

Support for Carers in Somerset

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1. Summary

- 1.1. The 2011 Census shows that there are approximately 6 million unpaid carers nationally. In Somerset, 58,000 have identified themselves as carers and there are many more that we don't know about. We recognise and value the contributions that carers make to our communities and want to make sure we are supporting them to carry out their caring role and to achieve their aims and ambitions.

Somerset County Council commissions a broad range of support services for carers. This feature highlights some of the very important work that these providers are doing to support Carers in Somerset.

- 1.2. This work contributes to all the aims within the County's vision:
- A thriving and productive County that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives.
 - A County of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities.
 - A County where all partners actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.
 - A County that provides you with right information, advice and guidance to help you help yourself and targets support to those who need it most.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. To note report only. Update requested following Scrutiny Workshop in September 2021.

3. Background – The Somerset Carers Support Service

- 3.1. Somerset County Council jointly commissions a Somerset Carers' Support Service with the ICB. This is a universal service for unpaid Carers and former Carers in Somerset. The service delivers a "one stop shop" approach to ensure that all Carers in Somerset can receive the support they require, when they need it, via a single point of contact. There is a focus on early intervention and prevention and the service helps Carers to find support within their local communities.

- 3.2. The Somerset Carers Service are currently supporting 69 Carers Champions

across GP Surgeries in Somerset. This includes helping with improving knowledge and working closely with the Primary Care Networks. A Peer Support Network has been set up to ensure consistency across the County in terms of the level of support Carers will receive. The Carers Manager was recently invited to a Commitment to Carers Conference in London to talk about the positive impact this work has had in supporting more Carers.

4. Supporting Carers in Hospital

- 4.1.** 158 Carers have been supported through the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) Team that includes the Agents Service, Red Cross and Acute staff. This offers a much more joined up approach to supporting effective discharge of patients and their Carers back home, fully utilising community support services.
- 4.2.** Follow up home visits are undertaken to ensure that both the patient and family are coping well back within their own environment. Micro-provider services are sourced in some circumstances to help reduce the strain on Carers by taking on everyday tasks so the family are free to focus on caring for their loved one. Ongoing care and support is sourced where needed to prevent re-admission into hospital.

5. Carers Support Groups

- 5.1.** Carers Groups are supported through the contract with the Community Council and provided by SPARK Somerset, there are currently 21 groups but these are growing. There are on-line groups as well as face to face, these provide a chance for Carers to have some respite and socialise, some groups run with the Carer and the cared for. There are regular group activities, organised day trips, informative speakers and much more!

6. Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

- 6.1** Somerset County Council contributes towards the provision of a mental health Carers assessment service receives approximately 1,200 referrals per year. A team of Assessment Workers provide support over the phone, email and face to face. Carers Support Groups are also set up and are supporting in excess of 238 Carers across Somerset.

7. Young Carers Support in Somerset

- 7.1** The Somerset Young Carers Service support in the region of 300 Young Carers in Somerset. Young Carers Groups are commissioned by Somerset County Council's Children's Services. The team work closely with local schools and colleges.

8. Supporting Carers within Adult Social Care

- 8.1** Operational colleagues are currently reviewing the Practice Quality Framework. This will provide an overall framework for practice in Somerset and also a framework for planning future training. The Framework will be holistic and systemic with carers at the very centre. We have also recently invited Carers to attend Locality Team meetings so that Social Care workers can hear directly from Carers about their experiences, both positive and negative, to help with the development of practice across the County.

9. Somerset Carers Strategic Board

- 9.1** A new group has been established of representatives across health, social care and the community and voluntary sector to work together to drive continuous improvement across Carers services in Somerset. This will include overseeing the refresh of Somerset's Commitment to Carers document which is endorsed by Somerset's Health & Wellbeing Board.

10. Somerset Carer Aware Programme

- 10.1** The Carer Aware Programme is designed to help people to recognise and value that they are Carers, as well as helping other people to recognise and value those that are in a caring role. It aims to improve access for Carers to effective advice and support that they need to help them in their role, as well as to have a life outside of caring. The Programme is also working on a carer aware brand that will be adopted across a number of agencies who are supporting Carers, as well as creating a shared suite of resources.

11. Continuous Improvement Plan

- 11.1 A Commissioning Plan has been developed to drive continuous improvement across all the services that we commission as well as to develop new ways of working to ensure that services are flexible and give choice and control to Carers. This includes working much more closely with health and Children's colleagues to develop a truly integrated approach to meeting the needs of carers now and into the future.

12. Carers Engagement Service

- 12.1 A newly commissioned Carers Engagement Service will help us to ensure that we continue to co-produce these services with Carers across Somerset, ensuring that there are a range of opportunities for Carers to give their views and feedback on services. The aim of the service will be to empower Carers to ensure that their voices are heard, and they have a genuine opportunity to influence how services are developed and delivered in Somerset.

13. Background papers

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author