

Caring for Carers Review

Health and Adult Social Care Committee 2011/12



Chairman's Foreword

Carers provide an invaluable service to the people that they care for as well as on behalf of the Council and its partners. Carers UK research indicates 2011 Census returns will see a significant increase on Boroughs 35,000 carers identified in 2001; evidence also shows there are many 'hidden' carers still not accessing support services. It is therefore crucial structures and services are in place to nurture this important role – particularly in view of an ageing population - allowing them to enjoy a life of their own alongside their caring role.

During the review it became clear Dudley has a strong history of supporting carers and that a lot of work is being done by extremely hardworking staff across the Council and its partners. Moreover Dudley's multi-agency Carers Strategy has spurred improvements and changes to organizational culture. It also promotes good practice that will genuinely support the carer in their caring role or help them maintain their own health and well-being The Carers Grant has also enabled significant investment in specific local projects providing services that carers can access directly. We were particularly impressed with the Carer Aware online guide to carers developed by the Council, underlining their rights and support, which has been commended as good practice and implemented by over 40 other local authorities.

However there is still more we can do. It is vital that acknowledgement of the carer's role, often called 'social capital' is recognized in assessment and support planning as we continue to implement personalisation in adult services. We should seize the opportunity of enhanced integration of health and social care as the NHS architecture changes to engage more closely with GPs - often the first person to know that a person has, or will have, a caring role. In addition, the Council's emerging Health and Well-Being Board also presents an opportunity to secure long-term improvements through Dudley's health and well-being strategy; and also harmonize approaches to carers across organizational boundaries. Only by hardwiring carers' priorities at the highest level can we promote ownership and motivate leaders to take action.

As Chair I would like to thank members of Committee for support on this review. I would also like to thank staff called to give evidence who gave generously of their time and enthusiasm. We will be framing our recommendations in a mutually agreed action plan with partner agencies to ensure real improvements for carers and their families

Cllr Susan Ridney
Chair - Health and Adult Social Care
Scrutiny Committee



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Summary Findings and Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review into the support for adult carers of part of the 2011/12 work plan.

An ageing population, increased life expectancy of younger people with significant disabilities and long term illnesses, along with community care policy drivers mean the number of people needing care at home continues to grow with support from family members. Recognising the increasingly important role of carers the Committee wished to look into how they recognised, engaged supported and valued within the local health community.

A Project Board was appointed (see page 19) and agreed to examine:

- Carers' needs assessment
- Identification within health and social care
- Respite Breaks and leisure

This review comes at a time of transformational change across health and social care. It can also be seen as an increasingly important document owing to the on-going update of the existing 2007-12 Dudley Carers strategy and the NHS Operating Framework – which stipulates for the first time a set of guidelines to support carers through an agreed delivery framework. The Council, Primary Care Trust (to be superseded by the Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group April 2013) and the voluntary sector will need to agree a set of policies plans and budgets in 2012/13.

In addition, the Adult Social Care White Paper, expected to be announced shortly, will impact on the policy framework within which health and social care support will operate.

It is hoped this review will make a valuable contribution towards the above; and in this way shape even more responsive services for carers and the people they care for.

Key findings

Strategy

Dudley has a good history of supporting carers through co-operation across organizational boundaries. Services have improved since the introduction of the multi-agency Carers Strategy in 2007, which has buoyed organizational change, culture and practice. The strategy builds on good practice in providing a wide range of measures designed to provide tangible support to the carer in their caring role or help them maintain better health and well-being.

Information, guidance and support

Evidence received indicated Carers who contact the Carers Network Team or other workers with a specific remit to support carers can expect to receive good, accurate information and to be referred to appropriate support. Improved integration of identification systems and procedures across health and social care – including GPs often the first to be approached by someone who is worried about the health of a person close to them – will help ensure this is true wherever the carer is likely to seek information.

Access to Assessment of needs

It was noted a large number of carers are having their needs assessed and met either through a formal or informal assessment. However it is recognised a more systematic approach would help develop more effective practices and ensure the carer's role is fully explored in both carer and service user assessments

A need for better links with Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust was noted through new protocols for carrying out carers assessments and that more could be done to improve identification and recording of carers needs amongst other providers.

Whilst members noted the importance of the formal carer's assessment to which carers have a statutory right, it was acknowledged the Dudley Carers Network and other workers and agencies are able to provide a wide range of advice and services which meet the carer's desired outcomes without the need for a formal carer's assessment.

Short Breaks

About 95% of the Carers' Grant spend is allocated to providing short breaks for carers. Evidence received suggested many carers are able to take part in a range of activities with or without the person they care for. However, there are some carers, often with the more complex caring roles who need more support to be able to do so either through the provision of more preventative services such as telecare and reablement or through the support planning process and longer term support.

Whilst formal breaks and services are important Members felt carers should also be supported to look beyond 'services' for breaks and to help break down barriers that prevent them accessing universal services

Health and Emotional Support

Members were concerned that carers often neglect their health due to pressures of caring. Whilst there are a number of services provided through health organizations carers can access -such as the 'Looking After Me' course for carers with their own long term difficulties– it was felt more needed to be done to encourage carers to make time for themselves and support them to maintain their own well-being.

Evidence received indicated a gap embedding emotional support needs in the assessment process (leading to appropriate referrals). It was also felt further consideration should be given to building on existing end of life support to strengthen services following bereavement.

Economic Matters

Members are concerned that changes in benefits such as Working Tax Credit and (yet unknown implications) of the move to Universal Credit and the replacement of Disability Living Allowance by Personal Independence Payments would result in increased anxiety and stress for many carers. Whilst evidence received indicated advice is available, it was felt that more needed to be done around support in assessing benefits and employment options.

It was acknowledged that changes to social care provision may not always encourage carers back into employment. In addition, the current economic downturn makes it increasingly difficult to promote practices to support carers in the workplace.

The review also found that the closure of traditional day services was impacting on people finding or retaining employment.

Recommendations

1. Members felt that all staff need to be encouraged to use existing information resources such as Carer Aware , the Community Information Directory and other web based information routinely to give carers accurate and timely information. In order to further improve the ease with which health professionals can signpost and refer people to appropriate support it is recommended that:
 - Council and partner organisations make a specific commitment to ensure that carers are signposted to sources of information for further help
 - a card for health professionals is produced containing the contact information to key sources of advice e.g, Carers Network
 - seeking backing from CCG to implement/adopt a carers' protocol aligned to national patient experience frameworks to help ensure identification all patients who are carers and ensure a consistent approach to managing needs.
 - strengthening the role pharmacies can play in the delivery of the Carers Strategy Delivery plan e.g. providing signposting information and offering support to carers seeking advice on their own health and wellbeing.
 - enabling carers' support workers in GP surgeries on a regular sessional basis.
 - Explore Government incentives to encourage training in carers issues for GPs
 - Explore scope and feasibility of a marketing campaign targeting indoor and outdoor spaces of GP surgeries promoting key signposting information.
 - Members are keen to promote the Carer Aware course as an essential tool for staff across the Council to raise awareness of carers and how they may be supported. They would also like to see it used as part of a wider training and development programme for health and other professionals likely to have the opportunity to identify and advise carers.
2. While continuing to work with Practices to encourage identification of carers and development of practice based services to support improved health and well-being outcomes as described above, the scope and feasibility of a shared register between the Council, GPs and other agencies should be explored to support this and enhance monitoring and review of needs.
3. That the Carers Strategy Group considers working in conjunction with the Shadow Health and Well-Being Board to ensure priorities are hardwired in

the development of Dudley's joint health and well-being strategy and resultant commissioning plans. Reflection on harmonized approaches to carers across organizational boundaries should also be encouraged in order to streamline pathways.

4. In supporting the continuous improvement agenda it is recommended that the Council considers the feasibility and scope of interviewing a random sample of National Carers Survey participants on a regular basis in order to contribute a 'reality check' to how services are established and maintained.
5. Funding for carers support should continue to be ring fenced when Adults Social Care and health are setting budgets to reflect the effectiveness of the funding in supporting a range of organizations to deliver strong preventative outcomes which yield savings in the long term for the wider health community
6. Key health and social care organisations consider the feasibility and scope of developing more support networks across the Borough to empower carers to support themselves and others who carry out a similar caring role. A focus on 'community champions' should also be encouraged to carry the information to carers from 'seldom heard' groups so that a wider range of carers and supporters have access to information. Development may be spurred by engaging Community Centres and therefore should be explored in the light of the close relationship with Council.
7. The development of a carer/ cared for person information sharing protocol recognised by stakeholder organisations signed by the cared for person giving permission to carer to have access to agreed information should be implemented in consultation with carers, services users and carers organisations.
8. Consideration should be given to extending the Carers Emergency support scheme which aims to provide support in the event that the carer has an accident or emergency by
 - increasing the number of carers who are able to take advantage of the scheme
 - ensuring that emergency care plan provision is noted in support planning
 - promoting the scheme widely with partners to ensure that it is implemented in an emergency
9. Links with Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust and other providers should be strengthened through the development of a joint protocol in

- conjunction with the Carers Strategy Group to improve identification and assessment of carers needs.
10. Systems are developed to ensure that the support offered by carers (also referred to as social capital) is accurately reflected in assessment, personal budget allocations and support planning. In addition carers should be supported to look beyond 'services' for breaks and be assisted to reduce barriers in accessing universal services
 - 11 Unfortunately owing to time pressures members were unable to fully evaluate effectiveness of support at point of Hospital discharge – often a time where support is needed most. Members therefore request the production of Committee report in order assure members that robust support is in-place at what can be a difficult and worrying time.

Objectives and scope of the review

In 2011 the Committee agreed to appoint a project board undertake a review on the theme: Caring for Carers across health and social care.

An ageing population and the increased life expectancy of younger people with a significant disability and community care policy drivers mean the number of people needing care at home continues to grow with support from family members. Recognising the increasingly important role of carers the Committee wished to look into how they recognised, engaged supported and valued within the local health community.

Committee agreed the Review should consider the following aspects:

- Carers' needs assessment
- Hospital admission and discharge
- Identification within health and social care
- Breaks and leisure

Subsequently the project board approved the following aims and objectives by the project board:

- Assess current support available and evaluate user satisfaction and outcomes of the carers strategy for carers
- assess the process for needs assessment and access to grants/allowances
- assess processes helping people to identify themselves as carers and access of information and guidance
- evaluate effectiveness of partnership arrangements particularly around the area short breaks and leisure

Carers can be any age, including children and young people, who often care for a parent. To ensure that the scope of the review remained manageable the Project Board decided to exclude young carers from this review and concentrate just on adult carers who are caring for an adult.

Background and Key Facts

Who is a Carer?

A carer is someone who looks after a relative, friend or neighbour with a disability, a long-term illness, mental health difficulties or who is older and frail. The type of support given varies – it could be providing physical help, emotional support or even helping with day-to-day affairs such as medicines or money. The person supported may be a husband/wife/partner, a child with special needs, a parent, neighbour or friend. Caring can vary from a few hours a week to a seven day/twenty-four hour commitment. They do not receive a wage for their role – although they may be receiving carer's allowance – which is a benefit not a wage.

Although they may also use the term and play a very valuable role, the following people are not classed as carers for the purposes of this strategy as they are not the people referred to in legislation and guidance

- People who are paid to provide care – this includes home care workers and personal assistants
- People who provide care in a voluntary capacity through an organisation
- People who offer respite care through agencies and organisations
- Foster carers

National Policy

In recent years there have been several pieces of national legislation and key strategies underpinning the establishment of local support frameworks for carers:

- The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
Provided carers with the right to request an assessment of their needs and placed a requirement on local authorities to provide carers with services which help them to care.
- The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
Placed a duty on all Local Authorities to inform carers about their entitlement to an assessment, rather than wait for a carer to apply for one.
- Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities (2008)

Set out a strategic vision that carers would be 'universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities'. With support tailored to meet individuals' needs that enabled carers to 'maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, while enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen'.

- Recognised, valued and supported: next steps for the Carers Strategy (2010)

Identified the actions that the coalition Government would take over the next four years to ensure the best possible outcomes for carers and those they support. These included supporting those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage, recognising the value of their contribution and involving them from the outset both in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages.

Dudley carers Strategy - why is it important?

The Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, the Directorate of Children's Services and our partner organisations, such as Health and the Voluntary Sector, recognise the contribution carers make to the well-being and continuing care of vulnerable people in the community.

The Borough has an estimated 35,000 carers providing hours of care that, on a conservative estimate, is worth around £106,000,000 yearly to the local economy. The support that they provide to Health and Social Care services is incalculable and often costs them dearly in terms of their own health, finances and independence.

A local strategy is needed to help offer the best support to carers and to help other Council Directorates and agencies to see how they too might support carers. The strategy contains principles of good practice relating to carers and the way in which organisations will work with carers. It sets out the vision for carers and for organisations and agencies whose role is to support carers.

This strategy was initially produced in 2007, revised in 2010 and has now been updated to reflect the current position and the way forward for 2012-13.

The implementation of the Strategy has been overseen by the Carers Strategy Group. This has representatives from social care, housing, health and the voluntary sector and takes into account the views of carers and carers groups. The ongoing implementation plan is centred on the 9 priorities identified by carers through public and stakeholder consultation. Although support for young carers should be included in all of these sections- carers groups wanted to highlight their needs separately.

Funding

Adult Social Care funding

Government funding for Adult Social Care includes an element for carer support. Originally this was ring fenced, which meant that it could only be spent on activities relating to supporting carers. This ring fence has now been removed, but ASC still uses the whole grant to support carers. In 2011/12 the sum was xxxxxx.

Breakdown of ASC expenditure for 2011/12

Breakdown of expenditure	2011/12
Grants to Voluntary Sector	
Home Based Respite	
Carers Personal Budgets	
Other – Miscellaneous	
Total	

Although there is significant support provided for carers, funded through the carers grant, and free at the point of delivery, the majority of carers support is provided through the provision of support for the person they care for, often with the explicit outcome of carer support. This can be either through the provision of short term or preventative support or via a personal budget for longer term support. Much short term and preventative support is free, or at nominal charge. When receiving longer term social care support the service user is subject to a financial assessment

Health funding

The PCTs receive additional funding from the Government to support carers, although this funding is not ring fenced. Nationally the funding in 2011/12 was £100m - the allocation for Dudley was xxxxxxxxxxx

The PCTs commission care packages for patients who meet the Continuing Health Care (CHC¹) criteria. Where there is a family carer some or all of the

¹ NHS Continuing Health Care is a package of services which is arranged and funded by the NHS for people outside hospital with ongoing health needs. It is available in any setting, including at home or in a

package, including personal care and sitting services may be aimed at the specific outcome of allowing the carer to take a break from caring .In 2009/10 an analysis of the budget indicated that xxxxxxo CHC spend related to carers' breaks.

Breakdown of PCT's expenditure for 2011/12

Breakdown of expenditure	2011/12
Crossroads contribution	
Grants to other Voluntary Sector organisations	
Estimated carers breaks costs included in CHC	
Total	

Carers' needs assessments

Carers providing regular and substantial care or caring which has an impact of their lives have a right to a carer's assessment. We use Fair Access to Care services criteria to prioritise these assessments, giving a higher priority to carers where it seems that there is a critical or substantial risk of care breaking down. Assessments may be individual or jointly with the cared for person. As a result of this assessment support may be provided directly to the carer, or to the cared for person with the intention of carer support.

In 2011/12 a total of xxxxx assessments or reviews of a previous assessment were offered to carers. Of these xxxxx were accepted. This only represented xxx of the carers in Dudley (as calculated by 2001 census). However as previously noted , many carers receive support without the need for a carer's assessment. In addition many services are provided to a service user, following their assessment, which are intended to support the carer- even though the carer has declined to be formally assessed.

care home. If individuals do not qualify they will still receive mainstream services free of charge, i.e. GP, District Nursing Services, Specialist therapy.

Carer's 'Peace of Mind' Emergency Support service

This is a service, accessed through an assessment carried out by the Carers Network Team that enables carers to develop a plan for how they would like the person they care for to be supported if the carer is suddenly unable to provide care (eg the carer is suddenly taken into hospital). The plan provides details about the cared for person and contact details for up to three relatives, friends or care providers that they would like to support the cared for person. In an emergency those people named in the emergency plan are contacted. If none of them are available then emergency cover will be provided as set out in the Plan

By April 2011 xxxxx carers were registered with this service

Carers Direct Payments

This is a single payment, usually of £300 to enable carers who need a break but are on a low income to fund a holiday, break, hobby or other leisure activity. The money cannot be used to purchase personal care or sitting services or go towards general household costs, like heating, food or paying bills.

Between 1st April and 31 December 2011 a total of xxxx carers received a Direct Payment at a cost of xxxxxxxx (an average of xxxxxxxx per carer).

All the budgets are used for breaks and leisure activities with the aim of support in the caring role and maintaining wellbeing

Consultation and Evidence Gathering

As part of the evidence gathering process the Project Board considered intelligence and learning arising from the National Carers survey and written responses from key health and social care bodies to questions identified in the Committee's approved review scoping document. The Project Board also considered information from carers who had contributed to a number of local consultations including a meeting with councilors. A workshop was also held for Members in March 2012 enabling direct dialogue with key practitioners working in the field helping attain a deeper understanding of service issues and priorities amongst the carer community.

Findings and conclusions

The below findings and conclusions are structured around priorities identified in Dudley's Carers Strategy designed in conjunction with Dudley carers

Information for Carers

The project board wanted assurance that all carers can get the information they need at the time that they need it. Members were established:

- The Information services offered by the Carers Co-ordinator are now well established and receive good feedback from carers and colleagues. Carers and supporters have access to newsletters, e bulletins, well maintained website pages and a helpline
- The Carer Aware online guide to carers, their rights and services to support them has been praised as good practice and been implemented by over 40 other local authorities
- The success of the course has led to funding for an *Essential Guide to Adult Social Care* which carers, users and staff should find an invaluable resource. The Primary Care Trust has developed a further module for Carer Aware, called Caring at the End of Life. Two further standalone courses, Young Carer Aware and an Autism awareness course are also in development to contribute to a suite of resources that carers, users of services and staff should find invaluable
- Close working with the Childrens Disability Network helps to ensure that carers of children have the information they will need through transition to adult services
- Resource considerations, as well as the need to ensure that information is up to date, mean that a focus on internet information is inevitable and desirable. However recognising that not everyone has access to computers we have 'badged' all of the Borough's 13 libraries as Carers Information Points where staff will help carers to find the information they need
- Some groups, teams and individuals make good use of the information, ensuring that it is passed to the carers with whom they have contact
- Carers of people with mental health problems continue to benefit by the role of the Carers Support worker at Rethink.
- Two newer posts, that of the Carers Support Worker at Thomas Pocklington (Visual impairments) and the Carers Co-ordinator post at Russells Hall Hospital has strengthened the 'team' of people whose primary role is to support carers including through the provision of information
- The Carers Co-ordinator at Russells Hall is also extremely active in raising awareness of carers with hospital staff to ensure that they too signpost carers to the information they need

- A growing number of carers are being referred to the Network by a small number of GP practices

Members felt information resources should be used more routinely by staff to ensure that they can give carers good and accurate information and supported the following actions:

- Carer Aware course could be used for training and as a resource to a greater extent than it is
- To encourage external agencies and groups to disseminate the information to their own clients
- Develop 'community champions' to carry the information to carers from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic and other marginalised groups so that a wider range of carers and supporters have access to our information

Members were impressed by the work of Dudley Council for Voluntary Service routinely circulating information provided by the Carers Co-ordinator to carers on its database and were keen for this to be extended to health partners.

Access to Assessment of Needs

In seeking assurance that Carers have their needs assessed and receive help to plan the support they need. Members received evidence to indicate:

- The online Carer aware training and resource has raised awareness with staff and carers of their rights and services to support them
- The numbers of formal individual and joint carers assessments is rising
- The success of the carers direct payments has encouraged take up of individual assessments
- Not all carers need or want a formal carers assessment. We have developed a number of ways that carers can get advice and support without needing to go through this process including a self-assessment form, access to advice and information from Carers Network, peer support through carers groups, short term interventions by specialist teams etc
- The forthcoming Essential Guide to Adult Social Care (an online tool for staff, carers and service users), firmly embeds the carer in the support planning process
- Support for carers is a key function of the Dementia Gateways
- The newly appointed Carers Co-ordinator for Russells Hall Hospital is able to provide information and training to staff to assist them to support carers and ensure carers are engaged in Discharge procedures and aware of services to support them
- Carers can have their emergency care needs assessed through the Carers Peace of Mind scheme operated by the Carers Network Team

Members were pleased to learn Carers who contact the Dudley Carers Network can receive advice on a wide range of issues including benefits, support groups, and health, social and 'universal' services without requiring a formal carer's assessment. In many cases they can then go on to access support directly either for themselves or for the person they care for. They can still elect to request an assessment if they wish

The Carers Strategy Action Plan also indicated that further improvements were needed in connection with identification and recording of carers needs

Providing a Break for Carers

Members felt that agencies should provide for Carers to take a suitable break from their caring role.

In evaluating current provision, members identified:

- The full element of funding received from the Government is ring fenced for carers support to provide breaks for carers even though the funding is no longer ringfenced by government
- Carers Direct provides one off payments to carers, following assessment, to allow them to take a break or pursue a leisure activity.
- The holiday floating support scheme to support people who can self-care but not be left without some support for a week/fortnight.
- The growing use of alarms and other Telecare technology enables many carers to leave the person they care for while they take a break
- Each year we make grants to around 30 carers groups and voluntary organisations to provide breaks for carers by organising a range of activities
- In addition there are a large number of non-carer specific community activities which can be accessed by all
- Some carers groups such as INSIGHT are accessing other funding sources to expand the activities that can be offered to carers and those they care for

Members also noted with interest that Carers are being encouraged to use their Carers Direct payments to fund holidays, short breaks, days out, driving lessons, gym membership, season tickets and fishing permits, complementary therapies, pampering sessions, yoga and karate lessons. Some carers prefer to use the money to pursue hobbies at home and have used grants to buy arts and crafts materials, gardening equipment, IT equipment & Internet access.

Whilst members were impressed with work in this area it was noted more could be done to ensure that carers' need for a break is accurately reflected in Personal Budgets and support planning. There is also a gap in supporting carers

to look beyond 'services' for breaks and to help break down barriers that prevent them accessing universal services

Supporting Carers to be part of the Community

The project board wanted to test whether Carers are able to access the full range of services and activities available to the general community.

Evidence received indicated:

- There is a growing awareness, backed by the Equality Act, across all agencies of the need to ensure that services are accessible and welcoming to carers, people with disabilities and older people
- There are a number of opportunities for people to access community activities (see above)
- The online Community Information Directory is a great resource for people planning 'lives not services'
- A recognition of the importance of the home environment in assisting the caring role and promote services offered by Housing and other services and we are working to improve provision of major adaptations

Members were pleased to note The Living Well, Keeping Safe scheme, a partnership between the Council, Age UK Dudley, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service and Victim Support, offers help and support to older people and people with disabilities on a range of home security, personal safety and wellbeing

Transport emerged as an key issue alongside an underlying need to understand why some carers remain isolated – often for complex emotional reasons as well as needing support for the person they care for. It was felt support was needed take forward innovative ideas/thinking arising from routine engagement with carers groups.

Emotional Support and maintenance of health

The project board sought assurance that Carers are provided with the emotional support they need at different stages of caring; whilst being able to access services to enable them to maintain and improve their own health.

Evidence received indicated there is a range of support available from a number of agencies and groups. Members established:

- A growing number of groups either in the voluntary sector or supported by health and social care services offer emotional and /or peer support for carers
- The Carers' Co-ordinators and other carers support workers at Thomas Pocklington, Rethink and Russells Hall Hospital provides signposting information and a 'listening ear'
- National charity *OMEGA* offers Bereavement support for carers
- The Palliative care team has developed a resource to help staff to support carers caring at the end of life
- Additional resources for people requiring access to psychological therapies
- *Looking After Me*, (the Expert Patient Programme for carers), is for carers with their own long term health difficulties (including stress, sleeplessness, anxiety) Regular courses are held across the Borough
- GP Practices are more aware of how to support their patients who have caring responsibilities
- Dudley health trainers give advice to all on improving diet, exercise, smoking cessation and this service is routinely promoted to carers
- schemes are being promoted to improve general fitness i.e. Green Gyms and walking programmes
- Some carers groups provide walks and enable sessions with health professionals or provide pampering sessions to enhance wellbeing
- Moving and Handling advice to given to those carers who need it
- The Living Independently Team offers short term advice and support and can refer people- including carers- to appropriate agencies and services

Based of progress underlined in the Carers Strategy Delivery Plan and other evidence members identified the following priorities for improving health and well-being and emotional support:

- Recognition of the need for emotional support needs to be more embedded in assessment process (leading to appropriate referrals)
- Work with Carers and other groups to ensure good quality peer support (for example by sourcing training)
- Build on the work being done on end of life support to develop more support following bereavement
- Continue to work with Practices to encourage identification of carers and development of practice based services to support them
- Explore Government incentives to encourage training in carers issues for GPs
- Continue to promote the Expert Patient Programme and Looking After Me courses offered by PCT and partners
- Continue to promote public health campaigns and services to carer

Financial Matters

The project board sought assurance that Carers have the information they need to maximise their income and reduce financial hardship.

Evidence received highlighted the following achievements:

- Production of a number of fact sheets to advise carers of the benefits they are entitled to and ensure that all benefits news is included in e bulletins and newsletters
- services publicised where carers can benefit from discounts such as the Options Leisure Card and the Cinema Exhibitors card
- services publicised which can help carers to save money and protect them from being exploited – eg Bogus Callers Line, Fix a Home Scheme
- promotion of schemes such as Health through Warmth and Warm Front which help some carers improve heating in their home
- Carers who wish to return to work can get extra help from the local Job Centre's Supporting Carers into Work scheme.
- The micro service project continues to advise carers who wish to set up their own business and some carers are taking paid work as PAs

Members were concerned that changes in benefits such as Working Tax Credit and the (as yet unknown implications of) the move to Universal Credit and the replacement of Disability Living Allowance by Personal Independence Payments would further anxiety and worry amongst carers. Evidence received indicated although some advice is available carers need more support to look at benefits and employment options.

Project Board

The Review Project Board was appointed by the Committee in September to oversee progress and strategic direction of the review. This comprised Cllr Ridley, Cllr Harris, Cllr P Miller and Cllr JD Davies.

Project Board Meetings

A workshop for Project Board members was held March 2012 with the aim of encouraging a direct dialogue with staff from across Health and Adult Social Care involved in provision for carers. The following participants were in attendance: