

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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SUPPORT FOR CARERS

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Summary

This report provides information on support for Carers in Medway, as requested by members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background and Policy Framework

- 1.1 In recent years, Local Authorities and the NHS have had duties to Carers as set out in various legislation and guidance, now brought together in the recent Care Act 2014. Medway Council has long been committed to supporting Carers (adult carers and young carers) and the Cabinet has directed Council officers to support Carers in the important work they undertake in our community. Council targets have been set for the number of Carer assessments and reviews and Medway Council has decided to undertake a Carers Survey each year, when the national requirement is every two years. A briefing note on the 2013/14 Carers Survey in Medway was issued to members of the Committee last month.
- 1.2 Members of the Committee have held a themed meeting focusing on the needs of Carers, hearing powerful personal testimony from Medway Carers, and then monitored actions to support Carers. Medway has a Carers Partnership Board that works with the Council and NHS locally to influence and shape support for Carers by representing their views, needs and aspirations.
- 1.3 The 2011 Census provides statistics for the number of Medway residents who are Carers and the level of support they provide for the person they care for. It identified 25,000 Carers, with nearly 7,000 carers providing over 50 or more hours of unpaid care.

2 The Care Act 2014

- 2.1 The Government is clear in the Care Act 2014 about the distinction between adult and young carers. The Act places emphasis on improving the rights of adult carers although this is within the context of a 'whole family approach'.
- 2.2 For the first time, Carers will be recognised in law in the same way as those they care for. One of the most significant changes for Carers is that the Care Act 2014 gives Local Authorities a responsibility to assess a Carer's own needs for support. Under previous legislation and guidance, Local Authorities were not required to provide support to Carers. In order to qualify for an assessment for support Carers were required to provide a "substantial amount of care on a regular basis". Under the Care Act 2014 all Carers will now be entitled to an assessment. If a Carer is eligible for support for particular needs, they will now have a legal right to receive support for those needs, just like the people they care for.
- 2.3 The Carer's assessment will consider the impact of the caring role on the Carer. It will also consider the things that a Carer wants to achieve in their own day to day life, including if they wish to continue with their caring role. Information, advice and guidance will be provided. If the Carer is assessed as being eligible for support from the Local Authority, the Carer can request a personal budget, which will give them choice and control over how their needs are met.
- 2.4 There is an emphasis on integration in the Care Act 2014 particularly between health and social care. This can be a crucial area for Carers, for example when the person they are caring for is discharged from hospital. There are other important areas in the Care Act 2014 that impact on Carers, including the following, but not an exhaustive list:
 - Local Authorities must establish and maintain a care and support market and promote diversity and quality in provision of services, including sufficient provision to enable Carers to participate in work, education and training. The Local Authority must assess current and future demand and ensure that services are sustainable.
 - There is also a new duty for Local Authorities to promote the integration of care and support services through the integration of health services and other care and support providers.

3 Medway Approach

- 3.1 Medway Council and NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are currently developing a joint Carers Strategy. The joint strategy will support integrated commissioning across health and social care and ensure that the needs of carers, including young carers, are supported by appropriate, effective and impactful commissioning activity and local support services.
- 3.2 Medway's Better Care Fund has 11 overarching themes, with one specific theme focusing on Carers' Support. Other themes will have implications for support to Carers and work plans will be developed across the Council and CCG over the next year, ready to be implemented from April 2015. Carers will be invited to engage in the development of these themes and associated plans.

- 3.3 Medway Council has very recently re-commissioned a range of Carers' Support Services, including a revised Carers' Break service with increased hours (31,000 per annum) to support Carers to have a break from their caring role. Medway CCG and Medway Council have jointly re-commissioned the Carers Support Payment fund, which offers a one-off payment of up to £400 for unpaid carers to support them to have a break from their caring role. The funding will support 573 unpaid Carers. The Carers Support Payment is accessed via GP surgeries, increasing identification of unpaid carers within GP surgeries.
- 3.4 The design of these services was informed by the findings of the Carers' Survey. Medway has now completed two – one in 2012/13 and one in 2013/14. This gathers Carers' views on their quality of life, the amount of control they have over their daily life, their awareness of support services, and their satisfaction with them.
- 3.5. For the Carers' Survey 2013/14, questionnaires were sent to 307 Carers, and 131 were returned (42.7% response rate). 77.0% of Carers reported that they have been included and consulted in discussion about the person they care for. This is higher than our comparator group average of 73.2% (based on 2012/13 comparator data). 46.7% of Carers were extremely or very satisfied with the care and support they received. This is higher than our comparator group average of 44.7% (based on 2012/13 comparator data). The survey also includes a 'satisfied' category but this is not counted by Government in reporting back Carer Survey findings.
- 3.6 In 2013/14, Medway Council provided funding to recruit a specialist Carers' Support Team to increase the number of assessments and reviews for Carers, ensuring they were offered an assessment (or review if previously known to Adult Social Care) and eligible support needs were met for both the Carer and the person they care for.
- 3.7 In 2013/14, 1,287 Carers were offered an assessment or review with over 90% accepting. This is a significant increase on the previous year when 674 Carers were offered an assessment or review.
- 3.8 Medway Council and NHS Medway CCG commission support to Young Carers and the Carers Partnership Board was privileged to hear the views of some Medway Young Carers in 2013/14. Resulting from their presentation a group of Young Carers were introduced to the benefits of telecare and technology to support their family members and this was well received. There is more to be done to support Young Carers in Medway including their request for support in accessing transport and leisure/sports for free or reduced cost in recognition of their family circumstances.

4 Risk Management

- 4.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Failure to support Carers adequately or effectively, resulting in poor outcomes for them and the people they care for, potentially putting them at risk.
Description	Good support for Carers that has positive affect on their wellbeing and resilience will ensure that the Council's, and partners, duties to Carers and people cared for is met in a meaningful way and minimises the risks.
Action to avoid or mitigate risk	A joint (health and social care) Carers Strategy, Medway Council Carers Support Team, responsive locally commissioned services, an annual Carer's Survey, engagement with Carers via the Carers Partnership Board and engagement with Carers in development work to take forward the Better Care Fund and the Carers Act 2014.

5 Equalities

- 5.1 The Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity, access and outcomes for all, through the delivery and commissioning of high quality services that are accessible and fair, and mainstreaming equality and diversity across all service delivery activities. All new services commissioned are subject to a diversity impact assessment that compels service providers to think carefully about its target audience and to demonstrate how it intends to serve their needs. This gives the Council a better measure of the impact the services are having on the community.
- 5.2 Carers come from many different ethnic backgrounds and the assessment and review process is sensitive and respectful to their needs, which in turn supports services to recognise and meet their individual needs.

6 Financial and Legal issues

- 6.1 Carers Grant funding received by Medway Council and NHS Medway CCG to support Carers locally is spent directly on Carers and unspent funding from previous years has been carried forward, in recognition and support of our ambition to support Carers in ways that are meaningful and have a positive impact directly on them and the person they care for. In addition, Adult Social Care has increased resource in the Carers Support Team. Going forward, the Better Care Fund and implementation of the Care Act 2014 will require additional resource to support Carers.
- 6.2 The legal issues have been addressed in the body of the report.

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 This report is presented to Members for information and comment.

Background documents

None

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