

Cross Party Group on Carers

16th March 2022

Minute

Present

MSPs

Gillian Mackay – MSP

Mark Griffin – MSP

Graeme Dey - MSP

Invited guests

Andrew Strong – Scottish Government, Carers Benefits Branch

Non-MSP Group Members

Andrew Muir – Psychiatric Rights Scotland

Celia Sweeney – Carer

Christine Farquhar – Carer

Lucy Challoner – Carer

Rebecca McColl – SFAD (Scottish Families affected by alcohol and Drugs)

Robert McGeachy – Camphill Scotland

Tom Wightman – Carer

Karen Maloney – Carers Trust Scotland

Louise Morgan – Carers Trust Scotland

Rachael

Anne Marie Kerr – Lanarkshire Carers Centre

Apologies

Carolanne Christie – North Lanarkshire Carers Together

item 1 – Welcome and introductions

Mark Griffin MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the format of the meeting

item 2 – Minutes and matters arising from minutes of last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were ratified

item 3 – Young Carer Action Day (YCAD) acknowledgement

Young Carer Survey Presentation

The recorded presentation was shared and after the presentation Mark asked if there were any questions. He stated if people had anything they wanted to add to contact Nicola at Carers Trust Scotland. Mark shared his thoughts on the survey and said it was concerning how little support young carers felt they were receiving from education.

There were a few comments from members about the lack of support for young carers especially in education and asked if we could as a group write to the Minister and other Education Strategic bodies to see what support is being offered to young carers and what they are doing to identify young carers in School. Also some comments were made about these surveys and that if young people do not identify as young carers and are not connected to a service, they would not have contributed to it. Could organisations look at where they publish the survey questions.

There was also some discussion on how carers of people with drug or alcohol misuse do not always identify themselves and like some young carers would not contribute to surveys looking for information.

Louise stated that Carers Trust Scotland do have a strategic post for education, and they are working to try and get uniformity across all local authorities on how they approach identification and support for young carers in schools. Several members agreed this should be the same across all local authorities

Mark also suggested people raise the issue with their local councillors at the local elections

**Action – CPG write to Minister regarding support for young carers in School
And also to Strategic organisations on identification of young carers in school**

Action – Write to invite the education minister to speak to the Group on how young carers can be identified and supported in all local authorities

Action – Also invite the carers representative on COSLA to join the CPG – This to wait till after local elections as reps may change

Action – Louise also asked if the group agreed to write to the minister to show support for the recommendations from the YCAD survey. All members agreed to this

Rachael thanked the members for listening to young carers and acknowledgement of the results of the survey. She stated that there needs to be more done to recognise young adult carers as well as young carers. Rachael hoped that people do recognise and care that we are getting the support and our wellbeing is being cared for

item 4 – Scottish Carer’s Assistance Consultation

Andrew shared the presentation and spoke about the consultation and what was included in it. The presentation will be made available for members after the meeting along with the link to the consultation

Mark commented that there appeared to be positive changes to the education and earnings levels. He also spoke about the earlier discussions that the group had on how carers of people with drug and alcohol misuse do not identify themselves and therefore can miss out on support and benefits they may be eligible for.

Andrew asked if anyone could come forward with additional evidence for the eligibility for carers assessment and to send to him so it can be included in the consultation

Tom glad to see the change in attitude by encouraging people to apply for the benefits. Andrew stated that they are looking at how to be more compassionate in the allocation of benefits.

There was further discussion on the timeline and if once the benefits had been agreed would they continue to be reviewed during implementation. Andrew confirmed there would be continual reviews carried out on the new benefit system. He also stated ta the moment there was no definitive timeline for the transfer but that they were working with DWP and would keep people updated.

Action – Karen to send out the link to the consultation to all members after the meeting

item 5 – AOCB

Louise raised email about festival of politics during 11th -15th August 2022. Organisers are currently working on the festival programme; they would welcome any ideas from carers for events on the first day. If people are happy for Carers Trust to put something forward on behalf of the CPG. Everyone agreed to that. Louise stated please send any ideas they might have to Karen

Andrew Muir raised the issue of the time bar on complaints to the ombudsman. Mark stated that this had been raised previously by the group and it required a legislation

change by the government. At the moment there did not seem to be any changes due

Item 6 – Date of next meetings

8th June 2022

14th September 2022