

**OXFORDSHIRE'S CARERS' STRATEGY
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES: 2005-8**

**Including the Review of the Carers Strategy
for Oxfordshire 2005-06**

Produced by the Oxfordshire Carers' Strategy Steering Group

February 2006

The Aims and Objectives of the Carers' Strategy 2005-2008

Statement of Principles

Oxfordshire's Joint Carers' Strategy Steering Group is committed to establishing a carers' strategy that is carer led and is working towards ensuring that the right services are available to carers and that those services are appropriate, easy to access, equitable and timely in their delivery.

Oxfordshire intends to achieve this by working in partnership, by recognising and respecting and supporting both adults and young carers in their own right and by training and supporting staff to fulfill the strategy's aims and objectives.

In 2005, the Steering Group revised the Objectives and endorsed Principles of Good Practice to apply to all levels of staff working with carers.

Our Objectives are to:

1. Provide a range of information, support and help to carers who provide substantial care on a regular basis
2. Help maintain the emotional and physical health and well-being of carers and their families
3. Help carers make informed choices about their caring roles by providing the right level of support as circumstances change
4. Help support carers in their aspirations through access to work, lifelong learning, training and leisure
5. Help to ensure all services and service development are carer led and where possible in line with what carers say they want and need
6. Provide equitable services that all carers can access

Principles of Good Practice

- To be able to recognize carers of all ages and signpost them to support
- To have a basic understanding of carers' issues
- To value and invest in their role as information providers
- To value carers as partners in care
- To respect carers as individuals with a right to a life outside caring
- To ensure carers have a voice in relation to their own situations
- To ensure carers special needs are taken into account.
- To recognize and value carers from different ethnic groups.
- To safeguard children by working towards the prevention of children undertaking inappropriate care of any family member
- To develop a whole family approach to ensure that assessment takes into account the needs of all family members.

Review of the Carers Strategy for Oxfordshire 2005-6

Across Oxfordshire, more than 55,000 elderly, adult and young carers are helping family, partners, neighbours and friends of all ages who are ill, frail or disabled and need support to live in the community.

The Carers Strategy Steering Group continues to meet four times a year, with the Head of Social Care for Adults in the chair. Members include carers & former carers, Social & Community Services, Children, Young People, & Families, the Primary Care Trusts, the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust, the Oxfordshire Mental Health Care NHS Trust, the Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust, the three Carers Centres, the Carers Forum, Age Concern, and Rethink Carer Support. It provides a multi-agency forum on carers' issues and helps inform the implementation of the Carers Strategy (Annex 1 Strategy Self-Assessment) and the way we spend the Carers Grant in support of our priorities. The Grant for £1,823,405 for 05-06 has enabled more projects to be funded and has strengthened existing projects; see www.oxfordshire.gov.uk. It is due to continue as a non-ring fenced grant. The indicative allocation for Oxfordshire has been confirmed at £1,774,000 for 06-07 and provisionally at £1,726,000 for 07-08, a reduction from 05-06. Resources to meet the range of needs are limited.

The second Carers Strategy Workshop was held June 2005 to review the Strategy and to set the following priorities for 2005-6:

- Information – at all stages of the caring role
- Signposting & support to access services – wherever they are on the care pathway, carers need to be recognised & signposted to appropriate support
- Imaginative outreach and publicity - we should get out to community groups, to GP practices, to places where carers are
- Choice and flexibility, responsive and culturally sensitive services
- Carers need planned short breaks and emergency back up.
- Partnerships between professionals and carers including: awareness raising so all professionals are aware of carer issues & engagement of GPs, Community Psychiatric Nurses, health professionals
- Young Carers and whole family working: ensure separation of Adult and Children Services does not have a negative impact on carers
- Sustain services provided by the Carers Grant

The Carers Strategy aims and objectives are intended to help organisations plan their work with and for carers in ways that are sensitive to carers' needs, views and aspirations. Statutory and Voluntary organisations are encouraged to use the Strategy to develop action plans, evaluate their work and report on their performance at the end of the year. For 2005-6 this includes the Primary Care Trusts, the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust, Age Concern, Rethink Carer Support, the three Carers Centres, the Carers Forum, and Oxfordshire Social & Community Services. The Oxfordshire&Buckinghamshire Mental Healthcare Trust is developing its own Carers Strategy to improve services & outcomes for carers of their service users. The new Children, Young People & Families directorate will look at linking the Carers Strategy to the Inter-Agency Children and Young People's Plan in 06-07.

The Oxfordshire Context (see Annex 2 The Wider Picture)

From 1.1.06 Social & Health Care and Learning & Culture merged to form two separate directorates in Oxfordshire County Council, one being *Social & Community Services* and the other *Children, Young People & Families*. During 2005-6 both have continued to support carers through provision of information, breaks and services for carers in their own right as well as part of the packages of care offered to service users through base budget and the Carers Grant. Core funding is provided to the three Carers Centres to deliver free, direct access information, support and advice for carers and young carers across the county and to the Carers Forum, an organisation of carers for carers to provide information and consultation with carers.

Significant progress has been made to revise Carers Assessment paperwork and processes, in consultation with carers, and to implement the new Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act. In addition, a new self-assessment tool and guidance has been introduced to provide carers with an opportunity to assess their own needs. A new Carers Operational Support Officer is now working with the help of carers to support and train front-line staff and to support Carers Champions across the service areas.

A very wide range of breaks and services is now being provided by the Carers Grant accessed through Social & Community Services and Children, Young People, & Families and through voluntary organizations. One of the most innovative is Carers Grant 15 which is supporting more carers year on year through increased one-off Direct Payments for flexible carers services. These are tailored to individual carers' needs, to help sustain them in their caring roles – including such things as a holiday for the carer, housework to support the carer, training, hobbies, counselling and wellbeing services, driving lessons. This Carers Grant fund, accessed through carers' assessments, has increased yearly from provision of £15,140 for 69 carers in 03-04 to £44,067 for 203 carers in 04-05 to a projected £55,000 for 248 carers for 05-06.

This year a key priority is improving information to carers and professionals who support them. The central focus has been the *Carers in Oxfordshire Website*, hosted and funded by the County Council and developed in partnership with Carers and the countywide Carers Grant funded Carers Website Project based at Oxford City Carers Centre. The website is a major and exciting contribution to carer information and support. It has gone live from December and will have its formal launch in March 06 www.oxoncarers.org.uk

Some of the Oxfordshire workshops held in year to improve practice include the BME Good Practice workshop; "You Are Not Alone", a conference for carers of older people with mental health needs and professionals organised by Age Concern with partners; "Delivering the whole family working approach in Oxfordshire"; and the Learning Disability Partnership Board open event "Reflecting Back, Looking Forward".

At the same time that progress is being made, the change agenda for health and for social services in Oxfordshire will inevitably affect delivery of the Carers Strategy priorities. Both systems have to make very substantial savings and both are in the process of restructuring. We do foresee major challenges as both try to get their finances and structures back into balance. Difficult decisions will have to be made. Strains will be felt by carers and service users.

Reconfiguration of Social & Health Care along with Learning & Culture into separate Directorates for adults and for children, young people & families presents a particular challenge to ensure communication and joint working between the separate Directorates around whole family working and transition issues for parent carers and young carers. To ensure these links, it has been agreed that for the foreseeable future Children, Young People & Families will be kept within the Carers Strategy Steering Group. Further integration of Learning Disability Services is now underway; and the Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust and the Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust will be merged into one organisation with one chief executive.

The future shape of the Primary Care Trusts is under review and will likely become one countywide trust by April 2006. Strategic Health Authorities will be reconfigured and reduced. Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council are going through systematic change.

Young Carers: Oxfordshire's Strategy for Children and Young People with Caring Responsibilities and their Families 2005 – 2008 was developed following a request from Social & Health Care Scrutiny Committee in July 2004. It was formally agreed at the County Council's Cabinet meeting on 22 June 2005.

The Strategy has actions designed to make certain that young carers are offered appropriate support, thus ensuring that they do not take on inappropriate caring roles and are protected from any adverse consequences of their parents illness or disability. It also proposes that adults are supported, to help them to fulfill their role and responsibilities as parents where possible.

Statutory organisations in Oxfordshire have a number of strategies and plans which direct the county's work with vulnerable children. The Strategy for Children and Young People with Caring Responsibilities is for all professionals working in public, voluntary and community settings. The strategic themes are based on the five key outcomes for children and young people seen in Every Child Matters (TSO 2003). There is an additional last theme about the management of the strategy. An Action Plan has been developed for the first year of work relating to the strategy and progress of this will be reported on in March 2006.

For more information on the Carers Strategy for Oxfordshire, please contact Marcia.davis@oxfordshire.gov.uk

ANNEX 1 - STRATEGY SELF- ASSESSMENT

The Supporting Carers Self-Assessment Tool for Councils (and Partners) was developed by the four Beacon Carers Authorities to provide a themed approach to developing good practice in carer support. See www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk. This working tool will be applied annually to review our progress around the themes and how they link to our Carers Strategy Objectives.

Some outcomes of our review for 2005-6 include:

Theme 1: Information and Recognition links to Carers Strategy Objective 1

Carers assessments revised, training is rolling out to front-line staff, & Oxfordshire Guide to Carers Assessments being updated.

Carers in Oxfordshire Website www.oxoncarers.org.uk live from 12/05 funded and hosted by the County Council and developed in partnership with Carers and the countywide Carers Website Project with formal launch March 06. Computer access at all Oxfordshire libraries.

Carers information pack produced jointly by partners and supported by radio outreach to carers for Carers Rights Day. To be revised, linked to carers website. Carers Information Strategy in development.

Oxfordshire Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust project to provide Information for Carers on four sites and in wards to reach out to hidden carers and employees who are themselves carers.

GP protocol being developed to identify and refer carers for support. Links between Carers Centres, Primary Care Trusts, GP practices to develop carer awareness and roll out to more practices countywide. Information and protocols on Section 3 of Carers Act endorsed by Steering Group and to be rolled out with Statutory partners to support partnership working

Oxfordshire County Council revising Working Carers policy. Carers Week on-line survey. Carers then included in staff survey. Staff advised of new worklife balance flexibilities. Management induction to include support for working carers.

Theme 2: Time Off links to Carers Strategy Objectives 2,3,4

Carers Grant provides more breaks for carers, including new for 2005-6: respite bed for adults with physical disability at Leonard Cheshire Home, Greenhill House, for county with part NHS funding. Headway pilot additional day care for high dependence adults with acquired brain injury. Willow Day Centre Friday day care for older people with mental health needs. Neithrop respite bed for young adults with learning disability, complex needs. Barnardos/Mencap Buddies 3, for young adults with learning disability. Children in Touch extend Befriending Scheme for children with autistic spectrum disorder.

Carers Grant provides more flexibility in breaks & services: through Social & Community Services (S&CS) and Children, Young People and Families (CYP&F) through Relief to Care, Direct Payments for Breaks and Carers Special Grant (CSG) 15 one-off Direct Payments for Carers Services; and through voluntary sector range of breaks and services, Carers Centres Time for Care, and range of voluntary organisations specific to care groups

Quality assurance on breaks and services being developed with Oxford City Carers Centre

Section 2 Equal Opportunities Act - leisure activities provided by Time for Care and Young Carers (Carers Centres) projects and other voluntary organisations. Oxford United Football club free for carers who accompany the disabled person.

Theme 3: Emotional support links to Carers Strategy Objective 2

Carers Support Workers and Young Carers Support Workers at Carers Centres. Carer Support Workers at Rethink Carer Support, Alzheimers Society, Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, and range of voluntary organisations (Clive Project, Headway).

Carers Forum: Carers Support Network Meeting - to hold support workers meeting, set up support network & identify gaps.

Range of carers groups including Carers Centres.

Counselling available City Carers Centre and Carers Grant 15.

Theme 4 Training and Skills to Care and Life long Learning links to Carers Strategy Objectives 1 and 4

Learning and Skills Council, European Social Fund 2 year rolling programme of carer training to end 06 -via the three Carers Centres -to be evaluated and address sustainability. City and Guilds e-learning course for Carers, Learning for Living, being explored by Social & Community Services (S&CS) Training Section as possible pilot. S&CS Training Courses open to Carers - links via Carers Centres.

Courses on specific conditions – Rethink, Social & Community Services. Expert carers to offer support: Black and Minority Ethnic Carer Ambassadors, Learning Disability Carers Network; explore possible County Council working carers group

Theme 5 Financial Security, Access to work and benefits

Links to Carers Strategy Objective 1 and 2

When a S&CS officer undertakes a financial assessment under Fairer Charging, they ask if it would be helpful to have a benefits review, and if so can refer to Age Concern or Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide the review.

Signposting via Carers Centres. Carers Website 24/7.

City Carers Centre participating in pilot project across Berks, Bucks, Oxon linking a range of advice centres with web cams to access housing advice from solicitors with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

Back to work advice available: Links being developed between Carers Centres, OCC & Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust Human Resources.

Some services offered Saturdays and after school support working carers.

Theme 6 Having a Voice Links to Carers Strategy Objective 5

Carers Forum discussion networks involve carers; information collected and fed back on service provision.

Social & Community Services Communication and Involvement Plan. Directorate Meeting with Carers Organisations twice yearly.

Carers self-assessment form and guidance rolled out. To explore website development to include on-line carers self-assessments, access to feedback / involvements.

Carers reps in Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Patient, Public Involvement (PPI).

Carers Strategy Steering Group and Workshop increasing numbers of carer reps. Feedback loops to commissioning. Young Carers Strategic worker to increase input from young carers and support workers into commissioning process

Carers databases held by Forum and individual Centres. To develop information consistent with Social & Community Services. Training for S&CS in electronic recording systems.

User and Carers Expenses Fund hosted for the county by NE Oxfordshire PCT (Primary Care Trust), now part of the North Oxfordshire PCT Partnership.

Theme 7 Quality Services links to Carers Strategy Objective 5

Quality Assessment monitoring statement and questionnaire in development. ORH has carers focus groups to develop working carers policies. OCC Human Resources now linked to Carers Centres.

Carers help roll out best practice: Carers input to training for Carers Assessments and to training and social work student selection for Oxford Brookes and Ruskin. PALS and PPI include carers help inform practice. Mental Health Carers Reference Group contributes to new Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire OMHT Carers Strategy. Possible carer involvement in Quality

Assessments (QOF) for GP practices for future.

Carers Organisations invited to OXSCNET (Oxfordshire Social Care Network) meetings for care providers. OXSCNET advised on carers rights/signposting.

Carers have more choice and control through increased Carers Grant to Relief to Care and one off Direct Payments for flexible carers services, to Carers Centres and to wide range of voluntary projects, and new funding for direct payments for breaks for carers.

Theme 8: Equity of access and culturally and age appropriate support

links to Carers Strategy Objective 6

Carers Forum developing discussion network for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) carers.

Carers grant projects S.Asian Carers, Chinese, and African and African Caribbean carers promote support to carers via flexible carers services

Pilot Interpretation Fund for carers grant projects and Centres/Forum

Young Carers Strategy in place

Theme 9: Preparing for emergencies links to Carers Strategy objectives 2& 3

Carers Assessments address emergency planning; Learning Disability putting emergency care plans in place starting with carers age 55 and over.

Customer Services & Emergency Duty Teams cover 24/7; widely promoted.
Carers Website 24/7 emergency back up information

Urgent Care in development through Home Support
N&W Carers Centre has Carers Emergency Cards

Carers Forum to map emergency cover countywide, look at gaps, developments, way forward.

Theme 10: Good quality management information about carers links to all objectives

Measures needed on how early appropriate intervention to support carers facilitates prolonged independence in community.

Electronic recording training being rolled out in new systems and new information requirements for Social & Community Services staff and for Carers Centres and carers grant funded projects.

PCTs information about carers developing. NOXON piloting GP protocol and monitoring data. Work in process across county.

'Carers' and 'care workers'

The word 'carer' refers to people who provide unpaid care to a relative, friend or neighbour who is in need of support because of mental or physical illness, old age or disability. It does not include people who work as volunteers or paid carers; these people should be referred to as 'care workers'.

From Practice Guidance: Implementing the Carers (Equal Opportunity) Act 2004

www.carers.gov.uk

The number of people needing care in the community is growing, and more people are taking on unpaid caring responsibilities. Almost 6 million people are carers across the UK, 10% of the population (2001 Census). Two million are new to caring each year, sometimes becoming carers overnight. (Hirst, M, *The Risk of Informal Care: an incidence study*, U of York, 1999.) They are caring not as part of their paid employment or on behalf of a voluntary organisation – but out of their love and concern for other people. The care may be for only a few hours, or it may be around the clock - day in, day out. It may be for a few years, or it may be for a life-time.

Their contribution to the dignity and wellbeing of those they support and to the provision of care in our community far exceeds their numbers. In *Without Us* (Carers UK 2002) it was estimated that carers save the UK £57 billion a year. The 12/2005 CSCI report on Social Care in England says ¾ of people now providing social care are doing so on an unpaid basis, saving the economy in care costs the equivalent of a 2nd NHS. Moreover, carers are the strongest ally of the professional health and social care providers, our partners in care. But this is not without personal, health and financial costs. Research by Carers UK found that 77% of respondents were worse off financially as a result of becoming carers (CNA *Caring on the Breadline* 2000). More than half have a caring related health condition (Carers UK *Missed Opportunities; the impact of new rights for carers* Carers UK 2003) and those carers who provide high levels of care are twice as likely to suffer ill health as non-carers (*Too Ill to Care* Carers UK 2004). And caring responsibilities are often on top of employment, challenging carers and employers to find a work-life balance. For further information about carers and the affects of caring see: www.carersuk.org

Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 (implemented from April 2005)

This builds on the National Carers Strategy 1999 and on previous carers' legislation (1995 and 2000) that acknowledges carers' needs and entitles them to assessment and services in their own right. It introduces a new dimension to carer support. It seeks to assist carers who wish to work, or who wish to access education, training or leisure activities. It marks a major cultural shift in how carers are viewed, no longer only care providers but people in their own right, with their own aspirations and who have been too often excluded from

opportunities others take for granted. It seeks to ensure that:

Section 1: carers are identified and informed of their rights

Section 2: assessments take into consideration their needs for education, training, employment and leisure

Section 3: public bodies (including NHS trusts, Housing, and Education) give due consideration to requests from the Local Authority in relation to the planning and provision of services that may help support carers in their caring role

The introduction to the Practice Guidance (available with the Policy Guidance and other carer legislation on www.carers.gov.uk) states: “The Act is an acknowledgement that carers are entitled to the same life chances as others and should not be socially excluded as a result of their caring role. Responsibilities for supporting carers need to be agreed across organisational boundaries to ensure that carers are recognised and supported by the whole of society and not just by social services.”

Wider legislative picture

Carers are increasingly being acknowledged in new legislation and guidance, for example, the Delayed Discharges (Continuing Care) Directions 2004 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The National Service Framework for Long Term Conditions sets out in Quality requirement 11: “Carers of people with long-term neurological conditions are to have access to appropriate support and services that recognise their health needs both in their role as carer and in their own right.” The January 2006 White Paper *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services* proposes a “new deal for carers”. It sets out plans to update the 1999 National Carers Strategy and to encourage councils and PCTs to nominate leads for carers’ services. It introduces new supports for carers including a national information service/helpline, short-term home-based emergency respite support for carers, and creation of an Expert Carers Programme. The Children Act 2004 provides the legislative underpinning for Every Child Matters 2005 including the framework for Inter-Agency Cooperation to Improve the Well-Being of Children: Children’s trusts and for Support for families of disabled children

The 2001 census found that 3 million people combine work and caring; roughly one in eight workers in the UK. It is vital that carers are supported by employers both to increase choice and independence, and in the interest of society as a whole. The government has a range of measures to help carers stay in or return to employment. A new Work and Families Bill was introduced in October 2005 which includes extension of the right to request flexible working arrangements (currently applicable to parent carers of disabled children under 18) to carers of adults from 2007.

The law and standards are comprehensively covered in [Carers and their rights: The law relating to carers](#) (PDF) produced by Luke Clements, in conjunction with Action for Carers and Employment National (ACE) and Carers UK. See www.carersuk.org