Carers (Scotland) Bill

Renfrewshire Carers Centre

Renfrewshire Carers Centre held a Carers Forum meeting where discussed The Carer (Scotland) Bill and paper reflects the views of the forum and Renfrewshire Carers Centre.

The Carers Forum were pleased that the Scottish Government is introducing new rights and entitlements for Carers and do not think anything should be removed from the Bill however did feel that some aspects of the Bill could be strengthened.

Welcomed:

- The provision of adult carer support plans and the need to identify Carers and support at an earlier stage
- The term regular & substantial will no longer be included so carers can provide any amount for care widening people eligible to get a Carers Support Plan
- The cared for does not need to be receiving social work services
- The removal of term ‘ability’ to provide care and to more outcome focussed
- The opportunity to review plans as Carers may be willing & able to care at beginning of caring role but if caring long term this may change particularly at times of transition, hospital discharge etc therefore must have the capacity for support plans to be reviewed as caring needs change and on a regular basis. Pleased their will be guidance on this.
- Clarification on who prepares plans if reside in different local authorities
- Duty on Local authority to develop and publish a local Carers Strategy and support this duty- We already work closely with our Local Authority to achieve this.
- Duty to support Carers based on eligibility criteria and a power to support carers in a preventative manner when do not meet eligibility criteria

Areas for Improvement:

- Defined time scales to determine how long Carers should wait for an assessment to carry out a support plan and how long it will take to put the services they require in place
• Feedback to date from our Young Carers is they don’t like there being 2 plans for them and the sharing of the YCS with young person’s named person.

• There needs to be clear guidance on confidentiality in the regulations

• Carers were concerned about each local authority has to draw up it own Eligibility criteria as they feel it will be a “Post code lottery”. While recognising that different areas such as rural will have different service needs, however the Local Authority has a duty to support carers who meet the criteria, think the criteria should be set nationally. Being eligible for support is key to unlocking carers right to support and has the potential if set too high will make it harder for carers to get support

• Outcomes strengthened to enable Carers to have a life outside of caring rather than outcomes related to their caring role

• Ensure review of support plans on a regular basis and when needs change and always asked if ‘willing & able’ to continue to care.

• The Info & advice provided needs to be appropriate to age etc and provided by an independent organisation and feel best achieved by resourcing existing services in the carers centre to provide this

• Some carers whilst pleased that local authorities will be required to take into account the views of the Carer when determining the needs of the person being cared for asked for clarification on what does ‘Take into account’ mean. Will this be seen as an option to say a support plan has been discussed?

• Support the call by Marie Curie that allows for automatic qualification of carer support for people caring for someone with a terminal illness and quick completion of carer support plan.

• Impact on Renfrewshire Carers Centre and other carers organisations in regards to more carers being identified and supported - a resource implication. Issues for capacity for Centres who carry our Carer Assessments/Support Plans. The Bill needs to be properly resourced to support Carers and Carers Centres.

Would include in the Bill

• We currently have an Emergency and future planning project which has been running for 5years in Renfrewshire and would propose that this is included in provision of information and advice services as our Carers highly value this service. Should be incorporated into Support Plans.

• We feel that the Bill would be strengthened by a duty being places on the Health Board to identify Carers and involve them in hospital admission and discharge procedures. Essential to ensure carers are identified and have support plans put in place or reviewed.
• Disappointed there will be no specific duty around short breaks.

• We also discussed the issue around charging for services and that every LA has own chargeable system – would be better if this was universal. Not always clear if service is for the carer or cared for e.g. respite if for the Carer why is cared for charged

Renfrewshire Carers Centre