone nationally. Therefore ensuring that good practice is spread amongst Health Boards, and also within individual Health Boards, would hopefully ensure that there is more equity in support being offered to carers.

It is important that good practice is spread and highlighted amongst Health Boards about the proactive use of Registers of Carers within GP practices. Throughout Stirling, using CIS Funding, all GP Practices – to some degree maintain a Carers Register (managed by the Practice Manager) who works alongside the allocated Carer Support Officer from the Carers Centre – this Carer Support Officer supports identified unpaid carers for that particular practice.

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

Yes

No

Comments: GP's should be expected to report annually to their respective Health Boards on the core contractual elements of the GP contract. Reporting should not just include the number of carers registered, but should also involve the support offered to carers and/or referrals made. This would further emphasise and place importance on GP's to ensure that carers are identified and receive the appropriate support. In addition, Health Boards themselves must generally be held accountable by ensuring that they report on compliance to the Scottish Government.

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)?

Comments: It should come down to the needs of the carer and what works best for them. If the carer is looking for direct support for themselves then it would be better for the local authority they live in to provide the Carers Support Plan, however if they are hoping that the assessment will provide support to the cared for person then it would be more applicable for the alternative local authority to undertake the Carers Support Plan.

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

Comments: It would be best if the cost was covered by the local authority providing the support, which may not necessarily be the local authority who undertook the Carers Support Plan. Even though we acknowledge that cost is an important factor, the concern would be that debates over cost would result in the carer not receiving the support they require.

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

Yes

No

Comments: Yes