Carers (Scotland) Bill

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Purpose

To present to the Health and Sport Committee the views of East Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership in relation to the Carers (Scotland) Bill.

Background

The Carers (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 9th March 2015 following consultation on a proposed Bill during 2014. The Health and Sport Committee issued a call for views on 25th March 2015. The remainder of this response addresses the five consultation questions posed in the Committee’s call for views.

Report

1. Do you support the Bill?

East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership recognises and values unpaid carers. Partners also recognise the necessity of supporting carers to maintain their caring role and have a life outwith caring. The Bill reinforces this longstanding view. It is however, our view that issues of practical implementation and cost are problematic.

Specific concerns relate to new demand for assessment arising from the removal of the ‘substantial and regular’ caring criterion. Providing universal assessment for this new group of carers will result in additional demand and significant associated costs. This is in the current context of demand for social care outstripping resources.

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

The stated policy intention relates to greater consistency of support, strengthening the rights of carers and improving outcomes for adult carers and young carers. There would also be some consolidation of current legislation pertaining to carers in one statute specifically for carers. However, the financial model requires to be based on the real current costs of provision. Any additional costs associated with implementation should be fully met to avoid conflict between this and policy intention.

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

Some aspects of the Bill focus on mandated procedural change rather than direct support or information to support carers. This does not seem to be in keeping with a focus on outcomes and local flexibility in realising these outcomes.

The cost estimates should ensure that implementation reflects real unit costs of current delivery rather than treating these as an upper estimate.
Local flexibility to deliver shared outcomes should be preserved.

4. **Is there anything that you would add to the Bill?**

It is our view that clarification could be added to the Bill in respect of the relationship between responsible authority and authority of residence where the cared for and carer live in different authority boundaries.

More rapid up-take of provision within the Bill among carers is likely in any implementation phase and this would be expected to be still greater given demographic change associated with increasing numbers of carers, greater longevity and rising numbers of people living with multi-morbidity.

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

Procedural redefinition where the rationale for positive impact on outcomes for carers is unclear.

Entitlement to assessment regardless of eligibility for support as this may have the effect of unnecessarily drawing on resources which could be better used for direct support.

The Young Carers Statement which could run against the policy intentions of Getting It Right for Every Child and the provision of a Child’s Plan.

The Ministerial power to set eligibility which may constrain flexibility in delivering outcomes at a local level in the context of Self Directed Support.

**East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership**