



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Ministerial Advisory Group Unpaid Carers Meeting: 18 October 2022

Minutes from the Unpaid Carers' Ministerial Advisory Group Meeting which took place on 18 October 2022.

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- 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 (new).
- Kim Dolphin, Chair of COLIN, Monmouthshire Council.
- Angela Hughes, Cardiff and Vale Health Board.
- Dr Vanessa Webb, Swansea University.
- Pennie Muir, Hywel Dda Health Board.
- Marie Davies, Powys Health Board.
- Jon Day, Social Care Wales.
- Claire Morgan, Wales Carers Alliance / Carers Wales.
- Simon Hatch, Wales Carers Alliance / Carers Trust Wales.
- Catrin Edwards, Carers Trust Wales.
- Jenny Oliver, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board.
- Valerie Billingham, Older People's Commissioner's Office.
- Nicola Hale, Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- Kathy Proudfoot, Vice Chair of COLIN, Bridgend Council.
- Naheed Ashraf, Aneurin Bevan Health Board.
- Elizabeth Flowers, Children's Commissioner's Office.
- Rachel Lewis, Welsh Government, Head of UCOPRE Branch.
- Ceri Griffiths, Welsh Government, Senior Policy Manager.
- Ben O'Halloran, Welsh Government, Policy Officer (Secretariat).

Apologies

- Anna Bird, Hywel Dda Health Board.
- Rhiannon Ivens, Deputy Director, Inclusion and Corporate Business, Welsh Government.
- Dr Diane Seddon, Bangor University.

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Introductions

Alwyn Jones, Head of Social Services at Wrexham Council introduced himself as the new independent chair of the group appointed by the Deputy Minister. The DMSS then spoke on a number of topics covered in the meeting agenda.

The Charter for Unpaid Carers was launched on the 27th September and the Deputy Minister thanked members of this group and the unpaid carers who helped develop the document. This document will support carers to understand and access their rights whilst the good practice examples will help professionals to deliver services.

Funding for carers and cost of living

Welsh Government has taken the following action:

- £500 one off Carer payment to unpaid carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance. 78% of carers who qualify for the payment have made a successful claim to date with some claims still being processed.
- £4.5m of funding for continuation of the Carers Support Fund over three years (2022-25). This scheme has helped 10,000 carers over the first two years with many previously unknown to services.
- £9m in funding over 3 years (2022-25) for the new Short Breaks Scheme.

Respite / Short Breaks Fund

The Short Breaks Fund is a landmark scheme with ringfenced parameters so the impact of spending on unpaid carers can be monitored and to ensure there is no substitution across other funding streams. RL confirmed a funding stream diagram and paper have been prepared and will be shared with RPB

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representatives at their next RPB co-ordination meeting in November.

The first year of funding is focussed on the RPB allocations and facilitating their activity in Q3 and Q4. In year two (23-24) the larger competitive third sector stream will become operational.

Action – Secretariat to circulate Simon Hatch Short Breaks Fund PowerPoint slides. All MAG members are asked NOT to circulate the information to any party outside of the MAG membership or discuss given ongoing planning and financial conversations with RPBs, Welsh Government officials.

Young Carers ID Card, Next steps

A short paper had been circulated to the members prior to the meeting which provided background information, including the core remit of the card.

Given the different operational systems and resources in each area some local authorities launched and began delivery of the national ID card ahead of others. The card has been available across all of Wales since April 2022.

All local authorities agreed at the start of the national project to deliver the core objective of the national ID card. Welsh Government funds cannot be used to obtain or deliver discounts. Local authorities have pursued opportunities at a local level as part of their wider offer to support young carers. Any discounts negotiated at the local level are heavily dependent on the local authorities' own financial resources and staff capacity.

KD advised that no discounts have been applied in Monmouthshire. The work has focussed solely on increasing awareness of the ID card in schools and pharmacies. Negotiating discounts at a local level is labour intensive and it is a challenge to manage and deliver the ID card.

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CTW and the Children's Commissioner have found the cost of public transport is a key issue for young carers. Officials asked for the support of MAG members to help promote the existing My Travel Pass scheme. This offers up to a third off bus ticket prices for young people aged 16-21.

Welsh Government officials continue to discuss the feasibility of a national discount being attached to the ID card. The chair clarified existing local discounts will remain the choice and responsibility of each local authority. Future activity by all will focus on building awareness of the national ID card and supporting culture change amongst professionals e.g. in schools, as a priority.

It was suggested that conversations are held with national business organisations to see if private sector businesses will provide different types of discounts for young carers.

Engagement Framework update, Carers Trust Wales

Two national online meetings were held in Carers Week in June. One focussed on BME communities with a second engagement activity at the National Eisteddfod. The feedback from the carers was discussed and is identified in detail within the CTW report circulated ahead of the meeting. The biggest issues were around financial pressures and accessing support. Activity is also taking place as part of the young carer engagement work with views being sought at the national Young Carers festival and a meeting in July with the DMSS and Education and Welsh Language Minister.

CE confirmed anonymised demographic data is collected on all those who participate in the meetings. Data can therefore be analysed to check engagement with different age groups. CE will meet with VB to discuss.

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Action – Secretariat will share the Carers Trust Wales slides on the Engagement activity.

Expansion of the Carers MAG membership

The Deputy Minister wishes to add unpaid carers to the membership of the advisory group. Some members of the MAG are unpaid carers as well as sitting in their professional capacity and could potentially offer a “dual voice”.

Members from local councils and local health boards described how they involved unpaid carers in some of their strategic groups. Members agreed that the unpaid carers invited to join will need to be supported and well briefed on agenda items. Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales confirmed they are happy to support unpaid carers in this regard.

Action – A task and finish group to be established with volunteers from the MAG to consider and provide advice as to how new unpaid carer members can be added to the current membership.

Topics for discussion at December MAG meeting

Members agreed on the following points to be addressed by the Deputy Minister at the next MAG meeting: What is the broader budget picture from Welsh Government’s perspective, what has changed? What is the Welsh Government’s policy position on hospital discharge?

Any other business

It was agreed future MAG meetings will be structured around updates from officials and members on work in support of the Carers Delivery Plan. All

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members will be asked to supply the secretariat with information about their organisation / represented network activity in the next 3-4 weeks. This will be incorporated into the drafting of the first annual progress report of the Carers Delivery Plan. The initial draft will be presented for discussion at the next MAG meeting in December. Other points addressed were:

- Members asked to be notified by secretariat of dates of any key carer publications or statements prior to release so they can prepare for queries from stakeholders.
- Carers register - officials are progressing this action and have arranged another meeting with Welsh Government / DCHW colleagues.
- A carers conference is being held in Powys on 25th November. It is an open invitation and members were told they can contact Marie Davies for an invitation.
- The Children's Commissioner's national survey to inform the commissioner's 3 year forward work plan is now live. (The links were shared post meeting by MAG secretariat).

£1m Carers grant funding reporting

CG will contact SSID colleagues regarding the format for LHBs / RPBs reporting of the £1m ring fenced carers allocation and whether the 28th October mid-year reporting deadline can be pushed back. (Action completed – email circulated on 21 October 2022).

RL confirmed the Charter for Unpaid Carers, now published, is not a living document so the text will not change. There will be further discussion of communications to help highlight and raise awareness of the charter.

The Chair proposed a face to face meeting in the spring if members wish to do so. Location to be determined.

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Close of meeting

The next MAG meeting is on 8th December, 10:00 – 11:30.

Annex A: links shared in online chat

Carers Wales distributes free Carer Emergency Cards, so carers can confirm who to contact in case of emergency - [Caring and emergencies - Carers UK](#).

Carers Wales have created a Money Matters up on their website. There is lots of information and advice for carers on benefits, grants, help with bills etc. on [Money Matters Hub - Carers UK](#).

Carers UK has today published a new report regarding the unprecedented financial hardship that carers are facing in [Cost of living crisis - Carers UK](#).

Welsh Government also has a website containing information on support to help with the Cost of Living - [Get help with the cost of living | GOV.WALES](#).

[Social Care Wales accolades](#) are now open and for the first time there is a carers category - reflecting the work of social care workers and social workers with carers.

At the Carers Summit earlier this year carers gave their feedback and made a number of recommendations [Carers Wales: Carers Summit 2022 - Carers UK](#).

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