

Communications Strategy – Priorities

Introduction and background

1. This paper builds on the draft Communications Strategy considered at the Carers Act Implementation Steering Group on 23 January 2017. As highlighted in that paper, there is a need to identify priority actions to make the best use of our shared resources in extending understanding of the effects of the Act.

2. This paper therefore proposes a timeline/programme of actions to be taken at a national level, noting in particular the Scottish Government's main role as mentioned in the January draft strategy and the need for local partners (both statutory and third sector) to determine their own actions and priorities:

The Scottish Government will need to work closely with our delivery partners to achieve successful communications with our target audiences. The key role of SG will be to produce core information and key messages about the Act and its implementation. This is intended to both facilitate communications at the national level, and to support local communications activities which health and social care partnerships and others may wish to undertake. A key role of our national and local delivery partners will be to tailor and adapt this information for local circumstances or specific target audiences and to use their existing networks and a diverse range of media to communicate these messages.

3. As also noted in the January paper, there is no intention to conduct a national media campaign. Instead, key actions include:

- Establishing and maintaining a single source of information, guidance, timelines etc. on SG website for carers and professionals;
- Developing a core script of simple, key messages for use by national and local organisations for communication with carers and staff;
- Ministerial communications through speeches and PR.

4. This is intended to be a rolling programme of activities, regularly updated as things progress. See also separate 'Summary of Action' paper (ref. 03/01) for completed actions. All the actions identified so far are for the Scottish Government.

5. As well as offering feedback on the attached programme, **Implementation Steering Group members are asked to help identify national level actions they will prioritise, to be added into the programme.**

Peter Stapleton

**Carers Policy - Care, Support and Rights Division – Scottish Government
May 2017**

Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 – Communications Timeline

When	Action	Audience	Notes
Ongoing	Speaking at and participating in events	All stakeholders including workforce	Already happening- e.g. in March, CoCIS event in Glasgow, South Lanarkshire Carers Network, Falkirk workshop for practitioners and service planners
April	Letter on implementation funding and planning, including when to expect regulations and guidance	Integration Authorities; Local Authorities; NHS Boards; Chief Social Work Officers; Heads of Education; Carers Leads	Issued
April onwards	Relevant Ministerial speeches and SG media releases on carers issues to include standard messages trailing the Act	All audiences	e.g. end April Parliamentary debate on carers and social care; May, Scottish Care conference. News releases also to direct people to webpage.
April/May	Meetings: Education Scotland, GTC and SCIS	Internal	To scope how best to communicate and with whom to highlight how the Act affects young carers and carers of children and those responsible for them. Include communications channels and Ministerial opportunities.
May	Refresh SG Carers Act webpage http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Unpaid-Carers/CarersBill	All audiences, including carers and professionals	Main hub for basic information. Simple summary of main effects of the Act with hyperlinks to additional resources as they become available including more detailed section-by-section summary, consultation, regulations, guidance etc. Update web address from 'CarersBill'.
May	Put widgets in email signatures to promote refreshed SG Carers website	Mainly professionals but open to all.	
May onwards	SG Twitter account to highlight new resources as they are placed on the webpage	Mainly professionals but open to all.	Mainly benefits 3 rd sector organisations and carers as most LA/NHS staff can't access Twitter at work.
May	Timeline for guidance, regulations, pilots and implementation to be published on website and e-mailed to key contacts	Mainly professionals and carer organisations but open to all.	
May	Develop short core script trailing the Act for SG policy colleagues speaking at events	Care groups, carers, professionals	Similar to standard messages in Ministerial speeches

For discussion – can be shared

**ISG Meeting 3
Paper 03/05**

May-June	Simple script of key messages (to be agreed) for use by national and local organisations for communication with carers and with staff.	Carers and workforce	Messages capable of being adapted for local use in leaflets, staff briefings etc. Include comms advice and suggestions for partner organisations to supplement key messages. Disseminate via e-mail to professional and NCO contacts and organisations for cared-for groups
June	Toolkit checklist for implementation to e-mailed to key contacts in public bodies.	Professionals	
June	Draft guidance on most aspects of the Act to support pilots	Mainly professionals in pilot areas	E-mailed to pilot areas (possibly also to other professional contacts as drafts).
June to August (tbc)	Consult on draft regulations on review of ACSP/YCS; describing breaks from caring; short breaks services statements. Possibly also Carers Charter.	Open public consultation	Highlight through e-mailing and Twitter
August	Entry in Inclusion E-bulletin	Education Professionals	Short para linking to website and trailing changes relevant to young carers.
October or November	Meeting Additional Support Managers network and Additional Support for Learning Officers	Education professionals	To discuss implications for young carers.
November	Carers Rights Day	All audiences	Opportunity to trail Act 'coming soon' in media release or social media activity.
December	Publish final guidance	Mainly professionals but open to all	Place on website. Notify LA, IJB, NHS and 3 rd sector contacts – including Education professionals.
2 April 2018	Commencement Ministerial photo-op and news release	All audiences	Suggestions for where? Ideally jointly with COSLA and NCOs.
April 2018	Update key messages on website, and for Ministerial and official speeches to reflect commencement	All audiences	
Consider opportunities to highlight progress post-implementation: maybe '1 year on'; or for carers week (June) or carers rights day.			