

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council



Swyddog Arweiniol Corfforaethol : Gwasanaethau Oedolion
Corporate Lead Officer : Adult Services

Dyddiad
Date

20/09/2018

Gofynnwch am
Please ask for

Llinell uniongyrchol
Direct line

Fy nghyf
My ref

Eich cyf
Your ref

Ebost
Email

FAO Health Social Services and Sport Committee,

Re: Consultation on the impact of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to Carers

Ceredigion County Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Health, Social Services and Sport Committee in relation to Carers of all ages with regard to the issues below.

1. *The number of carers' assessments undertaken in Wales and how this has changed as a result of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and whether there is variation between local authorities;*
2. *The number of carers receiving support following a local authority assessment, including respite care, how this has changed since the Act came into force, and whether there is variation between local authorities;*
3. *The extent to which local authorities are fulfilling their duties under the Act to provide information, advice and assistance to carers;*
4. *Whether local authorities and Local Health Boards have sufficient information on the number and needs of carers in their areas;*
5. *Other changes since the Act came into force which may impact on carers, for example changes to the services provided to people who are cared for;*
6. *Broader Welsh Government policy on carers and how it should be developed.*

Within this submission, we have incorporated a joint Ceredigion response to the Inquiry. The response encompasses a partnership approach, offering the perspectives of the Local Authority Ceredigion County Council, our partners Hywel Dda University Health Board Ceredigion County Team (H DUHB) and the Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO), and as a result, the submission has been extended accordingly to allow for the inclusion of the combined viewpoints.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Cewch ateb Cymraeg i bob gohebiaeth Gymraeg ac ateb Saesneg i bob gohebiaeth Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and correspondence in English will be answered in English. Corresponding in Welsh will not involve any delay.

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive :
Cyfarwyddwyr Corfforaethol / Corporate Directors :

Please note that the enclosed submission is currently being translated into Welsh and will follow as soon as possible.

I hope that you will find our reflections on the period since the Act was implemented with regards to our work with Carers to be useful, informative and encouraging. If you would like any further information on any of our work to date, I would be pleased to furnish you with further details.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Statutory Lead Officer of Social Services & Corporate Lead Officer Adult Services
Ceredigion County Council

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

Cyfarwyddwr Statudol y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol / Statutory Director of Social Services
Swyddog Arweiniol Corfforaethol : Gwasanaethau Oedolion / Corporate Lead Officer : Adult Services



Health, Social Service and Sport Committee: Inquiry on Carers

Ceredigion County Council has a longstanding ethos where “Carers are everyone’s business”. The vision is to provide Carers with the support they need, and to work consistently to achieve our vision of a carer friendly community that supports Carers to have a life alongside caring. The activity and initiatives embedded, and in development, demonstrate how the ethos of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWBA) drives the conversations and effective facilitation with and for Carers. We continue to develop and support our professional workforce to be “Carer Aware and Young Carer Aware” and to help develop more “Carer friendly” practices and in turn value those in our workforce who are Carers.

Ceredigion County Council is a partner in the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and in addition to the strategic and operational activities within Ceredigion as a county, we work closely with our neighbouring local authorities, Hywel Dda University Health Board and third sector colleagues in the delivery of services to meet the needs of Carers highlighted within the published Population Needs Assessment. Within the RPB Area Plan in which Carers are a priority, the RPB benefits from a long established West Wales Carers Development Group which was initially established to drive forward the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 and has continued to evolve to provide a catalyst for collaborative and integrated partnership working.

- 1. The number of carers’ assessments undertaken in Wales and how this has changed as a result of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and whether there is variation between local authorities;*

1.1 Porth Gofal is a partnership between the Council, HDUHB, and the third sector; providing a referral pathway for Health and Social Care services. Building on the expertise developed within our Single Point of Access, our Prevention Support Officers work alongside a Senior Social Worker for Adults and Adult Safeguarding, a Social Care Worker for Children and Families, senior clinical nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and third sector facilitators. Where Carers contact Ceredigion Social Care for a Carers needs assessment, the Triage service determines the most appropriate professional to undertake the assessment. The team around Porth Gofal is responsive to identify Carers and undertake the Carers needs assessments or refer requests on to the Long Term teams if already involved with them. In addition, Porth Gofal and Social Services assessment teams consistently offer proportionate assessment (Carers needs

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assessments) to people identified as Carers when they appear to need support (as required under current legislation). A Carer support plan is completed for those who have eligible needs resulting in a service being provided. Additional support in the form of specialist advice is available to professionals from the Ceredigion County Council Carers Unit where required.

1.2 Following the CSSIW Key Lines of Enquiry Carers Focus October 2016 and January 2017, CSSIW noted that Carers confirmed that they have been offered assessments and that generally their views are listened to, that they had received a copy of their assessment, and the assessment had resulted in additional services. In all cases, regardless of whether Carers are assessed as having eligible needs or not, Carers are provided with information and signposted to other organisations that may be able to help them in their caring role. As was anticipated, since the implementation of the Social Services & Wellbeing Act, there has been a reduction in the number of formal Carers needs assessments. The reasons for this are manifold. Whilst Carers that appear to require support are offered a Carers needs assessment, the formal annual offer of a Carers needs assessment is not a requirement of SSWBA to directly re-engage Carers with a formal social care intervention. In addition, the number of Carers needs assessments in 2015/16 increased significantly from the previous years because of the introduction of a Carer self-evaluation system. This self-evaluation system was withdrawn with SSWBA implementation as it more appropriate to mainstream Carers within the same assessment system as individuals in need of care and support. Whilst withdrawal of this system aligned with a reduction in Carers needs assessments, it established a return to a face to face assessment for all those undertaken.

Time period	1 st April 2013 – 31 st March 2014	1 st April 2014 to 31 st March 2015	1 st April 2015 to 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 to 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 to 31 st March 2018
Number of adult Carers that had Carers needs assessment	234	144	442	138	193
Average number of adult Carer needs assessments completed per year	273			166	

1.3 Carer's needs are addressed proportionately, a focus on the what matters conversation and aligned with the Signs of Safety approach adopted in Ceredigion as a through age holistic model, aimed at helping social workers to focus on prevention and early intervention throughout our systems and processes. The model has a strong emphasis on building partnerships and collaboration, not only with the family, but also with other professionals, extended family and peer relationships. There is a strong focus on promoting information with partners; some Carers needs have been met at an earlier stage of intervention with third sector organisations and will have not engaged with social care as a result and not progressed to having a formal Carers needs assessment. For example, Social Care's Porth Gofal (Care Gateway) provides information and

advice to Carers to help meet their needs, without necessitating formal assessment if that is the appropriate option for the Carer.

1.4 Young Carers under the age of 18 who are identified by Social Services assessment teams or who contact Social Services for support, are referred to the Council's commissioned provider, Action for Children Young Carers Service and for those in transition and over 18-25 years their Young Adult Carers Service, for help and support. The Young Carers and Young Adult Carers Service has delegated responsibility under a formal Protocol Agreement for carrying out age appropriate Carers needs assessment. Where they identify a need for support requiring multi-disciplinary input or social care interventions, they refer via Ceredigion Social Care's Porth Gofal Plant for coordinated professional support.

Time Period	1 st April 2013 – 31 st March 2014	1 st April 2014 to 31 st March 2015	1 st April 2015 to 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 to 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 to 31 st March 2018
Number of young Carers that had Carers needs assessment	71	45	6	107	73
Average number of young Carer needs assessments completed per year	41			90	

2. The number of carers receiving support following a local authority assessment, including respite care, how this has changed since the Act came into force, and whether there is variation between local authorities;

2.1 The allocation of the Welsh Government Respite for Carers Grant and its transfer into Revenue Support grant from 2018/19 has provided us with the opportunity to test a wider range of innovative approaches to respite, supporting pilots and testing new models: a) short breaks - the Supported Sleepover/Day break, a partnership initiative with third sector and statutory agencies. The project supports children with complex needs to have a 'supported sleepover or day break' at an adapted bungalow in the county and /or other locations in the community for supported activities, to enable the Parent Carer to have a much needed break and or time with other family members, the adapted bungalow has a sensory garden, established with the support of a further 3rd sector community group. b) Carers wellbeing alongside caring, - the responsive "Time for Me, Time to Do" Carers flexible respite fund enabling individual Carers and Carers Groups, to apply for a discretionary grant to support them to pursue an activity, take a break, access therapeutic support, explore personal development opportunities c) Carers Contingency, providing the Porth Gofal Team with access to immediate additional funding to respond to a triaged Carer issue, to enable a more immediate response, whilst allowing agencies to jointly prepare for an ongoing support need. d) Respite/Social tourism/Carer discounts model mapping – exploring the extent to which these models can offer a range of additional breaks for Carers and those for whom they care. e) Young Adult Carers - service implementation to support 16-25 year olds through transitions from school to college, university, work.

2.2 There is case study collated evidence that social care staff are being more flexible in terms of finding solutions to meet Carers needs, i.e. direct payment support where such service requests would have been less responsive prior to Social Services and Wellbeing Act. Through the good practice taken forward by our social care teams in carrying out Carers needs assessments and the links between the Council's Carers Unit and those teams, there have been a number of successes regarding outcomes for Carers. For example:

- Sourcing a range of benevolent funds: staff are supported to seek and source solutions in the community, i.e. a social worker worked with the Council's Carers Unit to make a successful application to a benevolent fund linked to self-employment to receive grant aid to help a Carer with household finances during a period of intense Carer ill health and subsequent treatment.
- Direct Payments: Carer awarded a weekly direct payment to enable them to finance transport to take the person they care for to and from a work placement. The continuation of the work placement was important for Carers own emotional wellbeing. The Carer was providing extensive practical and emotional support to the cared for person on a daily basis and whilst they wanted to continue in the caring role, they were struggling with the financial pressures of providing the transport.

2.3 The number of Carers receiving support after they have had an assessment has not changed significantly. During the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, Social Services provided support/ services to **47** adult Carers following a Carers needs assessment. During the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, Social Services provided support/ services to **55** Carers following a Carers needs assessment. The difference is the increased flexibility of support considered and the ways that support is encouraged.

2.4 We are currently implementing a pilot Carer Quality Assurance Framework developed to focus our attention on what needs to be in place to ensure that when Carers come in to contact with the Council, their experience meets or exceeds their expectations. The Framework itself defines quality in terms of Carer outcomes, states how it will be measured and determines how it will be improved. The framework encompasses casefile audits of Carers that have had Carers assessments, case file audits of Carers that have declined a Carers assessment but have received information or guidance and internal audits of procedures that assessment teams work to. A casefile audit tool and associated guidance notes are being developed for use alongside the framework. A set of reports have been developed by the Business Information Team to compliment the framework. When fully in operation in the latter part of 2018/19, an annual quality assurance programme will be piloted ensuring that all required areas are covered across the year. The Carers Unit will maintain a record of emerging issues and concerns identified as part of internal audit and case file audit process. Team members, team managers and service managers will be notified of these emerging issues and concerns as required. Corrective actions will be implemented, changes to procedures actioned and subsequent training carried out as required.

2.5 Other support provided to Carers falls outside of a Carers needs assessment. For instance, during the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, **70** Carers were in receipt of the Council's Carers Emergency Card service. Carers do not need to have had a Carers needs assessment to receive this service. The service provides the Carer with a credit-sized card to carry with them at all times. It is used as an instant source of identification in case the Carer suffers an accident or

sudden illness. Social Services hold the pre-prepared plan that specifies nominated emergency contacts so that in the event of an emergency, help can be coordinated, through the nominated emergency contacts, for the person being cared for.

3. The extent to which local authorities are fulfilling their duties under the Act to provide information, advice and assistance to carers;

3.1 Members of staff within the Council's Carers Unit, Porth Gofal and Porth y Gymuned have completed a Level 4 qualification in Information Advice and Guidance.

3.2 We have implemented a corporate approach to embedding DEWIS aligned with the third sector Infoengine as our core digital repository for community information and Carers Support is fundamental within it. The corporate Contact Centre CLIC officers have all completed Carer Aware and Young Carer Aware training. The Carers Unit Service and the Carers Information Service have transferred from Social Care to Customer Contact, under the corporate transformation programme, in order to embed Carers within the corporate infrastructure. This will ensure that Carers are recognised and identified more swiftly at the first point of contact with the authority. The Carers Unit acts as a conduit to improve understanding, enhance recognition and embed into practice and service delivery, the commitment from all sectors, and all services, to support Carers as core activity.

3.3 Carers may request and are provided with information, advice and assistance via a number of routes:

- During the period 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017, **349** Carers were in contact with the Information, Advice and Assistance service run by Social Service's Porth Gofal. During the period 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018, **285** Carers were in contact with the same service. The number of Carers accessing the service has most likely reduced because of the increased focus on prevention, early intervention and signposting alongside enhanced connections between services, meaning that more Carers are accessing information they need within the community thereby reducing the need to contact Social Services.
- Connectors working within the Council's Porth y Gymuned (Community Gateway) service, have an important role in identifying unknown Carers within our communities. Through using the Signs of Wellbeing principals and having the What Matters conversation with individuals on a 1:1 basis, Connectors are able to ensure that appropriate information and advice is offered where they identify Carers during their visits. They have an opportunity to link Carers to community groups and third sector services as well as raise the level of understanding relating to the support available from the Carers Unit and how to register with the Carers Information Service. Importantly, the team are also able to highlight the option of having a Carers needs assessment and to ensure an appropriate level of information is provided. This service will help to address the needs of Carers and others in the community before they are at the threshold of requiring Social Services support via Porth Gofal, the Carers Information Service run by the Council's Carers Unit, Social Services assessment teams or via the Family Information Service. There is a good staff awareness of services locally and nationally and periodic speed networking events are held. The third sector commissioned Carers' service

providers are members of a wider Ceredigion Carers Alliance network with a wide range of other third sector providers which is a conduit to ensure professionals are well connected.

- The Council's Carers Information Service is a core service of the Carers Unit. It is enhanced through a joint partnership agreement with the Hywel Dda University Health Board. This enables the joint extension of the information service to health professionals, to ensure they are provided with access to resources which offer support to Carers.
- There are a number of joint initiatives across the Health Board, the local authority and CVCs to maximise service impact. Integrated Care Funding has been used to fund the Third Sector Integration Facilitators whose role is to work across the sectors to raise awareness of professionals of third sector services which may support patients / clients / Carers. The Third Sector Integration Facilitators regularly support events organised by the Carers Unit.
- The Ceredigion Third Sector Core Community Resource Team is a collaborative working partnership between key Third Sector partners in Ceredigion which provides blended, timely and appropriate support to address the causes of issues faced by those who are frail and elderly. During initial discussions with the client, the team identify whether there are any unpaid Carers supporting the individual or whether the client is a Carer themselves, to ensure that they are signposted to services and can access appropriate support. The Third Sector Community Resource Team is facilitated by CAVO funded through WG Integrated Care Fund (ICF). British Red Cross Home from Hospital Team facilitates referrals for a rapid intervention, with partners, Care and Repair and Age Cymru Ceredigion. They are actively identifying Carers and providing a further route to IAA. The CAVO Caring Communities Fund is a Small Grant Scheme under ICF to enable smaller groups to apply for seed funding to test community ideas. Carers are a priority group to develop new initiatives.
- All ICF funded schemes in Ceredigion are expected to report in their work with a person with care needs, where they identify a Carer, that they have been provided with signposting to IAA and report any outcomes the Carer derives from the support provided to the individual with care needs.

3.4 The Carers Unit has a well-developed communications plan which sets out the engagement plan for the year and includes several large public events. Feedback is sought from Carers and partners as to the effectiveness of these events. The Carers Unit also publishes a Carers Information Service Magazine three times a year that receives universal praise from Carers and partners, and serves as a single source of information and directory of support. As evidenced during the CSSIW Key Lines of Enquiry Carers Focus Inspection, this is welcomed by Carers. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter are being increasingly utilised to communicate information to Carers alongside paper publications.

3.5 Raising awareness of the needs of Carers and recognising adults and young people with a caring role, continues to be developed and promoted throughout the county on an ongoing basis. One example of this is the Hywel Dda Regional Partnership (Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire local authorities, Hywel Dda Health Board and third sector partners) Investors in

Carers (liC) Quality Assurance scheme, an initiative initially developed by Ceredigion in 2006. Originally developed for GP surgeries, the scheme has 3 levels: bronze, silver and gold to provide recognition of the setting/service's commitment to Carers. The scheme offers a range of benefits including:

- A tool for improving the lives of Carers and providing a catalyst for change
- Helps to promote opportunities to support Carers in ways which matter to them
- It provides a framework to foster and maintain engagement with carers and partner organisations
- It is an evidence based scheme and provides a benchmark for continuous improvement

3.6 liC is being increasingly utilised across sectors: i.e. health, social care, education, community and the third sector. Coleg Ceredigion was the first college in the region to achieve the Bronze Award and Ysgol Penglais the first Secondary School in Ceredigion. GP Practices submitted 101 referrals to Porth Gofal in 2017/18. 51 requested a Carers needs assessment and 82 requested to join the Carers Information Service. 1942 Carers were registered with their GP as a Carer in Ceredigion as of 31st March 2018. There has also been a significant adoption of the liC scheme across the Health Board Mental Health teams, as liC is considered a supporting element of their Quality Assurance programme.

3.7 Developing Carers Resilience and Wellbeing is a critical component of our approach. The Council's Carers Unit has been working with partners on the ground breaking international first 'Carers Resilience and Wellbeing Programme' designed by Dr Dee Gray. The report and evaluation from phase 1 of the pilot programme demonstrated that the mental wellbeing of Carers that attended the programme was significantly improved, their isolation was reduced, and the skills they learnt that contribute towards enduring a demanding role were adopted and continue to be used 18 months on. Phase 2 feasibility explored the programme adaptation for Adult Carers in Employment (ACE) and for Young Carers in education (YCE), and considered whether a Train the Trainer model was viable. Phase 3 is currently underway to develop a Train the Trainer module with 11 Council Employees sponsored to become Trainers to deliver the programme to Carers in the Council's Workforce, 8 of which are current Carers. Concurrently, 6 Teaching staff of Penglais Secondary School with 6 Young Carers will also develop a schools programme. The delivery programme will be rolled out in 2019. The funding for Phase 2 & 3 has come from successful county bids within the WG Integrated Care Fund (ICF).

3.8 Ceredigion County Council led the innovative development of the original Wales "Carer Aware and Young Carer Aware" E Learning programme, licensed from a previously successful version outside of Wales. This was subsequently redeveloped as a West Wales partnership through the Carers Measure. Within the Council, this was mandatory for social care staff, with almost 750 staff completing the course up to March 2018. Access was also available to Health and voluntary sector. The e-learning course was a practical, engaging online training resource and feedback from over 95% of the learners stated that after completing the course, they felt confident to engage with Carers and provide Information, Advice and Assistance. Analysis of participants identified 21% were current Carers and 46% were previously. Approximately 70% anticipated becoming Carers in the future. The e learning was fully adapted to incorporate the SSWBA and provided a fundamental building block to the workforce understanding of the Act in support of Carers. In 2017, Social Care Wales commissioned a Wales wide e-learning course, and our regional licensed

course was decommissioned. The replacement due early 2018 is expected to launch in the latter part of 2018.

3.9 Under the Social Care Training programme, we are piloting wellbeing programmes for Carers and, with Carers. The first of these is supporting Carers of those with Dementia to access structured social gatherings together with the person they care for, supported by agencies to deliver information, knowledge and signposting in a natural environment as part of community occasion. Further work with Carers is ongoing to identify additional topics. Carers are also part of a “training” session with County Councillors this autumn, illustrating the impact of dementia on Carers’ lives.

4. Whether local authorities and Local Health Boards have sufficient information on the number and needs of carers in their areas;

4.1 The Council’s Carers Unit provides a bridge between partners in understanding the range of Carers issues, ensuring these are embedded in a “what matters” focused approach. The broad understanding of the numbers of Carers is part of partnership efforts to develop. The challenge lies in the myriad of reporting systems and identification/duplication of known individuals across multiple agencies. WCCIS will support that much more effectively when Health are working within the same IT system and we can extract data that cross references between health and social care. WCCIS is a critical tool in achieving that outcome.

4.2 Effective Commissioning of third sector services and domiciliary care service is key to the transformation agenda and the success of the prevention and early intervention agenda and is fundamental to the support for Carers. The Social Services Commissioning team has been reviewing all third sector contracts as part of a corporate wide review of commissioned services. We are also working closely with health colleagues on joint reviews of shared contracts. One of the themes has been around Carer Awareness and outcomes in current services for Carers. The review highlighted the lack of a Carer-focus in many general commissioned services. The focus is on ensuring the future tendering process reflects current and anticipated Carer requirements, mainstreaming Carers identification as everyone’s business. All future contracts for general services will include performance indicators to proactively identify Carers, to evidence signposting and to demonstrate the benefit derived by any Carers, from their service to the service user. Further, all contract awards will require services to undertake Carer Aware training and to demonstrate working towards achieving IiC to the appropriate level for their service area. This monitoring information will support ongoing profiling of our communities and support the next population needs assessment. Business Intelligence is a hugely important tool in developing processes which enable us to analyse the available information that can help us to better target Carers and support the communities in which they live, and at an earlier point in their caring journey. Methodologies for collating and sharing information between third sector partners, is also a critical component to address the future needs of the Carer population and we continue to support CAVO in their work to encourage more collaborative approaches between Third Sector organisations.

4.3 The Ceredigion Population Needs Assessment provided significant information through direct Carer engagement. It evidenced prevalence data from work undertaken throughout the region

and with partners across Wales. The 2011 Census identified 8,603 Carers across Ceredigion and across the region circa 47,000. Local data is also collected by the Council and third sector organisations on an ongoing basis on the number of Carers referred and registered with services. The number of Carers known to the Council will always reflect a lower “known” Carer figure in comparison to the overall self-reported Census data. Whilst we strive to identify as many Carers as possible at as early stage in their caring journey, it is important to remember that not all Carers want or need support all of the time. It is generally accepted that there is a turnover of approximately 30%, of Carers start caring and cease caring during the course of the year. A percentage of these will not want to engage with services because they are managing with the caring role or have sought and accessed support outside of statutory services. Conversely, not all Carers are aware of the support available to them or what benefits they are eligible to. In part, they do not recognise themselves in the term ‘a Carer’. Strengthening and supporting the work of the Health Board at hospital admission and predominantly at the point of discharge/transfer of care is essential in increasing the robustness of data and analysis of the needs of Carers. More Carers are seen as a first point of contact in a health setting than in social care, so the process and systems for collating and reporting need embedded throughout health services to support Carers, which will support Health and Social Care to reduce the risk of Carer breakdown. A stronger focus on supporting Primary Care to identify, record and report on Carers as a priority group would provide a robust health profile associated with the impact of caring, physical and emotional and assist to improve public health in the context of Carers health as evidenced in the Carers UK State of Caring Report 2018.

5. Other changes since the Act came into force which may impact on carers, for example changes to the services provided to people who are cared for;

5.1 With changes in any service, there can be unintended consequences to the outcomes for Carers. Ensuring an understanding of the impact both positive and negative on Carers through robust Carer Impact Assessments is a new concept and not generally recognised in equality terms. There has in the context of stakeholder engagement for the Transforming Clinical Services with Hywel Dda been a great deal of effort and intent to ensure that the Carers viewpoint has been included at all stages of the consultation.

5.2 Within Social Services, it is acknowledged that currently some of our day community services may not be meeting the changing needs of Carers, in particular, when we consider Carers maintaining their employment or needing emergency health care appointments for example. A key intent over the next 12 -18 month period will be to talk in detail with service users and Carers, listen to what their needs are and transform services to allow greater flexibility to the services we commission and deliver. This could mean access to 7 day service, hours that are more flexible e.g. a supper club and respite that is timely and accessible. But key will be to ensure that we have services that are meeting the needs of the service users and their Carers.

5.3 At times, assessment teams have found it a challenge to evidence that a Carer has eligible needs within the Act; it can be difficult for staff to prove that a Carer cannot meet their own needs and needs cannot be met by community. This is an evolving area of experience, and the need for robust evidence shown by a practitioner can result in delay for Carers because service requests are referred back, where there is insufficient evidence, which is equally understandable in ensuring resources are appropriately discharged. It is crucial to have ongoing high quality and

innovative training opportunities for staff to develop and grow in line with this process. The value in maintaining the Social Care Wales programmes for developing staff in relation to Carers under the Act will be fundamental to changing the long term culture and expertise of our workforce, particularly in relation to working with Carers outcomes. Given the growing demographics of caring and the increasing health conditions in those living with complex needs, the impact on Carers lives cannot be underestimated. We are still evolving the practice of staff within the new models, expanding the understanding of the community in supporting and meeting Carer needs, as well as supporting our Carers and communities to adapt to the changes. We are broadening our perspective in acknowledging and supporting Carer's needs that may not be met with a traditional Social Services "service" such as day care etc, but that their personal outcomes may be met with financial support to attend an art class or to purchase art equipment, or exploring funding for holistic therapy to achieve resilience and independence, which enables them to manage the expectations of their caring role with wellbeing and reduce their need for more formal interventions. Equally where the need for interventions is identified, we need to have flexible and responsive support for Carers before they reach crisis point. Work will continue to ensure outcomes can be evidenced as value for money as well as meeting wellbeing and resilience, but we have made considerable progress.

5.4 With the impact of budgetary pressures, and the reconfiguration of services, third sector organisations have reported that the services that they provide to Carers and people in need of care and support are stretched resulting in increased waiting lists and delays in service provision. This obviously adds to pressures on Carers, who often try to bridge the gap with resultant impact on their own wellbeing. With the increased focus on early intervention, signposting and enhancing connections through services such as Porth y Gymuned, this has the potential to further increase the demand on our third sector providers and a reliance on short term funding solutions.

5.5 In a rural county, access to close to home services, geographical based community groups and activities close to local communities remains a challenge. Many Carers live in very rural and remote communities where lack of transport, access to transport services, infrequency, inaccessibility and reliability of transport services, together with financial hardship and time restraints and long travel times, can make it difficult to access services, groups and activities which would support the Carer and enable them to sustain both their caring role and a life alongside caring.

6. *Broader Welsh Government policy on carers and how it should be developed.*

6.1 In November 2017, the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care announced 3 national priorities to improve the lives of Carers: These need embedded across all strategies within all areas of government policy:

- **Supporting life alongside caring-** All carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring;
- **Identifying and recognising carers** -Fundamental to the success of delivering improved outcomes for carers is the need to improve carer's recognition of their role and to ensure they can access the necessary support; and
- **Providing information, advice and assistance** - It is important that carers receive the appropriate information and advice where and when they need it.

6.2 Carers are the epitome of a cross cutting citizen, the foundation on which all else relies. They support individuals across the spectrum. Their lives are impacted from across the spectrum. There is rarely a policy, strategy or funding stream, consultation, or service change that does not encompass an impact on some part of a Carers life, from transport, to public conveniences, refuse collections, to employment and employers, education, health and social care, leisure, tourism, environment and many more. Carers are in all communities, across all ages, across all sectors and would benefit from wider consideration under equality and diversity and impact assessment processes as a special category.

6.3 Whilst there are a number of national priorities for Carers, there is no formal Carers Strategy for Wales. This raises two opposing viewpoints that a) Carers are not seen as a national focus of attention that warrants a dedicated strategic policy, or alternatively b) Carers should be embedded in ALL WG strategies and explicitly referenced as a requirement to identify and report within that arena to mainstream, rather than a standalone strategy that risks short term attention from a narrow sector viewpoint.

6.4 Being mainstream within all strategies provides for long term sustainability of focus, however with the growing number of references to Carers across numerous initiatives from different sections of government (which is itself a positive), it is increasingly challenging to implement a whole system approach to deliver the cultural change required to embed Carers as core business for all sectors, without a central focus from which to connect the different requirements across all areas of policy. There is an inherent risk that the requirements fail to connect in similar language, monitoring and reporting terms. Validating the range of strategies and policies to have the same core Carer principles would assist sector specific activity to evidence a whole system implementation for Carers.

6.5 The Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care has also recently established a Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers to provide a cross sector response to the challenges faced by Carers and provide a national forum to target and monitor improvements within the three national priority areas. It is crucial that this membership can develop inclusivity from all geographical areas and partners across Wales; using Welsh Government offices as a technological hub would help ensure those at a distance successfully engage.