

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 23 JULY 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

STRATEGY FOR CARERS

Executive Summary

Carers are identified as a priority group in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and feature in Wirral's Local Area Agreement (LAA). Wirral's draft strategy for carers echoes the National Strategy ('Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities') in envisaging that, "by 2018 support will be tailored to meet individuals' needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, while enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen' and that 'Carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and communities.'

The draft strategy sets down a revised strategic direction for developing carer services in Wirral based on contemporary national and local information. The strategy has been developed with carers and based on carer views. It proposes a number of areas for further development that will realise the vision set down in the strategy. A copy of the strategy is attached as appendix 1 for Cabinet to approve. This involves a key decision which was first identified in the Forward Plan dated August 2008.

1 Background

- 1.1 Information from the 2001 census shows that in Wirral 22.52% of the population have a limiting long term illness, compared to 17.93% nationally. As a result, there are also proportionately more carers in Wirral than there are nationally, with 23.75% of carers in Wirral providing care for 50 hours or more per week, compared to 20.48% of carers nationally, who are providing care at that level.
- 1.2 The need for a strategy to co-ordinate services for carers is evidenced by the discrepancy between the number of Wirral residents who identified themselves as carers in the 2001 Census (37,000) and the 2,263 people who received a carer's assessment in 2008/09. This figure represents 18.58% of the total number of people of services assessed. The theme of carers week 2009 was 'Carers – the UK's secret service' and many of the activities nationally and locally were to help identify the 'hidden carers'.
- 1.3 In financial terms, the contribution of carers is enormous. Carers UK estimate that nationally carers' unpaid work represents savings to the economy of about £87 billion. For Wirral the estimated annual cost saving is about £596 million. The strategy seeks to demonstrate to carers that

their contribution is highly valued and ensure that their number one priority of recognition by professionals is achieved.

- 1.4 Carer issues have been featured in Wirral's LAA 2005-2008 and will continue to feature in the LAA for 2008-2011 through the measurement of the percentage of carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer service for advice or information (NI 135). For 2008/09 the target was 18% which was exceeded and the target for 2009/2010 is 21.5%.
- 1.5 In recognition of the co-ordinated approach required to meet the needs of carers, the draft strategy was developed by Wirral's multi-agency Carers Development Committee between October 2007 and February 2008. Shortly after this, the new National Strategy for Carers - 'Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities' - was launched and a Standing Commission for Carers was established to promote the national strategy and to facilitate mutual learning and good practice in respect of carers.
- 1.6 Wirral's draft strategy was reviewed in the light of the national strategy and the main, national themes are reflected in the local one. In addition a survey of Wirral carers was also undertaken to find out what services carers felt they needed.
- 1.7 The revised, draft strategy was put out to wide consultation by carers, and the final, revised version, taking account of feedback from carers and organisations representing and comprising carers, was approved at the Carers' Development Committee at their May meeting, to go to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The current known budget for carers is set out in section 9 of the strategy. Further work is needed to identify what is currently being spent on carers across the wider Wirral economy.
- 2.2 It is clear that as this strategy develops and the personalisation agenda takes shape more emphasis will be placed on the necessary financial support required by carers and fully developed integrated commissioning intentions are required.
- 2.3 As the details will emerge overtime the actual financial implications will be monitored as part of the overall budget management processes of the Department. Any significant variation will be reported and addressed in a timely manner.

3 Staffing Implications

- 3.1 There are no additional staffing implications

4 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 4.1 The Department will be undertaking a full equality impact assessment. The Strategy seeks to reduce economic and social inequalities felt by Carers and also support the people for whom they care to become full and equal citizens.

5 Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 There are no Community Safety implications

6 Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 6.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications

7 Planning Implications

- 7.1 There are no Planning implications

8 Anti Poverty Implications

- 8.1 There are no anti-poverty implications. The strategy seeks to reduce the economic inequalities felt by carers

9 Social Inclusion Implications

- 9.1 The strategy seeks to enable carers to participate more fully in a 'life outside caring'.

10 Local Member Support Implications

- 10.1 There are no local member support implications

11 Background Papers

- 11.1 Draft strategy for carers (attached)

12 Recommendations

That:

- (1) Members are asked to approve the attached strategy for carers.

**JOHN WEBB
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