

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland

Minutes 25th November 2009

Present:

Mary Stewart	Fife Carers Centre
Bill Middleton	Fife Carers Centre
Seb Fischer	Voice of Carers Across Lothian (VOCAL)
Claire Cairns	The Coalition of Carers in Scotland
Lynn Williams	PRTC
Sheena Munro	HCCF
Gordon Paterson	Scottish Government
Ann Anderson	VOCAL
Tricia Morrison	A&B Carers Network
Catherine Paterson	Dochas Carers Centre
Maureen Summers	Carer, Perth
Eileen McCrory	PRT Helensburgh & Lomond Carers Centre
Donna Wild	Perth Drugs & Alcohol Team
Elle de Sousa	Renfrewshire Carers Centre
Diana Goodman	Renfrewshire Carers Centre
Lynn Gallagher	Borders Carers Centre
Laura Kerr	Borders Carers Centre
Catriona Tucker	PRT West Glasgow Carers Centre
Diana Buchanan	G.S.W.C.C
Brett Millett	G.S.W.C.C
Ron Culley	COSLA
Donald McLeod	HCCF
Velma Plummer	Perth and Kinross Drug and Alcohol Team
Nina Collins	Fife Young Carers
Ann Cummings	Glasgow City Council
Louise Morgan	PRTC
Harry McBride	Glasgow East End Carers
Margaret Jackson	PRT Perth and Kinross
Teresa Woodman	North West Carers Centre
Lorraine Keith	Edinburgh Carers Support Project
Madeleine Martin	NHS Lothian
Karen Joyce	GAMH
Rosemary Nicholson	GAMH
Christine Farquhar	VOCAL
Rhona Pettigrew	
Fred Beckett	Glasgow City Council
James Duncanson	East End Carers
Iain Biernat	Fife Carers
Anne Conlin	Carers Scotland
Moira Oliphant	Scottish Government
Pat Gallagher	PRT Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre
Agnes McMillan	PRT Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre
Shirley Green	VOCAL
Claire Pearson	South Lanarkshire Council
Andrea Ridley	Edinburgh Carers Council
Richard Adams	CLASP
Maureen Kerley	Care 4 Carers
Ann Teale	NLCT
John Stephen	East Dunbartonshire CarersLink
Jonathon Bury	CarersLink
Colin Orr	Fife Families Support Project

Wendy Laird	VOCAL/Carers Scotland
Eileen Rennie	Care 4 Carers
May Kirkwood	Stirling Carers Centre
Angela Reynolds	Stirling Carers Centre
Claire MacMilan	Glasgow North East Carers Centre

1. Welcome and Announcements

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting and emphasised the importance of the development of Scotland's Carers Strategy and the important role carers have in shaping it.

Alan drew people's attention to the leaflet and Website which have been created by the Scottish Government to encourage carers to submit their views to the development of the Strategy.

The dates of upcoming Coalition meetings in 2010 are:

24th of February
 28th April
 25th August
 24th November

2. Moira Oliphant, Carers Policy Branch, The Scottish Government

Moira provided an overview of how the strategy is being developed and what other government workstreams it will connect with. She also focused on carer training and how the Carers Strategy will build on best practice from recent pilot projects.

A copy of Moira's presentation, or any of the presentations from the meeting can be found on our Website at www.carersnet.org, or copies can be ordered by phoning the Coalition at: 01786 825529

3. Electronic Polling

Throughout the day participants answered a series of questions using a keypad response system. Below are the results from the first session:

Q1 In what capacity are you here today, As..

A carer	18%
A former carer	5%
A staff member from a carer-led organisation	57%
A staff member from a local authority or health setting	9%
A staff member from local or national government	5%
A Volunteer	4%
Other	2%

Q2 To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement, 'I feel positive/hopeful about the future for carers in Scotland?'

Strongly agree	4%
Agree	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	33%
Disagree	25%
Strongly Disagree	2%

4. Gordon Paterson, Carers Policy Branch, The Scottish Government

Gordon outlined some of the key themes that will be reflected in the strategy, as well as providing an update on the Strategy Working Groups. Looking particularly at the issue of Short Breaks/Respite Care

5. Electronic Polling

Q3 What should the top priority be for improving short breaks/respite care provision

A guaranteed annual entitlement to breaks from caring for carers in the greatest need.	11%
Services which are more flexible and take more account of the needs of carers and cared for person	51%
An increase in short breaks provision through greater local authority investment	22%
Easier access to Direct Payments/Self Directed Support	7%
Equal access to services across Scotland	7%
Other	2%

Q4 What should the top priority be for improving training for carers

The development of a National Carer Training Unit	15%
An entitlement for carers to access training to assist them in their caring role	36%
The continuation of NHS Carer Information Strategy resources	24%
Improved joint working between agencies to identify and respond to carer training needs	25%
Other	0%

Q5 Do you believe it is more important for local authorities and the NHS to prioritise funding for preventative services, such as carer training and short breaks, rather than crisis management such as emergency respite

Strongly agree	53%
Agree	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%
Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	0%

6. Ron Culley, COSLA

Ron provided some background to the current political and economic landscape, which will impact on the development of the Strategy. He also outlined COSLA's role in its development and implementation.

7. Electronic Polling

Q6 What is more likely to lead to real change in terms of support for carers

Strong leadership from national government in the form of rights and entitlements to information, training, support and short breaks for carers	57%
The freedom for local authorities to implement the Carers Strategy according to local priorities and needs	29%
Other	14%

Q7 When local authorities write their budgets, the priority given to carers is

Too high	2%
Just right	0%
Too low	95%
Don't know	4%

Q8 What do you think is the key barrier for carers in terms of accessing services

Carers not identifying themselves as a carer	18%
Lack of flexibility in timing of services	2%
Lack of awareness of what services are available	32%
Difficulty getting time away from caring to attend	9%
Prohibitive cost of services	2%
Waiting lists and service shortages	20%
No service available locally/current services do not meet requirements	16%
Other	2%

8. Panel Session

Ann Conlin, Carers Scotland: Ann drew people's attention to the evaluation report produced from the carer training pilot. Copies are available on Carers Scotland's website.

Tricia Morrison, Argyll and Bute: There is a 20% variance in funding to local authorities, Argyll and Bute are currently only responding to Priority 1 and 2 cases, in this climate how likely is it that they will prioritise preventative services?

Ron Culley: Local Authorities are faced with difficult times. It is much easier to re-configure services when times are good, but it can still be done. If we continue to prioritise reactive services we will be unable to cope with the rising tide. Its not going to be easy, it will require long term vision. Some councils, for example North Lanarkshire, have decommissioned care homes and built community capacity, moving from a reactive model to a anticipatory care.

Moira Oliphant: There are going to be challenges. Lanarkshire is a good example of preventative measures. This good practice is going to be captured in the Carers Strategy. The use of volunteers is another aspect of early intervention, it is only a small part of the solution, but there are important small scale examples of this working as early intervention before carers are in touch with statutory services.

Margaret Jackson, Perth and Kinross: When will we know about the future funding of NHS Carer Information Strategies, decisions are already being made about Year 3 funding. Also, why is money given to GPs?

Moira Oliphant: The current funding is until March 2011. We can't say anything about continuation funding. The emphasis is on developing best practice and embedding this in normal practice. This will be the focus for an event for Lead Officers in March.

Gordon Paterson: I have looked at the GMS contract to see if there is any scope to raise the profile of carers and do more about carer identification and support. I have also looked at HEAT targets, these are a key driver and work is going on behind the scenes.

Seb Fisher, VOCAL: I agree with Ron's presentation. We need to be aware of key trends. There are three dimensions to this

1. Demographic change
2. Financial crisis
3. Unpaid carers

Shifting the balance of care to unpaid carers is not calculated. We need to address this and develop a picture of what enormous amount of family care we will be relying on by 2025. The demand for unpaid care could double. The census will start to show trends and this will show the scale of investment needed. There needs to be an equal shift in services and support for carers.

Ron Culley: I agree. We need to understand the demand on carers. Shifting the balance of care will not take away the responsibilities of statutory agencies. We need to support carers better in the future and we need to do this with a partnership approach

Ann Cummings, Glasgow: I am interested in the balance of preventative care and crisis management. In Glasgow we have piloted self-assessment, in partnership with GAMH and local carer organisations. From June to October we had 100 returns, only two of which were forwarded to social work. This identified carers at the early stages, before they needed statutory services. We are now rolling this out in February

Moira Oliphant: I am meeting with Ann to discuss this best practice

Mary Stewart, Fife: I am concerned about the gap between rhetoric and reality. There are two strategies running alongside each other, the Carers Strategy and NHS Carer Information Strategy. How are we involving the NHS in the Carers Strategy

Moira Oliphant: There are reps from Health Boards on both steering groups. This question was also raised at the Away Day. The strategy is being developed in partnership with COSLA, but the involvement of the NHS is still important. We will also be taking account of the best practice from NHS Carer Information Strategies.

Gordon Paterson: We are not overlooking the critical role Health Boards have in implementing the strategy. We have close ties with health in the carers unit.

9. Catherine Paterson, Carers Reference Group

Catherine outlined the work of the Carers Reference Group which has been set up to ensure the views of carers remain central to the development of the strategy. She also highlighted some of the initial priorities which have been identified by the group.

10. Electronic Polling

Q9 Are you...

A carer	49%
A former carer	41%
Neither	10%

Q10 In what capacity are you here today, As..

A carer	16%
A former carer	6%
A staff member from a carer-led organisation	57%
A staff member from a local authority or health setting	14%
A staff member form local or national government	2%
A Volunteer	2%
Other	2%

Q11 Are there adequate services in your local area to meet the needs of carers

Yes	8%
No	88%
Don't know	4%

11. Louise Morgan

Louise provided some background on the Young Carers Strategy Group and their progress to date. She also outlined the views of young carers expressed through the Young Carers Festival.

12. Electronic Polling

Q12 What should the top priority be for improving identification of young carers

Embedding awareness into teacher and health service training courses	48%
Developing a Continued Professional Development course on young carers	17%
Providing greater financial resources for training	2%
Giving teacher and health professional more general information on young carers	21%
Specialist training for limited numbers of staff within each school or health service	10%
Other	2%

Q13 How can we best support young carers to fulfil their potential

Ensuring their individual support needs are assessed and met	48%
Education staff proactively supporting young carers in school settings	17%
Careers advisors being aware of young carer issues	2%
More services in the home for the looked after person	21%
Young carers encouraged to think about their future	10%
Young carers given the information to identify themselves and are identified by others	2%

Q14 Given what you have heard today, to what extent have your feelings about the future of carers in Scotland changed since you arrived this morning

Much more optimistic	0%
More optimistic	10%
Opinion unchanged	60%
More pessimistic	27%
Much more pessimistic	2%

13. Panel Session

Q: Given what we have heard from COSLA about the financial crisis, there are concerns about the sustainability of funding for projects. Are people taking this into consideration.

Louise Morgan: People are aware of the financial situation and the withdrawal of Lloyds TSB funding will have an impact on many young carers services. Services will need to downsize or groups may need to meet less frequently. We have written to local authorities about this and the importance of young carer services, and the danger of more services being lost.

Liz McCue, Falkirk: Regarding the loss of Lloyds TSB funding, we raised this with our local authority, but they said they couldn't help, as there was no money. There are also concerns about the sustainability of funding for local carer organisations across Scotland, there has been no increase or uplift to funding over time.

Louise Morgan: Where we have shown models work, we need Local Authorities to recognise this and mainstream projects at the end of the funding period.

14. Final Remarks and Closing

Alan thanked everyone for attending and participating in discussions.