

Policy Framework Statement 2013-16

Unpaid Care

1. National Context

The role of unpaid carers is increasingly recognised at Scottish Government level. There are an estimated 657,000 carers in Scotland caring for children, adults and older people with care needs. As carers get older, they take on more caring responsibility. With the ageing population, the number of carers in Scotland is expected to grow to an estimated million by 2037.

Specific outcomes and commitments to supporting carers are set out in Caring Together: the Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010-15 and Getting it Right for Young Carers which promote the following vision:

- Carers are recognised and valued as equal partners in care;
- Carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring responsibilities with confidence and in good health and to have a life of their own outside of caring;
- Carers are fully engaged as participants in the planning and development of their own personalised, high-quality, flexible support; and
- Carers are not disadvantaged, or discriminated against, by virtue of being a carer.

The role of carers and requirements for support are also a core part of other major national policy priorities, most significantly Reshaping Care for Older People and the Change Fund.

These increasingly reflect the shared responsibility of Local Authorities and Health Boards to support carers in a joined up way, and to recognise and plan for the contribution of carers and support required as part of major change programmes.

2. Local Context

NHSGGC recognises the fundamental importance of unpaid care to our whole range of services and objectives, and the impact which caring can have on carers' own health, wellbeing and economic status.

The focus for this policy framework for 2013-16 is to ensure that, across all our services, we:

- Treat carers as partners;
- Identify who has caring responsibilities, understand their needs, and support and involve them as individuals and in their caring role; and
- Understand our current and likely future reliance on unpaid care and plan accordingly.

NHSGGC continues to receive an annual allocation of Carers Information Strategy funding which is expected to continue until 2013-14 at least. This is intended to support carer identification, training and information, and improved awareness amongst staff, as well as strong carer engagement in service planning and delivery.

Responsibility for planning and support for carers lies with each of the six CH(C)Ps and the Acute Division. The past few years has seen greater joint planning with Local Authorities for carers including the development of joint carers' strategies, particularly in the integrated CHCPs. This has reflected a more joined up approach to support for carers and the great alignment of Carers Information Strategies, Carers Strategies and support for specific groups including older people. The six Change Fund plans all include support for carers, particularly focused on ensuring successful discharge and/or avoiding crisis and breakdown of carers' arrangements.

3. Key Issues for Planning Frameworks

In developing outcomes, each planning framework should consider the following issues. The term 'carers' includes young carers who may have specific additional requirements:

- How carers of people accessing the relevant services are identified and have access to assessment;
- How carers can be involved in decisions about care and treatment, where appropriate;
- The impact of proposed service changes on carers, specifically in relation to the development of supported self care and self management, supporting care at home, and personalisation/self directed support;
- How training can be provided to carers on specific conditions to increase their confidence in caring;
- The capacity, availability and flexibility of respite and short breaks;
- How the health needs of carers will be addressed, and how access arrangements will be flexible enough to accommodate caring responsibilities;
- Financial inclusion support for carers; and
- How timely advice and information can be provided to carers.

Specific actions for individual frameworks include:

- Older people: Understanding of the implications and unpaid care requirements of reshaping care for older people, and a clear assessment of how carers will be identified and supported. Engagement of carers in the development of plans. Support for carers of those with dementia. Consideration of how overall service improvements and joined up care will enable carers to continue in their caring role. The impact of support in relation to the change fund performance measures needs to be explicit;
- Primary Care: Identification of carers in primary care and referral on for assessment and support;
- Long term conditions and Disability: Include the impact on and contribution of carers to shifting the balance of care and the further development of support self care and self management;

- Acute: Identification of carers and provision of support, particularly in discharge planning;
- Children and maternity: Support for carers of children and young adults with significant health needs or disability. Identification and support for young carers, including children affected by parental substance misuse;
- Cancer: Condition specific information and support for carers; and
- Mental health: Identification and support, including engagement in care planning.

4. Additional Direction for Development Plans

Development plans should clearly set out action to:

- Identify which staff are most critical in identifying and supporting carers and young carers, and provide them with training and information to identify carers and carers' needs and to signpost to appropriate services;
- Improve understanding of 'who our carers are' to ensure that the needs of different equalities groups are recognised and responded to. For example, the burden of care may fall disproportionately onto women, and often onto older people; caring is often associated with poverty because it may restrict ability to work or take part in education;
- Work in partnership with Local Authority partners to provide joined up support for carers through the delivery of local carers' strategies;
- Engage with carers and carers organisations on the development, delivery and monitoring of plans, including continuing to meet the (2011)17 requirement that carers are represented on Community Health (and Care) Partnerships;
- Use Carers Information Strategy funding in a robust and joined up way to improve the identification and support of carers; and
- Support carers to be economically and socially active – maintaining or supporting access to work, education, volunteering. This may involve signposting to non NHS services or sources of advice.