

Cross Party Group on Carers

9th June 2020

Zoom Meeting

Present: Tom Arthur MSP; Mark Griffin MSP; Clare Adamson MSP; Joan McAlpine MSP; Tanith Muller-Parkinson's UK; Fiona Collie – Carers Scotland; Anne Bisset-carer; Marianne Greenway-Ayrshire Children's Services; Oonagh Brown-Scottish Commission on learning Disability; Claire Cairns – Coalition for Carers in Scotland; Geoff Kitchener-Centrica Carers Network; Fiona Pirrie-East Ayrshire Carers Centre; Alison Myles-Angus Carers Centre; Justina Murray- Scottish families affected by Drugs and Alcohol; Becky Vinnie Wood-Shared life plus; Ruth McLennan-Care for Carers; Callum Maguire-Queen Margaret University; Celia Sweeney- Carer; Elizabeth Morrison-Life Changes Trust; Andrew Muir-Psychiatric Rights Scotland; Raveena Sajjan- Alliance Scotland; Cath Purdie-Parents of Autistic Spectrum Disorder Adults; Louise Morgan-Carers Trust Scotland; Alison Wright-Carers of West Lothian; Cath Logan-Big Lottery Fund; Raymond Jamieson – Perth & Kinross Carers Centre; Francine O'Donnell-Lanarkshire Carers Centre; Carolyn Hunter-Carer; Moira McWhinnie-Carer; April Walker-Sense Scotland; Kate Hogarth-Shared Care Scotland; Antonella Valbonesi-One Parent Families; Colette McDiarmid-MND Scotland; Lisa Ross-Salvensen Mindroom Centre; Robert McGeachy-Camphill Scotland; Jan Noble-Borders Carers Centre; Fiona Robertson-Edinburgh Headway; Karen Maloney Carers Trust Scotland; Paul Traynor Carers Trust Scotland; Ann Wilson-Children's Health Scotland

1. Welcome and introductions

Mark Griffin MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke about an issue that had been raised regarding tweets that had been posted by a member of the group. They explained what had happened and how that could affect the group.

They gave the member who had posted the tweets the opportunity to apologise for the tweets, the member refused to apologise and stated that they were not offensive in their opinion. The Convenors stated that in those circumstances they had no choice but to remove their membership of the Cross Party Group on Carers and asked the members present if they had any objections. There were no objections voiced by members, so the member was removed from the meeting and the

members mailing list. A letter will be sent to the member outlining the reasons for the actions taken by the Cross Party Group by the Convenors.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes were agreed and adopted.

3. Covid – 19 What is the impact for the carers

Mark then stated that they wanted to ask how people were affected by Covid - 19

There were comments from some of the carers regarding the issues these are summarised below:

- A few raised the issue of health services not being available from local doctors' surgeries and general treatments to the acute services from NHS and cancer treatments and scans being cancelled.
- Lots of comments regarding Self-Directed Support and how that had been affected, with some services being withdrawn by local authorities and others being cancelled by the carers due to fears of the virus and how that might affect the person they care for.
- There were concerns if the care packages would be reinstated on the same basis as before the pandemic and some were concerned if their Self-Directed Support payments would be reinstated if they had cancelled them.
- There were comments about increased mental health issues for carers and the people they provide unpaid care for. Some who support people with addictions are finding that stress levels and issues of violence have increased.
- There were comments that third sector organisations are taking on roles and responsibilities normally done by statutory services and what will happen after the lockdown and pandemic is over, will these be picked up by statutory bodies or will they be left with the third sector and if they do will there be additional funding for these services.
- Amongst older carers there are concerns about their own health and wellbeing, as well as financial concerns as they are not all eligible for the Carer's Allowance and therefore the additional Carer's Allowance COVID-19 Supplement payment that the Scottish Government announced.
- There had been an increase in loneliness and isolation particularly for older carers, but young carers were similarly feeling this as well.
- Young carers were feeling they were missing support from peers and their education was affected by lack of support from the schools and lack of digital equipment.
- Staff at carers services had found an increase in calls from carers and that they were talking more often and for longer with unpaid carers. This also had an effect on the mental health and wellbeing.
- There had been some issues with PPE initially, but this does seem to have improved.
- There were concerns that services that allowed some form of respite like day care that had been stopped may not return or not in the same way and that could put extra pressure on unpaid carers.

- Carers of people with dementia or learning disabilities had found that they had issues when outside as the people they care for may not be able to keep to social distancing and this has caused some to be approached by the police.
- For those that are shielding there are concerns that if they have been furloughed and their work returns what do they do if the person they care for is still shielding or in a particularly vulnerable group.
- Carers are concerned that if they lose their jobs having to negotiate the process of universal credit, with particular barriers for those who English is not their first language.
- Carers have been taking on increased caring roles without support and this is affecting their own health and wellbeing.
- Through recent Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 legislation, local authorities have the ability to ease their duties to provide Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements and some carers and services were concerns around this.

4. Working group

Paul Traynor and Karen Maloney updated the meeting on the working group. It had been created to allow some members to work further and in more detail between the Cross Party Group meetings. The focus has been so far exploring Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 implementation and impact.

Paul confirmed that if anyone wanted to join to contact Karen and a meeting would be set up.

5. AOCB

Below are links to the some of the papers and reports mentioned in the meeting

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-unpaid-carers/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-self-directed-support/>

<https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/policy/policy-library/caring-behind-closed-doors-report>

<https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/policy/policy-library/nco-discussion-paper-life-leaving-lockdown>

<https://www.promis.scot/resource/unpaid-carers/>

<https://bit.ly/3aLMx7n>

<https://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/funding-opportunities>

<https://www.sclld.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SCLD-Submission-COVID-19-committee-call-for-evidence.pdf>

6. Date of next meeting

Next meeting is 22nd September 2020

Venue to be confirmed