Carers (Scotland) Bill

Scottish Ambulance Service

1. Do you support the Bill?
   Yes, generally support the Bill, which appears to bring some further structure to recognition and support for carers in the community. However, recognise that this will place additional resourcing pressures on Local Authorities and Health Boards and it is unclear how the current low level of engagement with carers will change as the onus still remains on carers to access that support. We do recognise that the Bill requires Local Authorities to develop a Carers Strategy and include plans around increasing awareness and identification of carers and there will be a clear role for NHS Boards and particularly GPs to support this.

   That said, the Bill clearly enhances the level of support available once the carer has accessed it. It is unclear how the eligibility criteria would be developed and specifically, what additional resource implications there would be for services beyond the general services already provided.

2. What do you feel would be the benefits of the provisions set out in the Bill?
   - Recognition of the extent and range of carers in Scotland and simplification of definitions.
   - Opportunities to link across health and social care in the context of eligibility criteria where existing services are not available to meet needs and links to anticipatory care plans in particular.
   - Access to additional support for carers meeting eligibility criteria.
   - Strengthening role of voluntary sector in supporting carers.

3. How do you feel the Bill could be amended or strengthened?
   Further clarification around local eligibility criteria would be helpful ahead of any decision to set national criteria as the Bill does try and offer flexibility to local authorities.

   It is unclear what specific expectations there will be on NHS to identify carers although acknowledge requirement of Local Authority to consult with NHS Boards in development of carers strategies.

4. Is there anything that you would add to the Bill?
   No.
5. Is there anything that you would remove from the Bill?

No.

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