



**ANGUS HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  
INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD – 24 JUNE 2020  
STRATEGY FOR CARERS PROGRESS REPORT  
REPORT BY GAIL SMITH, INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER**

**ABSTRACT**

At the meeting of the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board held 11 December 2019 it was agreed to request a progress report at six monthly intervals for the first 18 months on the implementation of the Carers Strategy.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board:-

- (i) notes the content of this progress report
- (ii) requests further progress reports at six monthly intervals for the first 18 months on the implementation of the strategy

**2. BACKGROUND**

At the meeting of the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board held 11 December 2019 it was agreed to request a progress report at six monthly intervals for the first 18 months on the implementation of the Carers Strategy.

The Carers Strategy has been designed to encourage the Angus approach to supporting carers, building on the principles of '*Equal Partners in Care*'. This approach will reflect the priorities in the Strategic Commissioning Plan 2019-22, and the spirit and requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 (The Carers Act).

The implementation of the Carers Act has been progressed through the Angus Carers Strategic Partnership Group, in consultation with key stakeholders. This has been assimilated into a Carers Strategy and Improvement Plan, approved by IJB 11 December 2019 (Report No IJB 80/19).

Following this the strategy and improvement plan were also presented as an information report to Angus Council Policy and Resources Committee 10 March 2020.

The December report identified the milestones met in 2018/19, and key developments planned for early 2020.

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| <b>Key milestones achieved in 2018/19</b> |
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|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Adult Carer Support Plan                                  | implemented Sept 2018                |
| Local Eligibility criteria                                | implemented Sept 2018                |
| Young Carers Statement                                    | implemented Jan 2019                 |
| Hospital discharge policy for carer involvement           | NHS guidance leaflet issued Oct 2019 |
| Local Carers Strategy and improvement plan                | IJB approval Dec 2019                |
| <b>Further key development targets</b>                    |                                      |
| Carers Emergency plan and Carers Emergency Card re-launch |                                      |
| Short breaks services statement                           |                                      |
| Waiving of charges for replacement care policy            |                                      |
| Supporting carers in the workplace                        |                                      |

### 3. CURRENT POSITION

The Carers Strategy and Improvement plan are now available to the general public on the Health and Social Care Partnership and Angus Council web-pages. The content of these web-pages was in need of revision and this has been done so that the information posted for carers is clearer and more accessible <http://www.angus.gov.uk/supportforcarers>

#### Increasing carer identification

A key objective of the Strategy is to increase carer identification in Angus. Not all carers will require formal support but we recognise that preventative input at an early stage will mitigate the risk of a carer coming to crisis. By supporting carers to identify themselves before the role adversely impacts on their health and wellbeing we can better sustain them in their role, if they are willing and able to continue. We would expect an increase in carer identification to be seen mostly among carers with lower level needs, as those with more critical needs may have already been identified – notwithstanding events causing carers to become in greater need more rapidly. This is broadly reflected in the number of Adult Support and Care Plans completed over the past 6 months, where the lower level assessments completed through the Angus Carers Centre have increased in comparison to higher level assessments through care management.

| Number of ASCPs completed | Care Managers | Angus Carers Centre |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| December 2019             | 24            | 2                   |
| January 2020              | 24            | 27                  |
| February 2020             | 26            | 24                  |
| March 2020                | 36            | 34                  |
| April 2020                | 4             | 37                  |
| May 2020                  | 7             | 10                  |

It should be noted that assessment activity will have been affected by the COVID pandemic.

#### Evaluating the COVID Effect

Currently sufficient information is not available about how the pandemic has affected carer identification; however it is clear that the situation will have affected carers in a number of ways, not least through the withdrawal of key support services during 'lockdown' and the need to 'shield' vulnerable people. This is a key issue for the Angus Carers Strategic Partnership Group as the improvement plan was based on information and services pre-pandemic. The group therefore aims to evaluate the effect of the pandemic. An initial exercise is being conducted through the Angus Carers Voice Network who have designed a questionnaire for carers to capture their experiences during this challenging time.

#### Emergency planning for Carers

Emergency planning for Carers is a priority identified in the Carers Act and in Angus we have had an Emergency Carers Card scheme in operation for over ten years. The scheme uses Community Alarm to store emergency plans for carers, and as the key point of contact for organisations to connect with when a carer is identified in an emergency situation.

The Angus Carers Strategic Partnership Group identified the potential to re-launch the Emergency Plan and Card as an important vehicle both to raise public awareness of carers, and, more importantly, to encourage carers to plan for emergency situations in order to avoid crises, where the cared for person could either receive inappropriate support or no support because the carer is unable to provide care. The pandemic accelerated the need for the new planning process to be implemented and it has been in place used since March 2020. Existing emergency plans have been reviewed and updated over the past three months. Details of the Carers Emergency plan and card are available to the public on the Carers web-pages and through the Angus Carers Centre website.

### **Short breaks, Waiving of Charges and Replacement Care**

Short breaks are identified in the Act as a key form of support to carers, and these breaks often take the form of services in a person's own home, day care or residential respite. A range of short breaks is currently available in Angus, and a statement is posted on the Carers web-page providing information on short breaks in Angus and our current policy.

A key issue in relation to the provision of short breaks in Angus is our interpretation of the requirement in the Carers legislation to 'waive charges for services to carers'. Scottish Government guidance in regard to waiving of charges identifies that there should be no charge applied where a service is provided for 'replacement care' (replacement care being where a carer is temporarily not available to provide care).

It is recognised that care services frequently benefit both the carer and the cared for person and it is therefore sometimes not clear whether charges should apply. A draft policy statement and procedure has been under development to clarify our position on this issue so that we can provide clear and consistent guidance to staff and the public. This remains a priority task for the strategy to ensure that carers are consistently supported, and will be addressed in a subsequent report.

### **Supporting Carers in the workplace**

Supporting carers in the workplace is being developed through an Angus Council Human Resources group, linking with the Angus Carers Strategic Partnership Group. This initiative has been identified in the Carers Strategy improvement plan with the intention of widening awareness and support through all employers in Angus, in recognition that many carers either are already in the workplace or would want to be employed, and that HR policies can go some way further to support this. This initiative has not progressed significantly since December and will be reviewed in light of the HR policy changes in response to the pandemic.

### **Angus Carers Centre**

The Angus Carers Centre is our main strategic partner in delivering the Angus Carers Strategy and in particular in supporting carers requiring relatively low-level/preventative support.

The Carers Centre have had to significantly change its operating procedures in response to the pandemic and activities at the Carers Centre have ceased. However support to carers has switched to mainly being by telephone and activity levels have been high with centre staff proactively contacting carers in addition to responding to enquiries. A report on the activity levels of the Carers Centre will be produced and used to evaluate how they responded to the pandemic, any changes in client activity and whether this can be used to inform changes in their operations.

Carers Week 8-14 June (theme "making caring visible") has demonstrated how the Carers Centre has had to adapt to 'social distancing' by conducting a digital carers week programme.

### **Carers Strategy Lead Officer**

The role of Lead Officer for the Carers Strategy will change from Jerry Forteath to Vivienne Davidson from 1 July 2020.

#### **4. RISK**

The development of a Carer Strategy for Angus complies with a specific duty under section 31 of the Act. This document, together with the Improvement Plan and the Strategic Commissioning Plan set out a cohesive approach to supporting carers as equal partners, complying with the Scottish Government vision.

Without an effective strategy and action plan the requirements of implementation of the Carers Act may not be realised within the required timescales, and there is a risk that carers will not be adequately supported and not be treated as equal partners in care, and subsequently diminished as an asset to the Partnership in supporting the Angus Care model. Apart from the effect on individual carers and the people they care for, failing to support carers will ultimately place greater demands on social care services and increase care home placements. It is therefore prudent to seek to support carers as equal partners in providing preventative care.

There is a risk that the policy on waiving of charges for services to unpaid carers may result in a loss of income for the Partnership. Early indications are that there may be a loss of income for the Partnership particularly relating to residential respite. A draft policy has been shared with carers' representative organisations, and further work is underway to test the draft policy in practice in relation to the financial impact on cared-for persons and unintended consequences for carers.

The COVID pandemic has undoubtedly put a number of carers under additional strain, not least as support services such as day care and respite have ceased to operate. The long-term effect of this has not yet been identified, and it is not yet clear whether these services will be able to continue given social distancing guidance. There is therefore a need to plan for alternative ways to support carers, and to keep carers' support as a key issue in planning for any changes in provision.

#### **5. PROPOSALS**

It is proposed that the IJB note the content of this report, and requests further updates at six monthly intervals.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

At April 2020, Angus IJB has received an additional £275k of funding from SG re supporting the Carers Act as reflected in the IJB's Strategic Financial Plan. This means the IJB has cumulative recurring funding of £972k to support the Act. However the IJB does not as yet have a comprehensive financial plan to reflect the implementation of the Carers Act over multiple years. A future report to the IJB will address this issue.

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