

Carers Event at Westbank – 23 July 2018

Report of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Members

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to confirmation by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendations:

- i. that as part of the new *Caring Well in Devon* contract officers continue to develop a systematic approach to capturing feedback from carer ambassadors.
- ii. that a 6-month update report on Carers' Support Services is factored into the scrutiny work programme.
- iii. that the Committee notes the report.

Background

Ahead of 7 June 2018 Health & Adult Care Scrutiny, Councillor Claire Wright had led on behalf of the members in working with officers in the preparation of a report reviewing the service user and carer survey results. At the subsequent Committee it was resolved that members site visits be arranged to Westbank Community Care Services, Exminster for a report to the next meeting of this Committee.

23 July 2018 a carers event for was held at Westbank for members which the following Councillors attended:

- Sara Randall Johnson (Chair)
- Hilary Ackland
- Andrew Leadbetter (Cabinet Member)
- Andrew Saywell
- Richard Scott
- Carol Whitton
- Claire Wright

The session with carers, care ambassadors, commissioners and the provider covered:

- the approach to Carers' Support Services, key features of the new service "Caring Well in Devon" and the carer offer.
- the County Council's response to the views of carers expressed in the biennial Carer Survey, the outlook for the next survey which will be undertaken this year and factors which may affect that.
- the new National Action Plan for Carers and expectations relating to carers in the forthcoming Green Paper on Social Care for Older People.

What is a Carer?

A carer is a person of any age who provides (or intends to provide) care and/or support of any type to another person, usually a family member, sometimes a neighbour or friend (sometimes referred to as the “cared-for person”), without payment and not as part of a volunteer scheme. The “cared-for” person could not manage without this care/support.

- Carers’ work valued at £1.6bn in Devon alone
- Census 2011: 84,000 carers in Devon (includes young carers)
- Public Health estimate 2018: 86,595 adult carers alone.

Carer Services in Devon

Carer Services in Devon are provided under joint commissioning arrangements between Devon County Council (both Adult Care & Health, and Children’s Services), and Northern, Eastern and Western (NEW) Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and South Devon and Torbay CCG. This arrangement is known as the Devon Carers Partnership in which Devon County Council is the lead partner. Westbank Community Health and Care were awarded the new 5-year contract in April 2018 for the *Caring Well in Devon* for adult carers of adults’ service, and the *Young Carers Support Service* for young carers.

The Devon Carer Offer – Key Changes

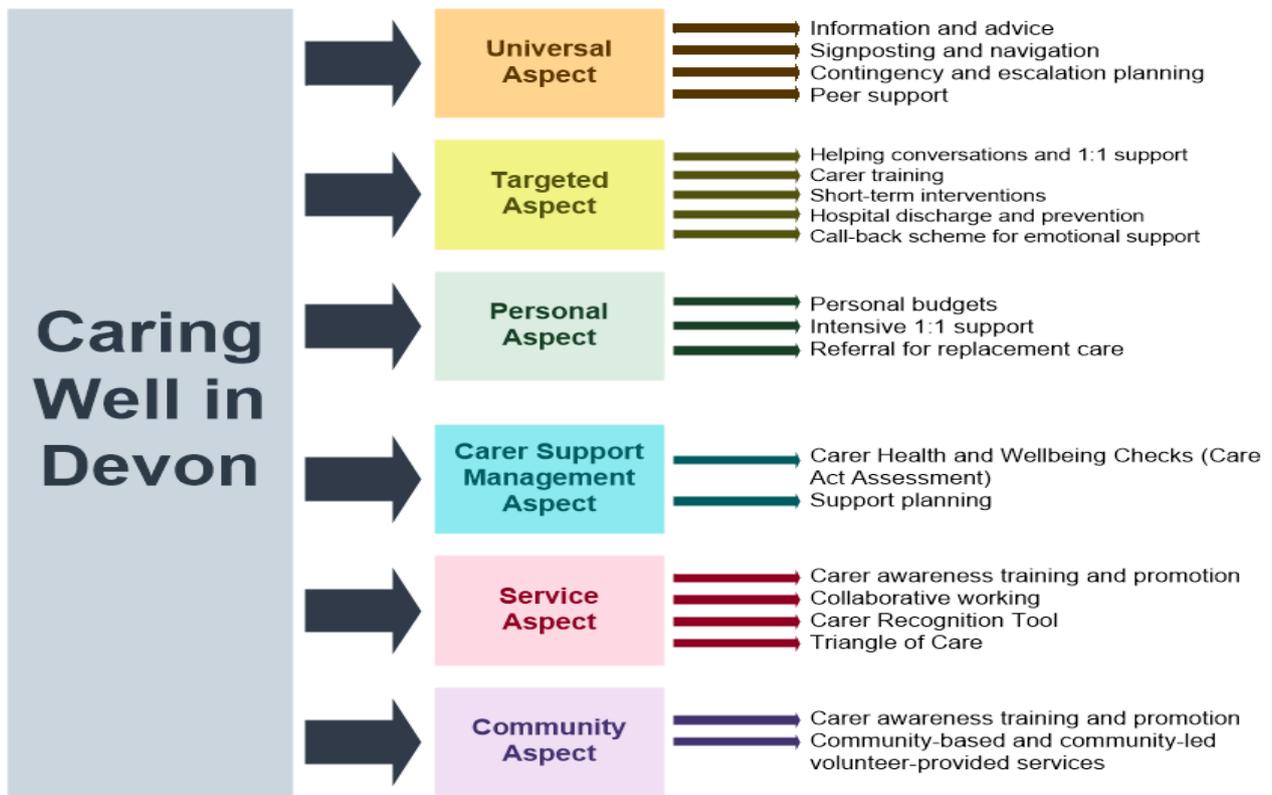
The “Old Offer”

- Take a Break - vouchers for up to 3 hours sitting service a week, contribution by the carer when redeemed
- Flexible Breaks Grants – small cash payments, once a year maximum, carer to use as wished – access on the basis of “proving the need for a break”
- “Respite Care”- on needs of cared-for person only, charged to the cared-for person

The “Post-Care Act Offer”

- Wider range of “universal” and “targeted “services
- More 1:1 and Peer Support
- Carer Direct payments to meet Carers’ “eligible needs” - very much more flexible than previously (replaces Flexible Breaks Grants)
- “Replacement Care” (“respite care”) – on eligible needs of carer (and according to the needs of the cared-for person) charged to the cared-for person

New Service Model for Carers in Devon



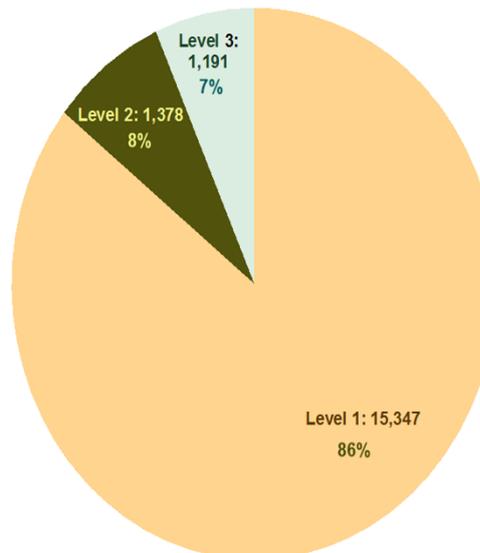
New Carers Offer

Level 1: Universal Support for Carers

- Information, advice and guidance, signposting to resources
- Carer Newsletter
- Carer Alert Card
- Advice on access to education, training, leisure, volunteering, and employment
- Support to develop relationships and networks
- Advice on access to other services
- Apps and other online resources
- Online training
- Celebration events
- Training to care safely
- Self-organised peer support

Level 2: Targeted Support for Carers

- Sourcing, signposting, referral to services e.g. benefits, dementia support, end-of-life planning
- Personalised advice, intervention, and 1:1 support
- Facilitated peer support
- Contingency and escalation planning
- Online and telephone carer-to-carer peer support
- Training (generic and specific)
- Hospital discharge and prevention scheme
- Casework and crisis support
- Group work
- Volunteer helpline
- Specialist service navigation



Level 3: Personal Support for Carers

- Volunteer call back scheme
- Specialist input and training
- Carer break payments
- Short-term Personal Budgets
- Replacement Care and longer-term Personal Budgets
- One-off personal payments for carer independence

Issues identified by Members in discussion with Carers / Officers

Performance

- Devon Carers undertakes a survey every year with carers to ensure a proactive response to experiences of those using the service. 55% of carers are satisfied / happy with their care from Westbank compared to 40% nationally.
- Some of the County Council's performance indicators relating to carers services have now however dropped below average. Commissioners are working across all levels to understand what is happening in terms of carer services through analysis of statistics but crucially also people's stories in order to triangulate this information.

Identification of Carers

- The identification of carers is a significant issue. Many carers are hidden and some may not want to be called a carer.
- Devon Carers are in contact with approximately 17,000 carers, but the growth in numbers has slowed over the last couple of years, with not as many people having come forward following the Care Act being brought in as expected.
- Members felt the carer recognition tool offered a useful prompt to identify carers with a set of questions to help signpost people.

Respite

- Members raised the issue of the difficulty some carers find in getting respite care, with many carers putting aside their own health in favour of the cared for person.
- A member who had previously been a carer advised that the *Take a Break* voucher scheme had offered carers a sense that there was someone out there caring, and helped them feel less alone.

Carer Ambassadors

- Carer ambassadors and various working parties are in place to bring issues relating to carers forward.
- The carer ambassador's role is crucial in helping carers to know what is available in the community.
- Members agreed that as part of the new contract there needs to be a systematic approach to capturing feedback from the care ambassadors as the network grows. Carer ambassadors have an important role in the system, and their experiences need to be carefully recorded and analysed.
- Members recognised the importance of carer champions in Health & Social Care. The new contract emphasises collaboration with the service aligned to the locality Care Partnerships and Devon Partnership Trust, which should help to promote and develop the network of carer champions.

GPs

- The importance of GPs, as well as receptions at GP practices, in understanding the carers role and the impact of good or poor practise on carers' lives.
- Officers advised that the new contract has increased emphasis on GP practices; but more needed to be done.

Staff Recruitment / Retention

- The supply of care workers is an issue across the County, which resonates with the situation nationally. There is a need to look at how the care market can be grown and supported in other ways.
- Commissioning arrangements should reflect the need for paid carers to work together with unpaid carers.

Transition at 18

- Carers of young people with a learning disability going through transition at 18 are quite often struggling, with nowhere to go for some young people at 18.
- The transitions process does not always start at 14.

Government Policy

- The Green Paper on Social Care for Older People has been delayed until at least the Autumn, but in respect of carers it has been signalled that it is likely to include juggling work and care, volunteer help and technology.
- The Carers Action Plan 2018-20 sets out the cross-government programme of work to support carers over the next 2 years and covers:
 - Services and systems that work for carers
 - Employment and financial wellbeing
 - Supporting young carers
 - Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community
 - Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers

Conclusion

Members would like to place on record a particular thanks to the carers who joined the afternoon, as well as the officers from the County Council and Westbank who organised the event. The session provided fascinating insight into the carers service both in terms of a background to the new contract and an invaluable perspective from carers as to some of the challenges they face, as well as the support they receive.

It is essential that work continues to support the identification of carers in the County, as while there are over 17,000 identified adult carers in Devon there will be a significant number of people providing care who do not see themselves as carers, and will therefore be missing out on vital support.

Health & Adult Care Scrutiny must continue to closely monitor the performance of the carers service and support the plethora of work being undertaken in this area, as well as ensure that there is continuing commitment to improve these services and the experiences for carers.

Councillor Sara Randall Johnson, Chair Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

Electoral Divisions: All
[Local Government Act 1972](#)
[List of Background Papers](#)

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref
Nil		

There are no equality issues associated with this report