

**Oxfordshire Social & Community Services, Adult Social Care
03 November 2008**

**Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities
“A caring system on your side. A life of your own.”**

Summary and local implications

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to inform the Social and Community Services teams of the new national carers' strategy and the implications for both the current work and planned work 09/10. This will also be posted on the Carers in Oxfordshire Website.

2. Background

2.1 The main principles underpinning the new strategy are;

- Carers should have a life of their own,
- Carers should not be forced into financial hardship,
- Carers should be treated with dignity and respect.

2.2 In England by 2040 the number of older people who rely on carers will be approximately 4m. Carers will have an important part to play in meeting this demand and must be supported properly if people are to take on caring roles.

- There are 5.2m carers in England and Wales.
- 1.1m people care for 50+ hours a week.
- Demographic changes mean that the demand for care is forecast to rise.

2.2 Since the 1999 Prime Minister's Carers' Strategy there has been significant progress, including an annual Carers' Grant to every local authority in England, the right to request flexible working and enhanced pension entitlements. Most recently, the *Aiming high for disabled children* programme will result in greatly enhanced support for families with disabled children.

2.3 There were four Task Forces charged with developing proposals for the inclusion of the strategy. They were chaired by a senior civil servant and external colleagues.

The Task forces were:

- Employment
- Equalities
- Health and Social Care
- Income
- co chaired

2.4 The major themes identified by the taskforce as underpinning their work were:

- Support for carers to lead a life outside caring
- Information
- Advocacy
- Access to services
- Recognition
- Diversity

- Young Carer issues

2.5 By March 2011, the Government will have invested over £1.7 billion for councils to use to support carers in a range of ways through the annual Carers' Grant. This includes £25 million a year announced as part of the New Deal for Carers for emergency break provision.

2.6 The Government's vision is that by 2018, carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities. Support will be tailored to meet individuals' needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, whilst enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen. By 2018:

- carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role;
- carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role;
- carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role;
- carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity; and
- Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

2.7 This is a shared vision and responsibility between central and local government, the NHS, the third sector, families and communities.

2.8 Short-term changes will begin in 2008 and be implemented over the next three years. Longer-term priorities are identified that will ensure the Government achieve their 2018 vision.

3. Personalisation

3.1 Personalisation is the new approach Government has taken to ensure services are designed to fit individual needs and preferences. Its overall aim is that the state should help people to get services that are tailored to their individual needs.

4. Key commitments

- The government has made a number of short-term commitments (up to 2011) in the strategy supported by additional funding (£255m of which £200m is Department of Health funding):
- £150m over two years for breaks for carers, money routed through PCTs
- Up to £38m to help carers enter/re enter the job market-mostly Jobcentre Plus proposals
- Over £61m for a range of proposals including:

4.1 Information and Training

- Funding to provide easy to access and local information for carers. Information through a single national telephone number and website. Online in spring 2009.
- In 2008 will be a new training programme for carers 'Caring with Confidence', providing training for caring roles and will help carers to work better with professionals.
- Pilots to look at how the NHS can better support carers. This will involve: the active involvement of carers in diagnosis, care and discharge planning, greater support for carers at GP practices and hospitals and closer working with councils and voluntary organisations.
- Improving voluntary sector provision. Many carers prefer to deal with voluntary organisations than statutory services.
- Funding a training and awareness raising programme for key professionals, from health and housing, to support carers.

4.2 Breaks

- Increased funding for breaks from caring for carers. Government have already committed to providing £370 million for short breaks for families with disabled children. A further £150 million over the next two years to fund more planned breaks for carers. This money, which will be made available from the NHS, is in addition to the Carers' Grant.
- Pilots to assess the quality and cost-effectiveness of flexible breaks
- Sharing best practice in terms of supporting carers across councils.

4.3 Training and Skills

- A carer-specific programme will be introduced at Jobcentre Plus that will improve the help and advice available to carers who wish to re-enter the job market.
- Review flexible working practices for carers;
- An awareness raising campaign for employers and carers about flexible working;
- A good practice guide for employers around supporting carers;
- Ensuring skills training is provided in a flexible manner

4.4 Health and Well being

- Piloting annual health checks for carers that will detect emerging health problems from an early stage. If successful, these pilots may be extended more widely.

- Pilot and evaluate a training programme for GPs to help them better understand carers' needs. The pilots could lead to a national training programme
- Government is considering giving priority to funding national projects providing emotional support to carers.

4.5 Young Carers

- More support for schools to help them in their support for young carers.
- Awareness raising on caring and the issues it raises across children's settings more generally;
- Training materials for health professionals.
- Preventing children from falling into inappropriate caring—action to help build better, more preventative support. The Government is to invest £4 million over two years to expand their extended family Pathfinder programme, enabling a further 12 to 13 areas to participate.
- The Government is to invest £1 million through voluntary projects to enable them to contribute to the prevention agenda.
- The government will invest in an expanded programme of local and regional training for staff in local services on 'whole family working'. The training will be particularly targeted at teams working in mental health and substance misuse.

4.7 Longer Term Plans

Over the next 10 years the Government wants to continue to improve and increase local service provision for carers, with personalised and specialised carers' services tailored to carers' specific needs:

4.7.1 Information and Training

- access to specialist services in every community;
- possible new flexibilities for personal budgets;
- offering carers a lead professional;
- sharing best practice with primary care trusts based on the NHS pilots,

4.7.2 Breaks

- Possible further increases to break provision;
- Share best practice about quality and innovative approaches to breaks;
- Look at how Councils and PCTs work with voluntary organisations.

4.7.3 Training and Skills

- Reviewing structure the context of wider benefit reform.

4.7.4 Health and well-being

- Developing a full training package for GPs.
- Rolling out annual health checks for carers nationally
- Replacement care to cover hospital appointments
- Discussing with GPs and other professionals how they can give greater support to carers
- Providing more information sharing between carers and professionals, especially where mental capacity is an issue.

4.7.4 Young Carers

- Looking at what more can be done, on the basis of ongoing pilots and research, to improve protection for young carers.

5. **Implementation**

- The Government will be establishing a cross-departmental programme board that will work with national, regional and local partners to ensure the strategy is delivered at every level.
- The Government is developing a survey for councils to assess carers' experiences, and therefore help them to improve the quality of services. At a national level, the Government will include a section on carers in an "omnibus survey" this year.
- Recommending the inclusion of a carer's question in the next Census. The government has ensured that a question on carers is also included in recommendations to Parliament for the 2011 Census.
- The government will set up a cross-government programme board which will have responsibility for ensuring the commitments in the strategy are implemented.
- In September 2007, Gordon Brown announced the Standing Commission on carers which will oversee the implementation of the strategy and advise Ministers on the longer-term issues affecting carers.
- The NHS Operating Framework 2009/10 will set out how the money for breaks will be provided by the PCTs in conjunction with LAs, in a personalised way.

6. Local Implications and Actions

- 6.1 Strong partnerships will be developed between carers the PCT, Adult Services, Children's Services, the Jobcentreplus and the Third Sector.
- 6.2 Carers will be involved in commissioning decisions at a local level via the local Carers Strategy Steering Group.
- 6.3 The PCT and Oxfordshire S&CS will work in close partnership to implement this strategy with designated lead commissioners in both organizations. Early actions in preparation for 2009/10 will include:-
- Refresh and update of the joint strategic needs assessment chapter on Carers (TBA)
 - Map and review existing services
 - Identify gaps and priorities for investment
 - Explore the options for a pooled budget arrangement
 - Develop a joint commissioning plan supported by a detailed investment plan for 2009/10 Strategy out to consultation.
 - Review workforce development plans and identify training gaps in relation to carer support
 - Roll out awareness of flexible working arrangements for carers within the work force
 - Consideration of participation in the programme of national pilots
 - Work in partnership with Job Centre Plus who have been tasked with providing a carers specific programme, to enable carers to stay in work or return to the work force or to take up training that will lead them into employment.

John Pearce
Service Manager
Commissioning and Redesign