

Ministerial Advisory Group Meeting for Unpaid Carers

Tuesday 4 June 2024

Attendees

Dawn Bowden MS	Minister for Social Care
Andy Lock	Private Secretary Minister for Social Care
Alwyn Jones	Chair
Taryn Stephens	Welsh Government
Denise Moultrie	Welsh Government
Mark Price	Welsh Government
Bobbie-Jo Haarhoff	Unpaid carer
Jayne Newman	Unpaid carer
Kai Collins	Young Carers Advisory Board
Rachel Clement	Children in Wales
Kim Dolphin	Carers Officers Learning and Improvement Network
Claire Morgan	Carers Wales
Kate Cabbage	Carers Trust Wales
Rachel Williams	Care Alliance
Kate Young	All Wales Forum
Anna Bird	Hywel Dda UHB
Marie Davies	Powys Teaching Health Board
David Watkins	Cwm Taff Morgannwg UHB
Amy Hawkins	Swansea City Council
Avril Bracey	Carmarthenshire County Council
Naheed Ashraf	Aneurin Bevan UHB

On-line attendees

Andy Pithouse	Special Advisor to Minister for Social Care
Diane Seddon	Bangor University
Jon Day	Social Care Wales
Valerie Billingham	Older People's Commissioner Office
Elinor Jones	Welsh Government

Apologies

Kathy Proudfoot	Carers Officers Learning and Improvement Network
Natasha James	Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
Naomi Harper	Flintshire County Council
Ffion Johnstone	Betsi Cadwaladr
Iain McMillan	Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
Cllr Jane Tremlett	Carmarthenshire County Council
Claire Roche	Powys LHB
Pennie Muir	Hywel Dda UHB
Angela Hughes	Cardiff and Vale UHB
Alyson Hoskins	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

1. Welcome (chair)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions provided.

2. Minister for Social Care

The Minister for Social Care was delighted to meet with the group in her new role especially as this was the first in-person meeting since the pandemic. The Minister acknowledged the full agenda for the day covering key areas such as the Strategy for Unpaid Carers. The Minister recognised the important insight from the group as we move forward on revising the Strategy for Unpaid Carers and reinforcing our commitment to unpaid carers. It is vital the role and views of unpaid carers are recognised and that we work in social partnership with the group.

The Minister was pleased to hear of the work of the Task and Finish Group in promoting improvement and timely access to carers' needs assessments and information. The work on raising awareness of young carers and the young carers ID card was also highlighted. In taking this work forward officials have sought views from young carers on the Young Carers Advisory Board. The Minister thanked Kai Collins for attending the meeting to represent young carers. The Minister was also pleased to announce funding to support the young carers festival for a third year this summer.

In closing, the Minister thanked Claire Morgan, Director of Carers Wales, for her work over the last seven years and her input into the work of this group as she leaves Carers Wales.

3. Workshop – Revising the Strategy for Unpaid Carers – Denise Moultrie

Denise Moultrie provided an overview of work anticipated on revising the strategy for unpaid carers and aims of today's workshop in seeking views from the group as we move forward with this work.

Summary of discussion

Discussion of priority one – identifying and valuing unpaid carers

Agreement this remains a priority area. Listening to carers is key as well as education of carers as to available resources. Issues of labels / terminology discussed as the term 'unpaid carer' and 'carer' is seen as a barrier to access, including in some cultures. Discussion on the term 'look after' as well as quality of conversation with a carer. 'Unpaid carer' not recognised, or challenged by some if they are in receipt of Carers Allowance. More work needs to be done around identification. Some unpaid carers still don't want to be identified or have an assessment.

Discussion of priority two – providing IAA

Agreed that this was still an important issue. Discussion on online directory development but challenge of keeping information up to date. Role of community connectors re knowledge of local resources – and GPs, social prescribers, DEWIS noted. Local carers centre should be aware of all local resources. It was questioned

what is a good conversation? It can be overwhelming or incorrect information. Relate information to individual and specific circumstances.

Discussion of priority 3 – Life alongside caring

Questions raised if work and education (Priority 4) is part of this priority as well as Information, Advice and Assistance (Priority 2). Unpaid carer at the centre of this discussion. Unpaid carers point of view raised and not having a voice can be frustrating and damaging. Local authorities also need to be more flexible and agreed Health and Third Sector should be at the table.

Other discussion on priority areas

Agreement of four priorities still stand in moving forward but recognised that some have changed slightly and this should be reflected in the refresh. Barriers for young carers in higher education also noted and the need to better promote available support, map opportunities and raise awareness. Financial improvement also needs to be addressed and more done especially around the cost of living crisis and to promote Carers Allowance.

4. Young Carer ID Cards update and discussion - Mark Price

Mark Price provided a background and aims for this work in identifying and supporting young carers. Updates were given on the meetings held to date with the local authorities and FE colleges and further collaborative work envisaged for the future. Mark Price also confirmed plans to work with pharmacies, advising on current work in progress in developing a survey for pharmacies on their awareness and engagement with young carers.

A working group with Welsh Government officials consists of Carers Trust Wales and colleagues from local authorities education and social services directorates. . Awareness of young carers as well as the young carers ID card will be promoted during Carers Week in June and the autumn term. This will involve close collaboration with schools.

Group discussion

The importance of liaising with head teachers was noted. Officials confirmed they were working with the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer as a point of contact with community pharmacies and that it was the decision of individual pharmacists to safely provide medication to young carers. The variation between local authority young carer ID card schemes was discussed. Video case studies being produced should promote good practice in schools and colleges.

5. Task and Finish group update

Denise Moultrie gave an update on the work of the group, including the completion of the local authority survey. This asked local authorities to self-assess and identify good practice. It was confirmed that 80 responses had been received. Further work is underway to develop a survey for health boards to report on their responsibilities to provide information to unpaid carers and signpost to available support services.

We are closely with Carers Wales to look at the information provided in their Track the Act survey for unpaid carers and we are arranging consultation workshops with unpaid carers. We will then collate all the information provided and agree next steps with statutory partners.

6. Unpaid Carers receiving support (UPRS) – Data

Joseph Wilton provided an update on work commissioned by the Ministerial Advisory Group to develop new local authority data collection for unpaid carers. This is likely to focus on unpaid carers who have received a carers needs assessment and will allow us to develop a better understanding of the population of unpaid carers accessing assessments and potentially subsequent support.

Group discussion

Some suggestions for useful data to record were made.

7. Terms of reference

The terms of reference have now been agreed and published on the Welsh Government website.

An invite will be issued the week commencing 10 June inviting relevant members to provide a brief expression of interest (EOI) for the vice-chair position. Relevant members are our unpaid carers and four Carers Alliance members. The Minister for Social Care will make the appointment based on the EOIs submitted.

An exercise will also be undertaken to look at current membership of the Ministerial Advisory Group to refresh membership for those on the group who have been members for more than three years. A schedule will be developed and shared with the group for consultation.

8. Workshops

Engaging with a diverse range of unpaid carers – how can we better reach out?

Summary of discussion - We could see that what matters to us all such as family, social activities, work, also matter to unpaid carers. That which we may take for granted are very important to unpaid carers such as sleep, privacy etc. How to better reach out and engage with a diverse range of carers was discussed. Participants considered we need to publicise positive stories and understand and meet assessed needs in a fair and timely manner. Unpaid carers need to be at the centre of support provided to the cared for person. Building trust between carers and professionals is also important. Services should be planned using available census data

Getting the message out in the right way to promote self-identification

Summary of discussion - Noted that messages about unpaid caring roles can be exclusively negative and we should consider the balance with more positive

messaging where appropriate and accurate. The language used is also important and difficulties in navigating systems.

How we consider messaging and recognise cultural difference was discussed.. The importance of supporting good physical and mental health of our carers was also highlighted. This needs to be considered as part of the review of the national strategy. The importance of utilising social media was acknowledged and access to information and carers needs assessments, where appropriate. Carers tend to present to services when the cared for person is in crisis and this should be considered in the timing and content of messages. Messaging should be tailored to varied target audiences.

9. Actions from the last meeting of 11 March and AOB

Action points carried over to the next meeting.

10. Reflections from the day

The Chair thanked the group and reflected on the positive discussions from the day and welcomed the opportunity to meet in person.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is to be held on 9 September (online)