

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
TO SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19TH APRIL, 2018**

UPDATE ON UNPAID CARERS

Purpose:

To inform Scrutiny of the work carried out and work planned to support unpaid carers in Carmarthenshire and the wider Region.

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Introduction

This report offers an overview of the developments and support provided to unpaid Carers in West Wales and, in particular, Carmarthenshire. The legislative framework supporting Carers has been brought together under the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014 and the Future Generations Act 2015 to improve the status and eligibility of Carers. In 2016/17 the Care Inspectorate Wales (formerly CSSIW) carried out an audit of Carer Support in Carmarthenshire which identified very high levels of satisfaction from Carers and all round positive outcomes for service providers. Partnership working across and within organisations is demonstrated by the regional successes gained under the Carers Measure and the new Act whilst in Carmarthenshire there is a vibrant network of 3rd sector organisations supporting carers, both formally and informally, alongside the Council and the Health Board.

Unpaid Carers in Carmarthenshire.

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Anyone could be a carer – a 15-year-old girl looking after a parent with an alcohol problem, a 40-year-old man caring for his partner who has terminal cancer, or an 80-year-old woman looking after her husband who has Alzheimer's disease.

Unpaid Carers contribute over 96% of all community care, dwarfing the services that we commission and finance. The economic contribution of 24,000 carers in the county is conservatively estimated at £500,000,000 per annum (Carers UK/Carers Wales 2017) whilst their sacrifices cannot be estimated or valued, we simply could not manage without them. We must also recognise that many, possibly the majority of carers, do not seek support or assistance and they are content within their role. However there is a significant number who are challenged in all sorts of ways by the fact that they are committed to caring for another adult or a disabled child. The extent of these challenges can compromise their Equalities and their Human Rights.

Unpaid care has been recognised through legal frameworks for decades but the significant change came in 1995 with the Carers Recognition and Services Act. This was further strengthened by two further Acts in 2000, and 2004 – The Carers and Disabled Children Act and The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act. More recently and only in Wales we had the 2010 Carers (Strategies) Measure – to stimulate consultation with carers and information for carers. Collectively along with a host of other legislation these were subsumed into the Social Services and Well Being Act (SSWBA) 2014. This legislation went even further and elevated the status of unpaid care by removing eligibility criteria for assessment and introducing proportionate assessment (and support services where eligible) for all unpaid carers.

It is this legal framework that we now operate within and the following report will hopefully demonstrate how we are addressing regional and local issues in line with the Act and the Welsh Government's strategic priorities for unpaid carers.

The SSWBA introduced in 2016 emphasises new approaches to care and support that direct, amongst many other things, we are to work collaboratively across agencies and across regions. Fortunately and as a result of the 2010 Carers (Strategies) Measure we have been collaborating jointly and regionally since 2012 allowing strong relationships and partnerships to develop. This work has been supported by funding from the Welsh Government (WG) and consequently annual reporting has been a necessity.

Regional Developments

Under the Carers Measure the regional work has focused on the two elements of Consultation and Information. Consulting with carers involves including carers in:

- The design and delivery of health and social care services (co-production)
- The assessment and care or support planning of the person they care for, including transfers of care

Information for carers is about:

- Telling them about their rights and how to access them
- Telling them about the support they may be entitled to (including benefits advice) and the support that is available in the community
- Telling them about the condition/prognosis of the person they are caring for
- Telling them about maintaining safety in their caring role

- Telling them about maintaining their own health and well being

Investors in Carers

One of the great successes from the Carers Measure work has been the adoption and creation of the now well established Investors in Carers programme. This evidence based award scheme recognises participating groups for the way that they recognise and support unpaid carers. The scheme is supported by a regional manager with 3 county development officers who aid and facilitate participation. Every GP practice across west Wales has attained the bronze level award whilst many have progressed to or are working towards Silver level. Pharmacies, schools and colleges (addressing young carers), clinical areas, wards, community teams and third sector partners are participating. The scheme meets the requirements of the Carers Measure in several dimensions. Recognising that resources are limited the scheme places a responsibility on existing staff cohorts and individuals to be inclusive of carers, thereby spreading the weight of responsibility to those best placed to be effective. It promotes inclusion of carers in consultations (primarily regarding the person that they care for) and information which means that carers are becoming more and more everybody's business. Investors in Carers (IiC) has been recognised and identified by Welsh Government as best practice with a directive for all regional partnerships in Wales to adopt or emulate.

Information for Carers

Information for carers has been a long standing provision from social services departments. Carmarthenshire has a service originally commissioned in the late 1990's and our two partner local authorities have similar provisions. The regional agenda has allowed us to review our information provision, share best practice and develop information initiatives on a regional basis. This experience and expertise has been an inclusive element of the strategic approach and rolled out to health provisions. For example: all hospital sites now have dedicated Carers Information notice boards that are managed and updated at least monthly. Complementing this is the IiC scheme which requires participating groups to demonstrate how they are informing carers and many, such as GP surgeries and wards will have installed Carer Information boards.

Basic information – termed level 1 – in the form of posters, leaflets and branded materials have been developed and disseminated for health practitioners to distribute to carers on first contact e.g. visiting times or at outpatients clinics. Level 2 information – more specific and with greater detail has been developed and distributed e.g. 'Say I'm fine and mean it' – a booklet to assist carers to look out for themselves and Medicines Management for Carers – a booklet to inform carers about the safe keeping and administration of drugs.

Outreach

During the planning stage for the Carers Measure it was identified that carers were requesting support through a dedicated worker – someone to refer to them and help support them. In response, Carmarthenshire introduced the Carers Information Outreach Service commissioned by Hywel Dda Health Board. Effectively, this service also catered for the additional carers referred to the service as an outcome of the liC programme. Outreaching to carers can be critical because so many are isolated and trapped by their caring responsibilities. The service has proved overwhelmingly successful and supports the SSWBA by ‘offering information in a variety of ways including face to face’. Further outcomes from this service are reported under ‘local developments’ below.

Carer Aware

Raising awareness of carers, carers rights and how to support them was deemed critical to the implementation of the Carers Measure and investment from the supporting funding has been utilised to develop an e-learning course ‘Carer Aware’ with a further version ‘Young Carer Aware’ developed in recognition of the special challenges faced by children who take on caring duties for a parent or other family member. The course has been supported by a dedicated role to promote, monitor and report on the take up, completion and outcomes of these courses. Across the region there are now hundreds more professionals who have completed the course and have declared positive learning outcomes.

Funding and Collaboration

The Carers Measure was repealed when the SSWBA was implemented with a directive from WG that the impetus from the Measure was maintained within the Act. Funding from WG over a three year period to date supports the transition period and amounts to £115,000 for the region. The professional capital established from regional and cross agency working has been sustained and the Carers working group is a good example of successful collaboration ensuring that the relationships, protocols and governance for Carers remains fit for purpose under the West Wales Care Partnership to deliver further initiatives under the SSWB Act.

Population Needs Assessment

Under the new Act Section 14 Regional Partnership Boards are required to conduct regional population needs assessment (PNA) to form a baseline and inform planners of what actions are required across several service areas within health and social care to improve outcomes for the region’s citizens. All statutory agencies, third sector partners, service users and their carers have been included in the process. The West Wales Carers Development Group has contributed to this assessment and has developed a Carers Delivery Plan to address the identified shortfalls to commence from April 2018.

Carmarthenshire developments

The Carers Measure influenced Information and Consultation and was designed with a primary focus on engaging health colleagues with the carer agenda because there was national agreement that recognising and supporting carers was best initiated from both primary and secondary care settings. However, social services departments have borne the greatest responsibility for supporting carers since the earliest legislation was introduced and this remains the situation at present. Social services are responsible for the assessment and provision of support for carers (where eligible) and the new Act has elevated carers by offering them equal rights to those of the people that they care for.

Carmarthenshire has been pro-active in supporting carers through two strategies, the second of which concluded in 2017. Areas addressed have included:

- Identifying and Recognising carers
- Support planning for carers
- Information for carers
- Commissioning third sector support services for carers
- Developing new forms of breaks from caring
- Direct payments for carers
- Promoting good practice when employing carers
- Advocacy for carers
- Self-help peer support groups for carers
- Carers Forum – representing the voice of carers
- Provider Forum for organisations directly and indirectly involved with carers

The introduction of the SSWBA has negated some actions that were planned simply because associated training and staff development had to take priority to ensure smooth roll out of the Act and compliance with new legislation. Carers Strategy actions such as training and audit have been withheld to allow for this. However, workforce development has included training on the revised rights of carers and seen the introduction of new practice under the Act such as the combined assessment which many teams have now adopted. The combined assessment looks at family units in the round – it examines the service user's circumstances and the carers capacity, ability and willingness to contribute ongoing care and to what degree. The carer's needs for work or a career, their training and education needs and their leisure and social life must be considered during the combined assessment. The combined assessment requires the permission of all parties. This is a significant step forward to ensure carer inclusion.

Carers Information Outreach Service

The SSWBA determines that local authorities must develop Information, Advice and Assistance services as a first line of support and must also engage third sector partners to deliver services. In Carmarthenshire a Carers Information Service has been established over many years and in more recent times has been enhanced through the introduction of outreach services. Hosted since 2014 by Carers Trust Crossroads Sir Gar the service has evolved into a comprehensive Information, Advice and Assistance service for carers. Carers have always identified information as their greatest need and the service commissioned from Crossroads is an exemplar. The service offers telephone contact or e-mail contact and functions on an office hours basis. Outreach, commissioned by HDdUHB, consists of 3 part time workers linked to CRT footprints with a generic remit for all carers. Home visits, signposting, light counselling, benefits advice, local links such as carers support groups, and specific information are inclusive to the role.

'Proportionate' assessment as described by the SSWBA is offered and an evidence based Carers Outcomes Star utilised to determine a carers stress levels which indicate whether referral to social services for formal assessment is necessary. Monitoring of the service demonstrates how effective it is at meeting carers' needs without the requirement of formal assessment. Less than 10% of carers get referred on to social services. The service contributes to the prevention agenda by ensuring carers receive the right information when they need it and provide a safety net for carers whose situations deteriorate. Satisfaction levels amongst carers who have benefited are highly complementary.

The service also has a website with links to the National Carers Trust and other carer focused support services. Information fact sheets, useful publications, a carer's blog page and other resources ensure carers can access information 24/7. A Facebook account and Twitter account enable the service to connect with hundreds of carers simultaneously to deliver news or seek opinion and support. Assisting with the promotion of Carers' Week and National Carers Rights Day is inclusive to the service with very good outcomes evidenced.



Carers Rights Day 2017

The commissioning of the service from Crossroads has benefited from their social enterprise status as a charity. In addition to making financial contributions to the information service and the outreach service (amounting to the equivalent of one full time post) they have made significant investment to develop the Carers Outcomes Star and Charity Log, a comprehensive data base to collate and produce statistical reports. Grants accessed on behalf of Carers from the Carers Trust amount to over £7,000 last year and activities for carers are directly funded by Crossroads.

Young Carers

Young Carers in Carmarthenshire are supported through an internal council service that is restricted to approx. 40 young carers at any given time. This reflects the sometimes challenging circumstances of young carers and ensures that those young carers in the most difficult scenarios are able to access support. However, there are further young carers who warrant support and Crossroads has to date drawn down in excess of £300,000 for the provision of two additional young carer services: The Young Adult Carer Service and the Children of Educational Years young carer service. Both are secured over 3 years with further funding to extend being sought. To support these services Crossroads contribute further resources for sessional activity workers and are also funding a 'work experience' temporary post for a young carer who is challenging the UK Government on Carers Allowance benefit.

Learning & Work Institute event when Lucy Prentice met Princess Anne as part of the campaign to address Carers Allowance benefit and how it restricts Young Adult Carers to 20 hours of study per week or they lose the benefit.



Replacement care for Carers (Respite)

The second most sought service by carers is 'a break from caring'. Carers in the most challenging roles, for example: dementia carers or learning disability carers often depend on having timely breaks from caring that allow them to rest and recharge so that they can carry on caring. Very often carers request support to have a break for more practical reasons – getting out to the shops or to pay bills, go to the bank or attend the dentist or doctor – breaks from caring are not always about a rest from caring, they are often about a lifeline.

Crossroads Carers Trust Sir Gar is our main commissioned provider of domiciliary replacement care and they have been growing year on year as a local charity. During 2016/2017 the service provided 131,687 hours of replacement care with 104,736 of those hours provided in homes. This reflects an 11% increase over the year and demonstrates a clear commitment from the department to support unpaid carers.

Residential breaks provided within the council's own provisions for older people, and learning disabled adults have also been well subscribed to. During 2016/2017 a total of 12,027 nights of respite care were provided to 473 families (allocated according to assessed need) whilst within the same client groups 714 service users and carers were assessed and offered a total of 184,718 units of day care, Disabled children and their families were supported with 2,025 nights respite within our own facilities and through Direct Payments. Further commissioned support, for service users with enduring mental illness, was provided by Hafal, Huts, Links and MIND who provide day opportunities and activities for service users that facilitate breaks from caring for their families. These Carers are also offered a distinct Carer Advocacy service from Eiriol, helping them to understand and navigate complex processes and circumstances to achieve their rights and the best outcomes for those they care for.

In 2017 the Welsh Government provided £3 million for additional respite services of which Carmarthenshire received £180,000. Due to a delay in the distribution of funding from WG a programme of respite provision was developed and implemented to deliver services for carers and service users. Some of the outcomes achieved have been overwhelmingly appreciated by carers across the county. Examples include:

- Young Adult Carers and Young Carers getting experiences they normally wouldn't
- Mental Health carers having opportunities to enjoy group activities and outings
- Learning Disability carers having additional opportunities on weekends
- Parent carers of disabled children receiving direct payments to facilitate breaks of their choice

A full report on the outcomes from this resource will be available by the end of April.

Caring Boss Awards

During 2015/16 the Carers Action Plan introduced in association with Crossroads carers Trust the Carmarthenshire Caring Boss Awards. The Awards are biennial and recognise Managers at work or employers who have been supportive of employees with challenging caring roles. 2017 saw the awards made for the second occasion during Carers Rights Day and are designed to raise the profile of working carers and how 'Bosses' can support them. Welsh Government has since taken up the idea and will be introducing a National Employer Award through Carers Wales.

Winners of the Caring Boss Awards 2015

Left to right – Back row: Martin Morris CEO Crossroads Sir Gar, Robert Brain Data Manager CCC – Joint Bronze Award, Jonathan Rees Carers Development Officer CCC and front row: Dr Lois Gravelle Joint Bronze Award, Ann Johnson, Llynyfran Surgery - Gold Award and Lynne Howells, Eiriol – Silver Award.



Above and Beyond Awards

Following introduction of the Caring Boss Awards a different award scheme was introduced. This time to recognise individuals who have gone to extraordinary lengths to support carers. The inaugural awards event was held at Carers Rights day 2016.



The recipients with their certificates: Elizabeth Evans MBE, Margaret Williams, Carole Budenis and Steven Griffiths on behalf of the Trustees of Crossroads Sir Gar.

In December 2017 Elizabeth Evans MBE passed away suddenly and has left a huge gap in Llanelli's carer community where for years she campaigned and supported carers. In future years the Awards will be titled The Elizabeth Evans Awards for services to Carers.

Carers Emergency Cards

For many years the Department has maintained a Carers Emergency Card scheme that offers carers a degree of assurance when they need to leave the cared for person unattended for any of a number of reasons e.g. Going shopping and paying bills or visiting other family relatives. Should anything untoward happen whilst they are away from the cared for person the scheme provides carers with a card to carry on their person that can be handed to or found by emergency staff that tells them the person is a carer and someone at home depends on them. By contacting Careline a contingency plan is invoked to maintain ongoing care until the carer can resume or alternative plans can be made.

The Carers Action Plan 2014 – 2017 reviewed the scheme and planned to improve it by:

- Introducing a new registered ID element for carers – that will afford the carer concessions at leisure and entertainment provisions whilst accompanying a cared for person
- Offers them entry to the Carmarthenshire Local Awards scheme – a staff discount scheme for CCC employees
- Contingency plans in an emergency

The improved scheme will be rolled out imminently.

Carmarthenshire Carers Forum

In Carmarthenshire we have recognised the importance of engagement and co-production to ensure that we have meaningful dialogue with the groups we work

with. Since 2015 we have, through a commissioning process facilitated the development of Carmarthenshire Carers Forum. The Forum provides a service for carers where they can freely talk about their circumstances, share and learn from each other's' experiences and benefit from invited guest speakers and trainers. The Forum is supported by the Carers Information Service who provide a range of information for those attending to take away with them. Conversely the benefit to the local authority and its partners is the regular consultation and engagement opportunities to get feedback on service development plans or new initiatives. In addition issues that are affecting carers are recorded and fed back into commissioning or operations as appropriate.

Recently a new post has been developed to address an issue that was brought to the attention of management by the Forum. Parent carers of children with disabilities, who do not qualify for social care, are entitled to have their support needs assessed. The new post is designed to facilitate this and also provide a link between the community and the teams to ensure solutions to support carers are communicated and utilised. The chair of the Forum has a seat on the West Wales Care Partnership.

Carers Champions

Developing a group of carers 'Champions' within our operational teams was an action within our Carers Action Plan. At the moment there are 13 members of staff who are signed up as carers 'Champions' – they act as a focal point within their teams to help others in how they support carers. They are motivated to promote the carers agenda and offer information and guidance to colleagues who may be less familiar with carers' issues or services available in the community to support carers. The Champions meet quarterly as a group to learn about developments and discuss common issues and best practice.

Future Developments

The Welsh Government recently published a list of three priorities that they want to see implemented in Wales to maintain the momentum of previous strategies and the new Act.

- Supporting life alongside caring - All carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring.
- Identifying and recognising carers - Fundamental to the success of delivering improved outcomes for carers is the need to improve carers' recognition of their role and to ensure they can access the necessary support.
- Providing information, advice and assistance - It is important that carers receive the appropriate information and advice where and when they need it.

Working on a local footprint within Carmarthenshire we will be endeavouring to uphold the WG's priorities through focusing our activity to support carers around the 3 elements of support to have a life alongside caring, maintaining our work to promote the recognition of carers and offering information, advice and assistance.

Regionally we will be implementing the Local Plan that has been drawn up following the Population needs assessment.

Summary

The above report demonstrates the high levels of recognition and support for Carers across the West Wales region and, in particular, the county of Carmarthenshire. Compliance with legislation and commitment of resources form the foundation of support for Carers that has been recognised by the CIW. Collaboration with health colleagues, neighbouring local authority colleagues and the third sector is prominent and highlights the positive approach to joint working around Carers that has developed in the region to align with the SSWBA.

Direct support for Carers can be illustrated, for example, by the amount of replacement care we provide that enables carers a rest from caring or opportunity to do other things that are important to them. One indicator reflecting this is that Crossroads Carers Trust Sir Gar, a 3rd sector provider, is the biggest branch (turnover and employees) of the organisation in Wales. The report also describes how we are being creative in the way that we address challenges – the Investors in Carers scheme and the Caring Boss Awards have both been recognised as good practice by Welsh Government and Carers Wales and will be emulated.

We have been responsive to what Carers have told us, evidenced by the hugely successful outreach service commissioned after consultation with Carers for the Carers Measure and continue to invest in a Carers Forum that offers carers space to express their issues and desires in a comfortable environment that provides an information conduit to and for service planners. Our work in the future will build on these positives through a model of cooperation and co-production with Carers as we set about meeting the Welsh Governments three priorities for Carers.