



Report of Carers Rights Day

25 November 2016, Great Western Railway Club



Introduction by Dr Sheila Marsh who recently became the Chair of Herefordshire Carers Support.

She thanked everyone for coming and giving up their time especially Carers who had made all the necessary arrangements to enable them to be present. She also acknowledged all the Carers who were unable to be at the day including our previous Chair Janet Fellows due to their own ill health or difficult caring responsibilities.

Sheila reminded us that the purpose of Carers Rights Day was to make the links with national policy and local implementation.

Key note speech by Baroness Jill Pitkeathley, Patron of Herefordshire Carers Support

It has been an extraordinarily dramatic year with Brexit, the election of President Elect Trump and Leicester winning the Championship!

There was very good news at the start of the year when we managed to get Carers exempted from the proposals to put a cap on the amount of benefits a household could receive but following that there was not much cheerful news to report.

The Carers Strategy has still not been published and is not now expected until next Spring.

The state of social care is giving widespread concern and there has been disappointment that in spite of pleas from Local Authorities, Health bodies, Voluntary sector organisations and politicians of all colours and persuasions, the Chancellor has allocated no new funds to social care and in fact had not even mentioned it.

This year Jill is chairing a Select Committee on Charities in the House of Lords and she listed the concerns which were being expressed to the Committee:

- What role does a charity play nowadays? Are they in fact providing services which we used to expect from the State?
- Are the lobbying activities of charities being restricted by legislation and are they being prevented from campaigning on behalf of members/beneficiaries?
- A great deal of worry about the lack of grant funding forcing charities into competing for contracts which may make them corrupt their actual mission. Charities are not being treated as equal partners and being kept waiting for news of contracts and not permitted to negotiate on a level playing field.
- Worries being expressed about the difficulty of recruiting suitable trustees who carry much responsibility nowadays.

In spite of all the problems Jill reiterated that we must keep fighting for the rights of Carers. They were hard fought for, but successfully under the Care Act and are now in danger of being ignored because of the pressure on funding.

It is important to achieve as much co-operation as possible between Health and Social care but now is also the time to press for a completely new settlement to ensure that social care is recognised as just as, if not more important than health care, in order to ensure that Carers receive the support they so urgently need.

Joint presentation from Martin Samuels Director of Adults and Wellbeing, Jo Davidson Director of Childrens Wellbeing (both Herefordshire Council) and Simon Hairsnape Accountable Officer for the Clinical Commissioning Group.

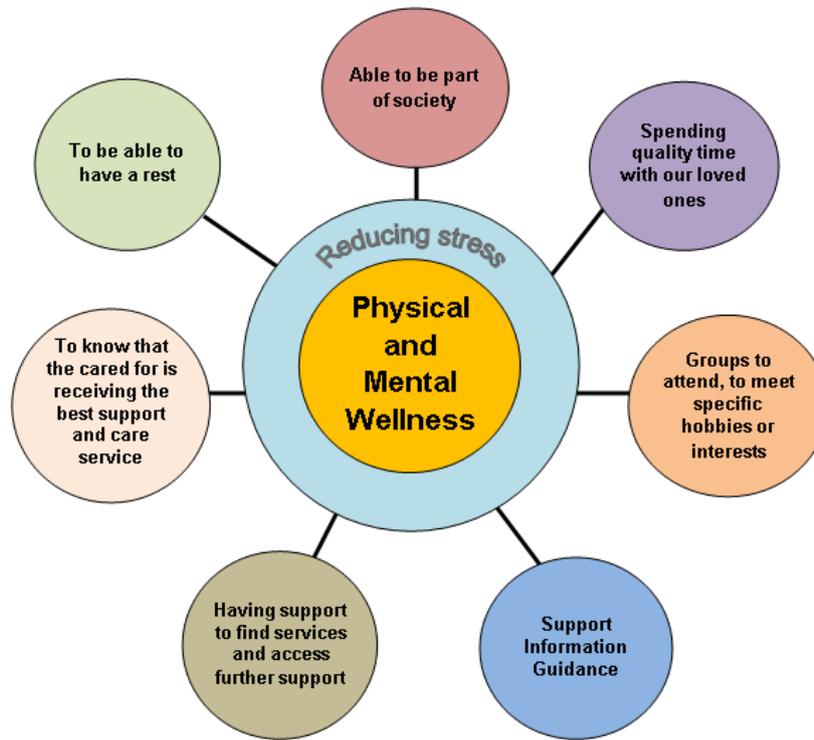
“Thank you for inviting Jo, Simon and I to speak at the Carers Rights Day on 25 November. It was good to meet up with carers and staff and share each other’s experiences of caring for family and friends in these challenging times. We are all grappling with the dilemma of celebrating that fact that we are living longer with the growing financial challenges this places upon traditional local authority services.

Many of the people we spoke to had also been involved in workshops and conversations about the future of support for carers in Herefordshire. The exercise we undertook at the event confirmed that the priorities we have identified from this work are the right ones which is heartening. We received lots of additional comments, ideas and observations which we will look at in detail and feed into our carers strategy. The themes emerging from this are attached. We had been waiting for the national strategy to be published, but as this seems to continue to get delayed, we will forge ahead and develop a draft early in the new year.” *Martin Samuels, Director for Adults and Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council.*

Priority 1	We want carers to recognise the caring role they have at an earlier stage so that information and advice can be provided sooner.
Priority 2	Young carers and young adult carers will have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive
Priority 3	Carers will receive support to enable them to participate in family and community life, access employment and education/training alongside their caring role.
Priority 4	Carers will be helped to participate in the design and delivery of services at an individual, operational and strategic level.

Summary of feedback

- The priorities identified through engagement work are right, although there is some scepticism about the ability to deliver given lack of carer time and diminishing public sector resources.
- The number one priority for carers is recognition and status for the work that they do, the money that they save, and the skills that they bring free of charge to care for the vulnerable.
- Carers need to be listened to – not just as a collective, but as individuals when engaging with public professionals. They often feel ignored or marginalised, yet feel that if professionals listened to them and responded accordingly, crisis could often be avoided.
- There needs to be a consistent approach to care and support from the public sector and all other agencies.
- The profile of carers needs to be raised across the board and nationally so that they are supported and understood by employers, health professionals, schools, and society in general.
- There is also a need to help people recognise their role as carers.
- Information, particularly in relation to networks and community support needs boosting and access promoted well.
- There is some frustration about the lack of a strategy despite carer involvement in a number of events.



Questions and answers:

Q. What has happened to the work on the Carers Strategy?

A. There has been a delay in the National Strategy but we will press on locally and produce the draft early next year for further consultation.

Q. Has the Council been made aware of the DOH (Research into practice for adults) research into Carers Assessments and cascaded this down to managers etc. to assist in training

A. The Council is a member of RIPFA and uses its material to help improve our practice.

Q. Can you tell us the core messages from the recent CQC/Ofsted Report about the SEND reforms?

A. Overall the messages were positive about the progress that has been made. But the Council acknowledges that communication with parents needs to improve. Many parents are not aware of the full range of services that are available locally and some do not feel that their voice is heard. A few parents expressed a view that they had not been fully consulted about developing appropriate provision in the local area.

The full Ofsted letter can be seen on the HCS website or at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571088/Herefordshire_LA_S_END_Inspection_letter.pdf

GP Awards judged from the nominations made by Carers

GP AWARD Winner: Dr A Johnson from Much Birch surgery

Highly Commended: Dr Dua Dr R and Dr O Penny, and Dr Leeman

GP Practice Awards (judged through a set of standards and nominations from Carers)

GP PRACTICE AWARD Winner: Weobley and Staunton-on-Wye

Highly Commended: Westfields, Pendeen, Much Birch and The Marches in special recognition of Fay Ladd's work.

Schools Award (judged through a set of standards and nominations from Young Carers)

Bronze Award: Hereford Academy

Silver Award: Eardisley Primary & Wigmore High School

Gold Award: Weobley High School

Closing remarks

Sheila Marsh closed the day with thanks to all the contributors and the HCS team. She remarked that if everyone went home with just a smile on their face from days such as Carers Rights Day that we had probably failed to do our job which is to keep pushing the challenging issues and to keep the recognition of the contribution made by Carers as high as possible.

Feedback about the day included the following:

1. Has today been helpful? Please tick as appropriate		
14 Yes		1 No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A very clear picture of the current legislation position and the Council's approach.I thought that all of the presentations were excellent and carer's worries came over strongly.The contributions by Dr Marsh, Baroness Pitkeathley on the **, intelligent and moving questions and comments by the audience made the whole event very worthwhile.Good to see face to names from Council.Expert help from professional contributor and good questions from the floor.The points raised by Baroness Pitkeathley were informative and useful to me but not the future support for Carers session.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">It was quite interesting listening to the Baroness.Still we are finding authorities are not listening.The only part that I didn't agree with was speakers treating us as uninformed, facts stated were sometimes incorrect. Time wasting.It is always interesting to gather information, reactions and talk to like-minded people.First time here - astounded at all the good work that is being done by and for carers.Good to put faces to names.
2. Please tell us your reasons for attending today's event (tick all that apply)		
8 To help me to cope better and continue in my caring role	11 To meet and talk to other Carers	15 To gain knowledge / be better informed about Herefordshire Carers Support and Carer issues in general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To get support as I am physically and emotionally exhausted.Our opportunity to have a say in our caring role. To act as an advocate for those unable to attend.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is important to take part as so many Carers cannot due to commitments.

3. Did today's workshop help you (tick all that apply)

14 To cope better and continue in my caring role

9 To meet and talk to other Carers

10 To gain knowledge / be better informed about Herefordshire Carers Support and Carer issues in general

- No because I felt we are not being heard.
- I found listening to Carers speaking of their experiences most interesting. I cannot bring myself to answer any written questions - the exercise upsets me too much. All support has been withdrawn from my husband and from me. The social worker who visited me to assess me told me that there was no point in giving me an assessment if I had savings. He offered me membership to a gym or a massage. I declined both. Officially, am I still a Carer? I am only acknowledged by Herefordshire Carers Support so thank you!
- The presentation by all three officials was patronising and non-informative in the mode it was presented. Another commentator described it as frivolous and I agree - totally inappropriate for the serious issues the workshop was purporting to address.

- To realise just what terrible lives some Carers have.
- My questions were not answered.
- Yes. Herefordshire Carers Support give us the support, encouragement to go forward - think positive.
- It was frustrating at times (play your cards right), rewarding at others. GP's real sincerity receiving reward for his practice and acknowledging work Carers do).
- Found 'facts and figures' rather misleading. Not representative of what we know to be the real needs.
- As usual no real answers to most questions from the panel.

4. Please rate the following (5: excellent, 1: Poor)

Venue					Timings					Subject / Content				
8	6	2	0	0	10	4	2	0	0	5	2	6	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

- Problems with parking. Very grateful for disabled entrance being open.
- It would have been more appropriate for the speakers to listen to Carers. We need to work in partnership/
- Felt it was a waste of time - Council part! Other parts very good!! Carers Support - great work!!
- Car parking arrangements were poor. The car park was full but still taking money.

- Though perhaps less Council talking at us.
- What would we do without Herefordshire Carers Support?
- Update car parking pre-meetings.
- Prior information regarding the difficulty of parking now that the railway car park is full by ordinary public parking and no arrangement of overflow with Sainsbury's would have been very helpful.

5. Have you attended any of our training/events/activities before?

Training		Events		Activities/Outings	
11 Yes	3 No	14 Yes	1 No	10 Yes	3 No

Please include any comments about the above here:

- I should like to attend activities but do not have enough support in my caring role.
- Cart Shed - lovely day out.
- I still say "who cares for the Carers? Herefordshire Carers Support does!" Thank you.

6. Based on today's event, do you think you will attend future events?

15 Yes	0 No	2 Unsure
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7. Would you like any further information, help or support from Herefordshire Carers support?		
5 Yes	0 No	9 Not at the moment
Yes (please give details):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm following up the offer of 'back to work' information. I need some practical help as I am caring for two people in different counties. I would like to continue to receive the newsletter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggling to share care information about my Son. Support, help and Carer based. 	
Additional comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not easy to hold several sheets of paper on your knee and write legible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank you all. 	

70 Carers in attendance.