

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

1 SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

ANNUAL REPORT - CARERS' INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY (2013 – 2016)

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Update Cabinet regarding progress on the implementation of Valuing Carers, the Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2013/2016;
- 1.2 Provide Cabinet with a copy of the Annual Progress Report concerning the aforementioned strategy for 2014/2015.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

2.1 This report links with the following priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent;
- Working with children and families to tackle problems early.

2.2 Supporting Carers is also a priority in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. One of the key features of the Act is that it aims to provide equal rights for carers, putting them on a similar legal footing as those they care for.

3. Background

3.1 The Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 introduced a new legal duty on the National Health Service and Local Authorities in Wales to work together and in consultation with carers to prepare, publish and implement a Carers' Information and Consultation Strategy.

3.2 The Measure covers all Local Authority and NHS service provision in Wales whether these are directly provided or provided by others.

3.3 The Measure is not targeted at any specific age group. It encompasses carers of all ages, including young carers (under the age of 18).

3.4 The overall intention of the Measure is to improve the lives of carers in the following key areas:

- Appropriate information and advice;
- Active engagement and involvement;
- Consultation about commissions and delivery of services;
- Partnerships that include Housing, Leisure, third or private sectors.

- 3.5 A Carers' Strategic Group was established in October 2011. This group comprised of Local Authority and Health Board Carer leads, Carer Centre and voluntary sector representatives from the Local Authorities in the Western Bay region.
- 3.6 In accordance with the Measure requirements a Carers Strategy (Valuing carers) was produced in partnership between ABMU Health Board, Bridgend County Borough Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, City and Council of Swansea, third sector organisations, carers themselves and carers' organisations. The key themes in the strategy reflect the four key areas outlined above in 3.4.
- 3.7 The strategy was submitted to Welsh Government in October 2012 and subsequently approved.
- 3.8 Reports were presented to Cabinet on 30th April 2013 and to the Cabinet Equalities Committee on 13th June 2013 to clarify the Measure requirements and confirm the collaborative arrangements to develop and implement a regional strategy.
- 3.9 In Bridgend, the strategy has built on the good work already being undertaken in with respect to carers.
- 3.10 Measure funding however, has enabled the development of specific projects, (full report attached at **Appendix 1**) which include:
- A Carers Aware E Learning programme which is being rolled out across the Council;
 - A targeted programme in schools to raise awareness of young carers;
 - Three engagement events to consult with carers regarding service gaps and priorities;
 - The development of a Carers' Emergency Card;
 - Welfare Benefit Advice surgeries;
 - Continuation of BCBC Carers' Development Officer Post;
 - Training events for carers and young carers;
 - Information and advice leaflets.

4.0 Current Situation/Proposal

Implementation and Monitoring

- 4.1 Implementation of the strategy has required collaboration between the Health Board, Local Authorities and carers' services together with the involvement of carers. The regional strategic group has been responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the strategy and monitoring its effectiveness. The strategy has also evolved as the needs and expectations of carers have changed.

Transitional Arrangements

- 4.2 The Carers (Wales) Measure 2010 will be repealed when the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 comes into force in 2016. By this time it is expected that good practice around identification, information and consultation relating to carers will be well-embedded within the NHS and local authorities. The strategic group is, therefore, currently working with colleagues in the Western Bay

Collaborative to identify future priorities and a transitional plan, which will sustain progress made and ensure carers remain a priority across the region.

- 4.3 In Bridgend, a local partnership group has been established which is developing an implementation plan for the final year of the Measure.

5. Effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The identification and engagement of carers as key partners is a theme which runs through the strategy. At a strategic level there are opportunities for carer representatives to participate in local authority strategy/ planning groups and carers have been involved in discussions about service development. There have been opportunities for young carers to share their views and comments.
- 6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the transitional arrangements to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Welsh Government funding has been provided to support the strategy for three years which has been split across the three localities according to population. Bridgend received £52,530 during 2014/2015 and this figure remains for 2015/2016.
- 7.2 The strategic group is currently exploring resource options for 2016/2017 when the Measure Grant ceases. This is to sustain progress made and to enable the continued improvement of outcomes for carers.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the Annual Progress Report attached at Appendix 1.

Susan Cooper
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10. **Background documents**
None