

**Aberdeen City Council's Support**  
**for Carers Strategy**  
**2009 - 2012**

**DRAFT**

**Consultation Draft June 2009**



## **Preface**

This strategy will shape the development of support for carers and the involvement of carers in Aberdeen City 2009 - 2012. It has been produced by the Joint Future Carers Task Group. This group has representation from carers, carer organisations, NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City Council.

The strategy reports on the developments that have taken place and proposes strategic outcomes and actions. These carers outcomes and actions will be expanded and developed following consultation.

Because it is valuable that carers in Aberdeen and organisations supporting and involving carers are involved in the production of the new strategy, this consultation draft is being widely distributed.

The final strategy will take into account all the contributions made and will be agreed by committee in the Autumn.

The consultation period will last until the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

We are keen to hear the views of carers and organisations with an interest in support for carers.

To take part in the consultation please either complete the consultation feedback form which is attached or contact;

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**This information can be made available in a range of languages and formats.**

## **Our vision**

We aim to:

- Provide support which enables carers to remain healthy and provide support for work options. This will include an increase in the numbers of carers' assessments undertaken.
- Provide carers with accurate, timely and good quality flexible support that meet the individual needs of the carer and the person they care for.
- Raise the profile of carers in Aberdeen and ensure all partners and council services recognise and understand the role of carers.
- Ensure carers are central to the development of social care.
- Involve carers in setting priorities for investment in carers' support.

To a large extent our present commissioning priorities for carers are included in the various city wide care planning groups. In addition to carer involvement in each of these care planning groups, carers' issues are shared and brought together through the multi-agency Joint Future Carers Task Group. This group focuses on wider issues affecting all carers and oversees the development of the Aberdeen Carers Strategy.

We are currently reviewing the way in which we commission services to support carers but this strategy and carer outcomes will form the basis from which services are commissioned. The final strategy and commissioning review will result in a number of smart actions being identified and timescales being agreed.

### **Purpose of strategy**

The purpose of this strategy is:

- To ensure that carers are recognised as Partners in Care by Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and other service providers.
- To create a strategic framework for carer support.
- To make a difference to carers' lives by encouraging partnerships between service providers.

## **Carers Strategy Budget**

Aberdeen City Council supports carers in various ways including providing respite provision and supporting organisations that support carers. In addition there is also a Carers Strategy Budget which was £253,455 for 2008/09. In 2008/09 the budget funded the following projects;

- Care Attendant Scheme
- Carers Help Group at Royal Cornhill Hospital
- Development Worker for Children with Special Needs
- Carers Counselling Service
- Welfare Rights Service
- Carer Information at Health Sites
- Young Carer Transport
- Carers Self Assessment Co-ordinator
- Administration Support

The above projects have been funded on an ongoing basis.

- Male Carer Worker (final year of 3 year funding)

The following were funded as one off projects;

- Young Carers Research
- Dounside Next Steps
- Carers Services Evaluation
- Return to Work programme for Carers
- Support for Carers of people with Schizophrenia
- Lifestyle Management

As stated earlier on Page 3 we are currently reviewing the way in which we commission support for carer services.

## **Outcomes for carers**

Aberdeen City Council has an aspiration to provide the best possible support for carers in the City. Recognising them as key partners in care, this is an essential element of our social care provision.

Significant work has been done in the last year with carers to identify their priorities for support. Five priority areas were then agreed in partnership with the Aberdeen City Council Senior Management Team and a set of carer outcomes was drafted based on this information and other key drivers.

We then undertook an exercise with service providers, partners and, staff throughout the city who offer either direct or indirect support to carers on these outcomes. We gave them the opportunity to add to these and comment on how these could be these could be met.

The five priority areas identified by carers and agreed by the Aberdeen City Council Social Care Senior Management Team are: -

1. Carers' rights to an assessment and support plan.
2. Develop/promote training opportunities for carers and raise awareness of carer issues with staff.
3. Appropriate respite provision.
4. Young carers.
5. Improve carers' health.

In addition to these priority areas, some identified outcomes for carers have been identified as: -

1. Carers having the knowledge, skills and confidence to continue in their caring role.
2. Increased awareness of carers' issues amongst staff.
3. More flexible respite provided for carers.
4. Improved health of carers.
5. Carers in greatest need supported to continue in their caring role.
6. Adopt and implement strategies to involve and support service users and carers in developing service provision.
7. Support income maximisation to help people and carers claim all the benefits to which they are entitled to.
8. Increase the percentage of carers who feel able to continue their role.

In order to support these priority areas and outcomes it would be important to do the following;

### **Actions**

- Ensure that a difference is made to the lives of carers by supporting and funding carer support developments.
- Develop a support for Young Carers Strategy.
- Ensure that existing and new initiatives funded through the Carers Strategy, or alternative budgets, continue to provide good outcomes for carers.
- Provide more flexible and equitable respite provision.
- Ensure that carers have accessible and clear information about potential changes to services the may affect the person they care for as well as themselves.
- Ensure that all partners and Aberdeen City Council staff who directly or indirectly support carers have accessible and clear information about potential changes to services.

- Promote and develop partnerships with other organisations, council departments and health providers whose activities impact the lives of carers in order to share best practice and information.
- Develop joint training and carer awareness within the partnerships.
- Support the voluntary sector for them to work with carers not eligible for direct support from Aberdeen City Council.
- Ensure that carers have a central role with other partners in service provision, design, development, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Identify more 'hidden carers' especially target black and ethnic minority groups as well as carers of people suffering from Mental Health, Substance or Alcohol Abuse.
- Promote quality assessments for carers.
- Consider 3 year rolling funding as security for key partners so they can plan ahead and give staff confidence to stay and carers to be involved in management .
- Ensure that carers are aware of all the support that may be available to them to them from statutory bodies, partners and in the community.
- Develop Carer Champions within Aberdeen City Council and within partner agencies at all levels of management and staff. This is important to deliver and monitor change.
- Update the strategy regularly to reflect local and national changes and ensure joined-up commissioning.

## **National Policies and Legislative Framework**

There are a number of acts, policies and strategies that could be relevant to carers. This section will focus on those that are central to the way in which we support and involve carers.

- The national strategy for carers was published in 1999. Since then, greater recognition has been given to the contribution of carers.
- The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 recognised carers as "key partners in the provision of care" and introduced the following rights for carers:-
  1. Substantial and regular adults carers, including parent and guardian carers of disabled children, are entitled to an assessment of their own support needs (carers assessment) independent of any assessment of the person they care for.
  2. Young carers under 18 have the same right to assessment.
  3. Local authorities have a duty to inform eligible carers of their right of assessment.

4. Local authorities have a duty to take account of the care provided by a carer, and the views of the person in need and their carer before deciding what services to provide.
- The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 also included the requirement Health Boards to produce a Carer Information Strategy. NHS Grampian has produced this and copies are available.
  - The Changing Lives - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work review has set out a vision for the future development of social work services by emphasising the need to deliver more personalised services. A five year plan was put in place in 2006.
  - The Care 21 report: The future of unpaid care in Scotland, commissioned by the then Scottish Executive is a valuable tool for guiding the approach to supporting carers.
  - The Concordat. In November 2007 the Scottish Government announced Scotland's budget 2008 - 2011, also setting out a new relationship between the government and local authorities. The concordat contains specific areas of spending to benefit carers, including the requirement to progress towards an additional 10,000 weeks of respite care per annum in care homes or at home.

In recent years a range of legislative and policy developments have required public bodies to ensure that they deliver their services in a non-discriminatory manner and promote equality. Aberdeen City Council has produced an Equality Scheme on disability, gender and race. Copies of this are available widely or on the Aberdeen City Council website. ([www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)).

## **Who is a carer?**

A carer is someone who is providing regular or substantial care to another person/people because of a long term condition, illness, disability, old age or any other condition that results in them not being able to manage without support.

A carer can be a:

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Partner or spouse
- Son or daughter
- Grandson or granddaughter
- Other relative
- Friend
- Neighbour

This strategy does **not** include those care workers who provide care by virtue of a contract of employment or volunteers working with a voluntary organisation.

## **How many carers are there in Aberdeen?**

The following figures for carers is taken from the 2001 Census and General Household Survey 2000:

It is estimated that there are 16,349 carers in Aberdeen. 42% are male and 58% are female.

It is estimated that 21% of carers are caring more than 50 hours per week and that 3 in 5 people will become carers at some point in time.

It is estimated that 80% of carers are of working age.

By 2037, the number of carers will likely increase by about 60%.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of young carers in Aberdeen. It is felt that this may be underestimated but most recent research gives a figure of 175,000 in the UK in total, 16,701 in Scotland and therefore 640 in Aberdeen. National surveys have shown that 10% of secondary school pupils have caring responsibilities.

## **What do carers do?**

Carers help the people they care in the following ways:

- Prepare meals
- Shopping
- Housework
- Personal care
- Physical support
- Emotional support
- Financial assistance with benefits, bills etc
- Act as an advocate or guardian
- Assist with medication and/or medical tasks

Carers provide care and support from a few hours a week to twenty four hours per day. Aberdeen City Council recognises the key role that carers contribute to health and social care services. This caring role can often impact on their daily lives and we need to be support carers to enable them to continue in their caring role.

## **Carers' Needs**

Carers carry out important work that can be physically and emotionally exhausting and can affect their own health and well being. Many carers juggle work and caring responsibilities. The support provided by carers is unpaid, brings no status, contract of employment or record of learning and skills gained. They can miss out on job opportunities, give up work or be unable to undertake paid work because of their caring responsibilities. This leads to many carers being excluded from society and struggling to live on little money. Many carers may also need care themselves and some carers move in and out of the caring role.

Although there are many differences between carers (for example, in terms of age, gender, income and in the caring requirements of the cared-for person etc.) most carers share certain needs:

- information and advice
- practical and financial help
- emotional support
- choice and flexibility of services
- training (e.g. in lifting and handling, and coping with stress)
- recognition of their own needs as distinct from those of the cared-for person
- benefits advice
- recognition of their needs as a family which includes the carers and those being cared for
- time off from the caring role (respite)
- the right to say when enough is enough, and to be supported in giving up some or all aspects of caring should that become necessary to maintain a balanced lifestyle
- communities and community facilities (including leisure) which are accessible to the whole family
- advocacy

## **Why carers find it difficult to seek help**

It is important to recognise the barriers why some carers may find it difficult to seek or accept help for the following reasons:

- Experienced carers often feel that only they have the complete knowledge about the person they are caring for, and that no-one else can replace them.
- The tasks they want help with may not be those that are likely to be readily volunteered by anyone else (e.g. help with personal care such as toileting and bathing).
- Confidentiality issues.
- Some carers feel they are stigmatised due to the reason why they are caring. This is certainly the case for many carers where the person they care for is affected by mental health or substance/alcohol misuse.

- They are uncertain if they will be required to contribute to the cost of services.
- Carers often find it hard to except change.
- They feel that asking for help constitutes an admission of failure to cope.
- The available help is not acceptable to the person they are caring for or the person offering the help is not acceptable for some reason.
- Sometimes there appears to be no appropriate services that would suit them.
- They feel that the help they receive will mean that someone else gets less.
- Accepting services means accepting the reality of the situation, which is often very hard.

## **Hidden Carers**

It is important to be aware that many carers are 'hidden' in the sense that they are undertaking considerable caring responsibilities, but have not identified themselves as carers or been recognised by others as carers. Recognition of 'hidden' carers is vital.

There may be instances where neither the cared-for person nor their carer is in contact with the local authority, for example in some longstanding caring relationships between older carers of people with learning disabilities and also some carers from minority ethnic communities. There are also many people who do not recognise themselves as a carer and see it more as their 'duty'. To reach these and other hidden carers, we should work with local statutory and voluntary sector partners to develop strategies for better communication with 'hidden' carers about their right to request an assessment. This could include Carer Awareness sessions being incorporated into training for health and social care staff; campaigns to help people recognise themselves as carers; posters and leaflets in GPs' surgeries; and building links with local communities and faith groups.

## **How we currently involve Carers**

### **Carer Involvement and Consultation**

The views of carers are gathered via a regular pattern of carers' days and events where an exchange of and ideas and information concerning support and service development is made.

Carers' views are incorporated into the development of services in a number of other ways: through Forum of Carers Voices, regular contact with Carers Support Groups and the regular meetings of the Joint Future Carers Task Group. There are also strongly developed networks of involvement around parents of children with disabilities and young carers.

Carers are also involved in a number of the Joint Future Planning Groups and have representation on the Joint Future Strategic Management Team.

One significant piece of work to note is the two Have Your Say events that took place in 2008. These gathered the views of a wide cross-section of carers and the findings went on to form the basis of Social Work's carers' priorities which in turn have informed the carers' outcomes that Social Work will now work towards meeting.

### **Carers Assessment**

This form aims to record the impact of the caring role upon the life of the carer and to engage with the carer in formulating a plan to assist them to sustain their caring role. The process allows the assessment to be completed by a social worker/care manager, or by the carer themselves or alongside a support worker with the resulting action plan being completed by a member of the local authority or health staff. This information is vital in informing and assisting future service planning. Carers feel that the term assessment is not appropriate as it infers capability issues. The information gathered is very important and it is hoped that a re-launch of the Carers Assessment as a Carer Support Plan will increase the completion and effectiveness of this tool.

Where a carer is identified during the assessment of a cared-for person, every effort is made to involve the carer appropriately in this assessment process.



## Consultation Feedback Form

The consultation period runs from 12 June to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

Post to Julie Thomson  
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Or email to : [Juthomson@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:Juthomson@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

### 1. About you

Carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carer Support Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Work Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	_____						
Is this an individual response reflecting your personal point of view?							
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>				No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Is this a group response?							
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>				No <input type="checkbox"/>			
If yes, what is the name of the stakeholder group?							

1. What are the strengths of the draft strategy?

2. What are the weaknesses of the draft strategy?

3. We welcome additional comments on any aspect of this consultation paper.

Comments

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.**