

# SURREY INTER AGENCY CARERS STRATEGY

## A framework for 2007 to 2009 - (draft 16.10.06)

**“CARERS look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide is unpaid.”**

In Surrey there are an estimated 100,000 carers. They save the public purse an estimated £892 million a year in our county alone. – source *“Without us? Calculating the value of carers support ” 2001 - Carers UK and the Institute of Actuaries.*

The central principle behind this strategy is that carers should be seen as individuals in their own right with a right to a life beyond caring. This principle will apply equally to carers of all ages, regardless of their race, beliefs, gender, sexuality or whether they are themselves disabled or in ill health.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This draft strategy has been developed through discussions at the County Carers Strategy Group and to reflect new legislation and Government Guidance. It is also a response to organisational changes in Health and Social Care Services in Surrey and the White Paper *“Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new direction for Community Services”*. In this White Paper the Government promise **“a new deal for carers”** and a new National Carers Strategy. Partner agencies will need to work together flexibly in order to respond to the rapidly developing policy agenda for carers.
- 1.2 The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are developing a new “star rating” system to look at outcomes for people who use services for adults and their carers. This is closely aligned to the key themes in the White paper. The proposed scoring system for “star ratings” for the first time recognises carers as a key group in their own right counting for 15% of the total score. There is also 15% apiece for Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Physical and Sensory Disabilities and with 40% for Older People. This is a very significant increase in emphasis in supporting carers.
- 1.3 The Government’s current National Carers Strategy says that local strategies are needed to provide a co-ordinated inter-agency approach to carers’ work.
- 1.4 This has now been reinforced by new Government Practice Guidance and this requires as “an essential element” that

*“each locality should have a multi-agency strategy for carers. This should be agreed by the relevant agencies, including health, housing, education, carers’ groups, leisure facilities, Jobcentre Plus and local employers. The strategy should include planning for staff awareness training, the development of an*

*information strategy and methods for monitoring the impact of the various aspects of implementation.”*

- 1.5 Carers Strategies also have to reflect the provisions of the National Carers Strategy and the three Carers Acts that give carers a right to information, an assessment of their own needs:
- Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
  - Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
  - Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

## **2. CARERS (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES) ACT 2004**

- 2.1 This legislation came into force on 1 April 2005 and:
- Requires that carers, including young carers and parent carers, are informed of their rights including their right to a carers assessment
  - Requires that work, life-long learning and leisure are considered when a carer is assessed
  - Gives local authorities some limited new powers to enlist the help of housing, health, education and other local authorities in providing support to carers
- 2.2 This legislation is complemented by mandatory Policy Guidance and an online Practice Guide produced by the Social Care Institute of Excellence.

## **3. ESTABLISHED PRIORITIES**

Key elements from our carers strategy 2003-6 that will remain priorities include:

- provision of an appropriate range of accessible information to carers (whether or not a carers assessment is accepted by the carer)
- undertaking Carers Assessments for adult carers, young carers and parent carers (of disabled children). Agreed outcomes for Carers should be recorded in a Carers Plan for Adult Services and form part of the Care Plan for Children’s Services
- provision of support to carers through care packages provided under Community Care legislation and the Children Act 1989.
- to improve support to carers in relation to training and work through the Action for Carers and Employment Partnership and promote carer friendly employment practice

- a comprehensive network of independently managed carers support schemes covering all parts of Surrey (part funded by PCTs) .
- innovative Back Care Projects for carers. (This model has been highlighted as best practice by the Department of Health).
- use of “Carers Services” including Direct Payments and Carers Break Vouchers to provide flexible breaks for carers
- provision of Young Carers support in all parts of Surrey, an inter-agency Young Carers Strategy and specialist workers for schools.
- Surrey’s Children’s Service support for carers of children with Special Educational needs and/or disabilities through Partnership with Parents
- use of the websites including [www.carersnet.org.uk](http://www.carersnet.org.uk) to provide a wide range of information for carers. Information is also available on the Surrey County Council’s website.
- Training on carers’ issues routinely involving Carer Trainers.
- To address the needs of ethnic minority carers (this is an area recognised as requiring further attention
- While a lot of work has been undertaken to address carers needs within Hospital Discharge procedures, carers have stressed the need for more progress in improving practice on the ground as experienced by carers. Addressing this issue will also therefore be a continued priority within the strategy

## **4. PARTICIPATION**

- 4.1 The Practice Guidance for the new Carers Act stresses that “Carers should participate at all levels in local arrangements, including planning, implementation, service development, recruitment, training and evaluation”.
- 4.2 The Practice Guidance also says that “ for any strategy to be effective, carers must agree with the method of implementation” and recommends:
- ensuring that carers are supported to participate (eg. through training, peer support, preparation for meetings)
  - having meetings at times that are convenient to carers
  - providing appropriate replacement support to the cared-for person
  - providing (or funding) transport to meetings
  - ensuring that material is accessible and understandable
  - avoiding the use of jargon and acronyms
  - allowing carers to opt in and out of participation in line with the demands on them as carers
  - staff from partner agencies attendance at carers’ meetings by invitation

- ensuing that more than one carer is involved in meetings, to provide moral support
- support from a staff mentor
- making information available about staff members and other attendees at meetings
- paying carers for their work (as distinct to inputting to consultation eg. carer trainers).

4.3 Involving carers is a responsibility for all organisations that provide them with support. An example of new steps being taken to encourage carer participation is the development of work with carers by the Surrey and Borders NHS Trust. The Trust has appointed a Head of Carers involvement and aims to co-ordinate this work with that of the inter-agency Surrey Carers Strategy. There will be opportunities for the Trust to have some shared consultation processes for carers of adults – together with Surrey County Council, the Surrey Primary Care Trust and carers organisations.

4.4 The local authorities involved in the strategy will explore ways of building on existing partnership working to improve recognition, information and support for carers.

## **5. A CARERS CHARTER**

5.1 A Carers Charter has been produced as part of this Strategy. The Charter confirms the values, aims and standards that will be adopted by agencies working to common objectives and in partnership with carers.

The Carers Charter was developed from the five key National Standards produced by The King's Fund and based on what carers say they want. These have been supplemented by two locally agreed standards based on the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act. These concern carers assessments and supporting carers to have "a life beyond caring": The Charter will be used to monitor outcomes for carers in the light of this strategy and each agencies own responsibilities to carers

## **6. "OUR HEALTH, OUR CARE, OUR SAY": A NEW DEAL FOR CARERS**

6.1. Published by the Department of Health, this White Paper sets out the Government's vision for integrated health and social care provision. Chapter 5 sets out a New Deal for Carers. This explicitly pledges new information services, an expert carers programme, emergency respite schemes, a carers' lead in Primary Care Trusts and local authorities and reviewing the National Strategy for Carers.

- 6.2 The White Paper “*Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*”: says , “Carers are a vital part of the whole health and social care system – we will give them more support.”

The Paper continues “6 million people in this country care for family or friends. About 1.25 million of them provide care for over 50 hours each week. People who provide these long hours of care are twice as likely to be in poor health themselves”,

- 6.3 The Government make several commitments for carers in the White Paper:

“We therefore propose to offer **a new deal for carers** to improve support for them through a range of measures.”

“We will **update and extend the Prime Minister’s 1999 Strategy for Carers and encourage councils and PCTs to nominate leads for carers’ services.**”.. “and issue a revised cross-government strategy that promotes the health and well-being of carers..... and includes the use of universal services.”

“**We will establish an information service/helpline for carers, perhaps run by a voluntary organisation..**”

“**In each council area, we will ensure that short-term, home-based respite support is established for carers in crisis or emergency situations.**”

“**We will also allocate specific funding for the creation of an Expert Carers Programme.** This will be aimed at providing training for carers to better self manage their own health and the health of those they are caring for. The White Paper also sees “expert carers” running courses for nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, social workers and other care staff.

- 6.4 Other specific provisions in the White Paper that will benefit carers include:

- **NHS “Life Checks”** – this will be valuable as Carers are subject to increased risk of stress and ill health as a result of caring responsibilities.
- **End of life care** – all staff who work with people who are dying, are to be trained to look after both the patient and the carers
- **Support for people with longer-term needs and their carers.** Self care and self management of long term conditions to take into account carers. This is about looking at carers in their own right, rather than an add-on.
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- **“Information prescription”** will be introduced for people with long-term needs and their carers aimed at sign-posting people to further information and advice to manage their own conditions. These prescriptions will be issued through health and social care to both patients and carers.
- **Peer support networks and routine health and social care information** will be provided for carers of people with long term conditions.

## 7. WORK AND FAMILIES ACT AND CHILDCARE ACT

- 7.1 The Work and Families Act 2006 includes new rights for carers to request flexible working. From April 2007 carers can ask their employers for flexible working arrangements – including reduced hours or hours that work differently - for example an early start with a long lunch hour. These requests will have to be taken seriously, and the employer must give a good reason if they decide to say no.

Having the right to request flexible working could be the difference between giving up work or being able to continue juggling work and care. This will help the Carers Strategy Group promote carer friendly employment practice in line with the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act Guidance.

- 7.2 The Childcare Act 2006 will require Local Authorities to take reasonable steps to secure enough childcare in their area in order to enable parents of disabled children (up to the age of 18) to take up or remain in work or undertake vocational training. It also requires councils to provide information to parent carers about the availability of such services.

## 8. INFORMATION

- 8.1 The Practice Guidance for the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act requires local authorities to co-ordinate an information strategy as part of its multi-agency Carers Strategy.
- 8.2 The new legislation specifically requires Local Authorities to inform carers of their right to an assessment whenever it is assessing their needs. This includes initial contact assessments, full Community Care Assessments or CPA (Mental Health) and Department of Health (Children Act) Assessments.
- 8.3 Local Authorities have duties to provide information on services for carers and guidance issued under the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act places considerable emphasis on this. The need for this has also been reinforced by the Community Care Directions 2004 which state that local authorities must:

**“ensure that up to date and appropriate information on the range of support, entitlements and assistance available for carers is accessible in a variety of formats. This information should be offered to all carers, irrespective of whether the carer receives an assessment.”**

This includes ensuring benefits advice is offered to all carers making contact with the County Council about Social Care issues.

There are many unknown and unsupported carers and it is seen by carers' organisations as critical to do more to reach out to them – using a wider range of information and communication media.

- 8.4 Surrey County Council has enhanced the role of its Contact Centre as a first point of contact for all enquiries about service. This should be a valuable source of information for carers. Training programmes and carer information packs will help the Contact Centre with this role.

## **9. CARERS ASSESSMENTS**

- 9.1 The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act has further emphasised the key importance of carers' assessments. The carer's needs in relation to work, education and training and leisure must be taken into account in deciding what services to provide.

Carers Plans have just been introduced in for adult social care so that the carer gets a record of the outcome of the carers' assessment (already being used in Mental Health). Feedback from carers indicates that further work is needed to ensure that these plans are consistently used.

## **10. WORK, TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- 10.1 There is now a duty to consider carers' needs in relation to work, training and education within carers' assessments. More flexible and creative solutions will be needed, often arranged through use of direct payments.

The Action for Carers and Employment project has been expanded using European Social Fund money. This is part of a major programme co-ordinated by Carers UK and involving West Sussex and Hertfordshire County Councils and arrange of national policy partners.

## **11. LEISURE**

- 11.1 The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act places greater emphasis on the need to provide services giving leisure opportunities for carers. The County Carers Strategy Group has recently identified that:
- a) Direct Payments and Vouchers could help improve flexibility, for example, holiday club memberships (health or golf club membership), equipment to pursue a leisure activity can also be considered along with more traditional respite care.
  - b) More specialist leisure services are needed as well as services that a carer and user can access together. There is a particular lack of services for younger disabled people (18-30 years).
  - c) We need more services that provide regular very short breaks to enable carers to participate in everyday life
  - d) District and Borough Councils could give concessions to carers for using leisure facilities as well as for disabled people

- e) Transport is essential if people are to get to leisure facilities and breaks services. Direct Payments have helped in a few cases and this should be expanded. Carers' need improved access to community transport.
- f) Taxi Voucher Schemes would be valuable if rolled out across the county (developed in East Surrey and replicated for Surrey Heath and Woking).

## **12. PARENT CARERS AND YOUNG CARERS**

- 12.1 Surrey County Council has actively been seeking to improve support for carers and intend to continue to make progress in this area in line with the development of a Children's Trust in Surrey. The Council are working in partnership with key stakeholders including the Surrey Primary Care Trust, the Learning and Skills Council, Connexions and voluntary organisations to develop a Surrey Children's Trust. This will enable the agencies to improve coordination of services and provide better information and support for carers.

There is however still a need to improve performance in undertaking carers assessments for Parent Carers as well as Young Carers.

- 12.2 The County Council's Service for Children had not previously taken an active account of the needs of Parent Carers in relation to work issues when undertaking assessments but are now starting to look at these issues in the light of the new Carers Act.

Guidance issued for the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act stresses the importance of using the Connexions Service as a source of support for Young Carers aged 13 and above. Work with the local Connexions service and use of training pack will be essential to make this a reality.

- 12.3 Families Service will undertake the following action:

- Improved support for carers is a key theme in the Children and Young People Plan 2006 - 2009.
- Seek the assistance of Adult Social Care Team to identify Young Carers looking after adults and make referrals to Children's Teams.
- Ensure continuity of Carers assessment through transition from Children's to Adult Social Care Teams using the Transition Protocol.
- Develop guidelines about the relative responsibilities of Adults and Children's Teams to support for Young Carers and Disabled Parents.
- Increase take up of Carers Awareness training by staff from Children's Teams and Schools.
- Further training for relevant staff in Children's Teams using the Young Carers assessment course (successfully piloted).

- Continue to support and work in partnership with Young Carers Projects, making appropriate referrals to them.
- To further develop work with Young Carers in schools.
- To work with the Connexions Service to support Young Carers.

### **13. ACTION PLANS**

Outcomes for carers will be monitored through use of the Surrey Carers Charter and Action Plans developed by each agency. These will show progress made in responding to the Charters Standards and identify action necessary where these are not being addressed. Both the Surrey Carers Strategy Group and each partner agency will monitor these.