

Report to: Denbighshire County Council Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 19th February 2013

Lead Member/Officer: Head of Adult & Business Services

Report Author: Commissioning Officer (Carers)

Title: North Wales Carers Information & Consultation Strategy

1. What is the report about?

The report refers to the implementation of the new Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 (the Carers Measure) as now set out in the North Wales Carers Information & Consultation Strategy 2012 – 2015 (the Regional Strategy – Appendix 1).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

In accordance with the requirements of the Carers Measure, the final draft of the Regional Strategy has been approved by Welsh Government.

Each of the six Local Authorities in North Wales is now required to scrutinise and approve the Regional Strategy.

This report provides a brief outline of how the Regional Strategy addresses the requirements of the Carers Measure.

The report was considered by Denbighshire Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 31st January 2013, and the committee agreed to support the implementation of the Strategy.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 approves the North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy, 2012-2015 and the partnership approach with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and the third sector in regard to its implementation.

4. Report details.

The Carers Strategies (Wales) Regulations 2011 were approved by the National Assembly for Wales on 6 December 2011. The Measure, Regulations and Guidance on implementing the Measure were subsequently issued to all Local Health Boards and Trusts, and to Social Services (the 'designated authorities') in January 2012.

This is the first time that statutory duties in regard to Carers have been placed on health authorities in Wales.

At its meeting on 9th February 2012, Denbighshire Partnerships Scrutiny Committee received a report that outlined the requirements of the new Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010, and in particular the requirement to publish and implement a regional Information and Consultation Strategy for Carers.

Local Health Boards are designated as the 'lead authority' in the implementation of the Carers Measure Regulations.

The North Wales Carers Leads Strategic Group (NWCSLG) was established in 2011 to develop the Regional Strategy. It will continue to meet and act as the partnership working group to take forward the actions outlined in the Regional Strategy. In addition, BCUHB have established a Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure Project Board to scrutinise the work of the NWCSLG and provide advice and assurance to the Health Board that it is meeting its responsibilities with regard to the Carers Measure. The Board includes representation from local authorities and the third sector.

In approving the Regional Strategy, the Welsh Government concluded that this was "a proactive Strategy, with a good focus on outcomes and underpinned by clear thinking about what might need to be done differently to achieve them. The Strategy demonstrates strong partnership working between the Health Board, six Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations".

There were, however, some areas for improvement. These included the need for a separate chapter on young carers (as required by the Guidance); strengthening some of the Key Actions for Year 3, especially those on staff and carer training; and stating how the Strategy will relate to Black and Minority Ethnic communities and other groups with protected characteristics. The mental health element of the Strategy also needs strengthening (this was a weakness across the Strategies as a whole, and Welsh Government are looking at ways of supporting the Health Boards with this).

The key objectives of the Regional Strategy are:

- All NHS and local authority professionals will be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the Carers Measure through opportunistic awareness raising and staff training.
- Carers will be identified at the earliest opportunity.
- Carers will be given sufficient timely information according to their needs.
- Where patient consent is withheld, carers will be provided with as much information that can be shared without breaching patient confidentiality to enable them to carry out their caring role safely.
- Every carer will be informed of their right to an independent assessment of their support needs as a carer
- Carers will be involved as a matter of course in all decision making processes around care management.
- NHS staff are able to signpost identified carers to carer support organisations.

In order to meet these objectives, the Regional Strategy sets out key actions in relation to:

- Identification and Signposting of Carers
- Carers Needs Assessments
- Information provision

- Communication and consultation with Carers
- Staff Training and Carers Training
- Monitoring the effect of the Carers Measure

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The statutory duties that the Carers Measure places on the health board, addresses demographic issues in relation to the increasing numbers of individuals taking on a caring role, particularly in regard to supporting an ageing population. Also, increased support to Young Carers will help to address needs set out in Denbighshire's Young Carer's Strategy, with the involvement of Education as a key partner.

Denbighshire's Big Plan states that it will support the development of the Regional Strategy, and support the implementation of the Strategy actions. In turn, the development of the Regional Strategy will support the performance measures included in the Big Plan in regard to the numbers of Carers identified and assessed. As indicated in 6 below, however, it will be important to monitor the effect that this will have on commissioned services in Denbighshire.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The following allocations will be made available to BCUHB to support the implementation of the regional strategy across North Wales:

April 2012	£97,436	
End 2012	£97,436	+ £18,559 – to support the delivery of the Young Carers chapter of the strategies.

The first allocation will be for health boards and local authorities to cover costs associated with training and raising awareness of the new measure amongst relevant staff to ensure they are conversant with all aspects of the new Measure. Part of this funding is being used to fund a Carers Measure Co-ordinator post based with BCUHB to implement the Regional Strategy Action Plan.

The effect of the new Measure is likely to result in increased number of Carers identified and referred on for statutory assessment by the local authority.

The impact of earlier identification of carers is unknown, therefore the potential for an increase in the number of referrals will be monitored to consider capacity issues and implications for future services.

7. What consultations have been carried out?

Consultation on the development of the Regional Strategy has been via existing Carer forums and networks, and have been co-ordinated by the NWCSLG. Consultation with Carers and representatives from the third sector will continue with the implementation of the Regional Strategy.

The North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012 - 2015 was considered by Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 31 January 2013 and the Committee supported the principles and objectives of the Strategy and the Carers Measure, and the partnership approach with the BCUHB and the third sector with

regards to its implementation. However, the Committee did raise concerns with respect to the adequacy of current hospital patient discharge plans, where they existed, to signpost carers to the most appropriate help and support available to them and the person for whom they cared. Comprehensive discharge plans should form a key element of the information package available to both the patient and carer in order to provide them with the necessary support. Scrutiny was also keen to ensure that young carers and older carers were sufficiently signposted and supported and that adequate resources were made available to underpin the Strategy

8. Chief Financial Officer's Statement

The costs to the Council of implementing the strategies should be contained within the funding available. The longer term service and financial impact of implementing the strategies should be kept under review.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

As previously indicated, the risks to the authority may possibly be an inability to meet the demand for requests for statutory Carer assessments, and the demand for support from our commissioned services for Carers. It is important, therefore, that this is monitored closely and that alternative options for carrying out assessment are considered jointly with health.

Contact Officer:

Commissioning Officer (Carers)

Tel: 01824 706658