

## The Coalition of Carers in Scotland Short Breaks Group –22nd May 2009

Present: Mary-Denise McKernon, Acting Convenor  
Suzanne Munday  
Don Williamson  
Claire Cairns

Apologies Elizabeth McDade

### 1. Minutes and Matters Arising

The last minutes were agreed as accurate.

Matters arising:

- Don has circulated the information on parliamentary questions relating to the estimated cost of the additional respite weeks.
- Suzanne contacted Adam about joining the Short Breaks Task Group to ensure the needs of BME carers are represented. She is currently on the Carers Strategy Group
- Suzanne confirmed that she managed to provide input to the later stages of the development of the Short Breaks Guidance to add information on the needs of BME carers.
- The Briefing on the Short Breaks Guidance has now been developed and distributed. Don has contacted local carer organisations offering to provide an update on developments and has received several responses
- Don has been working on setting up a carers and users consultation group. An application to the Volunteer Action Fund was unsuccessful. Claire suggested he may be able to link to the Carer Reference Group which is currently being set up to link to the Carers Strategy Group.

### 2. Review of Joint Working Agreement

Don and Claire have met to discuss the JWA. It will be updated by the end of June and will reflect progress.

### 3. Survey of carers access to short break services

Suzanne has been undertaking a scoping exercise on behalf of the Scottish Government into short breaks and BMA carers. She has found very little reference to BMA carers in policy, strategies or research. She agreed to forward information once it is available. As part of this process she has identified the carer leads in local authorities and agreed to forward their contact details

The need for a survey of carers access to short breaks was discussed. It was felt this should be undertaken on an annual basis. It could be on a small scale using an online survey, or with funding it could be on a larger scale, distributing questionnaires through the network of local carer organisations.

It was agreed the questionnaire should include information on What services carers receive, what they would like to receive, what their outcomes from short breaks have been and their experience of self-directed support. It should aim to establish unmet need and if there has been a reduction in provision.

Don and Claire  
to update and  
circulate

Suzanne to  
forward  
information on  
lead officers

Suzanne said she has heard of people losing their short break service due to changes in eligibility criteria. This information needs to be recorded using more formal research methods.

Don agreed to work up a research proposal and circulate it.

Suzanne suggested that Audit Scotland might agree to do some in-depth research into respite data. Suzanne agreed to investigate this with them.

#### 4. Updates

##### ○ **Ministerial Meeting**

Don introduced an item on short breaks and raised with the minister concerns regarding the targets for additional respite weeks. He raised concerns about whether this target was sufficiently challenging, about the arrangements for monitoring these additional weeks and the quality of the respite being provided.

The Minister advised that she recognised Shared Care Scotland concerns. She advised that arrangements for monitoring performance against the target had now been agreed with CoSLA, and officials would clarify what information will be shared with NCOs.

##### ○ **Carers Strategy Group**

Don raised the issue of the delayed spending review and the impact this is likely to have on the strategy. It was agreed to clarify the following at the next meeting:

- The timescale for the Respite Task Group to re-convene
- Details and implications of the postponed spending review
- Potential for research into short breaks, to be funded and supported through the Carers Strategy Group, possibly as a function of the Respite Task Group.

##### ○ **Shared Care Scotland Conference -'Better Breaks for All'**

The conference was very successful with good attendance. It was positively evaluated, particularly in relation to the input from Christine Lenehan OBE, Director, Council for Disabled Children.

##### ○ **Short Breaks Task Group (to re-convene)**

The Short Breaks Task Group is to re-convene. It will look at promoting the Short Breaks Guidance and the minimum entitlement to short breaks and will feed into the Spending Review which has now been delayed. It was agreed there should be a pre-meeting of the NCO Group to discuss desired outcomes.

#### 5. AOCB and Date of Next Meeting

SCS is planning a person-centred short breaks planning tool. Don agreed to send details to Claire who will circulate it to Coalition members.

It was agreed to set the date of the next meeting once the Short Breaks Task Group is established and has set its agenda.

#### **ACTION**

**Don to work up a research proposal**

**Suzanne to contact Audit Scotland**

**Issue to be raised by members of the Strategy Group**

**NCO to have a pre-meeting**

**Claire to circulate info**