



Llywodraeth Cymru
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Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers Meeting: 17 May 2022

Minutes from the Carers' Ministerial Advisory Group Meeting
which took place on 17 May 2022.

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Attendees

- Rhiannon Ivens, Interim Chair - Deputy Director Inclusion and Corporate Business, Welsh Government.
- Julie Morgan, Deputy Minister for Social Services.
- Pennie Muir, Hywel Dda Health Board.
- Jon Day, Social Care Wales.
- Claire Morgan, Wales Carers Alliance.
- Simon Hatch, Wales Carers Alliance.
- Johanna Davies, West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board.
- Jenny Oliver, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board.
- Kate Young, Wales Carers Alliance.
- Jason Crowl, Powys Teaching Health Board.
- Valerie Billingham, Older People's Commissioner's Office.
- Diane Seddon, Bangor University.
- Alwyn Jones, ADSS, Wrexham Council.
- Natasha James, Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- Catrin Edwards, Carers Trust Wales.
- Kathy Proudfoot, Vice Chair of COLIN, Bridgend Council.
- Naheed Ashraf, Aneurin Bevan Health Board.
- Rachel Lewis, Head of UCOPRE Branch, Welsh Government.
- Ceri Griffiths, Senior Carers Policy Manager, Welsh Government.
- Ben O'Halloran, Carers Policy Officer, Welsh Government.

Apologies

- Kim Dolphin, Chair of the COLIN, Monmouthshire Council.
- Sean O'Neill, Children in Wales.
- Vanessa Webb, Swansea University.
- Cllr Jane Tremlett, Carmarthenshire Council.
- Anna Bird, Hywel Dda Health Board.

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Introductions

Rhiannon Ivens introduced herself as interim chair whilst the application process for the new independent chair is still ongoing. Officials have received one nomination to date.

Deputy Minister for Social Services

Members were sent a paper outlining some of the good practice examples from the £3m Respite Funding for 2021/22. The Deputy Minister highlighted a few of the projects.

- Bridgend “Try Something New” project gave 50 unpaid carers the chance to try out new hobbies and skills.
- Caerphilly gave over 100 unpaid carers a gym membership which provided additional benefits of improved physical and mental wellbeing through exercise.

An unpaid carer in the Vale of Glamorgan reported her referral gave her permission to “go out and be me” The Deputy Minister highlighted this as critical to providing support for unpaid carers as it gives them a chance to have a life alongside caring and to be themselves.

The Deputy Minister was pleased to announce £9m funding over the next 3 years for a short breaks scheme which will be coordinated by a third sector organisation working across the public and third sector.

The young carers ID project now has total coverage across Wales meaning any young carer aged up to 18 can apply for a card within their local authority. This project has been effectively coproduced between local authorities, Carers Trust Wales and Welsh Government. The Deputy Minister was pleased to hear that

local authorities are currently applying for funding in 2022/23 to continue the positive work.

At the Deputy Minister's virtual meeting with young carers from Pembrokeshire last week, she found that the young carers were very proud of their ID cards and told her how important the card was to them. The young carers also said how much they valued the activities and support made available by Action for Children (the local authority's commissioned service provider) in their area.

The Deputy Minister held a productive meeting with the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles. He was keen to stress the importance of the cross cutting work when it comes to supporting young carers in education and training. The issue of absenteeism was also a key topic in the discussions. Officials from the carers team and education team will be discussing action going forward.

Young Carers national ID Card

Many local authorities are highlighting in their end of year funding claim reports how they are looking at providing additional benefits with the national card. This has not been funded by Welsh Government directly as part of the project, but it has triggered activity in these areas. The national card is a tool for young carers and to help raise awareness amongst professionals. The local networking of the project is beginning to show some significant progress. Officials in SSID are making links with colleagues in Welsh Government departments to consider potential future developments for the ID card including education, sport and health, awareness raising amongst employers and training providers.

Carers Trust Wales will be working with local authorities on how to further promote the young carers ID card scheme in their areas.

In the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board there is a funded adult ID card scheme. The plan is to include similar benefits to those added on locally to the Young carer card. However, some young carers may not want to have the ID card so it is important to capture their feedback on the reasons for declining the card, which is voluntary.

Members highlighted the importance of the card in providing support for unpaid carers at the transition point between young adult carer and adult carer – age 18. It could also be considered as a supporting tool between education support currently available and the Carers Wales support for employers.

Action – a paper on good practice examples from local authorities operating the national young carers ID card will be circulated to MAG members for the next meeting.

Proposed Carers Register and next steps

Following the last meeting a working group was set up to explore the potential for a Carers Register. A note of this meeting was shared with MAG members.

Examples of how GPs and health boards are collecting data is being collated by officials. There are difficulties in sharing data within health boards as information about unpaid carers is stored across several codes in the health board IT systems, so unpicking that is a big challenge.

Action – Naheed will share the research she carried out with Public Health Wales on the NHS codes with officials.

A carers' census was also proposed to sit alongside the register, this would collate and then anonymise information taken from those who have carers' needs assessments. This would be a smaller data set but could still be used to

inform research and policy. These two elements could be progressed in parallel but take time to develop.

It was suggested that lessons could be learned from the process used by Public Health Wales to target groups for the vaccine rollout, especially if there is going to be a regular or annual Covid vaccination programme. This might be applied to a database for unpaid carers. There are the issues around data protection with this method, perhaps the consent forms would need to be changed to allow for the data to be used for a carers register in addition to being marked for repeated vaccinations.

Officials are meeting with colleagues in Digital Health and Care Wales about how they collect data to see if this could form the basis of a register and/or carers' census.

Carers Engagement Framework, Catrin Edwards

The Carers Engagement group was disbanded earlier this year with the view to create an engagement framework reaching a broader range of unpaid carers.

It was agreed that the framework is needed to reach unpaid carers from diverse and varied communities in a format that encourages less formal engagement. Four national meetings will be held looking at the Strategy for Unpaid Carers' four strategic priorities. Four events will be held in partnership with organisations that work with underrepresented groups. There will be visual minutes, quarterly written reports and an agenda item at each MAG meeting.

Action - Local authority and health board members offered to share their contacts with CTW for local groups working with ethnic minority communities in their areas.

Activity planned during Carers Week w/c 6th June, will include the first meeting under the new framework focusing on carer identification. There will be an event to hear directly from minoritised groups on 9th June and next event later this summer will be focusing on information, advice and assistance, followed by an event for Welsh speaking carers.

The meetings and events will be a mix of virtual and face to face. The point was raised that to collect information from ethnic minority communities it would be useful to have 1 to 1 interviews due to cultural reasons, or not wishing to share personal information in a group forum.

Action – Eventbrite invitations will be shared with officials to be disseminated among MAG members.

Funding has very recently been agreed for a young carer engagement framework which Carers Trust Wales will also be taking forward. Members agreed it would be good to have some young carers co-present an agenda item at a future MAG meeting.

Increase diversity of MAG membership

Members were happy to agree to unpaid carers being invited to join as members of the MAG.

Action – MAG members will send in suggestions on how the group membership can be diversified and made more representative.

The size of the group needs to be managed to prevent it becoming too unwieldy. Task and finish groups should be convened to take forward various parts of the delivery plan. Experts could be invited to speak at specific meetings rather than increase the entire membership of the MAG.

MAG meetings should be more closely aligned with the Delivery Plan.

Next Steps for the MAG

Action – A meeting will be arranged for further discussion on the MAG's work plan in the context of the national Carers' Delivery plan, and MAG membership.

Any of Business

Due to the cost of living crisis it is important to maintain links with policy leads supporting children in poverty as most young carers are at higher risk of financial hardship. The Bevan Foundation is collecting information on the factors affecting poverty in Wales.

Action – Kate Young will share the information from the Bevan Foundation will be collected ahead of the next MAG meeting.

The Charter for Unpaid Carers is being finalised with the plan to have it published during Carers Week in June.

Action - Claire Morgan requested an alteration to the previous MAG meeting minute. She will send by email to the secretariat.

Close of meeting

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