

## Risk Assessment Paper – Herefordshire Carers Support

### Overview

The risks to Herefordshire's health and wellbeing system through a 50% cut in Council funding to Herefordshire Carers Support (HCS) as currently proposed, may be summarised as destabilising and dismantling a proven system for Carer support that currently offers:

**A Whole System Multi-Agency Approach:** one of the few agencies that can integrate across a complex pressured system with a set of services and arrangements with Carers' interests held as central

**A Single Carer Voice and Knowledge Bank:** both to advocate for Carers as an invisible workforce and to inform strategy and commissioning decisions

**A Strategic Robust Integrated Service Partner:** which has a trusted, knowledgeable and skilled workforce, and an organisational track record of fundraising to lever more funds into the County.

The focus of these cuts is understandably on achieving financial balance for adult social care and focusing on people they directly support. However, thinking about Carers should include the benefits arising from ALL Carers receiving support, in terms of preventing stress and enabling improved quality of life for Carers themselves and those they care for. This in turn sustains the huge economic contribution from Carers and the savings to other bodies such as the NHS that results.

Along with the local authority we ask all stakeholders to consider how they can help value Carers within our local community as partners in care, and recognise the significant contribution they make in helping to maintain the health and wellbeing of Herefordshire as well as enabling local stakeholders to meet their own aims, strategies and statutory duties. All research, legislation, guidance and best practice experience about Carers makes clear that:

- Carers have the **same rights** as the people they care for and the need to support them has therefore been enshrined in law.
- Local authorities **must** establish a comprehensive service for providing people in its area with information and advice relating to all aspects of care and support for adults and support for Carers.
- Carers play a critical role in **reducing the need for formal care**. They provide a lynch pin between the person being cared for, the GP and other care workers and professionals and an important network of support from within family, friends and local community. They help prevent health and care crises for the cared for that would otherwise **cost** public services much more.
- The family must be seen and supported as a **'whole system'** in providing a 'whole' Carer service across the social care and health economies.

## Risk Assessment Paper – Herefordshire Carers Support

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1** This paper details the risks posed to Carers and those they care for in the event of Herefordshire Carers Support (HCS) being unable to continue following a significant reduction in funding for carers services. HCS has produced this following a request from local authority Commissioners.
- 1.2** The paper poses these risks in the wider context of risks to the health and care system in Herefordshire and of legal duties on the Council and other bodies. It is impossible to detail the risks to Carers services without sharing the HCS understanding of the broad context for Carers in which they were derived and therefore we hope that this paper might also be useful in the current development of the Council's new Carers Strategy.
- 1.3** The current HCS/Herefordshire approach is a 'whole family' and 'whole life' model across young Carers, parent Carers, and older Carers i.e. supports all Carers irrespective of their age or the condition of the person they're caring for. The model is built on a set of principles and values derived from years of collating experiences of Carers and from nationally set priorities that have been translated to meet local circumstances. These include the current four priorities (see below) of the local authority outlined and published at the HCS Carers Rights Day in November 2016. The model has at its heart two vital goals:
- i. the building of resilience within the Carer population to reduce unnecessary demand on public services and
  - ii. the constant evaluation of cost efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

### 2. Context for Carer Services

- 2.1** Most care happens within families, and often families do everything they can to minimise the need for formal care and support. Often within complex interdependencies, they juggle the support and care they can give by using the skills and relationships that have been built up over the years they have known each other. All the evidence gathered over years demonstrates that Carers inevitably suffer negative impacts on their health, wellbeing and lives from their caring role, much of which is preventable.

**2.2** The following are key national drivers, legislation/guidance, which place clear expectations on Local Authorities as to what they should be providing and why:

- **Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for Herefordshire and Worcestershire (2016)** - the STP is expected to be a significant and transformative vehicle in England's health and care landscape and a primary focus for local commissioners, providers and stakeholders looking towards the future. The STP with reference to Carers states the following:

*'Carers play a vital role in this vision and are a hugely important asset to the NHS and social care system. We need to do more to help identify, support and recognise their vital roles. We will do this by working towards achieving system wide agreement to implement the "Commitment to Carers – Carers Toolkit". Helping Carers to provide better care and to stay well themselves will contribute to better lives for those needing care and more effective use of NHS and social care resources.'*

- **The Care Act** (March 2015) placed duties on the Local Authority to ensure that people receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious or delay the impact of their needs; that they can get the information and advice they need to make decisions about care and support; and have a good range of service providers to choose from. A right to a care assessment for all is included in this Act.
- **Children and Families Act 2014** – placed, for the first time, a legal obligation on the Local Authority to identify 'young Carers' and to assess their needs and provide services as appropriate.
- **LGA Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme (2014)** - focuses on the evidence that helps councils reduce demand for their services, as well as looking at costs. The programme advocates constructing the front end of the service in a way that enables citizens to receive timely help and to find solutions that come from within communities before offering formal help from the state. The LGA suggest that Councils might expect to divert 75 per cent of people towards a solution of this nature before an assessment or offer of formal help is made. The HCS model of a single point of access available to all residents, is predicated on this thinking and we have worked tirelessly with all key partners to understand their role in supporting this approach.
- **Social Value Act Sept 2012** - requires public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts. HCS has built this into our strategy to meet the obligations of the Act on behalf of the LA through:
  - **Economic** - increased access to employment and volunteering/developing employability skills/taking people out of financial hardship

- **Social** - reduce social isolation/promote healthy lifestyles/community cohesion
- **Community** – enable/increase peer support, mentoring and self-help/development of new community groups.

In addition the new **National Carers Strategy (expected Spring 2017)** - has signalled a welcome recognition within central government of the need to support the nation's 6.5 million unpaid family Carers. Demographic and economic pressures are key drivers for the new strategy with the need to reconcile an ageing population within increasing care needs and unprecedented pressure on public budgets. Carers play a key role in supporting public services providing care worth billions each year. Ensuring that caring is a viable option for families in the future is essential for the sustainability of our health and care services. Plus, ensuring Carers are supported in the workplace is essential for our economy, nationally and locally, particularly as more of us are working into older age.

We also expect that Herefordshire Council's current priorities for Carers services as noted below will be central to the Herefordshire Carers Strategy currently in development:

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

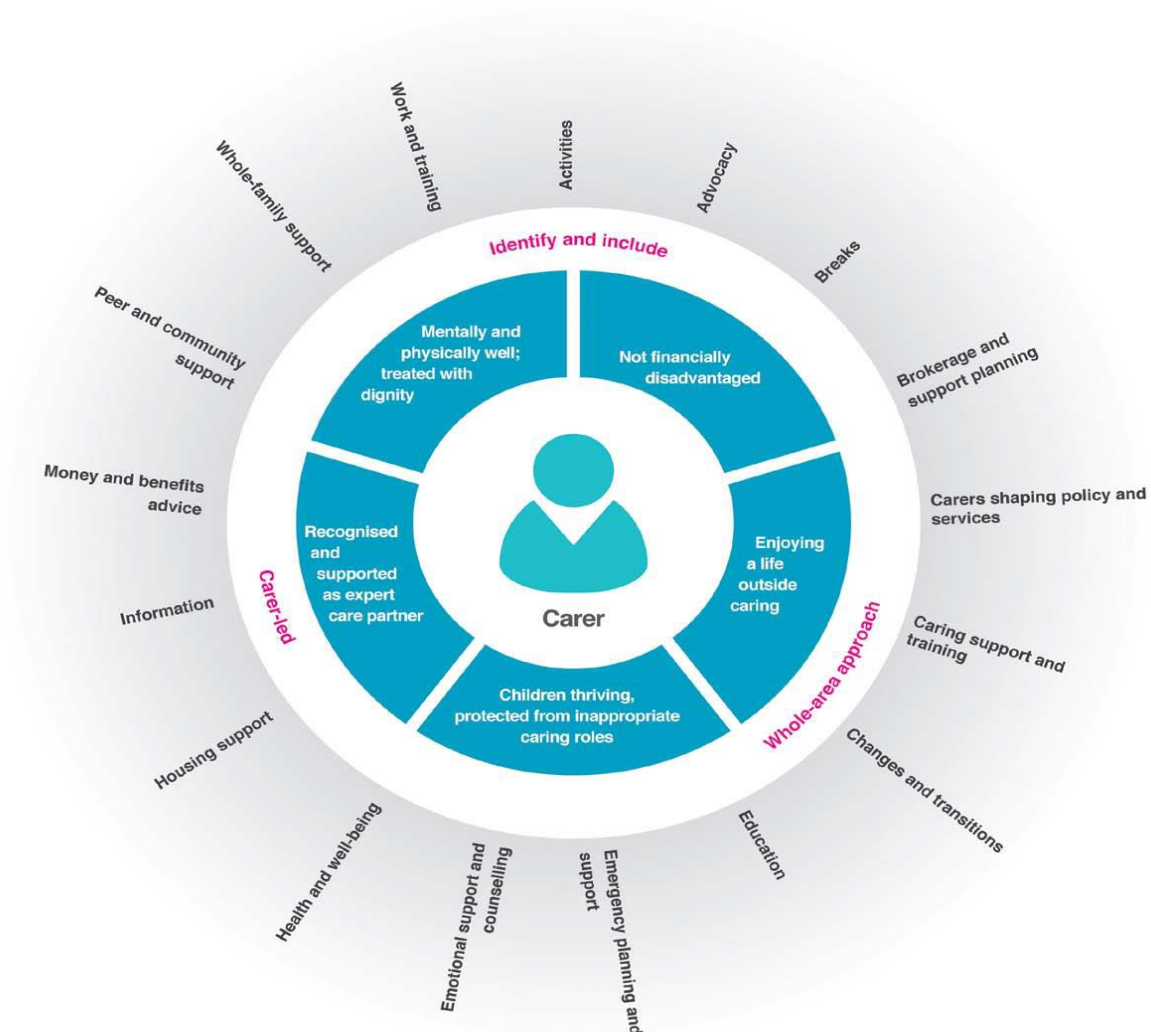
**2.3** In summary all research, legislation, guidance and best practice experience concludes the following:

- Carers have the same rights as the people they care for and the need to support them to make a sustainable contribution has therefore been enshrined in the law.
- Local authorities **must** by law establish a service for providing people in its area with information and advice relating to care and support for adults and support for Carers. The service provided should also address prevention of care and support needs, finances, health, housing, employment and what to do in cases of abuse or neglect.
- It's clear that Carers play a critical role in reducing the need for formal care. They provide a lynch pin between the person being cared for, the GP and other care workers and professionals. They provide an important network of support from within the family, friends and the local community.

- HCS experience has consistently shown us how important it is to see and support the family as a ‘whole system’ in providing a ‘whole’ Carer service across the social care and health economies. To work with the whole family network in identifying its own internal resources (emotional/practical) and how these can best be deployed in a way which provides the level of care required for their loved one as well as support to one another.

### 3. Risk Assessment Resulting from Reduction in Funding

- 3.1** As noted above the HCS model is constructed in its detail in response to the national and local drivers which firmly point LAs in the direction of a whole system Carer service. Fig 1 below represents how HCS operates.



(Fig 1 – Source: Carers Trust)

- 3.2** To remove one or more activities starts to weaken the whole model, and the interdependencies of those activities, both within social care/local authority responsibilities as well as health. The following are risks resulting from this approach:

- **Whole Carer Population Approach** - the maintenance and development of systemic identification of **ALL** Carers across the health and care system. The database of registered Carers (5,250 registered Carers with around 900 new registrations each year) is our gateway to individuals, enabling us to keep them well informed and feeling part of the Carers community through the Carers Support Groups held monthly (including Parent Carers ) and Young Carers clubs held fortnightly. Carers are also contributing through the Carers Forums held quarterly, the monthly Parent Carer Forum and the Young Carers and Young Adult Carers Forums. By having this whole system/Carer population perspective HCS is in a good place to identify the prevalence of Carers in Herefordshire, what's working well and what the system/service gaps are which need to feed into commissioning and ongoing decisions.
  
- **Whole System Multi-Agency Approach** - evidence from Carers is overwhelming that having an organisation, and person within it, who can help them navigate the complex range of disciplines/services they come into contact with is priceless. It is well documented that Herefordshire's health and social care system is complex with multiple access points. Herefordshire Carers Support assists Carers to navigate through the system, which ensures correct referrals, reduces unnecessary social care provision and hospital admissions. Partnership work with other organisations is central to the mission and operating principles of HCS. The removal of 50% of our funding will significantly weaken this position. Our close structural ties with Healthwatch also bring great advantages. This puts HCS in a position strategically, where it can provide direct encouragement, advice and support of quality service developments in/across other agencies/services in line with Carers needs e.g. production of the Carers Charter, the Annual Carers awards for Primary Care Services. This synergy would be lost by removing the strategic management of both organisations.
  
- **A Single Carer Voice and Knowledge Bank** - through the strategic co-ordination of Carer knowledge we can add value to the whole, gain intelligence and continue to improve what everyone does. The collation of whole system Carers 'intelligence' is our mandate to act as representative of Carers views at strategic planning and policy levels, feeding into commissioning decisions.
  
- **A Strategic Robust Integrated Service Partner** – because of HCS's integrated approach, range of activities and influence over the multi-agency system, it is able to innovate and take considered risks in using different and creative service interventions. Also, in business terms, HCS is viewed as structurally and organisationally 'strong' and as a consequence has been able to attract in funds from other sources e.g. Healthwatch, Independent Support – nationally administered contract through CDC for Parent Carer support for EHC Plans and Participation Grant for Parent Carers Forum. A 50% reduction in funds will significantly weaken the infrastructure of the organisation making it less sustainable and therefore less attractive in being able to take on other

contracts with all the strategic benefits this brings to Carers and the work and responsibilities of Herefordshire Council.