

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: The word 'assessment' suggests to many carers that this is a judgement of their ability to care rather than an assessment of the support they require to continue their caring role. Changing the name to Carer's Support Plan will promote the identification of the needs of the carer in terms of their personal outcomes and aspirations and what support is required to enable them to continue in their caring role and enjoy a life outside caring.

The only concern we have identified with this name is that it may suggest that an outcome of completing this plan will be support for the carer and this will not always be the case.

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: A low level carers assessment could encourage carers who are not yet adversely affected by their caring responsibilities to identify emergency and anticipatory care plans. It is recognised that these types of support plans may be less in depth and may require a lighter approach. If all carers had to complete the full assessment this could be off-putting for carers who are currently coping with their caring responsibilities. It is also important that there is not an unnecessary burden on the local authority to complete full assessments for everyone with a caring responsibility.

Removing the substantial and regular test will improve access to effective preventative and early intervention support, as well as planning and crisis support. We believe, however, this will result in an increased uptake of carers assessments and in service demands that flow from these. It is essential that additional funding and a range of resources are in place to address this. Change to current eligibility test (ie substantial and regular) will also improve equity and consistency for all carers across the country.

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 per page 10, statement 12, a person may still be a carer even if the cared-for person is not in receipt of services as described above. . It may be that the level of care provided by the carer negates the need for local authority services on a regular basis however a carers assessment could identify a need for respite or a short break.

In rare instances a carers assessment has highlighted the need for interventions for a cared-for person not currently known to social work. In these circumstances, the advantages of extending the right to an assessment to a wider group of carers may help identify quality of life and wellbeing benefits as well as unmet need for social work services.

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: This is consistent with existing policy and practice in Aberdeenshire. Our carers assessment process includes a Carers Supported Self-Assessment which is available in an online version via the Council's website. We work closely with third sector providers to promote carers assessments and, as a result, they come from a variety of sources. We are designing a new pathway for our assessments where the third sector, carer and LA will work together to inform the carers support plan.

We believe a choice of routes will improve carers' awareness of their rights. It is important that NHS primary and acute care practitioners should also be actively raising awareness, signposting and offering carers access to assessment, support and planning. NHS staff are embedding mandatory carer awareness training into all their existing training provision.

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

Yes

No

Comments: There is a negative connotation to the statement as it stands. The purpose of the assessment is to explore the carer's aspirations and personal goals for a life outside of their caring responsibilities that will improve their outcomes and those of the cared-for person.

We do feel that it is important that the carer is aware of their choice whether or not they wish to continue to provide care. In some situations there may be a conflict of

interest between the carer and the cared for and it is important that a carer is not forced to take on a caring role which they are unable to cope with.

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: We recognise the importance of carers being informed and aware of timescales. We would be more supportive of a commitment to report performance against target response times, as a way of publicly and routinely monitoring the efficiency of our systems that also minimises administrative burdens on practitioners.

It is important that information about entitlement is unequivocally linked to assessment or support planning rather than entitlement to services.

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

Comments: We would be concerned to ensure that priorities are locally responsive and relevant, as well as equitable. Portability of assessments is important to improve continuity of care particularly in periods of transition. It is entirely relevant that the review process, following a move to a new environment/area, may result in changes and improvements to a carers support plan.

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: This would support the smoother transition from one area to another, whereby the Carers Support Plans could be reviewed and updated, taking into account the change of residence rather than the need to commence the process again with the new authority. This would avoid the potential for lengthy delays in support being provided, where appropriate for the carer, enabling the carer to continue with their caring role.

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: We currently fund voluntary sector services to provide advice and information in relation to services and this is already working very well and so we see no need for the LA to duplicate this provision.

Aberdeenshire Council already holds information for carers through our website and intranet but we are also looking to develop a specific online resource for carers where they can find information on all the different services available to them and where to look for information and advice. This piece of work will be completed in partnership with the NHS and third sector.

It is important that local authorities are able to fulfil the duty to provide information in a way that suits local circumstances. There have been occasions where a duty to establish a specific service is imposed that has led to significant public funds being utilised that may have been better invested elsewhere.

We recognise that Information for young carers is extremely important and needs to be widely accessible. Careful consideration must be given to how this is accessed by young carers in particular as information points are not very practical particularly in the more rural areas. Ensuring the statutory organisations and third sector services have access to regular up-to-date information which can then be shared with young carers in their settings is essential.

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: With the above conditions attached. We are aware that our NHS colleagues may hold a different opinion but in our experience we have not found the strategies particularly helpful or productive. Regular CIS meetings with staff from the LA, NHS and third sector ensure that we remain focused on the priorities relevant to our local communities. In Aberdeenshire regular third sector Carers Forums and the LA Carers Strategic Outcome group involve carers and enable carers' views to be taken into account and inform progress. Again this is an example of a situation where this work could divert resources from direct provision.

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: Aberdeenshire Council supports a duty to support carers and young carers however we have concerns about an eligibility framework and are concerned such framework may mean that those carers who do not meet the eligibility framework would not receive support –there needs to be some flexibility. It would be important that the eligibility framework is consistent across all LA's to ensure a fair and equitable system. The creation of the framework should be developed with LA, NHS, third sector and carers and the eligibility framework should include a provision to provide preventative support.

We are also aware that carers will be supported through the Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 when it comes into force.

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

Yes

No

Comments: If the eligibility framework is developed as above then there would be no need to retain the existing discretionary power.

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

Yes

No

Comments: The problem with a duty to provide short breaks is that it can conflict with a carers' right to choose what support they require and some carers do not wish for a short break. Some carers will arrange their own short breaks through for example Creative Breaks funding and whilst this is not provided directly by the local authority it still enables the carer and cared for to have a break. These types of breaks can be more difficult for the local authority to monitor.

Aberdeenshire Council has established a short breaks bureau which can provide carers with information and advice on respite and short breaks including more innovative types of short breaks. This service can also support carers to plan and book a break. This service can help to ensure sufficient provision of suitable breaks through identifying any gaps in provision.

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: Statutory guidance would be beneficial for practitioners ensuring awareness of stages of caring are highlighted and discussed with the carer and cared-for person together with the need to review the Carer's Support Plan when the carer/cared-for person reaches a new stage. This statutory guidance would help to ensure this was managed equitably across different LA areas.

If the only assessment for young carers is to be through the GIRFEC model and the development of a Child's Plan then structured guidance for this, focusing on young carers is essential. The diverse needs of young carers may not be met through the generic model alone, and that direction will be required.

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: This provision would support smoother transitions for all involved (not just the young person), earlier intervention and planning for support will support the young person during a potentially difficult period in their life. If a young carer is becoming an adult carer, knowing that a plan is in place to provide them with the support that they require to enable them to continue with their caring role will provide reassurance, consistency and stability for not only the young carer but the cared-for person too.

This is something that we already do within Aberdeenshire Council. When a Young Carer is going to become an adult carer then a Care Scotland Support Worker will work with a Support and Development worker from Voluntary Service Aberdeen and a LA Care Manager to develop an adult plan.

It is very important that support is provided in this period to enable a smooth transition.

It is important that the young carer is made aware of their right to chose whether to care and that it is not assumed that a young carer will continue to care into their adult years.

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: Carers have a key role to play within planning, shaping and delivery of services, they are very aware of the individual needs of those who are cared-for. This involvement is particularly important where the cared-for may have capacity but under estimate the level of support they are receiving from an unpaid carer or where the cared-for may have a condition such as dementia and believe that they are more able than would be identified by the carer. Within Aberdeenshire Council relevant staff attend third sector carers forums and we have carer representation on our Carers Strategic Outcome Group.

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: Carers' organisations are committed to ensuring that services are planned, shaped and delivered effectively for carers' therefore their involvement would be hugely beneficial. They are at the forefront of collating information with regards to the types of services and support that carers require and can be very innovative in their thoughts and processes.

Within Aberdeenshire council we have third sector representation on our Carers Strategic Outcome Group and in our CIS group to ensure their involvement at the highest level. We also have a carers' providers forum group which involves LA, NHS and third sector providers.

Whilst we feel the involvement of carers' organisations is vitally important it is also important that carers themselves are included in addition to this as it cannot be assumed that carers organisations represent the viewpoints of all carers.

This is very important for young carers services as well and we have an excellent resource in the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance. It is crucial that their knowledge and expertise is brought to the table.

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 and Young Carers often play a key role in the provision of support for cared-for people, therefore they would be able to provide information with regards to the level of support required, possible networks of support and potential opportunities for development. This approach also ties in well with the EPiC principles. Guidance must be shared across the statutory services to allow them to support this involvement. In our experience, this is more frequently an issue for planning for health needs rather than social care and therefore this principle should apply to Health Boards as well as Local Authorities.

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: This would be viewed positively as young carers often provide regular, much needed support for the cared-for person. They are well informed about the cared-for person's needs and aspirations and are often able to identify solutions where issues arise, which others may not.

This involvement of young carers is very important. However this model would need to be age and maturity level appropriate. Consideration would also need to be given to how much experience they have in a caring role. In terms of support for young carers their input is essential as they know what works and what is needed and the numbers of young carers who go on to work for Young Carers Projects is testimony to the inside knowledge and vast experience that they have.

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: This is not necessary as LA and Health work together and are committed to doing so. As mentioned in our response to Q17 we already have a structure in place which supports this collaboration and we extend that collaboration to third sector organisations. Integration will further support this partnership approach.

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 would welcome the introduction of statutory provision for LA and Health Boards to ensure a sufficient range of services is available and we would welcome guidance which would help inform how 'sufficient' be defined. We recognise that additional funding may be required to support this. The provision appears to be 'patchy' for young adult carers in their early twenties and resources may be required to help support this age group as they transition from child to adult services.

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 and Local Authority's already have the provision to identify carers within records and this is already being done, although, we do recognise that there is room for improvement. Establishing and maintaining a separate register would deflect finite resources from actual care/support provision. It is also already in the GP contracts that carers must be identified and signposted as appropriate. Integration may identify opportunities for ICT systems to integrate and make this information available to both the LA and NHS.

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: This would promote the positive benefits to carers, e.g. extended appointments, raising awareness of carers and their needs/common issues. It is very important that services to Carers are equitable across all LA areas and sharing of good practice will help to promote this.

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

Yes

No

Comments: If compliance is not monitored support and service delivery may vary greatly across Scotland resulting in carers receiving differing levels of service based on where they live. If we agree as in Q22 that there is no need for legislative provision then the Health Boards must take responsibility for monitoring compliance.

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: Where the LA in which the cared for person lives accepts that an individual is a carer for the resident then responsibility for assessing and funding should lie with the LA in which the cared-for person lives. This does not preclude the LA from "sub contracting" the assessment and service provision to another LA while retaining responsibility for the cost. However, this can only truly work if there is close collaboration between the two authorities.

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: As above. Cost should remain with the LA in which the cared for lives.

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

Yes

No

Comments: Guidance will help to ensure consistency across different LA areas.