

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 3 NOVEMBER 2005

### SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE REPORT – THE FUTURE OF UNPAID CARE IN SCOTLAND

#### Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise members of the outcome of a research project into the future of unpaid care in Scotland as published in the above report.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 1991 census identified that there are in excess of 660,000 unpaid carers in Scotland with some 15,000 (12.5% of the population) of these resident in East Ayrshire. East Ayrshire Carers Centre which is core funded by the Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran to provide information, advice and support to carers has 4000 carers registered.

- 2.2 Unpaid carers provide a substantial amount of care to individuals who require it at no direct cost to the Council. Being a carer however, can have a significant impact upon an individual's health, employment, education, social and emotional life.

- 2.3 The report was commissioned by the 'Care 21' unit within the Social Work Services Policy Division of the Scottish Executive. The work was undertaken by the Office for Public Management (OPM) between October 2004 and August 2005.

- 2.4 OPM was commissioned to undertake the research with a view to:

- Pulling together thinking on how the situation for unpaid carers in Scotland can be improved; and
- Making recommendations to the Scottish Executive and other agencies as to how this could be achieved.

- 2.5 The project utilised and incorporated a range of research methods. These included:

- A review of existing research
- A household survey of 2000 members of the public
- A Survey of over 4000 carers
- A survey of over 1000 senior managers, policy makers and representatives of carers agencies
- An economic modelling tool
- A stakeholder Steering Group
- A project website
- A development of 'Future Scenarios'

### **3. SUMMARY FINDINGS**

3.1 The 4 areas identified by unpaid carers as those that would most improve their quality of life and which form important recommendations within the report are summarised below:

- Giving unpaid carers **the right to regular breaks** from caring and providing more and better quality respite options
- **Increasing the benefits** of people with support needs
- **Offering cash payments** rather than services so that unpaid carers can arrange care according to needs and preferences
- A greater emphasis on **information and training, advocacy, and guidance including emotional support**

3.2 A full list of the 22 recommendations is included in the appendix.

### **4. EAST AYRSHIRE POSITION**

4.1 East Ayrshire has been committed to supporting carers since its inception in 1996. The Council was one of the first to develop distinct Carers and Respite Care strategies both of which underpinned Community Care and Children's Service plans.

4.2 The implementation of both strategies led to significant investment in services both in-house and with external partner providers such as:

- Thorntoun Estate - The Elms – residential respite for adults
- NCH Action for Children - Lisalanna – residential respite for children with additional needs
- Carers Centre
- East Ayrshire Advocacy Services

4.3 In 2005 the East Ayrshire Joint Future Partnership endorsed new Carers and Advocacy strategies which involved carers, service users and other partner. These strategies acknowledge and anticipate many of the issues identified in the research.

### **5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no immediate policy or legal implications for the Council. The Scottish Executive is currently considering its response to the research. The findings of the research are also being examined by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work Review Group. Any policy or legal implications for the Council will become evident after these deliberations have taken place and any resultant action identified.

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Nil

## **7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Following the mid term review of the Eliminating Poverty Action Plan the substantive actions of the new Carers Strategy have been incorporated within the Action Plan.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 It is recommended that members:-

- (i) request the Director of Educational and Social Services to bring a further report to Social Work Committee when any implications for the Council have been identified by the Scottish Executive; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

**John Mulgrew**  
**Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**  
**09 October 2005**  
**Enc (1)**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. The future of unpaid care in Scotland: Scottish Executive\0PM, 2005

For further information please contact:  
Eddie Fraser, Senior Manager Community Care, telephone: 01563 554825

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY**

**Abridged Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1**

The Scottish Executive should develop a Carers' Rights Charter in Scotland.

**Recommendation 2**

A national forum representing the views of young carers be established and supported by a separate Young Carers Strategy.

**Recommendation 3**

A range of measures to enable greater control and choice (including shifting the balance of 'purchasing power' to carers and users) be fully explored by the Scottish Executive.

**Recommendation 4**

The development of a national 'expert carer' programme. This should include training for people to develop their own caring skills knowledge and expertise.

**Recommendation 5**

All frontline staff with direct responsibilities for supporting the needs of carers in 'first contact' agencies (local authorities, health and voluntary organisations) are properly equipped to advise unpaid carers about their rights entitlements and available services.

**Recommendations 6**

NHS Carer Information Strategies should be implemented as an early priority in all localities and that the requirements are extended to include local authorities.

**Recommendation 7**

Professional training for all health and social care staff should include a substantial component which relates to unpaid carers as partners in care, carers' needs and the diversity of the unpaid caring experience.

**Recommendation 8**

A greater role for carer representative organisations in the joint planning and development of care and other services (especially housing, leisure and transport) at national and local level.

### **Recommendation 9**

The Scottish Executive and other policy makers integrate the issues facing unpaid carers into their policy development and planning processes.

### **Recommendation 10**

Service providers ensure they meet the needs of the whole caring community, taking account of carers with special needs and the specific cultural and language needs of minority ethnic groups.

### **Recommendation 11**

The Scottish Executive continues to update the Carers' Strategy to incorporate the impact of demographic and social change and to plan for resourcing of future need.

### **Recommendation 12**

Carers' organisations should have a greater role in the inspection of local services that support unpaid carers and users.

### **Recommendation 13**

Local authorities should work with unpaid carers to develop person-centred life plans alongside the established carers' assessment process.

### **Recommendation 14**

The UK Government completes an early review on carers' benefit entitlements, tax credit and pensions with a particular focus on removing the barriers to work which are inherent in the way current financial arrangements are constructed.

### **Recommendation 15**

The UK Government should develop a national awareness campaign to ensure that employers of all sizes are made more aware of both their roles and their responsibilities towards carers, and the overall contribution of unpaid carers.

### **Recommendation 16**

The Scottish Executive, Local Authorities and NHS agencies along with partner agencies, focus strongly on the health and well-being of unpaid carers.

### **Recommendations 17**

Issues facing unpaid carers are given proper consideration when new technology is applied to caring situations.

**Recommendation 18**

Scotland's existing network of local carer support organisations is strengthened.

**Recommendation 19**

National carer organisations focus on their collective role as the 'voice of carers' and co-ordinate effectively their capacity in the planning development and monitoring of carer policy and support services.

**Recommendation 20**

As an urgent priority the Scottish Executive develops a national strategic framework with service providers to ensure unpaid carers are given a statutory entitlement to appropriate short breaks and breaks from caring.

**Recommendation 21**

The report's recommendations are incorporated into providers' performance management systems and progress monitored by the Scottish Executive and, where appropriate, relevant regulatory and inspection bodies.

**Recommendations 22**

Good policy must continue to be based on good research including reliable statistical evidence with attention to the diverse experiences of unpaid carers.