

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### SELECT COMMITTEE - CARERS IN KENT

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Carers in Kent held at Stour Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 30 January 2009.

PRESENT: Mr L Christie (Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr J Curwood, Mrs V J Dagger, Mr S J G Koowaree and Mrs M Newell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs B Hagan (Maidstone Carers Project), Ms E Hanson (Policy Manager), Mr A Hickmott (Head of Children's Services, West Kent), Mrs A Hornsby (Policy Officer), Mr S Leidecker (Director of Operations), Mr M Thomas-Sam (Head of Policy and Service Development) and Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview))

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**1. Response to the Select Committee Report**  
(Item. 1)

(1) Mr Leidecker updated the Committee on the general progress that had been made in this area since the Select Committee had submitted their report to Cabinet in December 2007. He stated that the Select Committee work had been really important for Kent Adult Social Services (KASS) and Children, Families and Education (C, F & E) Directorates. The Select Committee report combined with the national strategy had provided a platform to re-examine KCC's approach with Carers organisations.

(2) Mr Leidecker mentioned the challenges of estimating the extent of demand and need for services from carers and in connection with this the complex definition of "carer". Although he believed progress had been made both Directorates he was not complacent and stressed the importance of recognising carers and treating them with dignity and respect to help them to live more normal lives.

(3) KASS had made a significant contribution in financial terms and had £3.4m reported level of expenditure in 2007/08. In 2008/09 the Carers Grant was £1.1m from KASS. This had been invested in a range of services in East and West Kent and Mental Health. Mr Leidecker gave several examples of the new services that had resulted which included an extra 4,000 hours in West Kent to enable carers to have a break.

(4) Mr Leidecker stated that KASS had changed their approach to carers and carer organisations, to improve accountability to them. KASS and C, F & E had held a seminar at the beginning of 2008 which had been attended by 21 carers organisations. Following this a representative group had been set up to identify priorities for 2008/09 and in addition the standing advisory group was set up and its terms of reference agreed. This group had now met twice and was due to meet again shortly. He introduced Mrs Hagan from the Maidstone Carers Project who was a co-chairman of the Carers Advisory Group.

(5) Mr Leidecker mentioned that there had been some progress in relation to engagement with the NHS and in the next couple of months they would be consolidating a multi-agency strategy. Next years each PCT would have approximately £600,000 to support carers and how this money was to be used would form part of the strategy.

(6) In conclusion Mr Leidecker emphasised that carers issues would be looked at along with other government strategies including dementia and end of life.

(7) Ms Hornsby and Mr Hickmott answered questions from Members specifically related to young carers and also showed an extract from a DVD which had been made by young carers and explained in their own words what life was like for them. This would be used in schools along with training materials for teachers, governors and multi-agency partners. Mr Hickmott stated that the Children and Young Persons Plan had identified key actions for Young Carers to be cascaded down to Local Children Services Partnerships. In addition guidance for schools on young carers had been placed on the Kent Children's Trust Website.

(8) Ms Hornsby explained that a joint protocol was being produced by KASS and C, F& E to help colleagues in Adult and Children's Social Services to identify and support young carers.

(9) Attached as an appendix to the report was a table showing the Select Committee's recommendations and the action that was being taken to address them and the progress that had been made since December 2007.

(10) The Committee discussed the progress made on each of the 14 recommendations and Officers answered specific questions on the action taken to date and action proposed:-

#### *Recommendation 1*

- In response to a question on progress with providing a consistent supply of information for carers from the out of hours service, Ms Hanson explained that business process mapping had been carried out and from this it was hoped that the County Duty Service would be able to provide a more consistent approach to carers.
- In relation to the key area of identifying the number of carers in Kent, it was explained that a survey was planned.
- In response to a question, Mrs Hagan stated that from her perspective there had been a gradual change in the right direction. Regarding the out of hours service the biggest issue was around support and advice on mental health. Mr Leidecker explained that there had been significant developments in support for the mental health out of hours service as part of the £1.1m investment.

#### *Recommendations 2 & 6*

- The chairman mentioned the Carers Emergency Card which was a recommendation from the Select Committee. This had been launched at the end of last year. Unfortunately Members of the Select Committee had not been invited to the launch. It was confirmed that 172 applications had been

received for the Card via the website. Mrs Hagan stated that the Maidstone Carers Project was receiving 2 applications per day.

### *Recommendation 3*

- Regarding the pilot for outsourcing of carers assessments to carer support organisations, Ms Hanson explained that the two organisations involved in this pilot were Dover District Carers Support and Carers First in Tonbridge and the tender for this had just been produced.
- In response to question on the number of carers assessment carried out Mr Thomas-Sam undertook to provide Members with this information from CSCI's report.
- The Select Committee had heard evidence that carers preferred assessments to be carried out by voluntary organisations and it was important that there was a link between assessment and service provision. Ms Hanson explained that they planned to train carers support staff, who would be carrying out assessments, alongside KCC staff to make sure that they were all seen as part of an extended team.
- In relation to the funding of the outsourced carers assessment Members were informed that in the pilot an assessment officer plus on costs would be provided and for 48 weeks of the year it was anticipated that they would carry out 4 assessments a week but the pilot would help develop an understanding of how many assessments could realistically be carried out.

### *Recommendations 4*

- It was acknowledged by Members that the work carried out on the policy for carer's assessments was a good start on the foundations of the service but it was hoped that the service would be flexible and able to respond to changes. Mrs Hagan stated that on the ground the voluntary groups had yet to see an improvement but this was within the context a changing situation. Mr Thomas-Sam pointed out that this area of work was under scrutiny with regular practice reviews being carried out.
- In response to a question Mr Thomas-Sam stated that young carers were able to access regular reviews or contact with care managers through direct payments.
- The Chairman stated that as this recommendation was still being actioned, he assumed that Adult Social Services POC would want to reserve the right to oversee this.

### *Recommendation 5*

- Concern was expressed that carers would not be getting a named person as their contact. Mr Thomas-Sam explained that it was more important for a carer to get an effective response and have contact with a team rather than have a named person to contact who may not always be available.
- It was confirmed that the new call management system made sure that there was a record of what the caller had said last time they had made contact so that they did not have to keep repeating the same background information each time they called.

#### *Recommendation 7*

- The Chairman stated that respite had be the biggest single issue raised by carers. Mr Leidecker mentioned the increased number of hours that had been funded in East and West Kent. More of the expressed demand for respite, as demonstrated by waiting lists, had been met, but there was still unmet need. Mrs Hagan gave the example of Maidstone Crossroads which, when the Select Committee were gathering their evidence had a waiting list for respite of 18 months, which was now down to 6 months, which was an improvement but not ideal. Ms Hanson stated that work was being carried to try to get funding from PCT's to complement this provision.

#### *Recommendation 8*

- The Chairman expressed disappointment that the Multi-Agency Carers Strategy had yet to be approved. Mr Thomas-Sam explained that the strategy was due to be completed by March 2009 and he was confident that this deadline would be met. Ms Hanson pointed out that there was a complex sign off process for this strategy e.g. it had to got to PCT Boards, Management Teams, POC and Cabinet Members.

#### *Recommendations 9 & 10*

- It was suggested that the DVD could be provided to Kent TV so that it could reach a wider audience.
- In relation to the £20,000 which had been allocated to each of the five young carer's projects it was confirmed that these organisations covered most of the County Councils area, but officers were working to fill a gap in the Canterbury area.
- Members suggested that it would be helpful to have a governor in each school who had responsible for young carers. However, this should not necessarily be the governor with child protection responsibilities as this could reinforce young carer's fears of identification leading to family break up.
- Reference was made to the role of GP's in identifying carers. It was stated that the Royal College of GP's had set up a pilot project to look at the ways in which GP's could identify and support carers. Mrs Hagan informed Members that for the first time she had been invited to go to a GP practice and discuss carers issues with the staff.

#### *Recommendations 11&12*

- Members were happy with the progress that had been made to address the recommendations.

#### *Recommendation 13*

- The Chairman mentioned that the Select Committee had received considerable evidence from carers on how there were often excluded by health care professionals. Ms Hanson stated that this issue featured in the multi agency strategy. Another issue was ensuring that carers had the skills they needed to take on their caring role when a person was discharged from hospital. Mr Leidecker explained that PCT were being encouraged to invest

money in acute trusts to train staff so that were more aware of carers and their role.

*Recommendation 14*

- A Member stated that in the evidence that the Select Committee had heard, the balance between patient confidentiality and the role of carers, including the specific information that they are able to provide about the cared for person, especially in relation to mental health issues was a key issue for carers. Ms Hanson explained that a way that this could be addressed was by use of an advanced directive but again that assumed that the cared for person was willing to share information with their carer. Members acknowledged that this was a very difficult issue and that work needed to continue to be carried out to address this.

(11) Mrs Hagan, on behalf of carer's organisations, stated that they valued the work that the Select Committee had carried out and the holding this monitoring meeting had been extremely helpful in ensuring that work was carried out to achieve the recommendations.

RESOLVED that the progress made on the recommendations, and the work that was in progress be noted.