

## SHORT BREAK TASK GROUP

NOTES OF MEETING OF 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2009 at CoSLA Offices

Present:	Moira Oliphant (Chair)	Scottish Government
	Gordon Paterson	Scottish Government
	Ron Culley	CoSLA
	Margaret Petherbridge	ADSW/Falkirk Council
	Suzanne Munday	MECOPP
	Martha Shortreed	SWIA
	Fiona Collie	Carers Scotland
	Mary Yates	South Lanarkshire Council
	Sue Brace	ADSW/Edinburgh City Council
	Rod Burns	Scottish Government
	Jack Ryan	Crossroads Scotland
Apologies:	Don Williamson	Shared Care Scotland
	Claire Cairns	Coalition of Carers in Scotland
	Julie Rintoul	Scottish Government
	Mattie Crossley	Care Commission

### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

1. Moira welcomed everyone to this the first meeting of the *Short Break Task Group* (SBTG), explaining that this follows on from the previous work undertaken by the Respite Task Group, with a revised membership to reflect the planned remit. Members of the group introduced themselves.

### 2. DRAFT REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP

2. The draft remit that Gordon had produced and circulated was discussed.

3. Moira advised that in the current financial climate we could not realistically expect significant additional resources being made available, if any. She highlighted that the group therefore needed to reflect the current difficult financial climate in our deliberations and outputs and consider what can be progressed by using existing resources more effectively.

4. Gordon advised of comments that had been received from Don Williamson and Claire Cairns, respectively that:

- the remit should highlight that the SBTG should “articulate a vision for short breaks within the Carers’ Strategy and propose steps to support progress towards this”

- that the remit should reflect that some people need, choose and benefit from respite in more institutional settings and that the remit should highlight choice from a range of options.
5. It was agreed that these would be incorporated into the group's revised remit.
  6. Fiona suggested that reference could also usefully be made to the National Minimum Information Standards at paragraph 5.
  7. Ron raised concerns about the phrase "particular geographical areas" in the second paragraph. He was keen that our analysis should not infer or direct criticism of the approaches to planning/developing/providing short break services in identifiable local authorities, without being aware of the wider context in which they operate.
  8. Gordon advised that he was thinking here about the particular challenge in providing services in remote and rural areas, however, this could be worded differently.
  9. There was then a more general discussion about the risks around and value of highlighting "gaps in availability of short breaks", which some members felt too negative.
  10. Margaret advised that it was also important to recognise that in some areas there may be gaps due to a lack of providers, bringing a lack of choice for service users. This required commissioners to think about how they can stimulate their local market.
  11. Margaret further highlighted that the flexibility and choice provided by Direct Payments can sometimes mean that local authorities don't need to know exactly how these are used, making it difficult, for example to report on respite hours delivered.
  12. Sue highlighted that it was a major strength that the Guidance on Short Breaks gave such a wide definition of short breaks, however this was also a weakness insofar as more personalised and flexible examples would not necessarily be monitored and recorded, or ultimately counted against the 10,000 weeks target.
  13. Sue agreed with Ron and suggested that "gaps" was perhaps too negative and it perhaps inferred that more of the same types of services were needed. Instead we should reflect the paradigm shift that is necessary to provide personalised, short breaks in the context of rebalancing care and reshaping services.
  14. Moira advised that there was a major piece of work now underway which is looking to reshape older people's services. Mike Martin is leading on this work, within which consideration will be given to the role of social partnerships, as well as how befrienders and volunteers can, for example, provide sitter services to support people to have breaks at home.

15. Ron suggested that the remit should make reference to the Reshaping Older People's Services workstream and should also highlight the role of the NHS in rebalancing care.

16. Fiona and Suzanne were concerned about the proposal to remove reference to "gaps" in service. They felt it important to keep this in, given that some types of service are underdeveloped and that the needs of particular groups of carers e.g. LGBT, BME can often be overlooked.

17. Ron acknowledged this point. He felt that if by highlighting gaps this stimulates the market or showcases examples of good practice, this is acceptable, however, it would not be helpful to use this information to criticise particular councils or make political points. He was concerned that some perceived gaps may reflect local decisions, local priorities and a lack of demand locally for some types of service.

**ACTION:** Gordon to redraft the remit taking Don's, Claire's and Fiona's specific points into account, and developing a form of words to address these other views.

### 3. CARERS' STRATEGY

18. Discussion around this item highlighted the value of having the Care Commission involved in the group, in terms of their experience of current short-break provision across the country. However, Suzanne and Jack highlighted that as such provision would likely be registered as "care home (with respite)", "care at home", "adult placement" or "support service" it may be difficult for the Care Commission to provide any aggregated information on the provision of short breaks/respite in Scotland. They may however, be able to cite some particular examples of good and increasingly personalised practice in provision.

### 4. SHORT BREAKS:.....FOR SCOTLAND'S DISABLED CHILDREN

19. Rod Burns provided background information on the For Scotland's Disabled Children coalition. This comprises over 30 organisations across Scotland, who together, with support from the Scottish Government, have developed a liaison project which is looking at; transitions; access to affordable and quality childcare; improved educational opportunity; improved provision of short breaks; and the £34m consequential added to local authorities' block grant following the Aiming High for Disabled Children UK Report.

20. In respect of respite/short breaks nothing has yet been formulated. It was agreed, however, that through Rod and Don Williamson's participation in the SBTG and in the FDSC Group strong links and good communication can be achieved.

**ACTION:** Gordon to obtain a copy of Rod's paper on the feedback from parents of children with disabilities, in order that it be circulated to the SBTG.

Moira left the meeting at this point and Gordon took the Chair

## 5. MANIFESTO COMMITMENT – ENTITLEMENT TO SHORT BREAKS

21. Gordon introduced this item by explaining that the SNP's manifesto gave a commitment – building on a recommendation 20 from the Care 21 Report – by 2011, to provide a guaranteed minimum entitlement to respite, to carers in the greatest need.

22. Gordon advised that this had not been included in the Concordat and that the previous Respite Task Group had considered the benefits and risks associated with the implementation of this commitment, as outlined in a paper he circulated.

23. Martha advised that she was slightly surprised to see this matter arise again, particularly given the financial climate in which we are operating. Gordon explained that the Minister was keen that this be progressed by the SBTG, but aware of the significant challenges it presented.

24. Gordon suggested that task for the group was to identify some options for the Minister to consider, perhaps looking at:

a) if the greatest need was set at **x** in terms of intensity/level of caring and priority need, and there were an estimated **y** carers in this category greatest need, then estimated costs would be **z**.

b) identifying what can be delivered at neutral cost, perhaps following greater analysis of current demand/activity/levels/costs.

c) an approach that aims to, or assists with, rebalancing care towards earlier intervention designed to avert, rather than respond to crises.

25. By way of background, Gordon advised that the previous Respite Task Group considered this matter at the time when the new relationship and Concordat between central and local government was being worked through. In this context, it identified that one way of delivering on this commitment, without prescribing to local authorities, would have been for each locality to set its own respite guarantees, building this into local single outcome agreements. However at that time, CoSLA did not accept that this approach would diminish the need for significant additional resources to deliver this commitment. The matter was therefore not progressed, as intended, to CoSLA's Health and Well-being Executive Group.

26. Ron advised that CoSLA remained concerned that the delivery of this manifesto commitment brought with it definitional, political and financial issues. As follows;

- **Definitional**, in terms of agreeing definitions of "greatest need" and agreeing what the "minimum entitlement" would be.

- **Political**, in terms of the fact that this was not a Concordat commitment and the focus of local councils would instead be on those matters that were, and where

additional resources had been included in the block grant. Neither was there any great incentive for some councils to deliver on a SNP pre-election pledge.

- **Financial**, given that additional and perhaps significant investment would likely be necessary to deliver this commitment in a meaningful way, without displacing resources from those who currently enjoy appropriate higher levels of short breaks. Care.

27. Ron queried whether there was any support for this manifesto commitment. Fiona clarified that the NCOs welcomed this commitment as it supports their ambition to promote a rights-based approach to supporting carers. They did however, recognise the challenges around delivering on this commitment without disadvantaging some carers, particularly in the current financial climate.

28. There were also general concerns expressed by group members that it was difficult to reconcile the delivery of this commitment with the move towards more personalised responses to individual needs, wherein breaks from caring can be achieved in non-traditional ways that are more flexible and imaginative and thus more difficult to measure and quantify.

29. Gordon issued the group with the draft National Standard Eligibility Criteria for Community Care services, suggesting that if adopted across Scotland, it may be possible to correspond “critical or substantial risk”, which are described as “high priority”, with those in “the greatest need”.

30. This could perhaps address the definitional issue around “greatest need”, particularly as the risk categories in clued risk to carers, as follows;

- Risks relating to neglect or physical or mental health
- Risks relating to personal care/domestic routines/home environment
- Risks relating to participation in community life
- Risks relating to carers

31. Ron advised that CoSLA accepted the recommendation from Lord Sutherland’s review of Free Personal Care (FPC) that National Standard Eligibility Criteria was needed and worked with the Scottish Government and ADSW to produce the draft that is out for consultation. However, this was achieved through £40m investment by the Scottish Government, who recognised the pressures that local authorities were experiencing in respect of demand for FPC,

32. The group also raised concerns that “greatest need” and the possible application of the National Standard Eligibility Criteria both target those at risk of breakdown, in crisis. Rod advised that this fails to reflect predictable future outcomes and Martha highlighted that many carers are in a situation of constant, chronic, caring situation with substantial demands.

33. In order to progress this matter it was agreed that members would give further consideration to the National Standard Eligibility Criteria and that at the next or a separate meeting, the group would carry out a more detailed analysis of the

Definitional/Political/Financial issues by way of a S.C.O.T. (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, to begin to work on the detail of this.

## 6. GUIDANCE ON SHORT BREAKS

34. Gordon explained that the NCOs had raised concerns about whether local authorities were taking cognisance of the guidance issued jointly by the SG and CoSLA in November 2008. The NCOs felt that this was a very positive, welcome and helpful guidance paper, providing the “quality” element to the 10,000 weeks focus on “quantity”. The NCOs had raised this matter when they last met with the Minister and she had acknowledged the need to ensure that the guidance was being promoted.

35. Ron advised that he had been promoting the guidance including recently to his Executive Group. Given its status as merely “guidance” – albeit important guidance – Ron was not minded to agree to CoSLA carrying out any monitoring activity in respect of this paper. He felt that there was no evidence to suggest that it was not being taken into account by local authorities and that it was up to them to what extent they used it and that it would not be appropriate for CoSLA to question this.

36. Gordon confirmed that the SG and the Minister continue to refer to and promote to the Guidance on Short Breaks at every appropriate opportunity. He suggested that as the guidance seeks to inform strategic planning around respite, six months on it may be too early to expect it to have had a significant impact.

37. It was **agreed** that CoSLA and the SG will continue to promote this guidance.

38. The group agreed that it may be more appropriate for COCIS or Shared Care Scotland to contact local authorities to remind them of its existence, to encourage them to consider it and to seek feedback on the impact it is having. Fiona and Suzanne agreed to take this back.

**ACTION:** All to seek to promote the Guidance on Short Breaks when such opportunities arise.

**ACTION:** Fiona/Suzanne to consider whether COCIS may wish to approach local authorities to remind them of the guidance and to seek their views on how it is or will be used.

39. In view of this discussion, it was suggested that there was perhaps no need for this item to remain on the proposed remit for the SBTG. This can be discussed and agreed at the next meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING; To be arranged in late September/early October