

North Yorkshire County Council

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

31 May 2012

Report of the Members' Session on Carer's Strategy Consultation

Present:

County Councillors: John Batt, John Fox, Tony Hall (Chair), Dave Peart, John Savage

Voluntary Sector Representative: Lynne Webb-Thorius

County Councillor Clare Wood

Officers: Sukhdev Dosanjh, Sarah Wileman, Ray Busby

1. The Members met on 29 March 2012 following the Committee's request to consider how the County Council supports carers to participate and contribute fully to consultation and engagement events and therefore influence service planning and development.
2. Members considered a report which provided the opportunity to help shape the carers consultation exercise and in particular assist in the preparation of a series of questions central to this exercise. This will then inform the development of a North Yorkshire Joint Carer's Strategy 2012-15.
3. The consultation will be undertaken jointly by North Yorkshire County Council and NHS North Yorkshire and York. Carers themselves, as well as family and community members, will be asked to comment on the kind of support they believe carers deserve and which will work in their best interests.
4. During the course of the meeting Members were asked to:
 1. Consider amending or adding proposed questions to ensure that the right questions were being asked.
 2. Review the draft consultation plan, including the list of consultees to ensure the consultation exercise is fully inclusive.
 3. Review the consultation process ensuring that the maximum benefit can be gained and the exercise will help improve carer's services within the County.
5. Sukhdev referred to the changing health and social care landscape and the need to look at how we ensure carer's issues are at the top of the partnership agenda, especially how Client Commissioning Groups are

engaged. Now was an ideal time to make progress in areas which in the past had proved difficult.

6. The importance of integrating strategies for supporting carer's with those of health colleagues could not therefore be overstated.
7. It is in no one organisation's interest for a carer's relationship to breakdown. Having to intervene at the point of crisis is unhelpful and damaging, especially financially.
8. The role of GPs in identifying and supporting carers dominated discussion during the early part of the meeting. Clearly there was a pressing need to influence GPs to recognise and signpost carers to support services. Lynne Webb-Thorius advised that previous attempts by Hambleton/Richmondshire Carer's Resource had achieved mixed success at best. The distribution of Carer's Referral packs, for example, had not prompted the anticipated or desired increase in the number of referrals. There was a strong case for renewing these awareness raising efforts.
9. There was a wealth of evidence to suggest that where a carer can be signposted, particularly by GPs onto additional support, the amount of medication diminishes.
10. Drawing from their own experiences, Members were personally aware that GPs were not committed to maintaining the Carer's Register.
11. Clare Wood suggested that the advent of the Health and Wellbeing Board presented a timely opportunity to affect a seachange in GP awareness and attitudes towards supporting carers. Early meetings had suggested there was a collective will to work together.
12. 50% of carers were working age adults, so it was important that employees were influenced and urged to have carer friendly employment policies.
13. **The following were agreed suggestions:**

A: The Questionnaire

1. The inclusion of a general question at the beginning of the questionnaire about the caring role.
2. The following questions be moved up the order:
 - a. Knowledge of what support services were available for carers. (Previously Q.6.)
 - b. What would help carers have a life outside the caring role? (Previously Q.13.)

B: The Consultees/Consultation Plan

1. The consultation list was agreed, subject to the possible addition of Pharmacists and direct communication with Registered Social Landlords and Housing Associations.
2. The importance of using the media was emphasised.
3. In that part relating to young carers, Member's preferred approach was for consultation with young carers to be taken out of the exercise altogether. It was important to facilitate joint learning but attempting to run a joint exercise was potentially confusing. **It was agreed this therefore be taken back to CYPS.**
4. In relation to Appendix A, a rewording of the second paragraph to reflect the aim of this exercise to consult and review with carers how they are supported, which would culminate and result in the new strategy.

C: The Process/Milestones

1. The importance of linking with Carer's Week.
 2. The milestones appeared realistic and were supported.
14. It was agreed that a report be made to the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee's next meeting recording this discussion.
15. The results of the consultation will be reported to the Committee meeting on Thursday 30 August.

Additional remarks

16. Since this meeting the public consultation has been launched and runs until 8 July. People can contribute to the consultation by completing the carers consultation questionnaire. This can be filled in by individuals, or on behalf of an organisation or group (such as a carers support group). There are several ways of doing this:
- By completing the carers consultation questionnaire online;
 - By contacting Sarah Wileman on 01609 534940 or sarah.wileman@northyorks.gov.uk to request a paper copy of the questionnaire; or
 - By attending a carers focus group to provide feedback

Tony Hall
Chairman
Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 May 2012