Carers (Scotland) Bill

Macmillan Cancer Support

Introduction

Macmillan Cancer Support welcomes the opportunity to respond to the committee’s call for views on issues around the Carer’s Bill.

The number of people living with cancer in Scotland is expected to grow from 220,000 in 2015 to almost 400,000 in the next 20 years, and 30,000 people are expected to receive a cancer diagnosis every year. This will have huge implications for carers - and for carer’s services.

1. Do you support the Bill?

Macmillan responded positively to the initial Consultation in 2014 and is pleased that the Bill has taken forward the key recommendations from the original Consultation.

2. What do you feel would be the benefits of the provisions set out in the Bill?

If the Bill increases awareness and uptake of Assessments then that would a huge success. Introducing the new Adult Carer Support Plan model with lower eligibility criteria could be a great catalyst to increasing support for carers.

The Bill provides for the establishment of an information and advice service for carers in each local authority area: Macmillan Cancer Support place great emphasis on Information & Support to help people through their cancer journey. In most parts of Scotland we work closely with local authorities and health services to help people get information and advice including financial advice, as well as through our nationwide phoneline support service. We would be keen to investigate how Macmillan could help local authorities and health services provide information & support to carers dealing with cancer patients.

3. How do you feel the Bill could be amended or strengthened?

We had expected more reference to Health & Social Care Integration, and working with the Health & Social Care Partnerships. It is vital that Carers issues are at the heart of each Strategic Plan and just as importantly in locality planning. The committee may wish to seek to strengthen the link between the two.

In a similar vein, we are keen to understand the relationship between this new Bill and the Government’s Framework for Action on end of life care – which is an enormously important issue for carers. There should be dialogue about how the emerging provisions of the Carers Bill will impact on the Government’s end of life care strategy.
4. Is there anything that you would add to the Bill?

We back the SPPC submission to you regarding the Bill being silent on the role of General Practitioners and primary care in the identification of carers. We would welcome the Committee looking into the role of GPs and others as another route to drive up assessment identification and uptake.

5. Is there anything that you would remove from the Bill?

N/A