

**Minutes of the Carers Strategy Steering Group
26 May 2009 10.30 -1.30 at Victoria Quay**

Present

Moira Oliphant (Chair)	Scottish Government, Carers Policy Branch
Gordon Paterson	Scottish Government, Carers Policy Branch
Jack Ryan	Crossroads Scotland
Julie Rintoul	Scottish Government, Analytical Services
Fraser Stewart	Scottish Government, Analytical Services
Florence Burke	Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Seb Fischer	Coalition of Carers/VOCAL
Claire Cairns	Coalition of Carers
Suzanne Munday	MECOPP
Fiona Roberts	Alzheimers Scotland

Apologies

Sue Brace	City of Edinburgh Council
Sharon Duncan	NHS Grampian
Stacey McLaren	NHS Forth Valley
Cath Krawczyk	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
Julie O'Neil	NHS Fife
Martha Shortreed	SWIA
Ron Culley	COSLA
Fiona Collie	Coalition of Carers
Don Williamson	Shared Care Scotland
Adam Rennie	Scottish Government
Julie Webster	Scottish Government

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

1.1 Moira welcomed everyone to the group. Introductions were made and apologies noted.

1.2 Seb expressed his concern that a number of key members of the Steering Group were absent. He advised that the successful development of the strategy will be influenced by members' commitment to attend meetings and also to progress work outwith these meetings.

1.3 Moira noted that some were unavoidable absences. One or two people had provided comments on the papers beforehand. And there had been good attendance at previous meetings. Nevertheless, Seb's comments were acknowledged and accepted.

2. Minutes from meeting on 29 April

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by group.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Amended Remit (CSSG(09)1)

- Moira has revised the remit which will be circulated.

3.2 Amended Background Paper (CSSG(09) 2)

- Moira has revised the background paper and this too will be circulated.

ACTION: Moira will circulate the revised remit and background paper.

3.3 SWIA Information

- This has now been circulated to the group.

3.4 PRTC Comprehensive Service Model

- This has been circulated.

3.5 Carers Reference Group

- Seb advised on progress in developing the group, comprising carers from across Scotland and with a range of caring experiences, which will be the Reference Group for the Strategy. This is based on a model used in Lothians and the Carers Policy Branch will be providing a small amount of funding to enable VOCAL to coordinate and convene this group.
- Suzanne advised of some difficulties that she has experienced in securing a participant from the bme community, however, Seb and Claire advised of some contacts they have who may be able to assist.
- Moira agreed to forward the draft remit for the Carers Reference Group to Steering Group members.

ACTION: Moira will issue the draft remit for the Carers Reference Group to members of the Carers Strategy Steering Group (now done).

3.6 Students and Carers

- Given some work that Crossroads are doing in identifying students who are also carers, Jack agreed to bring a short paper to the next meeting.

ACTION: Jack to present a paper to the next meeting.

4. Resources/Budget

4.1 Moira advised that it had been intended to link the Carers Strategy to the Comprehensive Spending Review and she had been advised that the indications are that the latter has been delayed until next year. While this may impact on the launch date for the revised Carers Strategy, this does not mean that we should defer undertaking the work that is planned to develop the Strategy – indeed it may provide more time to do more comprehensive work.

NOTE: The Minister has confirmed that the strategy will be published early next year and before May.

4.2 Florence advised that she felt it was important that the Carers Strategy be supported by and linked to additional resources. She cautioned that in consulting, more widely or in engaging with the Carers Reference Group it will be important to not raise expectations and to think also about the timing of consultation.

4.3 Claire advised that there was a danger of weakening the Strategy if it wasn't linked to additional resources. The NCOs have highlighted that there is a need for a transformation fund, to achieve transformational change on an “invest to save” basis.

4.4 Moira advised that it had always been recognised that it would be important for the Strategy to highlight more effective ways of working with existing resources, by learning from best practice, improving integration across services and also building on links with other SG workstreams. The Minister has reiterated her commitment to carers, but has also acknowledged the need to balance competing priorities in the current economic climate.

4.5 Seb expressed his concerns that in light of the possible lack of additional investment and the possible delay in the launch of the Strategy, that consideration should be given to suspending the work of the Strategy Groups, focussing instead on sub-group activity to progress key elements.

4.6 Florence advised that with additional time there was scope to progress the work, with the Steering Group taking an overview and “steering” the work. She also reiterated Seb's comment that it was important to consolidate the involvement of key participants.

4.7 Moira agreed with Florence's comments and confirmed the need to progress on this basis.

5. Statistical Work for Strategy

5.1 Julie outlined the work that Fraser has already undertaken and will be progressing over the next three months working on carer issues. This will produce important information for the strategy and will also be published separately as a Scottish Government research report.

5.2 Initially, Fraser has been focussing on the 2001 Census, although he is aware of the limitations from this on identifying young carers and will put some narrative around this in his report.

5.3 Fraser will also look at the SPI data on respite, the Scottish Household Survey and the Scottish Health Survey, and JPIAF.

5.4 Seb highlighted the need for this to reflect economic dimensions. He explained that this applied both in terms of the implications for increasing numbers of carers on society, the labour market and the economy, but also in respect of carers providing care on an unpaid basis without the recognition, rights, protection and remuneration received by the paid carer workforce.

5.5 Seb advised on work in Edinburgh around “re-ablement”. Short-term intensive interventions are provided to enable people who are recovering from an acute episode to regain skills to independent living. He highlighted how this could be more effective, for example, if carers who work could be given time off to contribute towards this “re-ablement” intervention.

5.6 It was agreed that Julie would identify who and how “re-ablement” in Edinburgh City is being evaluated and that either she or Sue Brace would report back to the next meeting on progress in respect of the project and planned evaluation.

ACTION: Julie Rintoul to source information on this project and any planned evaluation, particularly in relation to outcomes for carers.

NOTE: Julie has sent Moira a note on the “re-ablement” work.

6. Personalisation

6.1 Gordon presented the draft paper on “Personalisation”, which was discussed.

6.2 Suzanne highlighted that some bme carers are benefitting from Direct Payments as these provide greater flexibility and can be result in responses being designed that are more culturally sensitive.

6.3 Seb suggested that “benefits” in the final paragraph could be replaced with “outcomes” and indeed it might be worth mentioning the NCOs work on outcomes in a specific paragraph.

6.4 Seb mentioned that some carers find that Direct Payments are too burdensome and bureaucratic and only add to the range of responsibilities that they have to balance. Often their preference is for quality arranged services and interventions. It is clear though that carers need for emotional support and counselling to deal with the “occupational hazard” that is their stress, is often not a priority for social work and health services.

6.5 With suggested amendments, the group agreed this paper and the proposed approach of convening a round-table discussion to consider further the issues raised. The group suggested some possible participants.

ACTION: Gordon to amend the paper and to then arrange a round-table discussion on personalisation and carers.

7. Carers Income and Employment

7.1 Moira spoke to this paper. In response, Claire sought clarification on whether the Scottish Government have a position on the Carers Allowance. Moira explained that this was a reserved matter and that the Minister would be writing to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, James Purnell (now resigned) to advise him of Scottish carers' concern about the level of the allowance and the need for the intended review to be progressed.

NOTE: The Minister has received a reply from the Minister for Disabled People, Jonathan Shaw MP.

7.2 Moira also advised that she had begun to arrange a 4 nations meeting to look at a range of matters, including those reserved matters that impact on our Strategy in Scotland.

7.3 Claire commended the Work and Pensions Committee Report "Valuing Carers" and helpfully provided a copy. This proposes a two-tier system for paying Carers Allowances with one part universal and the remainder following assessment, however the levels of allowance remain insufficient.

7.4 Seb advised that carers express the view that the allowance should be seen as income and not as a benefit, but remuneration for their unpaid contribution.

7.5 Suzanne highlighted that as well as many bme carers not claiming the Carer Allowance, there are issues about bme people who are often self-employed, or in small retail and catering businesses where employers have more difficulty being flexible.

7.6 Florence also highlighted that the DWP's direction is still to move people towards work, when there are few suitable jobs available.

7.7 Moira advised that she was meeting a colleague from DWP and these were important points that would inform her discussions.

NOTE: Meeting held between Moira and Mike Daly, Disability and Carers Benefits Division, Work, Welfare and Equality Unit, DWP on 5 June 2009. Will update next meeting on discussions.

8. Strategy Overview and Issues

8.1 Moira tabled this draft outline for the strategy, along with some draft templates on themes/issues and suggestions on possible work groups.

8.2 Suzanne suggested that the draft outline should include something about Carers Rights and about the EHRC and the Equalities Bill.

8.3 Jack suggested that at section 7 there should be mention of the purpose, value and benefit of carers assessments.

8.4 Claire advised that the outline should include carer training, information and emotional support at section 7, and that people affected by substance misuse should be incorporated into section 5.

8.5 Florence felt that section 7. should also include advocacy and brokerage, as well as acknowledgement of support needed at the end of caring.

8.6 Fiona advised that at section 5. dementia should have its own bullet-point rather be included in “mental health”.

8.7 Suzanne advised that section 4. should include carers with a disability (or mental health problem) and that HIV/Aids should be included at section 5.

8.8 Claire suggested that a read across summary or Implementation Plan be incorporated into the final strategy to pick up cross-cutting issues and make for easier reference.

8.9 In addition to Gordon progressing work on Personalisation and Moira on Income and Employment, in response to Annex C it was agreed that:

- the reconvened Short Breaks Task Group should look at issues and developments around short breaks to produce information for the Strategy.
- that training be redefined as Workforce Development and that this look at the training and development needs of both the unpaid and paid workforce. This group will involve Florence, COCIS representation, Suzanne and Anne-Marie Knowles in respect of young carers' issues.
- That issues of procurement be picked up through contact with the Third Sector Team, through Florence's participation on the JIT Reference Group and, where relevant, through discussions about Personalisation.

ACTION: Gordon to draft remit and membership for reconvened Short Breaks Task Group (now done).

ACTION: Moira to draft remit for Workforce Development and circulate to those to be involved for initial meeting before next Steering Group meeting.

ACTION: All Steering Group members to identify which groups or workstreams they would wish to lead on, or participate in and to advise Moira.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING; 25TH AUGUST 2009 1.00- 4.00PM, Room 4, PentlandHouse