

I. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Under the Scottish Executive's 'Programme for Government' a strategy for carers in Scotland was introduced on 24th November 1999. The strategy outlines a package of measures aimed specifically at supporting people who regularly provide voluntary care for friends or relatives. The strategy acknowledges the invaluable contribution made by unpaid carers to the care in the community agenda and represented a significant step towards meeting the needs of the many carers in Scotland.

There are, in addition, relevant UK wide measures affecting carers on employment, pensions and benefits.

Following consultation with carers' organisations based in Scotland, the following priorities were identified:

- *The promotion of new and more flexible services for carers, including respite care, at a local level*
- *The introduction of national standards for such services.*
The need for monitoring by the Scottish Executive of the performance of health and social services in supporting carers
- *The introduction of carers legislation to allow carers needs to be met more directly*
- *The provision of better and more targeted information for carers at a national level*
- *Attention to specific needs of young carers*

The strategy document outlines the measures and mechanisms for supporting the meeting of these main priorities. In summary, these include:

- *identifying finance (grant aided expenditure) for carers and services*
- *requirement to be explicit in terms of publishing financial information by local authority area to enable carers' groups to be informed*
- *a requirement to include and involve carers in, planning the spend, placed on local authorities*
- *continued development of the work of the National Care Standards committee. This work covers standards for residential care, day care, home care and residential respite care*
- *additional requirements have been placed on the local authority to report in detail to the Scottish Executive on:*
 - *how resources are used*
 - *the detail of community care plans*
 - *the involvement of local carers' groups*
 - *identify good practice*
 - *inclusion of performance indicators relating to carers assessments*

2. LOCAL CONTEXT

Joint Community Care Plan 1998 - 2001

South Ayrshire Council Community Care Plan Review

Modernising Community Care July 2000 provides the basis for the local context

The services described therein include:-

- ***South Ayrshire Carers Centre***
- ***Crossroads***
- ***Short break Services for: Older People***
 - Adults with Learning Disabilities***
 - Children with Disabilities***
 - Mental Health***
 - Physical Disabilities***

Partnership with carers as key stakeholders in developing and implementing the reviews:-

- ***On services for people with a learning disability***
- ***On service for older people***
- ***On implementing the mental health framework***
- ***On commissioning new services***

Development of Self Assessment Pro Forma with carers:-

- ***To offer, where appropriate and wished, a separate independent assessment of the needs of carers***

Cornerstone Community Care

Cornerstone have been commissioned to provide permanent and short break placements for adults with a learning disability in the local community.

Cornerstone is a registered charity whose aim is to enable people who require support to enjoy a valued life. The service will aim to provide placements for adults within family homes where they can live in the community and lead normal, valued lives, like everyone else.

The service was officially launched in February 2001 and already the staff in Cornerstone are dealing with enquires from potential carers.

Turning Point - “In the Picture” Project

Turning Point have been commissioned to provide a range of social opportunities for adults with learning difficulties.

Services From The Carers Centre

Funded mainly by South Ayrshire Council and Ayrshire & Arran Health Board, the South Ayrshire Carers Centre is now in its fourth year, providing an effective and efficient service to Carers. The Carers Centre aims to provide information, advice and support to informal Carers across the whole of South Ayrshire including remote rural areas where Carers are particularly isolated. Key services include benefits maximisation, outreach / home visits, carers training, alternative therapies, counselling, advocacy, support groups and young carers support. The Carers Centre has also facilitated, in partnership with the Council, the establishment of four new Carers Fora including the South Ayrshire Carers Action Network, which has achieved recognition by the local authority as an effective source for consultation within the caring community.

During the life of the Project, the Carers Centre has identified and supported over 1000 Carers and 50 Young Carers. We will, over the next three years, continue to identify ‘hidden Carers’ by liaising and networking with other key agencies and organisations including health, social work and the voluntary sector. Participation in a number of planned new initiatives for the next three years will enable us to reach many more Carers before they reach crisis point.

Development of Carers Forum

Locally based Carers Forums have been established in Troon, Maybole and Girvan. Each of these groups are engaged in activities to support carers and promote awareness of carers needs and rights.

In addition a Carers Action Network was established in the summer of 2000. The Network is representative of carers groups in South Ayrshire and was established to facilitate the partnership between carers and council officers. While the Network is still at a relatively early stage of development it has the potential to be an effective vehicle for joint working and dialogue between the statutory agencies and carers.

Stakeholders Conferences

1999/2000 saw five major Stakeholder Conferences being held in Troon, Ayr and Girvan. Three specifically focused on adults with a learning difficulty and two on older people.

As the title suggests, these conferences involved service users, carers, council officers, service providers, Councillors, health staff, etc. These conferences were judged a great success by all participants who demonstrated their energy, passion and enthusiasm for partnership working and planning for the future. These conferences have informed the action plans relating to service user groups in the Joint Community Care Plan.

Smart Home Technologies

1999/2000 saw the establishment of a project to pilot and evaluate the role of Smart Home Technologies in enabling older people to remain in their own homes rather than be admitted to residential care.

In discussing needs with older people and their carers, safety issues are a prime area of anxiety. Carers particularly are fully aware of the risks facing some older people. People suffering from dementia, for example, face many potential risk factors and understandably many carers are unable to accept the level of perceived risk. As a result, it can be difficult to continue to support people at home.

Crossroads

Crossroads provides services to relieve carers in their own home. The service covers the whole of South Ayrshire and provides care for all ages and disabilities.

This service is much appreciated by carers and supports in the region of 160 carers each year. The respite provided allows carers to pursue activities in their own right. One lady who looks after her elderly mother was able to take a summer job. Another lady looking after her mother, and under much pressure, appreciated having the time to have "a relaxing bath".

3. ACTION PLAN FROM LAST JOINT COMMUNITY CARE PLAN 1998-2001

Objective

- *Ensure that the needs of Carers are assessed*

ACTION	OUTCOME
<p>Undertake continuous improvement exercise in relation to assessment of needs and managing care arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work teams have reviewed their own practice - pilot Assessment and Care Management Project March-December 1999 followed by other teams involvement in March-October 2000. • Publication Policy and Procedures document October 2000. • Clear action plan for future developments - major theme - empowerment.
<p>Research Carers Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent research to be commissioned.

Objective

- *Ensure that practical assistance and other supports are offered to carers*

ACTION	OUTCOME
<p>Address housing needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers are now under the Carers Recognition and Services Act 1995 entitled to an assessment of their own needs. Carers assessment pro-forma implemented in 1999/2000. • Where housing needs are identified a formal referral is made to the housing area manager - facilitates partnership working amongst service user, carers, social worker and housing manager
<p>Develop Respite/Short Break opportunities (cross reference to individual chapters)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifeways have been commissioned to provide short breaks for older people in the homes of short break carers. • Community based respite for adults with learning disability developed.
<p>Develop Services from Carers Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short breaks unit at Chalmers Road opened in 2000.

Objective

- *Ensure that Carers inform the direction and content of Strategic development.*

ACTION	OUTCOME
<p>Develop Carers Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Carers Forums exist in Girvan, Maybole, Ayr and Troon. • Carers Action Network established in 2000 = broad based carers organisation has improved the strength of the partnership between carers and council officers.

4. WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SINCE PLAN

Assessment of Needs & Managing Care Arrangements

Each of the social work teams have now had the opportunity to review their own practice and a policy and procedures document has been produced. This exercise has set in motion a programme of continuous improvement in practice.

Recognising that front-line operational staff have the additional knowledge that only direct contact with service users and carers provides, has given the opportunity to examine practice and procedures and develop a person-focused approach to assessment and care management. One of the main themes of this process has been the empowerment of service users. The assessment process very much includes and promotes an active involvement on the part of the service user, their carers and any other relevant persons who are involved in their lives.

This has resulted in significant developments in the way in which service users and their carers access and receive community care services.

The underlying principles are:

We are committed to:

- *Avoiding discrimination*
- *Acknowledgement of the rights of individuals as equal citizens*
- *Service users and carers being partners in the policy making process, service planning and in the delivery of services*
- *A positive and imaginative choice of services and supports to maximise an individual's potential*
- *Promoting modern, flexible and home-based services*

A carer who was recently involved in her father's community care assessment wrote...

"I was prepared for the worst, that is that there would be no services available for my dad and I'd be left to fill the gaps! I had a very clear view of what was needed, however, right from our first contact with the social worker, it was clear that she was interested in our situation and was keen to involve dad fully. I was really glad to see this happening. It gave my dad his dignity and encouraged him to give his view on how he wanted to be supported. I was surprised by some of the things he said were important to him and recognised that my original plan would not have fitted in with his view of the situation. He got a care package that was really comprehensive and I was reassured that he was safe and happy. I was offered a carers assessment and was given a copy of the booklet. I didn't proceed because I felt that my needs were clearly addressed in the course of my dad's assessment."

A further development has been the development of new community care stationery.

Service users and carers were consulted about the information recorded and the style of recording. Feedback clearly told us that a simple, straightforward report was most helpful. All service users, and where appropriate, their carers, receive a copy of the community care assessment and care plan. This reflects the fact that it is their assessment and that we are making a partnership with them. It ensures that there is clarity about what we have agreed their assessed needs are and how these are to be met. It allows service users and carers to identify omissions, gives them something to relate back to and shows respect for them. In undertaking all community care assessments we have sought to ensure that practice is clearly centred on the person.

The council has consulted service users and carers who have had an assessment of need completed recently and compared their comments with those of service users and carers who had an assessment completed prior to the implementation of the new procedures. The overwhelming message is that people view the changes as very positive and importantly felt that they were listened to and recognised themselves in the written record of the assessment.

Following completion of a community care assessment, where housing needs are identified, a formal referral is made to the housing area manager by the social worker. This process quickly facilitates partnership working between the service user, carers, social worker and housing manager in an attempt to find a solution to the housing need identified.

A carer whose mother was rehoused using the policy, commented...

“My mother has become very frail and needed a great deal of attention. Although she had a good service from home carers, I was staying with her more frequently because of her (and my) fears that she would fall and injure herself. We knew that her house was not helping matters. I was becoming more and more resentful of the effect this was having on my life. I had recently retired and was looking forward to travelling. I was beginning to think that mum would need to go into a home. The social worker discussed rehousing with mum and I and we agreed to try this option. I was so low that I didn’t think it would work. But it did. Mum was allocated a sheltered house very quickly and her care package was changed.

I am now a daughter and not a carer. Mum likes her new house and the people who live round about. She can manage to get around her house well and I can see that there are still lots of things that she can do for herself. I can’t believe that I thought she would have to go into a home.”

Carers Recognition & Services Act 1995

This Act amends Section 12A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. A carer aged 16 and over, who is either providing or intending to provide substantial amounts of care on a regular basis, is entitled (on request) to an assessment of their own needs. The result of the carers assessment should be taken into account when the local authority is making decisions about services to provide to the user.

1999/2000 saw the implementation of South Ayrshire Council’s carers assessment proforma. This was created in consultation with carers and was designed to be used as:

- ***A self-assessment tool, or***
- ***To provide a focus for discussion between the carer and the community care worker.***

The carer’s assessment is widely used throughout South Ayrshire Council and its effectiveness is to be evaluated during 2001. Community care workers report that many carers have been reluctant to use the assessment tool, perhaps because many carers do not see themselves as carers. Workers have found that some informal carers have been persuaded to participate in a carer’s assessment in order to help them see the extent of their caring role with the person being cared for. In these circumstances, it is a very powerful instrument and can assist in developing care packages which support the service user and their carer.

All community care staff have received practice guidelines relating to carers assessment which seeks to embody good practice and is based on the work done by the Carers National Association.

Development of Short Break Opportunities for Older People and for Adults with a Learning Disability.

Short Breaks for Older People

Lifeways have been commissioned to provide short breaks for older people in the homes of short break carers. The service aims to offer a flexible service which is tailored to meet the needs of older people and provide an alternative to residential respite. The short respite breaks provides a safe, secure, homely environment within the home of a carer who has been recruited, screened, trained and supported by Lifeways Community Care. The service would also aim to maximise service users' capacities and afford service users and carers the opportunity to function as independently as possible.

Short Breaks for Adults with a Learning Disability

The short breaks unit at Chalmers Road opened in 2000 and provides short breaks for adults with a learning disability. Chalmers Road is a purpose built four-bedroomed en-suite bungalow which was designed in consultation with people who would use the service, carers, local authority and health staff. The bungalow is situated in a quiet residential area of Ayr and is within easy reach of the town centre.

The service aims to provide:-

- ***Residential breaks for adults which enables their carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities.***
- ***To provide a quality, needs-led, person-centred service within a small group setting.***
- ***To provide the opportunity for service users to experience a range of community resources.***
- ***To maintain and promote people's independence.***

In 2000, the unit was able to offer a service to 49 service users and their carers.

5. WHAT REMAINS TO BE ACHIEVED?

- **Young Carers**
 - *work undertaken by Carers Centre needs to be supported*
 - *young people not providing direct care-link with Education needs to be established*

- **Rural Carers**
 - *identify who rural carers are - research/survey*
 - *research carers needs from last community care plan*
 - *work underway with carers network needs to be supported and developed*
 - *what are carers' needs? Identification of the issues - objective overview needed*
 - *development of partnership approach to joint working*
 - *addressing problems relating to financial issues for carers. Access to training, education, employment, payment of appropriate benefits*
 - *transport has been raised as a serious issue across all care groups and is seen as central to the lives of service users and carers alike. Issues range from transport in rural areas within South Ayrshire to transport problems pan-Ayrshire and indeed nationally*
 - *hidden carers - work needs to be undertaken to identify and support hidden carers*

6. OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

- *Young carers - work being undertaken by Carers Centre to be supported and enhanced*
- *Links with education to identify and develop support strategies for young carers.*
- *Commissioning research from academic institutions to identify the needs of carers in South Ayrshire. This would be viewed as a working document to inform the development of the carers strategy over the next 3 years. This option is viewed by officers of the council and carers' group representatives as an appropriate use of money. This research could also look at addressing the needs of rural carers.*
- *Addressing some of the financial issues facing carers. The employment of a Welfare Rights Officer (WRO) to concentrate solely on the financial needs of carers for a period of 12 months. Emphasis would be on the educative and awareness raising role of the WRO as well as direct work to support carers to make appropriate claims for benefit.*

7. ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS

- *The employment of a WRO to concentrate solely on the financial needs of carers for a period of 12 months*
- *Commissioning research from an academic institution to identify the needs of carers in South Ayrshire. This would be viewed as a working document to inform the development of the carers strategy over the next 3 years*
- *Carers needs and services are so closely interwoven with the care needs of the people they care for that a link in the action plan has to be made with the action plans for other care groups. Reference should therefore be made to the other Chapters of the Community Care Plan*

SERVICES TO CARERS

ACTION	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	PROVIDER	FUNDING SOURCE
Carers Centre	77260	77260	79578	81965	84424	Unity Enterprise	Social Work, Housing & Health AAHB
Carers Scheme	122340	122340	126010	129791	133684	Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme	Community Services/ & Health AAHB
N.B. THE ABOVE ARE ALLOCATED ACROSS VARIOUS CLIENT GROUPS							
Service Developments		241000	248230	255677	263347		Social Work, Housing & Health
Total	199600	440600	453818	467433	481456		