

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland Rural and Isolated Carers Working Group Minutes - Tuesday 14th September

Attendance: Sheena Munro, HCCF (Chair)
Jinty Morrison, Western Isles Carers, Users and Supporters Network
Mohammed Afzal, MEAD
Catherine Paterson, The Dochas Carers Centre
Claire Cairns, The Coalition of Carers in Scotland

Apologies: There were no apologies

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

Sheena welcomed Mohammed to his first meeting. Mohammed gave the group a summary of the work of the Minority Ethnic Access Development Project (MEAD) which is based in Perth.

Progress on the Western Isles: Jinty informed the group that the Western Isles now has an active Carers Strategy Group. Members include social work, health, housing, Crossroads, Alzheimers Scotland and Jinty represents the Carers, Users and Supporters Network. The group has been developing a local Carers Strategy.

Training on carer awareness has begun with staff and there are carer information boards in G.P surgeries. A pilot has begun on North and South Uist identifying carers, increasing the uptake of carers assessments and analysing the needs of carers. The possibility of setting up a project for young carers is being investigated, potentially through the Red Cross.

It was acknowledged that the money for the community facilitator helped to kick start some of these developments, most of which have been funded through Carer Information Strategy monies. So far there hasn't been a great response to the carer training. Sheila suggested speaking to Tina Morrow from HCCF about how they overcame similar problems in Highlands and Jinty agreed to pursue this.

There was a discussion on the support available to carers from BME communities on the Western Isles and the Highlands.

2. Discussion on the work of Community Facilitators 2009/2010

o Highlands

The money from the community facilitator scheme was used to fund a local survey on transitions for parent carers. This highlighted the current failures in the system during transition periods and recommended a buddying system, peer support group and information packs for carers, which HCCF is looking

into developing. The report was sent to the Carers Policy Unit to help to inform the development of the Carers Strategy.

Jinty and Catherine also highlighted difficulties during transition periods in their local areas.

- Argyll and Bute

The project has been focusing on the development of carer support on Islay and has visited the island on 8 occasions. Good progress has been made in relation to health professionals and the identification of carers. However, social work staff have been more difficult to engage with and there appears to be negativity from staff around the promotion of carers assessments.

It was suggested that staff might benefit from a training event highlighting their legal responsibilities in relation to carers assessments and the benefits to carers of participating in a positive assessment process.

Sheena highlighted the approach taken in Highlands of the integration of services with a single budget which has improved joint working.

Catherine outlined the projects future plans to move into Campbeltown and Tarbert. They are seeking grant funding for an outreach worker.

3. Plans for Community Facilitators 2010/2011

There were no proposals from the Western Isles, Highlands or Argyll and Bute for future development.

Mohammed outlined a proposal for MEAD to link with local service providers to identify local carers from BME communities, in particular from the Chinese community. This would include identifying volunteers to undertake support work within carer BME communities and employing a sessional worker with the appropriate language skills. They will also explore the possibility of hosting a conference for BME carers from Perth and Kinross to act as a springboard for future developments.

It was agreed that Claire and Mohammed will meet to work up a proposal which can be shared with the group.

4. Updates:

- Carers Strategy

An update was provided on plans to implement the Carers Strategy. The Coalition has developed a briefing paper which has been distributed widely. There will be a government implementation group which has yet to meet.

- Short Breaks Fund

Two projects have been proposed. The first will allocate funds to local carer organisations, or alternative local projects to allow for spot purchasing of short breaks. The second will be a Short Breaks Grant Fund. The proposal has been sent to the government and is still to be finally agreed

- Carers Manifesto Campaign

The manifesto has just gone to the printers. Meetings have been held or arranged with all the main political parties and the second stage of the campaign will begin in early 2011

- Carer Training Initiative

A training Coordinator, Graham Walkinshaw, has been employed. The audit is nearly complete and the grant criteria is currently being developed

5. AOCB and future date

There were no matters arising. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 30th of November at 9.45am by conference call.