

Somerset's Commitment to Carers

Produced by:

Carers' Voice Somerset

Working together to improve the lives of unpaid carers in Somerset

February 2016

A Commitment to improve the wellbeing of all unpaid carers in Somerset, helping them to achieve a fulfilling life.



Carer's Voice Somerset has chosen images of swans throughout this document, because they know that, like carers, however serene and in control they seem on the surface, they are paddling frantically underneath.

www.carersvoicesomerset.co.uk

Contents

Forward by Susan Hartnell - Beavis BEM	3
Are you a carer? & About The Care Act	4
Underlying Principles	5
Theme 1 - Information and Advice	6
Theme 2 - Prevention	7
Theme 3 - Assessments	8
Theme 4 - Young Carers	9
Theme 5 - Working Effectively Together	10
Working together to create Somerset's Commitment to Carers Action Plan	11
Making sure that the Commitment continues to meet the needs of carers in Somerset.	12
Contacts	13



Forward



Carers come in all shapes and sizes and with many different roles and responsibilities. But one universally acknowledged fact is that being an unpaid carer, even though we are usually caring for someone we love, takes a toll on our own health and wellbeing. Unfortunately we don't always recognise this until we hit a crisis, because we are simply doing what comes naturally.

Often our caring role creeps up on us over a number of years. Elderly parents become less able to manage entirely on their own and we pop along to help with the shopping or handling some of the financial affairs. But we still don't think of ourselves as Carers with a capital C. We're just doing what any son or daughter would do, though there may be times when we grumble that it's taking up a bit more of our time, just when we were hoping that we could be free to enjoy our own retirement.

Sometimes an accident or stroke plunges us into a completely new life overnight. And for others it is when their son or daughter is born either physically or mentally impaired and they take on a role in addition to their first and most important one of being parents. They may not recognise that they have become Carers with a capital C either, even though their lives have changed in so many ways.

But now there is a growing number of Young Carers - children who do things for parents who are physically or mentally impaired which no child would normally be expected to do. This can affect their education, their emotional development and their social lives. They have to grow up before they have had a chance to enjoy being children and they are truly amazing.

Somerset's Commitment to Carers has been developed to ensure that all these people can be supported so that they and the people they care for can live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.

Susan Hartnell - Beavis BEM

Author of *"If only I'd known that"*

Introduction

Are you a carer?

Are you someone who spends a significant proportion of your life providing unpaid support to a relative, partner or friend who has serious physical and/or mental health issues? If so then you are a Carer. Through the Care Act 2014, carers will be recognised in the law in the same way as those they care for.

How many carers are there?

The 2011 Census shows that there are approximately 6 million unpaid carers nationally. In Somerset, 58,000 have identified themselves as carers, 15,491 are 65 and over, 3,306 are 25 and under and it's estimated that more than a thousand are under the age of 16. 12,300 of those people provide more than 50 hours care a week. We know there are carers that we are not aware of and some who may not wish to be contacted.

What is the Care Act about?

The Care Act sets out carers' legal rights to assessments and support. Somerset's Commitment to Carers is about improving the lives of unpaid Carers across Somerset.

What is Carers' Voice Somerset and what do they do?

Carers' Voice Somerset is an influencing body concerned with improving the lives of carers in Somerset. Carers' Voice Somerset brings together carers, former carers, local providers and commissioners to advise and make recommendations on the joint development of health, social care and related services. Carers' Voice Somerset leads the monitoring and development of Somerset's Commitment to Carers.

What is "Somerset's Commitment to Carers"?

Somerset's Commitment to Carers has been produced by Carers' Voice Somerset. The Commitment focuses on a number of key themes and priority outcomes based on what carers have told us they need. This information has been gathered through a series of meetings and feedback. The themes and priorities outcomes can be seen on pages 6 - 10

Underlying Principles

This Commitment recognises and values the tremendous contribution that carers make to the lives of those they care for. It aims to give carers the information and help they need to support them in this role and offers them the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives themselves. Carers' Voice Somerset will ensure that the themes and priorities identified within this document will shape and develop carers services in Somerset.

To make the best use of resources the work contributing to this Commitment will apply the following principles:

Equity - provision of services should be proportional to need and targeted to those that need them most.

Accessibility - Services should be accessible to all.

Integration - All relevant organisations should work together to maximise the local benefits.

Effectiveness - Activities and services should be evidence-based and provide value for money.

Sustainability - The work contributing to this Commitment should be developed and delivered with due regard to the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability.

Diversity - Activities and services should have due regard to the specific needs of protected groups and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their duties.

Theme 1 - Information and Advice

Priority 1.1

Carers tell us they need...

Clear and easy ways for all carers and former carers to find information and advice

"Some carers find it difficult to use a computer, many older people find it uncomfortable to use a computer".

This will enable...

More people to recognise that they are carers and to understand and realise that they can be helped with their caring role

Priority 1.2

Carers tell us they need...

Help with form filling and advice on benefits

"I am so worn out and all of this form filling is just too much for me, I am afraid that I will make mistakes".

This will enable carers to...

Have improved understanding of what is available and how to apply for the right benefits and services



"There is just too much information, I just need someone to speak to who can help me find what I need".

"I do not know where to begin to find information that can help me".

Theme 2 – Prevention

"I am at the end of my tether, I have no energy, it feels as if no one is listening to me, I just can't think straight and I am becoming more and more afraid of what will happen to me and the person I care for if I can no longer cope".



Priority 2.1

Carers tell us they need...

Someone to talk to during and after caring for another person that provides an opportunity to express feelings

This will enable the carer to have...

Better emotional and physical health and wellbeing

Priority 2.2

Carers tell us they need...

Agreement of planned respite and sitting services

"It's like living on the edge of a volcano, you never know when and where it will explode".

This will increase carers'...

Ability to plan life and improve relationships between the carer and those that they care for

Theme 3 - Assessments

Priority 3.1

Carers tell us they need...

Early discussion and regular reviews of the needs of carers during and after their caring role

This will ensure...

The carers needs are met throughout

Priority 3.2

Carers tell us they need...

Services to meet identified needs to be put in place within a mutually agreed time frame

This will enable...

The carer to have the ability to continue to cope better rather than wait for a crisis

"I didn't know where to go for an assessment".

"It took me months to get an assessment".

"My carers' assessment was helpful, I was grateful to be able to talk with someone and share my worries and concerns, I have been given some useful websites, my young daughter may be able to get some support also as a young carer which is brilliant as she finds things difficult at home I am also looking forward to attending the support group".

"I had my assessment but no one has come back to me to tell me what's happening".

Theme 4 - Young Carers

"I need people to understand what it is like to be a Young Carer but I do not want to be singled out".



Priority 4.1

Young carers tell us they need...

Support through education

This will increase...

The understanding of young carers, caring issues and disability within Schools

"My mum has a bipolar disorder, I need to know more about this, what to expect and how to cope when things get difficult".

"Sometimes I am so tired that I can't concentrate on my homework".

"Sometimes I get really sad and I do not know what to do".

Priority 4.2

Young carers tell us they need.....

Improved support to reduce inappropriate levels of care by children and young people

This will ensure..... Young carers are safe and protected within their caring role and can have a life outside caring

Theme 5 - Working effectively together

Outcome 5.1

Carers tell us they need...

All services that support carers to work together

"I wish I did not have to tell my story over and over again".

This will ensure that...

Carers tell their story only once and gaps and overlaps are avoided

Outcome 5.2

Carers tell us they need...

Flexible services to meet individual needs

"Because of my son's specific needs current respite services are no good for me".

This will ensure...

Carers are more able to be in charge of their own lives



Working together to create Somerset's Commitment to Carers Action Plan are:

The Alzheimer's Society

Ashford's Solicitors

British Red Cross

Carers UK

Carers' Voice Somerset

Compass Carers

Healthwatch

Public Health

Samaritans

Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

Somerset County Council

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation
Trust

Somerset You Can Do

St.Margarets Hospice

The Stroke Association

The Village Agent Project



For details of how and where to access copies of The Commitment Action Plan
please contact: carersvoicesomerset@outlook.com

Making sure that the Commitment continues to meet the needs of carers in Somerset.

Monitoring of the action plan

Carers' Voice Somerset is responsible for the on-going monitoring and review of the Commitment and it's action plan.

The Commitment and it's action plan will be monitored at regular intervals throughout the year. Progress updates will be fed back to carers by Carers' Voice Somerset in a variety of accessible ways.

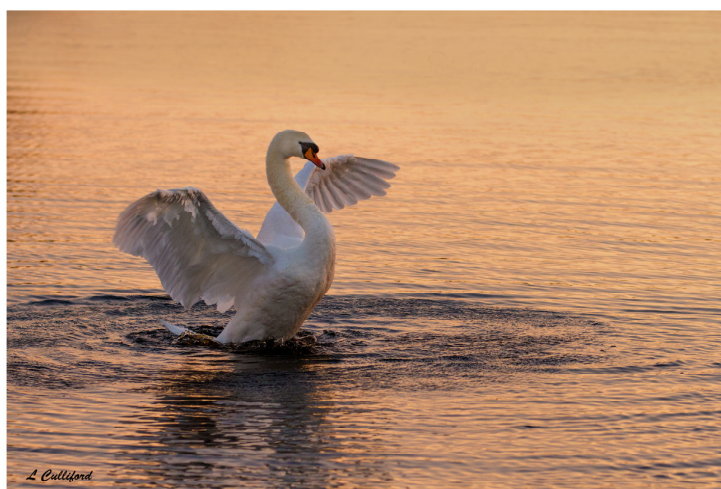
Carers' Voice Somerset will provide an annual summative report detailing successes, progress, areas for improvement, new ideas and potential solutions.

Carers working with Carers' Voice Somerset will be involved in this process at every step along the way.

There are several accessible ways that carers can contribute to the monitoring of the Commitment. If you would like to get involved, or find out more about this please contact:

carersvoicesomerset@outlook.com

07818 523487



Carers will be at the heart of all that we think, say and do in Somerset

Contacts



Carers' Voice Somerset

Have your say and get involved to help improve the lives of carers in Somerset.

www.carersvoicesomerset.co.uk

email: carersvoicesomerset@outlook.com

07818 523487



Somerset Choices

Find out more about the choices available to you, in relation to care and support in Somerset.

www.somersetchoices.org.uk

0300 1232224



Produced by Carers' Voice Somerset
February 2016

