



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers Meeting: 8 December 2022

Minutes from the Carers' Ministerial Advisory Group Meeting
which took place on 8 December 2022.

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Attendees

- Julie Morgan, Deputy Minister for Social Services.
- Alwyn Jones, Chair of the MAG.
- Sean O'Neill, Children in Wales.
- Michael Mitchell, West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board.
- Kim Dolphin, Chair of COLIN, Monmouthshire Council.
- Dr Vanessa Webb, Swansea University.
- Marie Davies, Powys Health Board.
- Jon Day, Social Care Wales.
- Claire Morgan, Wales Carers Alliance / Carers Wales.
- Dr Catrin Edwards, Carers Trust Wales.
- Jenny Oliver, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board.
- Valerie Billingham, Older People's Commissioner's Office.
- Kathy Proudfoot, Vice Chair of COLIN, Bridgend Council.
- Naheed Ashraf, Aneurin Bevan Health Board.
- Rachel Lewis, Welsh Government, Head of UCOPRE Branch.
- Ceri Griffiths, Welsh Government, Senior Policy Manager.
- Ben O'Halloran, Welsh Government, Policy officer (Secretariat).
- Carol Mooney, Welsh Government, Cabinet Office (observing).
- Jane Tremlett, Carmarthenshire Council.
- Naomi Harper, Flintshire Council.
- Dr Tim Banks, Carers Trust Wales (guest speaker).

Apologies

- Dr Diane Seddon, Bangor University.
- Anna Bird, Hywel Dda Health Board.
- Pennie Muir, Hywel Dda Health Board.
- Simon Hatch, Wales Carers Alliance / Carers Trust Wales.
- Rhiannon Ivens, Welsh Government, Deputy Director Inclusion and

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Corporate Business.

- Kate Young, Wales Carers Alliance / All Wales Forum.

Deputy Minister for Social Services

The Deputy Minister praised the group for its work on expanding the membership to include unpaid carers and she looked forward to meeting the reps when they have been selected.

Carers Rights Day took place on the 24th November, marking an important time of the year to put unpaid carers in the spotlight. The Deputy Minister met with unpaid carers and attended the launch of the Welsh and English promotional materials for the Carers UK Jointly App.

Third sector reports published to mark Carers Rights Day highlighted the ongoing financial pressures unpaid carers are experiencing and the need for breaks away from their caring role.

Welsh Government has made significant progress with the Short Breaks Fund and the Carers Support Fund is now open - the Deputy Minister encouraged members to raise awareness of this important avenue of support.

The Charter for Unpaid Carers will be a key tool in ensuring unpaid carers understand their rights. In the upcoming months members will be asked to help disseminate this document amongst their networks. Awareness raising with Directors of Social Services, RPB leads and teams across Welsh Government has already begun.

There is planning underway in Powys to conduct research on coproduction with unpaid carers on how to implement the charter in the area.

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Action – Officials will meet with Marie Davies (Powys THB) to discuss her research proposal on co-production and charter implementation.

Experiences of unpaid carers from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, Dr Tim Banks

The Carers Trust Wales report on experiences of unpaid carers from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities was shared ahead of the meeting.

There will be a roundtable on 18 January. It will bring carers and professionals together to consider practical ways to take forward the recommendations.

Feedback from members

The recently updated Welsh Government Anti Racism Action Plan will be important in the work to support minority ethnic unpaid carers going forward.

People from diverse backgrounds often find themselves spending time educating a service provider on their cultural background and do not end up discussing what support they need and what is available.

The group agreed this report's findings should be considered in the updated version of the delivery plan.

It was suggested the MAG makes links with Eyst and the WG working group considering issues relating to stigma.

Action – the Chair offered to write to the chair of the Welsh Government's Anti Racist Action Plan working group regarding links around health, service provision and unpaid carers.

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Update on Unpaid Carers Delivery Plan and discussion

The delivery plan template, which will form the basis of the annual report, was sent round to members ahead of the meeting. The current version is a table used as a high level tracking document to assess progress made against the delivery plan objectives.

This agenda item was used to get a steer from members on where the work needs to be focussed on developing the annual report document for publication in spring 2023 (following approval by the DMSS).

It will also discuss the drafting of the second iteration of the delivery plan which will refresh the current list of actions beneath the national priorities. The refreshed delivery plan with any new actions relating to specific policy areas and any financial commitments will have to be agreed by ministers in advance of publication of the refreshed Carers delivery plan.

The key audience will be ministers, Senedd members and key stakeholders across the public, third and private sectors but the document must also be presented in way that it can be read and understood by unpaid carers.

The table format is good however it was proposed that a summary version could also be published to highlight progress or clarify actions which have been delivered.

It was agreed by members that this work should be discussed in greater detail in a task and finish group in the new year.

Action – Secretariat will set a date for a task and finish group meeting to discuss the delivery plan template in January.

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A specific point noted was that young carers struggle to find time to carry out the voluntary work that is required as a part of the Welsh Baccalaureate. It was suggested that perhaps the volunteering criteria be broadened to allow caring to count as voluntary work.

Action – Welsh Baccalaureate falls under the responsibility of the Education minister. CG confirmed she will pass the members views to officials.

Update on Carers Engagement Framework, Dr Catrin Edwards

4 engagement events have been held since the last MAG meeting. The quarterly report is currently being written which will be shared with MAG members. Events included an online event for adult carers and one in Mold for male carers. These all focussed on Priority 3 – supporting carers to have a life alongside caring as in respite.

Common feedback from the events:

- there is no common understanding of what a break is
- getting a break is referred to as a “postcode lottery”
- getting a carers’ needs assessment is important
- issues around breaks and the availability of paid workforce

Male carers stressed the importance of peer support, interdependence of formal care and family support, and the need for information on available breaks.

There was an online event held for young carers and two held in person at Llandrindod Wells and Merthyr Tydfil.

Mental health and wellbeing support in schools was noted as the biggest point of concern for young carers. Those that attended said they wanted:

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- dedicated young carers leads in schools
- school pledges or award systems
- time and space for young carers in school
- mandatory awareness training for teachers
- improved identification

In the Aneurin Bevan region (SE Wales), the young carers in schools programme delivered by the Care Collective is very successful. However mandatory young carer awareness training is not included in teaching undergraduate studies or new teacher qualification requirements.

Officials confirmed initial teacher training falls under the education portfolio. Relevant officials in Welsh Government will need to be approached for discussion. It is not possible to add education related actions to the Welsh Government carers delivery plan without formal agreement from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language.

Training is listed in the Estyn framework for pre inspection so perhaps it could be reinforced more. CG confirmed she will be meeting with an Estyn official next week to discuss the approach taken regarding young carers.

In the new year, following discussion and agreement with Welsh Government's student finance branch officials, there will be a focus on raising awareness on the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and other financial support available for young carers and young adult carers.

The Deputy Minister will attend a Young Carers Action Day event at a venue in Cardiff Bay. Further details will be agreed with Carers Trust Wales closer to the date in March. The topics for discussion will be the EMA and Young Person's Guarantee.

Update from T and F group on expanding MAG

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membership to discuss and agree proposal

Unpaid carer reps

Members were updated on steps to expand the membership, agreed at a recent T and F group meeting held on 17 November. Third sector reps will be asked to disseminate the agreed role description to unpaid carers and to support the unpaid carer reps once they have been selected. There will be a maximum of 2-3 unpaid carers selected to join the group. If there are more than 3 applications criteria for assessment will be developed. The unpaid carers who sit on this group will not be expected to represent the views of all carers. This follows the template established for the carer reps on regional partnership boards.

Members agreed the role description and next steps.

Local authority reps

It was agreed by the MAG that the proposed 7 additional COLIN members would be too many to join existing members. These reps would be unable to represent the necessary strategic level of engagement for the group.

KD fed back on the recent meeting of the COLIN where MAG membership was discussed. The key feedback was the need for Welsh language representation on the MAG.

It was agreed by members that more senior management level local authority reps should be approached and asked to join. Suggestions were for Gwynedd, Anglesey, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion local authorities. Representatives

from these areas could provide improved Welsh language awareness and feedback for the group.

Action – Officials will draw up options for approaching and requesting additional members from the aforementioned local authorities. These will be sent to MAG members for feedback.

It was discussed that if the MAG clarifies its role and action and communicates that to the various networks that members represent, this can enable views to be fed in, rather than adding to the existing MAG membership.

Register for unpaid carers

Officials met with Welsh Government colleagues to discuss the feasibility of a carers register. As discussed previously, carers share their data for a specific purpose e.g. vaccination. More carers have registered their status with their GP. However, every carer would have to be contacted to seek their agreement to sharing of their personal data for it to be held by a carer register. A reply from Welsh Government was recently sent to the chair of the Senedd Petitions Committee which has asked about a register.

Given the ongoing cost of living crisis and social care pressures the Unpaid Carers team has been focussed on financial support - the £500 carer payment activity, and the new short breaks support for unpaid carers. Considerable funding resource would be required for a register and there is no available funding to take forward a register at this time. Officials will continue to explore options in the future.

Annex A: links shared in online chat

Jointly App promotional video - [Jointly - care together from anywhere](#) -

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YouTube

Jointly App promotional videos in Welsh

Carers Support fund - **Carers Support Fund Wales Programme - Carers Trust**

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