

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET

1	Meeting:	Cabinet
2	Date:	21 May 2015
3	Title:	Scrutiny Review: Support for Carers
4	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5 **Summary**

The Scrutiny Review Support for Carers was undertaken as a joint review by Health Select Commission and Improving Lives Select Commission. The review took place in 2013 and was reported to Cabinet on 5 February 2014.

The report was welcomed and provided an opportunity to focus on unpaid carers who provide a valuable support and resource to people with disabilities and older people across Rotherham. Their contribution is valued, and this Scrutiny Review provides an opportunity to improve the support to carers in Rotherham.

6 **Recommendations**

- **Cabinet notes and accepts the recommendations and actions outlined in the attached plan.**

7 Background and Information

In 2011, 31,001 people in Rotherham said that they provided unpaid care to family members, friends or neighbours with either long-term physical or mental ill health or learning disabilities or problems relating to ageing. The number of carers has increased only slightly from 30,284 in 2011 but still equates to 12% of the population and is higher than the national average of 10%. One noticeable change is that compared with 2001, fewer people are now providing 1-19 hours of care a week (19,069 in 2001 down to 17,400 in 2011) but more people are providing care for 20 or more hours per week. The number of people providing 20 to 49 hours care has increased (3828 to 4736) as has the number providing 50 or more hours (7387 to 8865).

The Select Commissions recognised the contributions made by carers in their review. It sought to consider the following:-

- if carers generally identify themselves as carers
- the degree to which carers access support or consider they need support to assist them in their caring role
- where carers go for initial support
- the key factors necessary to ensure carers receive good and timely information
- any areas for improvement in current information provision

The review established that carers represent a vital unpaid workforce within the Borough and that like all workforces they need to be invested in. The report noted that any resources invested with carers services represents an opportunity to reduce pressure on social care and health services.

The review produced eleven recommendations, which focus on:-

- increasing the number of people recognising themselves as carers
- ensuring that support for carers adequately includes emotional support and counselling
- providing an multi-agency “carers pathway” that recognises the journey carers are on
- increasing the number of people receiving a fit for purpose carers assessment which is reviewed annually

Care Act

These recommendations are welcomed especially in the lead up to the implementation of the Care Act 2015 (yet to receive Royal Assent) which for the first time will give carers a right to an assessment in their own right and requires Councils to provide an Information Advice and Guidance offer which promotes wellbeing, offers advice on prevention and sustaining independence, and guides customers and carers to services which will maintain their ability to make choices and have control over their lives.

The recommendations from the Joint Scrutiny Review are outlined below:-

- a) That NHS England, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and Rotherham Council work with GPs to ensure that the first line of support aims to increase the number of carers identified and seeking support.
- b) In looking at recommendation 1 above, the partners consider whether professionals should work on the presumption that the close family member or friend is a carer and ask questions to determine if this is the case, and therefore what information resources are required to back this up.
- c) That Rotherham Council investigates further with the Advice in Rotherham partnership (AiR) and the Department of Work and Pensions, what specific information carers need to access benefits that are available to them. This may also help to identify more carers.
- d) That NHS England, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and Rotherham Council, work with their VCS and other partners to create the carers pathway of support; an integrated, multi-agency response to the needs of carers, using carers assessments and crucially the allocation of a “buddy” or “lead worker” to champion their individual needs. This lead worker should, where possible, come from the most appropriate agency identified for individual needs.
- e) That Rotherham Council considers via its review of services to carers, and in light of the new requirements imposed by the Care Bill, reconfiguring its advice and information offer for Carers including; Assessment Direct, Connect 2 Support, Carers Corner and outreach services, to ensure that flexible support is offered within existing resources.
- f) That the “triangle of care” presented by RDaSH be considered as part of this process as something that could be adapted and rolled out to all partners providing support to carers.

- g) That Rotherham Council reviews its carers assessment tool in the light of the Care Bill to ensure it is fit for purpose. This should involve considering whether it could be less onerous. The correct title of the document “Carer’s needs form and care plan” should be used by partners to reflect that it is an enabling process rather than an “assessment”.
- h) That Rotherham Council looks to set more stretching targets for carers assessments and regular (annual) reviews.
- i) That steps are taken to ensure that the Joint Action Plan for Carers meets the recommendations of this review and is more accountable in terms of its delivery, seeking to influence external partners accordingly.
- j) Whilst the review group has sought to make recommendations that can be accommodated within existing resources it also recognises that there is a strong case for further investment in this sector, in line with the prevention and early intervention agenda. It therefore recommends that the allocation of resources to carers (including the Better Care Fund) is reviewed to demonstrate how the changes to services proposed within this review are to be achieved.
- k) Although outside the original scope, the review group recognised the important role public, private and third sector employers, play in providing flexible employment conditions for carers and therefore recommend that the findings of this review are shared with partners as widely as possible. In addition they reaffirmed the commitment in the Carer’s Charter to actively promote flexible and supportive employment policies that benefit carers.

9 Finance

The review acknowledged the need for recommendations to be contained within existing resources and in the main there are no financial implications arising from this report. Separate to the Scrutiny Review, the Care Bill implementation has a significant impact.

10 Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to respond adequately through the provision of advice support and services to carers could result in increased levels of demand for services; support to carers is vital in ensuring that they are able, where they choose to do so, to continue caring, to receive adequate breaks and to be valued in their caring role.

The Care Act presents Councils with a significant change in legislation and practice, the precise detail of which is unknown until the Bill receives Royal Assent and regulations and guidance (secondary legislation) have been produced. There is likely to be an increase in demand for assessments from carers who are now entitled to an assessment in their own right (even if their family member does not have eligible needs). The increase in demand, workload and cost is currently unknown.

The Scrutiny Report provides a suitable challenge and champions carers and this is welcomed within the Council. It is clear that partner organisations also have a commitment to cares. Strong partnership working is required to implement fully some of the recommendations in this report.

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