

Review of Shropshire Carer Support Services

Background

In June 2019 Shropshire Council began a review of the offer for carers in Shropshire. The first stage of the review, gathering information from carers, ran from mid-June to end of July, and we spoke with:

- 135 carers, individually and in groups, throughout Shropshire;
- a further 93 carers completed the online survey; 55 working carers; 28 non-working carers and 10 preferred not to say;
- Voluntary sector organisation - Taking Part
- Frontline staff – 6 members of staff.

Geographic area and category of carer who participated:

Locations	Survey Locations	Condition Specific
Shrewsbury	NW - 14	MH Carers
Pontesbury	NE - 6	LD Carers
Nesscliffe	C - 42	Parent Carers
Church Stretton	SW - 4	Age UK
Oswestry	SE - 3	Parkinson Carers
Wem	Prefer Not to Say - 24	Stroke Carers
Market Drayton		Care and Share – dementia carers
Bridgnorth		Alzheimer Carers
Shifnal		MS Carers
Ludlow		General Carers
Cleobury Mortimer		

During the second stage of the review we held three Task and Finish group meetings to develop an action plan from the findings of the initial report. The Task and Finish group was made up of carers and representatives from:

- Shropshire Council Adult Social Care,
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust (SaTH)
- Primary Care.
- Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG);
- Parent and Carer Council (PACC);
- Age UK
- Carers Trust 4all (CT4A)

Proposed recommendations have been organised under respective priorities, where possible, and are detailed under each key point. The proposed recommendations will be considered when we prepare to recommission the Carer Information and Support contract.

Several of the proposed recommendations are relevant across all the priorities, see table below, and have been included under the most appropriate priority to avoid duplication.

Improved communication between professionals and individuals and other organisations	Timely, easy to understand and find information	A joined up system
Digital approach – technology that may assist	Showing how we value carers	See me – I am not ‘just’ a carer

Carers Strategy Priority One – Carers are listened to, valued and respected

Key point: currently, not all carers feel that the organisations they are seeking support from listen, value and respect them, and talking to practitioners is only of benefit when it is a proper two-way conversation where what they have said has been heard and recognised.

Task and Finish Group Proposed Recommendations and Actions:

Proposed Recommendation	Proposed Action
Plan meetings and workshops with the carer in mind	we will ensure date and time of meetings/ training/workshops are suitable for carers and give information on parking and expenses
Carers are actively involved in overseeing the All Age Carer Strategy action plan, ensuring their voices are heard	The FCPB will be co-chaired by a carer and Shropshire Council representatives. We will establish area based armchair panels so that more carers can contribute to a meeting without attending.
Conversations must be person centred where carers are heard and recognised. Practitioners recognise the difference in the caring role for different conditions	We will support practitioners to have meaningful conversations through mentoring and coaching, including feedback from carers.
Opportunities to provide training for carers	We will have a programme of available training such as safe handling as part of the ILP manual handling contract; basic first aid through partner organisations; medication through pharmacists; joint training courses such as Supporting Mental Health Carers.
Raise awareness of the particular needs of carers to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the way Shropshire Council delivers services	Internal awareness raising work with services and commissioners
How do we support cross boundary carers - especially when their cared for is in hospital in Shropshire?	We will explore cross boundary agreements with neighbouring Councils regarding support for carers where the cared for resides in another Council area. We will work with SaTH on how we will provide information in the hospital for people from neighbouring Councils e.g. Powys about what support is available to them.

Ensure young adult carers are recognised and given appropriate support in line with Care Act 2014	We will work with Children's services to ensure a smooth transition for young adult carers into adult social care through a transition assessment to ascertain what support is needed; link with local colleges and the two universities in Shropshire, pastoral care for students and organisations providing support for young people such as The Hive, CT4A and YSS to see how we can utilise the support they give; provide future planning workshops.
Ensure parent carers are transitioned into ASC and given appropriate support in line with Care Act 2014	We will work with Children's services to ensure a smooth transition for parent carers; provide a carer assessment under the Care Act 2014; link with partner organisations providing support such as PACC and provide future planning workshop
Adopt a whole family approach to ensure all carers for an individual are identified e.g. main carer recognised but often siblings provide care but are not recognised	We will support practitioners through mentoring and coaching to raise awareness of whole family approach and develop key steps for them to consider e.g. Step one: Think family. Step two: obtain the whole picture. Step three: Make a plan that works for everyone. Step four: Check it's working for the whole family.
Specialist support required as well as generic support provided	We will identify sources of support for specific caring roles. Using the symbolism of a tree, where the trunk is the generic information for those areas that are common to all carers, the branches are specialist areas of support

Carers Strategy Priority Two – Carers are Enabled to Have Time for Themselves

Key Point: Currently, not all carers felt practitioners considered a wide range of options when suggesting different ways to allow the carer to have space and time for themselves and it is only by practitioners addressing any isolation and thinking outside the box that may allow carers to have a break.

Task and Finish Group Proposed Recommendations and Actions:

Proposed Recommendations	Proposed Actions
Person centred assessments that have value and are quality conversations	We will support practitioners to have meaningful conversations through mentoring and coaching, including feedback from carers, advising they think holistically and 'outside of the box' when looking at options for carers.
Better information sharing with partner organisations	We will develop protocols on sharing information, with consent, to relevant organisations on referral e.g. forwarding

	copy of carer assessment to CT4A on referral or adding detail on referral form of next steps agreed.
Digital Approach - Technology enabled support that may aid carer	We will raise awareness of technology enabled support to practitioners as part of the mentoring and coaching programme so that they are able to suggest to carers what support may be effective in each individual situation. A programme of workshops on Technology enabled care for carers, in order that they can see the equipment and a demonstration of how it would be useful for them.
Proactive identification of carers to aid self-identification and signpost/refer for support	We will support practitioners through mentoring and coaching on appropriate language to use to encourage carers to self- identify. Continue developing the 'Do you look after someone' bookmarks scheme at pharmacies. ICS practitioners at SaTH and community hospitals actively identifying carers and providing information and support during hospital stay, referring on for community support if appropriate. We will clarify the pathway and process for carer assessments arising from ICS
Ongoing Support – how to move from carer assessment and support plan to outcomes being met.	We will include actions from the review in the recommissioning of the carer contract. We will support practitioners to complete full support plans of how carers needs may be met through mentoring and coaching so that carers and other agencies referred to have a clear plan to work towards. Partner organisations provide support on financial advice and welfare benefits; peer support groups; other avenues of information including drop in's, information line. All agencies will review the support given to a carer to ensure it has been effective.
How to access emotional support; coping strategies and psychological support with caring responsibilities	We will discuss carers emotional and psychological needs during a carer assessment and look for support in the community such as counselling services; befriending; Mindfulness courses; online laughter yoga; linking with peer support groups and how a carer can access these within their caring responsibilities, this may mean arranging some form of respite solution. We will work with our partners to arrange courses on coping strategies for carers such as Heart Conscious breathing course

Carers Strategy Priority Three – Carers can access timely, up to date information.

Key Point: Currently, not all carers feel they are getting the right information at the right time during their journey and information needs to be helpful, appropriate, correct, consistent and provided in a timely manner if it is to be of use.

Task and Finish Group Proposed Recommendations and Actions:

Proposed Recommendations	Proposed Actions
How information on what is available in the local community is provided	<p>We will ensure clear, understandable information is made available in a variety of formats i.e. digitally and in paper form at local venues such as GP practices and libraries in collaboration with partners such as CT4A.</p> <p>We will support practitioners to find local information through a programme of networking/ signposting workshops for those involved in signposting individuals on, both practitioners and other organisations; Community directories; social prescribing directories; Tribe; ASC staff news and their own links to the community in order that they are able to effectively signpost carers appropriately.</p>
Making every conversation count across the sector. Ensuring all areas of health and social care are able to identify carers and are aware of the best route to signpost a carer and where to access digital information.	We will provide a programme of networking/ signposting workshops, open for anyone involved in signposting individuals; LTL workers in each area making contact with groups in their area e.g. Stroke association self-help to leave details with the lead about how to contact ASC and where to get advice
Practitioners are sufficiently skilled to explain and advise on the ASC process	We will support practitioners through mentoring and coaching to explain the ASC process and what may be needed at varying stages, such as keeping care related receipts for the financial assessment. We will develop a 'handy hints' style document for key hints and tips that will also be available digitally.
Information on technology enabled support	We will provide clear, understandable information on what technology support is available, how it may support individuals and how it can be accessed on our Shropshire Choices website and through the Shropshire Support Finder booklet.

Priority Four – Carers are enabled to Plan for the Future

Key point: Currently, not all carers felt they had being given information to plan for the future and without regular contact, timely conversations and support are missed when their caring role changes.

Task and Finish Group Proposed Recommendations and Actions:

Proposed Recommendations	Proposed Actions
Provide information to allow carers to plan for the future	We will develop a programme of future planning workshops throughout the year.
Ongoing contact to receive timely information.	We will include actions from the review in the recommissioning of the carer support services contract. We will work with partner organisations on developing future plans for carers, which will be reviewed to ensure they are effective.

Priority Five – Carers are able to fulfil their educational, training and employment potential.

Key point: Currently not all working carers feel they are receiving good, understanding support from their workplaces where their options are discussed, without standardisation of carer rights and a carer policy in the workplace carers may have to stop working to provide care.

Task and Finish Group Proposed Recommendations and Actions:

Proposed Recommendations	Proposed Actions
Ensure Council policies are carer friendly	We will work with Human Resources and make proposals to ensure carer friendly policies
Raise awareness of working carers in business sector and provide information and support to businesses to enable them to support working carers	We will seek advice from Shropshire's business representatives about engaging with the business sector to introduce 'Working for carers' schemes – accreditation for businesses and training on supporting carers in the workplace.
Support services provided for working carers	We will have a 'late night' availability on a weekly basis where carers are able to contact with queries and concerns via the phone or link chat with a member of staff.
Sustaining the caring role by supporting someone to work, train or volunteer	We will discuss a carers opportunities in a carers assessment and support them to work, do training or volunteering, which may involve looking at respite solutions to allow the carer to do this

Proposed Next Steps

To take the report to the meetings in the table below for consultation and final sign off before incorporating new actions into the Shropshire All-Age Carers Strategy and developing an implementation plan.

Date	Action
2 December 19	Family Carer Partnership Board
6 December 19	Making it Real Board
10 December 19	Directorate Management Team
January 2020	Task and Finish group 3rd meeting
February 2020	Learning Disability Carer Forum
March 2020	Family Carer Partnership Board