Carers (Scotland) Bill

Carers of West Dunbartonshire

Do you support the Bill?

Yes, the Bill is an important recognition of carers, the challenges they face and the compromises they make for the most vulnerable within our community.

However, for this Bill to have any chance of success it has to be implemented at a National level from the outset, so that like for like comparisons may be made (it's the only way all carers across Scotland can be treated equally) and the degree of mixed/wrong interpretations of how the Bill should work would be reduced. For each LA (as is intended at the moment) to do it's "own thing" in interpreting eligibility criteria will lead to a lot of unnecessary and expensive time wasting bureaucracy.

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

If it strengthens the support which is on offer to carers and changes attitudes and practice towards carers then it would be welcome.

Short breaks should be a priority and a right for all carers - it is for everyone else in the caring profession

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

There needs to be proper, ongoing policing and accountability from the start at both local and national level. E.g. will LA be required to publish their "reasonable timescales" and will they be asked to evidence the factors that will be taken into account on each level of the eligibility criteria to enable carers to challenge decisions? An independent appeals procedure on this would be useful rather than the complaints procedure.

Eligibility criteria must be national to ensure equity across all areas.

A lot of the wording is vague and open to a wide degree of interpretation, support, eligibility, criteria. It is not clear how would the support etc would be structured, implemented and policed to make sure carers involvement was being actioned properly? E.g. in 2006 a duty was placed on Health Boards to develop Carer Information Strategies, in the intervening years this duty seems to have had no meaningful impact on carers.

How will the SG ensure that this Bill is directly benefitting carers?

Is there anything that you would add to the Bill?

When considering the eligibility of a carer for services they should not only take into account the carers needs but include the impact of those needs not being met on the cared for person e.g. low level of support to the carer could
prevent serious repercussions for the cared for person. Surely it is in the interests for Health Boards and LA’s to meet these needs to prevent unnecessary hospital admission.

**Is there anything that you would remove from the Bill?**

Nothing recorded.

**Additional comments, questions and concerns.**

What additional resources will be made available to support the Bill, in particular where carer support services are delivered by the third sector?

Although what appears to have been costed is an additional two Carer Support Workers for each area in reality there could potentially be simply be a stand still position. i.e. as a result of CIS funding ending some staff contracts coming to an end therefore any “new” posts will only mean a stand still position as oppose to additional resources.

Who will carry out all these additional Carer Support Plans? There is concern among third sector staff that the LA will have an expectation that they can absorb the additional workload. Third sector services, in particular Carer Centres, are already dealing with increased workloads and no additional funding.

**Carers of West Dunbartonshire**