

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Social Work Committee -15th November 2004

**REPORT ON:** SUPPORT TO CARERS

**REPORT BY:** The Director of Social Work

**REPORT NO:** 760 - 2004

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform the elected members of the Scottish Executive Draft Guidance on NHS Carer Information Strategies and the work currently being undertaken within the Social Work Department in relation to Carers' issues.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:

- notes the contents of the report; and
- endorses the actions planned by the Director of Social Work to achieve better outcomes for Carers in the city.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Caring is often an isolated - and isolating - activity that can limit the carer's own opportunities and development. The work planned by the Social Work Department, as outlined in this report, will enable the Department to provide support directly to carers in line with the principles of social inclusion and equality expressed in the Local Agenda 21 programme.

### **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Carers can find themselves excluded from a range of activities and opportunities because of their time and personal commitment to their caring role. These proposals are aimed at ensuring better opportunities for carers in the City.

## **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

### **6.1 Background**

Supporting carers is a key priority for the Scottish Executive under its Strategy for Carers in Scotland, first published in November 1999 and more recently reinforced with the introduction of new provisions under the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002. These provisions, which legislate for carer assessments and carer information strategies, fulfil a commitment by the Executive to introduce new legislation to ensure that the priorities of Scottish carers are addressed and to allow carers' needs to be met more directly.

### **6.2 NHS Carer Information Strategy: Draft Guidance**

Section 12 of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 enables Scottish Ministers to require that all NHS Boards prepare and submit to them for their approval a "Carer Information Strategy" and to prescribe the content and format of such strategies. An independent Working Group that included carer, NHS, local authority and Scottish Executive representation was set up in January 2004 to make recommendations on the format and content of such strategies. The group's recommendations are set out in draft guidance that proposes the minimum requirements that any strategy should meet. The guidance is designed as a tool for NHS Boards working in collaboration with local authorities and the voluntary sector.

### **6.3 Good Practice Example**

As part of the consultation exercise on the draft guidance the Executive asked for good practice examples for inclusion in the final document. The following 'good practice' example was submitted to the Executive for consideration for inclusion:

Joint training sessions on carers' assessments have been arranged for social work staff and NHS staff who may, in the course of their work, be called upon to carry out such an assessment. The training, which will take place in November, has been specifically designed to provide an overview of the legislation relevant to carers' assessments, including single shared assessments, and to give an understanding of good practice in carrying out assessments. It will guide and assist assessors through the assessment process, using the locally designed carers' assessment form. It will also guide staff through the procedures for accessing support services. It will include the importance of record keeping, in order to collect and collate information on the care provided, and the needs of carers. This, in turn, will improve the strategic planning of services to support carers. It will allow staff from both agencies to share good practice and to reflect on the value of carers' assessments. Participants will be given a Carer's Assessment Practice Guidance Toolkit and resource pack..

### **6.4 Carers' Strategy**

The Social Work Department is committed to delivering improved outcomes for carers and those they care for and we work very closely with the NHS, the Princess Royal Trust Dundee Carers Centre and other voluntary agencies in the city. As well as the operational staff who work with carers on a daily basis, the department has also recently identified a Senior Officer (Strategy and Performance Service) to take lead strategic responsibility for carer's issues.

A detailed action plan of activity, upon which the local carer information strategy can be built, is already in place. The main objectives of the action plan are to:

- Increase awareness of carers' issues and the impact of caring
- Improve carers' assessments
- Improve the involvement of carers in the strategic planning process
- Improve the availability of support, both practical and emotional, to carers
- Improve carer consultation
- Improve support to particular carers who traditionally have been outwith mainstream carer activity

To support these objectives, the Senior Officer is leading on the following specific developments that will:

#### **Raise awareness amongst all Council staff of carers' issues generally**

Government statistics suggest that as many as 1 in 7 people in our workforce may be a carer - dealing with what might seem like two jobs – one paid, one unpaid. Carers Rights Day is 3<sup>d</sup> December 2004. In conjunction with the Princess Royal Trust Dundee Carers Centre, an information display will be set up in the reception area, Floor 2, Tayside House. Carers' information leaflets and advice will be available for staff and visitors alike. Many carers do not actually recognise themselves as carers. This exercise will assist in the identification of hidden carers amongst the Council's workforce.

#### **Raise awareness of carers' right to an assessment**

As well as the inter-agency training described above, the Social Work Department carried out a survey of carers who attended the annual carers' conference earlier this year. The survey was designed to find out carers' experience of assessments to date. Their comments influenced the design of the new carers' assessment form, the format of the joint training and the development of a joint framework for carers' assessments. In conjunction with the Princes Royal Trust Carers Centre the Department has drawn up an information leaflet entitled 'Your right to a carer's assessment'. This will be distributed widely amongst staff.

#### **Develop an involvement and consultation strategy for carers**

Working along with the voluntary sector and the Princes Royal Trust Carers Centre we are currently mapping out existing consultation and involvement mechanisms. We aim to develop a strategy that will not only service the health and community care planning arena but also the wider community planning agenda.

#### **Promote more flexible respite/short breaks services**

Carers tell us they want more respite care provision. To ensure that all carers can benefit appropriately we need to improve the allocation of such provision. To do this we plan to develop guidelines, in partnership with carers, to ensure consistent eligibility criteria for short breaks/respite provision.

#### **Provide support to Carers' Support Groups**

Certain carers have traditionally been outwith mainstream carer activity, i.e. carers of people with mental health difficulties, children with disabilities, people from minority ethnic communities, people with drug and alcohol difficulties, people who are HIV positive, people with physical disabilities and/or progressive illness and young carers. Support has recently been given to the HIV Carers Support group and the Drug and Alcohol Support group to produce poster, leaflets and pocket sized cards to raise awareness of their existence. An article about carers' issues and rights is currently being prepared for insertion in a local

magazine for people from minority ethnic communities. Support is continuing to the Young Carers Partnership.

The growing emphasis on the needs of carers is clear. Supporting carers is a key priority for the Scottish Executive under its Strategy for Carers in Scotland. Supporting carers locally is a continuing priority for the Social Work Department. Significant steps have already been taken and the above plans should ensure further improvement in the outcomes for carers and the people they care for in Dundee.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Chief Executive, The Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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Director of Social Work

Date: 5th November 2004