

Cross Party Group on Carers

6th June 2023 1pm – 2.30pm

Minutes

Present: Mark Griffin MSP; Gillian McKay MSP;
Don Williamson; Ron Culley; Angela Bonomy; Beth Friel; Fiona Collie;
Paul Traynor; Becky Duff; Kate Hogarth; Francesca Ianni

Item 1

Welcome and Introductions

Mark welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those who had attended in person and those who were joining online, He informed the meeting that it would be recorded for minute purposes only.

Item 2

Minutes and matters arising from minutes of last meeting

Minutes were agreed and adopted

Item 3

Carers Week Research outcomes – Paul Traynor and Fiona Collie

Paul and Fiona spoke to their presentation on the research that had been carried out during Carers Week and the results and recommendations from that.

The presentation will be shared along with the minutes

Some of the points to come out of the research were

- The amount of time it took some carers to identify as carers some taking over a year and there were some that were caring for up to five years before identifying themselves as carers
- There was a need for statutory and voluntary services to ensure that they are signposting carers to organisations that can provide the help and support they need
- Due to this there is an underestimation of the numbers of carers in society

- Also a need for colleges and universities to help students carers who have a higher drop out rate than other students
- Not being identified as carers had impacted carers opportunities at work and in their social life as they were not getting the help and support to allow them to continue in work or seeing friends and family
- Young carers also being affected as they are unable to meet their own aspirations for their future as they are not aware of the support and help that is out there for them
- Young carers can also be affected by fear and stigma of what will happen especially if they are caring for someone with drug or alcohol misuse
- Young carers are also not identified as most census data is completed by parents and some may not recognise the caring role or feel embarrassed that their children are caring for them so do not identify them in the census data
- Also if schools are unaware of their caring role they are not included in the SEEMIS figures
- The financial support given to agencies and services needs to ensure that there is sufficient to allow them to support the increase in carers.
- Carers also need to be aware of the funding, grants and benefits that they are entitled to or can access to assist with short breaks and support for the person they care for.
- SDS differs greatly depending on where you stay and the options you are given on how to use this funding
- There was also comments regarding how the Carers Act was being implemented and if there was any accountability on local authorities to ensure that the carers act is being implemented correctly and fairly in all areas.

There was a discussion on the support available and how more organisations like NHS and local authorities should be ensuring that carers are being identified and signposted to the relevant services for help and support.

ACTION: Letter to be written by the CPG to the local government committee to consider taking post legislative scrutiny under the Committee empowerment Act which was passed in 2015

Item 4

Challenges Facing Short Break (Respite) Providers– Don Williamson (Shared Care Scotland), Ron Culley (Quarriers) and Angela Bonomy (Sense Scotland)

Don introduced Ron and Angela who were going to speak about providing short breaks in residential spaces and the challenges that they face

Don spoke about the need for breaks for the mental health and well being for carers and the lack of access to them. The fact that the Government had recognised the

universal right to breaks but with the hold on the National Care Service Bill and uncertainty on when this would come into effect, causes delay to funding.

A lot of these services are charitable organisations and non-profit so rely on funding which can be insecure and is diminishing.

Ron Cully spoke to his presentation on the issues around the running of the residential services and maintaining the buildings.

We knew there was demand but were still losing money and when talking to Don about this we realised we were not the only organisation with these issues and spoke to Angela about it and decided this needed a wider conversation.

We arranged an event which was attended by several people including representatives from HSCP, Carers organisations, Health Improvement Scotland, and the Care Inspectorate.

Ron and Angela stated that after the event and discussions with carers they felt that they were being advised to use the break money for trips to places like Blackpool and other resorts rather than the residential services. Some of the carers like to bring the cared for and not all options are equipped to support them.

They stated that there are still costs that need to be paid even if there is no one in the premises

Out of the conference came the statement and recommendations on the presentation and we have here. We have sent a letter to the minister and would welcome any support that the group can offer.

There was a discussion on what support the group could offer and Gillian and Mark offered to ask a question in Parliament if they could send on the letter they sent to the minister.

Action: Ron and Angela to send letter to Convenors for them to ask a question in parliament.

Item 5

Older adult unpaid carer research and campaign update and discussion - Beth Friel (Carers Trust Scotland)

Beth spoke to her presentation and why Carers Trust had carried out this research. Beth spoke about the importance of understanding the challenge especially as the population is aging.

Beth spoke about the effect that caring had on older carers and how it affected their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The reduction on the availability of paid carers also had an impact on the support that was available for them .

Several respondents also stated that the cost of living had an impact on what they did including skipping meals and cutting back on the electricity that they were using. This could have an impact on their health and also the person they care for if they use medical equipment that needs electricity to run it.

Another area that worried older carers was emergency and longer term planning for what happens if they are unable to continue caring for their cared for person. A lot of carers do not have anything in place and currently rely on family and friends to assist but that is not an ideal solution for longer term. Some of the options were putting people into care homes which were not necessarily suitable for

From the research came the recommendations on the presentation and we ask if the Cross Party Group could write to the minister regarding and supporting the recommendations.

Action: Cross Party Group to send a letter to the Minister supporting the recommendations in the report

Item 6

AOCB

Jamie Livingstone from Oxfam Scotland mentioned that the Consultation period for the Scotland that cares campaign had been extended to 12 June

Justina Murray from SFAD spoke about a campaign for family members who have lost someone to Alcohol or drugs, where they can write and read a letter to them on how their situation impacted them. This is supported by Monica Lennon MSP and Miles Briggs MSP. I have dropped a copy of the open letter we wrote to the minister in the chat for anyone that may be interested.

Item 7

Date of next meeting

5th September 2023 – Hybrid meeting. Committee room 3 Scottish Parliament