

## **Carer Benefit Advisory Group – Meeting 5**

**3 November 2016 - St Andrew's House, Edinburgh**

### **Minutes**

#### **Present**

Ellen Searle, Scottish Government (Chair)  
Fiona Collie, Carers Scotland  
Heather Noller, Carers Trust  
Paul Traynor, Carers Trust  
Nicola Dickie, COSLA  
David Formstone, Social Work Scotland  
Rosin Connolly, Highland Carers Centre  
Peggy Winford, SG Carers Branch  
Alison Leighton, Scottish Government  
Liz Davidson, Scottish Government  
Dawn Abell, Scottish Government

#### **Apologies**

Carole Jones, Social Work, Falkirk  
Ian McPhee, Stirling Carers Centre  
Suzanne Munday, MECOPP  
Trish Brady Campbell, Scottish Government

#### **Welcome and introductions**

1) The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular new members Roisin Connolly, Centre Manager at Highland Carers Centre and Alison Leighton, Scottish Government.

#### **Minutes of previous meeting**

2) No comments were received from members and the minutes were agreed.

#### **Update on wider context**

3) Michael Russell has been appointed as the Scottish Government's new Minister with responsibility for Brexit negotiations with the UK government. There was a section regarding the impact of leaving the EU in the Programme for Government.

4) The first meeting of the Carers Act Implementation Team was held on 29 September and a high level implementation plan produced, which would be published listing priorities going forward. Several working groups were underway looking at regulations, terminal illness, adult support plans and the young carer plan. The commencement date for the Act was 1 April 2018.

5) An update was provided on the Disability Benefits Advisory Commission (subsequently announced by Ministers as the Disability and Carer Benefit Advisory Group) which would be up and running in the next few months, and members provided views on the plans.

6) The Scottish Government was working with DWP colleagues to look at the feasibility of implementing payment of the Scottish Government's increase to Carer's Allowance before the new social security agency was established. The Scottish Government was committed to doing it as soon as practically possible.

### **Social Security Consultation (paper 7/2016)**

7) The Chair thanked everyone involved for their input and hard work around the consultation process and for hosting many of the events that were held up and down the country. The responses were now being considered and the Scottish Government would publishing an analysis of the responses in early 2017.

8) Paper CBAG 7/2016 was introduced. Its purpose was two-fold a) to help facilitate a 'pre-mortem' workshop which would help identify the challenging issues, draw out priorities, and actions to address them and b) to seek learning's from the consultation process.

9) Before breaking into groups to discuss a) and b) above, there was a useful discussion around the key themes which came up at the events members were involved in. These are set out below.

- Changing the earnings threshold and the rules around education in the Carer's Allowance were viewed as a priority.
- When considering changes to Carer's Allowance, wider support for carers such as concessionary travel and other non-financial asks e.g. leisure passes, travel; short-breaks should be considered, as well as other benefits such as Funeral Payments and Cold Weather Payments.
- Mixed views on alternatives to cash payments, perhaps because it was difficult at this stage to give concrete examples of what was on offer.
- Any action on Carer's Allowance should consider how it would help reduce inequality.
- Confusion from young carers about who the proposed Young Carer's Allowance was aimed at (age and eligibility). Feedback from parents was strongly against any form of cash payment especially for under 16's and this was supported by members of the advisory group. Young carers wanted more leisure activities, short-breaks and concessionary travel. Additional support should be linked to the Carers Scotland Act 2016.

10) Members split into two groups to complete the a) pre-mortem; and b) learning's exercises. On a) several challenging issues were highlighted in the form of a "make believe newspaper headline" relating to young carers, pensioners and the cost of caring and members set out action to mitigate them. On b) members were very positive about the engagement with the SG in terms of contributing to the draft consultation document but also support to run events. Improvements suggested

included a consultation document targeted specifically at young people and making the cross-cutting material more user friendly. The key points are set out at **Annex A** and would inform future policy development and consultations.

### **Working Groups (paper CBAG 8/206)**

11) The Payment Rules working group had met twice and were looking at the rules around why Carer's Allowance stops and starts once in payment. Some evidence had been collected to date and a final paper giving recommendations would be produced before the next main advisory group meeting on 14 December.

12) The Evidence Review group held its initial meeting where it undertook a knowledge mapping exercise. The group were now looking at evidence from the UK, EU and wider afield to identify areas of good practice. The Scottish Government would shortly be recruiting a social researcher to conduct a review of the existing evidence base for financial payments for unpaid carers comparing across countries where possible.

13) Since the announcement of a Young Carer's Allowance by the First Minister, a working group had been set up and its first meeting was scheduled for 9 November. The group would consider the findings from the mapping exercise which had looked at the existing financial and non-financial support and the evidence base to help identify any gaps in provision. David Formstone suggested that someone who could represent children and young people would add value to the group and members agreed.

### **Round Up and AOB**

14) An 'Alpha project' was underway to develop thinking on the new computerised system for the Scottish social security agency. Cross-cutting/cross-border issues were being considered as part of the DWP feasibility study into early payment of the increase to Carer's Allowance.

15) The Group agreed it would hold meetings in January, February and April 2017, where possible, to progress policy development in light of the consultation analysis and to meet the legislative timetable.

<b>Action by whom</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Notes</b>
SG (Ill health and disability unit)	To set up monthly meetings, where possible for 2017	Completed
SG (carer branch)	To issue Carer Act implementation information	
David Formstone(DF) /SG	DF to identify a representative from the Children and Families sector for the Young Carer's Allowance working group and SG to contact them	
SG (Ill health and disability)	Use key findings from workshop on pre-mortem to feed into policy	

unit)	development	
SG (Ill health and disability unit)	Feedback consultation learning's to other social security colleagues	