

Caring for Carers Report

On 12.10.16, the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board Stakeholder Network hosted an event themed around unpaid carers.

The event focussed on local support for unpaid carers in their caring role and aimed to engage partners in deciding on the most effective ways to improve the lives of carers. Local support for carers includes working in partnership with Clinical Commissioning Groups, the community and voluntary sector, the independent sector and carers themselves.

Councillor Muriel Weisz opened the event, standing in for Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, followed by a joint presentation by Sue Batty, Nottinghamshire County Council and Hazel Buchanan, Nottingham North and East Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This focused on carers in Nottinghamshire detailing the work of the Local Authority, the CCGs and their partners.

Young Carers Workshop facilitated by Maggie Pape, Strategic Commissioning

This workshop was jointly facilitated by colleagues from the County Council, the Carers Federation and Carers Trust East Midlands who presented information about pilot projects that are providing group activities for young carers in the south of the County and in Mansfield and Ashfield. Participants commended positively on these activities and then discussed how this work could be built upon, and how organisations and individuals might work together to identify and support young carers.

Key feedback from the group included:

- that group work for young carers is important and needs to be available across the whole County (note: the County Council and health partners intend to commission County-wide group work activities in 2017)
- the role of schools and health organisations is vital in identifying and supporting young carers – staff within these organisations may need advice and training to enable them to do this effectively
- the safeguarding of young carers is important – the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board has a role in this
- age appropriate information for young carers is important, making use of ICT/social media -
- a 'Young Carers Card' was proposed, providing weblinks to useful information and enabling a young carer to identify themselves to schools, health providers etc.
- friends, neighbours or the wider community may be aware of young carers and need to know how to access support for them

Carer-friendly communities Workshop facilitated by Dan Godley, Strategic Commissioning and Katie Freeman from Newark and Sherwood CVS, who is currently working with GP practices in the Newark and Sherwood area to help support the wider health and social care community to understand what it means to be 'carer friendly', and how to achieve this.

The aim of the workshop sessions was to encourage the groups to share any experiences of 'carer friendly communities' and to explore what a carer friendly community should look like; and highlight any issues and challenges, which could prevent success.

The first session was mainly attended by carers, however the second session was mainly attended by social care, health and district council professionals. Although the responses from both groups were different in terms of each group's perspectives, there were a number of common themes, preventing the success of caring within the community.

The biggest themes were communication and the sharing of information. This ranges from GP's being unaware or unclear about available support, to confidentiality issues of sharing information with carers by health professionals, especially if the carer is not a family member. There was also a strong sense that health and social care organisations do not communicate well with each other, which prevents seamless services and support being provided to carers and their cared for person.

Another big issue was the 'carer' label. Many carers do not see or identify themselves as a 'carer' and feel that there is a stigma attached to being labelled as a 'carer'.

Despite the above issues and frustrations, both groups made some positive suggestions to build more successful 'carer friendly' communities:

- Better use of available community resources and facilities to support carers in the community, including libraries and church support groups to enable local carers to come together
- Encourage local employers to become 'carer friendly' employers to support carers in their workforce
- Encourage former carers to provide 'peer support' to other carers in their community
- Use community pharmacies to help identify carers, provide information and signposting
- Wider promotion and availability of carers information packs and carers hub information to be available within pharmacies, libraries, churches and other local amenities

Planning support for carers in the future workshop facilitated by Penny Spice, Strategic Commissioning

This workshop explored the challenge of the growing demand in support for carers as the population ages and carers' numbers increase. A presentation on Shared Lives was given to demonstrate a different approach to breaks. The discussion centred on the importance of sustainable integrated services; information and education for carers, feedback / evaluation of services and ideas for the future.

- **Information and Education for Carers**
 - Training – external training sessions – on how to care for the cared for. (Hoist/continence etc.)
 - Awareness about services & coping strategies
 - Extend 'Making sense of Dementia' Radford Care Group to county
 - Something like 'Looking after me'
 - Carers need accessible, up to date information about who to contact, etc

- **Negative experiences**
 - Consistency of workers –not repeating info to different workers
 - Repeating of information, form filling (DWP), amount of time taken to fill in paperwork, which causes emotional/emotional distress to carer
 - Chasing people when things go wrong spend time
 - ‘Face to Face’ –Carer’s Assessment – sometimes distressing – but too long waiting list for ‘face to face’ assessments
 - Should be offered ‘choice’ - waiting list needs reducing
 - Limited access to Compass Workers when cared-for is not receiving services
- **Feedback / evaluation of services**
 - to all carers/service users and lead commissioner
 - without fear anxiety about impact on future delivery of care to the person
 - advocate/independent person to service user to gain feedback
 - use of website, similar to Patient Opinion
- **Suggested Services**
 - Key worker who carer can ring
 - Champions in GPs
 - Crisis Prevention and earlier/regular intervention
 - Phone contact (Golden Number) answer phone to request ring back
 - Share experiences when the cared for has moved to residential placements
 - Point of contact - volunteers to assist carers e.g. DIY jobs
 - Telephone Support Service
 - Drop in service
 - Support Services appropriate times etc. for working carers and contacting professionals
 - Arrangements where workers get to know service users and carers, gradually before break is arranged
 - App to share info

Information and advice for carers Workshop facilitated by John Stronach, Strategic Commissioning

The workshop focussed on the Council’s information and advice offer and included a short demonstration of the ‘Notts Help Yourself’ website, including how people can access information from the site if they do not have access to the internet. The website is accessed by calling the Customer Services Centre, or at local libraries or voluntary organisations such as Carers Trust. This was felt to be very important and useful as it was acknowledged that the internet was the best format for keeping up to date, but alternative means of accessing

information as described was essential as not everyone feels comfortable accessing information online for a variety of reasons.

The workshop was attended by a people with a varied background and included service users, carers, care providers and NHS and social care staff. The workshops were affirmative and on the whole the Notts Help Yourself was seen as a positive resource for carers to access information and support. People stated they would promote it within their organisations and ensure that their groups and organisations are listed on the site. Pledges included:

“I will go back to our group with the nottshelpyourself.org.uk website and encourage members to access it.”

“I will advertise the Making Memories Befriending Service on Notts Help Yourself.”

There were useful discussions on how the offer of information and advice could be developed further and these will be taken forward to be considered.

Examples of the immediate actions include: information such as carers packs and Notts Help Yourself to be promoted within local pharmacies and the information and advice video to be shared with local Clinical Commissioning Groups and District / Borough Councils. Software will introduce symbols to make the site accessible for an individual with a Learning disability.

Suggestions as part of planned development of the site are:

- To link the ‘what’s on?’ News feed to Facebook adverts
- To have a live message chat facility from the site with CSC.