Carers (Scotland) Bill

Scottish Social Services Council

This response is from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and was established by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. We are responsible for registering people who work in social services, regulating their education and training and the collation and publication of data on the size and nature of the sector’s workforce. We are also the Scottish partner in Skills for Care and Development, the Sector Skills Councils for the care sector in the UK.

Our work increases the protection of people who use services by ensuring that the workforce is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated. We aim to protect people who use services, raise standards of practice, strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce and improve the outcomes and experience of people who use social services. The social service workforce provides care and support for some of the most vulnerable people in Scottish society. The sector employs more than 189,000 people¹ in Scotland (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014). These workers often deal with complex care needs and make a real difference to individuals’ lives.

Our vision is that our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. Our purpose is to raise standards and protect the public through regulation, innovation and continuous improvement in workforce planning and development for the social service workforce.

The SSSC and NHS Education for Scotland are working together to implement the workforce education and learning elements identified within the Carers’ Strategy.

¹ There are a number of groups of workers not captured by this data. These include childminding assistants and personal assistants employed by individuals in receipt of a direct payment (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014).
Equal Partners in Care (EPiC): Core principles for working with carers and young carers

Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) is a joint project between NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to implement the workforce education and learning elements of Caring Together 2010-15, the Carers Strategy for Scotland. We aim to support workers from health, social services and other sectors to work in partnership with carers and young carers, and to achieve better outcomes for all involved in the caring relationship. We do this by providing learning resources to help best practice become universal practice.

The EPiC project has developed six core principles. The principles are based on six key outcomes for carers and young carers. Each outcome is linked to the knowledge and skills workers need to work effectively with carers to achieve this outcome. The six core principles are as follows:

- carers are identified
- carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring role
- carers are enabled to have a life outside of caring
- carer are fully engaged in the planning and shaping of services
- carers are free from disadvantage or discrimination relating to their caring role
- carers are recognised and valued as equal partners in care.

Three levels have been identified for each principle:

- **Carer aware** (level one) is intended for all workers and volunteers who may come into contact with carers – from cooks and porters, receptionists and healthcare assistant, care workers and social workers. These workers should be able to signpost carers to support and a carers assessment.

- **Caring together** (level two) is for any worker who wants to increase their understanding of carers and improve their practice. Workers at this level should be able to work with carers in a person-centred way to achieve better outcomes.

- **Planning with carers as Equal Partners** (level three) is for anyone with a leadership role in involving carers in planning and shaping services and who already completed at least level one.

The principles are linked to the relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers and Employers (Scottish Social Services Council , 2009)

The EPiC network contains a number of examples which illustrate how this resource is used. For example, EPiC has supported the development of a new training strategy in the Highlands.

(Scottish Social Services Council / NHS Education for Scotland, 2013)
What do you feel would be the benefits of the provisions set out in the Bill?

We support the Bill. We particularly welcome the following proposals:

- the replacement of the current carer’s assessment with a new adult carer support plan (ACSP) and provision of young carer statement (YCS) for all young carers
- the plans to enhance the level of information and advice services for carers
- the requirement for local authorities and health boards to involve carers in carer services provided by the local authority or health board
- the duty to support carers who needs cannot be met by general services in the community.

We note that the duty described above is dependent on the carer’s needs meeting local eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria should retain a focus on the outcomes for carers and their assets. The EPiC guidance can help workers to achieve these goals.

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

One of the EPiC core principles / key outcomes for carers is that carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring role. The new duty to support carers whose needs cannot be met by general services within the community is consistent with this outcome. Some consideration will have to be given to the workforce implications associated with increased eligibility for support. These areas could be considered as part of the Bill or the implementation process for this legislation.

The introduction of a new Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) and Young Carer Statement (YCS) are consistent with a number of the outcomes in the EPiC core principles. Consideration will need to be given to the skills implications arising from these changes. The skills required to implement these changes are articulated within the EPiC framework and resources (in particular at level 2: Caring Together).

We welcome the requirement to involve carers in carer services. The need to ensure that carers are fully involved in the planning, shaping and delivery of services is identified in a number of resources including the Carer’s Strategy and the EPiC core principles. It is also consistent with the ‘Standards of best practice for engaging carers’ developed by the Coalition of Carers in Scotland.

Is there anything that you would add to the Bill?

We would not add any additional items to the Bill.

Is there anything that you would remove from the Bill?

We would not remove anything from the Bill.
Bibliography


Scottish Social Services Council