

Cross Party group on carers

Thursday 15 January 2015, 12:30pm

Attending: Claudia Beamish MSP, Joan McAlpine MSP, Anne McTaggart MSP, Gillian Reid, Enable Scotland; Paul Thomas, Dumfries and Galloway User and Carer Forum; Harry Robertson, Enable Scotland/North Lanarkshire Carers Together; Andrea Donogue, Barchester Care; Jane Greenacre, VOCAL; Sarah McDermott, Health and Social Care ALLIANCE; Jude Clarke, Division of Clinical Psychology, British Psychological Society; Clare Lally; Lisa Ross, Mindroom; Norma Begg, Mindroom; Lesley Jeffrey, Dumfries and Galloway Carers Centre; Bill Beaugie; Fiona Collie, Carers Scotland; Ian Hood, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland; Gill Westwood, Citizens Advice Scotland Kinship Care; Gordon Dewar, West Glasgow Carers Centre; Moira Oliphant, Scottish Government Carers Policy Branch; Eva Kestner, office of Rhoda Grant MSP; Caroline Hickling.

Apologies: Graeme Dey MSP, Johann Lamont MSP, Alexandra Belgeonne

Joan McAlpine chaired the meeting and welcomed all the attendees. There were no matters arising.

Gillian Reid from Enable Scotland gave a presentation about emergency planning and phase two of their Picking up the Pieces project (Slides from the presentation are available.)

Joan reflected on the differences between local authorities in emergency planning and asked if the mapping exercise had revealed any areas of particular good practice. Gillian said that Glasgow's system works well and that in general, areas like Glasgow where the voluntary sector and the local authority worked well together, was good. Integration with statutory social work is important so that the plan works well when tested. Claudia Beamish stated that although this meeting was concentrating on issues for older carers, it was known that young carers also worried about their caring role in an emergency & what would happen to the person they looked after. Gillian confirmed that older carers were the focus of the initial research report and that generally older people with caring responsibilities were more worried about their caring responsibilities in emergency situations. However the programme recognised that all carers face these issues and the learning and good practice would reflect this.

Fiona Collie said that the National Carer Organisations agreed that emergency planning should be included in the forthcoming Carers Support Plan, but hard to reach carers would still be excluded, and not all families want to be involved with social work services. She asked if any learning could be taken from Glasgow City Council's power of attorney campaign in terms of generally widening conversation & promoting discussion of difficult subjects. Gillian confirmed that she had recently met with the lead on emergency planning in Glasgow and had discussed their work around guardianship and power of attorney which is an integral part of future planning.

Paul Thomas praised the inclusion of procedures from the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act and asked whether the project was including private sector providers of supported accommodation and residential care, as people who look after someone in these types of accommodation are not always recognised as carers. He also asked whether advocacy would be included as part of the mapping. Gillian confirmed that the private sector should be involved, especially now that self-directed support is being implemented across Scotland. She also confirmed that advocacy for carers and supported people is included in the mapping process, although access to advocacy for carers will differ and will often depend on them meeting other criteria, for example age or mental health issues.

Gill Westwood asked about kinship care. Gillian said that she would be interested to meet with Citizens Advice Scotland to discuss issues around emergency planning and kinship care arrangements.

Joan pointed out that all carers are very different and wanted to know how emergency planning recognised different needs. Gillian confirmed that although all carers have their own specific needs, there are some general shared needs & this is what drives robust policy decisions, with individual variation dealt with in individual cases. It was pointed out that the term 'emergency' could be misleading, as the situations are not always catastrophic emergencies but any situation where the carer cannot provide their usual amount of care, such as needing to attend medical appointments, and that this kind of irregular short term replacement care could be very difficult to get in some situations. Gillian confirmed that the project workers had begun the mapping process and were developing networks, as the pilot projects had just started at the end of 2014.

Jude Clarke asked if Enable Scotland's management of the project meant that the focus would be on caring for people with a learning disability. Gillian said that learning disability issues had informed the first stage of the project but part of the next phase was also about widening the project to a range of caring situations and she was keen to hear about examples of emergency planning with all carer groups.

Moira Oliphant asked if there was standard terminology for emergency planning, as new legislation for carers is currently being drafted and it would be helpful to use standard terms if available. It was acknowledged that there are different terms for emergency planning, and this is compounded by the difficulties in needing to recognise anticipatory and future care planning within this. Decision makers also need to share their thoughts and knowledge around this type of planning. Fiona Collie said that research from Carers Scotland has shown that carers frequently neglect their own health as it is too difficult to get replacement care to cover non-emergency appointments but over time this can lead to more serious issues. She asked if technology was also included in the mapping process, as Carers UK have an app called Jointly (<https://www.jointlyapp.com>) that helps with anticipatory care planning. Gillian reiterated that a range of organisations were being consulted as part of the mapping process & various different approaches were being discussed.

Joan asked about carers who became too ill to provide care and faced an immediate crisis. Gillian said that a full national picture was unknown at this stage, but the main issue in crisis situations was that inappropriate short term care was provided for the cared-for person but this ended up being long-term, or the carer tried to manage the situation without support and further compromised their own health. Some personal experiences of this kind of situation were shared, with some references to fear of asking for help from the local authority due to inappropriate replacement care and lack of flexibility, and Joan noted that third sector involvement from the beginning & close working with the local authority seemed to provide the best outcomes. Gillian confirmed that involvement of the third sector was happening more in all aspects of planning emergency care.

Claudia Beamish asked Moira Oliphant to give further information about the forthcoming carers' legislation. Moira confirmed that many responses to the consultation had mentioned the inclusion of emergency planning and confirmed that planned changes to the carers assessment process (due to become carer support plans in the new legislation) would include emergency planning if this would be appropriate to the carer. She clarified that issues not dealt with by the primary legislation would be dealt with through regulations and statutory guidance that accompanied the new legislation but it was not clear at this stage what elements would be in regulations. This does not mean that elements that are in regulations are of a lesser status. Moira also confirmed that the

Scottish Government's response to the consultation would be published in the next few weeks, before the next meeting on 11 March.

Ian Hood said that changes to the carer's assessment process were welcomed, as recent research from the Learning Disability Alliance had shown that not many carers' assessments were carried out & changes need to be made. Lesley Jeffrey confirmed that not many carers' assessments were done in Dumfries and Galloway & wondered whether new legislation would actually change things. It was acknowledged that many carers are not sure if they have had a carer's assessment, particularly if a shared assessment with the cared for person has taken place, so new legislation and guidance would seek to clarify this and allow carers to choose the method that worked best for them.

Lesley spoke about the carers' strategy in Dumfries and Galloway and its provisions for emergency planning. The carers centre in Dumfries and Galloway provides emergency cards for carers (as do many other carers services) but problems arise if the carer has no friends or family who can be an emergency contact. Social work services cannot be included as the emergency contact. These cards are designed to deal with short term emergencies when carers are delayed unexpectedly or involved in accidents, but thinking about this kind of planning has inspired further thinking about longer term planning. Joan asked if any particular rural issues had been identified. Lesley confirmed that care agencies and other home-based services could be difficult to access for rural and isolated families even if service users were directing their own support. This is related to lack of travelling allowance and fuel cost issues for care workers. Most care is provided by friends and family and emergency support is frequently provided by other family members or by organisations such as the church.

Joan thanked all the attendees for their contributions. Gillian asked that examples of good practice in emergency planning were sent to her. Materials from the Picking up the Pieces project will be circulated to the group.

Topics for future meetings

Topics for future meetings were discussed. The Carer Positive employer's kitemark, kinship care, young carers, carers' legislation and self-directed support were all proposed as future topics.

Next meeting of the CPG

The next meeting of the cross party group on carers will be on Wednesday 11th March at 5:30pm in TG20.21 and will discuss the implementation of self-directed support for carers.