

Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities “A caring system on your side. A life of your own” (Department of Health, June 2008)

Introduction

Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities sets out the Government’s vision for carers and the actions required to achieve over the next 10 years to make the vision a reality. By 2018, carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities. Support will be tailored to meet individual’s needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, while enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen.

By 2018:

- Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role
- Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role
- Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role
- Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity
- Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the Every Child Matters outcomes

Making this a reality requires changes and attention on issues including breaks, income, information and advice, the workplace, access to employment, emotional support, the health of carers and the specific needs of young carers.

Short term changes will begin this year and will be implemented over the next 3 years. Longer term priorities have also been identified – timescales for implementation are yet to be developed.

Underlying the Government’s approach is a recognition of the need to get the services right for the person being supported – if these are not right, then both the individual and the family are affected.

Chapter 1: Challenges, roles and responsibilities

In setting the agenda for the next 10 years, the strategy tackles one of the key issues facing society today – how to establish the parameters and responsibilities for providing care for the growing number of people who need support, while taking account of an individual's needs and being realistic about what is appropriate for statutory services to provide.

The strategy focuses on personalised services and provides the framework to improve the support that carers receive to enable them to maintain a balance between the provision of care and a healthy life outside of caring.

In setting the framework for the future, the strategy recognises the duties and responsibilities of the state to ensure they are properly and fairly discharged. However, there are limitations to what the state can do and an understanding is needed of where the role of the family, the individual and wider society begins. Any realistic solution to the challenge of improving carers' lives must recognise that the individual, family and state must work in partnership.

The role of the family: the challenge is balancing the increase in the number of people needed care and the ready availability of those friends and family members able and willing to provide it.

The role of government: government has a key role in improving the health and well-being of carers and those that they support. This is also true of mainstream statutory services. The Government should do those things that only government can, including:

- Providing leadership – establish a framework to ensure statutory services are of a good standard and are designed to meet the needs of carers
- Monitoring the implementation – of the commitments set out in the strategy
- Setting overall objectives – and agreeing key principles to enable local statutory agencies to design services that best meet the needs of local populations
- Helping to join up services – ensuring that supporting carers is not the responsibility of one local agency

The role of wider society: wider society must recognise the vital role played by carers and their invaluable support to individuals and society as a whole. Professionals who provide services to the cared for should recognise the carer as an expert and they should be consulted as partners in care and their unique knowledge and expertise recognised. Employers have a key role to play in recognising the contribution carers can make to the economy and the workplace.

The role of the individual: the individual must recognise that caring for a family member, friend or partner is one of the key responsibilities we all potentially face as part of family life. An expectation that family and friends will always be willing to

support those in need must be accompanied by assistance and recognition from the state and wider community.

Chapter 2: Integrated and personalised services

Vision: carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role

Services across the board must be fit for purpose in supporting carers. Services must be sensitive to the needs of people from all sectors and groups within society and must reflect local diversity within communities. Carers have their own specific needs but very often their lives will be improved if services are better tailored to the needs of the people they care for. The needs of carers should not be seen in isolation from the people they care for.

The various agencies responsible for providing care and support should work effectively. The carer should not have to piece together support from many 'suppliers' who seem very often to be working against each other and against the carer. Delivery of the vision will be characterised by carers feeling that not only are services working, but they are 'on their side'. The move to greater personalisation across the public sector and in particular adult social care, should support this ambition.

The vision can be achieved by delivering greater integration between services, greater personalisation of services for carers and by empowering and enabling carers through better information and training.

Integrated Services

Key to achieving greater integration of services is the use of more effective holistic assessment which enables the person cared for and their carer to identify their needs and how their own outcomes will be best met. In some circumstances it will be important for carers to have their own individual assessment. Such assessment will be supported by the development of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for adults, to share relevant information between agencies and encourage close working between the council, NHS, other statutory agencies and the Third Sector. The CAF will encourage self assessment for carers and the people they support and ensure that this is placed at the heart of outcome based assessments, in which the carer, the person they support and professionals work together on future care and support plans. CAF will encourage joined up working between services through appropriate sharing of information, facilitating both self and professional assessment to ensure that the best possible support is given to carers in their caring role while respecting the wishes of the people they support.

Health and social care

Carers have often been seen as a social care issue alone and it has sometimes been difficult to engage the NHS in providing them with support.

To encourage partnership working between health, social care and the Third sector the strategy **commits to running pilots over the next 3 years to look at ways in which primary care trusts can better support carers. The pilots will seek to enshrine good practice such as:**

- **Actively involving carers in diagnoses, care and discharge planning**
- **Providing greater support for carers at GP practices and acute trusts**
- **Working in partnership with local authorities and the third sector to provide flexible support for carers**

The Third Sector

Many carers prefer to deal with third sector organisations than with statutory services. These services play a vital role in supporting carers and in supporting carers to influence the design and delivery of mainstream services and support.

In recognition of this, **government is committing funding over the next 3 years to build capacity in the sector both at a national and local level.**

Workforce

The workforce needs to give carers the recognition they deserve through treating them as expert partners in care. There are issues about the quality and suitability of the replacement care being offered to carers. If carers are to be able to take a break and combine paid employment with caring, they must have confidence in the quality and competence of those that will be replacing them. The workforce needs to reflect the diversity of those needing care. Enabling the workforce to better support the carer and person they support is key to success of the strategy.

The social care workforce is vital in enabling and achieving the social care transformation agenda set out in the strategy. The adult social care workforce strategy will set out the implications of Putting People First for the workforce. There is a particular focus on the workforce involving carers as experts and partners in care, in addition to putting carers together with service users at the centre of service provision. The workforce strategy is investing over £130 million in the development of the adult social care workforce and a major part of the workforce's role is to support self care, which relates to the 7 Common Core Principles to Support Self Care.

A greater awareness of carers and the particular issues that they face is needed not only by health and social care but by professionals working across the piece. They need training so that they can provide information and services that carers need to support them in their caring role. To this effect, **government is investing in training a range of professionals in local authorities to support carers more effectively in their day to day dealings with them and when making commissioning decisions at a local level. The training will also bring professional together in their local area, facilitating more joined up service provision on a micro level providing major benefits to carers.**

Personalised services

The new approach of personalisation shifts the balance away from just professionals making decisions to a recognition that people should be active citizens rather than passive recipients of support.

Direct payments help to deliver personalised care and support and can benefit carers by giving them and the cared for flexibility to purchase tailored services. Direct payments are not the only solution and Putting People First introduced personal budgets. Personal budgets allow for better outcomes for the person being supported and the carer as they have choice and control over what services best meet their needs. This outcome based approach sets the direction of travel across government and recognises the mutual relationship between the carer and the person they support. **In the longer term, government will consider extending flexibility in the way personal budgets and direct payments can be used.**

Empowering and enabling carers

Easy access to comprehensive and up to date information at the right time is fundamental in supporting carers. Assisting carers in their caring role by meeting their need for information reflects one of the central tenets of the personalisation agenda.

A key component of the New Deal for Carers is the provision of an information service. It will provide, via a website and a single national telephone number, easy access to the comprehensive range of information needed by carers. Carers will be helped by the service directly and through signposting to other services that are more appropriate to their needs. £2.775 million per year is available to fund the service. This will be in place by Spring 200

There is still more that can be done – in addition to a national source of information, carers have identified a clear need for personalised, targeted information which will reduce some of the difficulties they face.

To enhance the service offered by the advice line and information provision as a whole, government are committing funding over the next 2 years to help ensure the provision of information is comprehensive, easy to access and up to date about services available in each carers local area.

Carers Training

Carers often come into their role unexpectedly and have to take on a range of responsibilities for which they may not be adequately prepared. **In recognition of this, government are establishing Caring with Confidence, a training programme for carers. This will build on existing training, empowering and enabling carers to enhance their own well-being and that of the people they care for. The training will be available on a face to face basis from August 2008 and on distance learning from December 2008. £4.6 million per year is available to fund the programme.**

Longer term measures

Government will:

- **Explore possibilities around enabling carers, no matter where they live, to access specialist carers' services which can support them in a way that suits them.**
- **Where appropriate, consider offering carers, with significant needs, a lead professional to help carers access services and to ensure early intervention when circumstances change**

Short Term Commitments

- Training and awareness raising for key professionals
- A carers information helpline and website
- Funding for accessible information provision about the local area for carers
- Caring with Confidence, a training programme for carers
- Pilots to look at how the NHS can better support carers in their caring role through developing models of best practice and enabling more joined up service provision between the NHS, local authorities and Third sector
- Improvements to the capacity and reach of third sector services at national and local levels

Longer term: identified priorities

- Carers' being able to access specialist carers' services in every community
- Consider extending flexibility of the way personal budgets and direct payments can be used
- Where appropriate, the offer of a lead professional to help carers access services and to ensure early intervention when circumstances change
- Dissemination of models of best practice to PCTs on how to provide better support for carers

Chapter 3: A life of their own

Vision: carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role

Carers should have the opportunities and space they need to participate in activities outside their caring role. In giving carers a life outside caring, there should be a greater emphasis on the provision of planned breaks, which will provide carers with the time to take up the same work, education, leisure and training opportunities as anyone else. The carers strategy has a major role in ensuring that this vision is fulfilled and work in four key areas will drive this forward: break provision; personalisation; improvements in technology and housing, leisure and transport.

Break provision

In response to the high value placed upon breaks by carers, **government are investing £150 million over the next two years.** This extra funding recognises the value of carers in today's society and their ever growing importance in the future. The money will be allocated to PCTs who will be required to work with their local authority partners to publish joint plans as part of the Joint Strategic needs Assessment process for the provision of breaks. The Operating Framework for the NHS published in autumn 2008 will set out how PCTs can work with local authorities to deliver short breaks for carers in a personalised way.

Although breaks are valued, there are still major gaps in the evidence as to the best and most cost effective ways to provide them. **To ensure these gaps are filled, government are committed to running a set of pilots over 3 years in local authorities to:**

- **Encourage and collate innovative approaches to break provision**
- **Examine the quality of break provision**
- **Look at the cost effectiveness of breaks**
- **Look at how personal budgets can be used to provide breaks for carers**
- **Provide models of best practice to disseminate across local authorities and PCTs**

In the longer term, in the context of community empowerment and the reform of the care and support system, government will consider how the relationship between local authorities and the third sector and carer led organisations can be developed to make better use of the expertise of these organisation and to provide carers with greater choice and control over the way in which services are provided to them.

Personalisation

Personal budgets, provided that they are tailored to meeting agreed outcomes for the carer or to the person cared for, can be used in a flexible and creative way to deliver the right sort of support. Over the next few years, **government are committed to giving every person using social services, including carers, a personal budget.** These will enable carers to live a life outside their caring role while still ensuring that the people they care for receive the high quality support they need.

Technology

Technology can play a major part in giving carers peace of mind and in doing so can provide space that they can call their own.

Housing, leisure and transport

As outlined by Lifetime Homes, lifetime Neighbourhoods, good housing makes a critical contribution to the value and effectiveness of the health and care systems. That strategy will play a key role in helping services to be better joined up. It will relieve a significant part of the stress on carers and those being supported by encouraging housing providers to work with other agencies to identify new ways of bringing services together around a common agenda of prevention, personalisation, co-ordination and integration. Specifically government will be working to:

- Test a preventative predictive risk approach in suitable locations from 2008 and develop national information and advice on housing and related areas
- Integrate housing support into the Common Assessment Framework
- Develop the single assessment process to promote joined up health, housing care and benefits assessment
- Support local authorities and PCTs with their new statutory status as named partners in their duty to agree and deliver a single set of priorities for their local area

A number of local authorities run schemes that recognise the contribution carers make to society and government want to build on these. For example, some offer discount schemes for transport and leisure facilities. In recognition of the good work already happening, **central government will be working with local government to make sure that this good practice is spread more widely.**

Short Term Commitments

- Increased funding for breaks for carers
- Pilots to assess innovative approaches to the provision of breaks, their quality and their cost effectiveness
- Sharing of best practice in supporting carers across local authorities

Longer Term Identified Priorities

- Consideration of further increases in break provision, taking account of evidence about quality and outcomes
- Dissemination of models of best practice on quality and innovative approaches to break provision, based on evidence garnered in the pilots

- In the context of community empowerment and the reform of the care and support system, government will consider how the relationship between local authorities and the third sector and carer led organisations can be developed to make better use of the expertise of these organisations and to provide carers with greater choice and control over the way in which services are provided to them. As part of this, government will also examine how best to utilise the Carers Grant to the benefit of carers

Chapter 4: Income and Employment

Vision: carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role

For many carers, particularly those providing regular and intensive support, the impact of their caring role on financial security can be significant.

Society benefits greatly from the care that family and friends provide. A key goal of the strategy is to look at the groups most at risk and consider what must be done to protect them.

Through the provision of better services for the person being supported, increased break provision, easier access to training and skills and encouraging more flexible working opportunities, government want to ensure that carers, where appropriate, are able to combine paid work with caring.

Income

From 2010, government are introducing a National Insurance carer's credit for people under pension age providing at least 20 hours of weekly care, to recognise their need and protect their rights to the State Pension and State Second Pension.

Carers need access to good benefits information. The introduction of the carers' helpline will help make this information more easily accessible.

Within the context of wider welfare reform and the fundamental review of the care and support system, government must create a system of carers' benefits that is able to provide support where it is most needed and that can adapt to the wide range of needs that carers have. In doing this, government will adopt the main principles that the Income Task Force recommended:

- To recognise the contribution carers make to society
- To make it easier for carers to combine caring with work, or preparing for work
- To reflect the diversity of carers' circumstances and caring responsibilities

The longer term reform of support for carers Government must create a flexible system that reflects these principles

Employment

Enabling carers to combine their caring role with paid employment is a key ambition in trying to mitigate some of the negative financial effects of caring.

An awareness raising campaign will be launched later this year to ensure that carers, the people they support and employers across the country are aware of the rights and the benefits flexible working can bring.

Government will review the definition of a carer in the flexible working legislation with a view to extending the right to request flexible working to all carers.

Jobcentre Plus is currently improving the ways that advisers work with carers. Jobcentre Plus can provide support to facilitate a smooth transition when the carer or former carer is eventually able to return to the labour market. Childcare partnership managers have been in place since April 2003 and they co-ordinate Jobcentre Plus programmes and strategies with other agencies and bodies in order to help parents into work.

A similar approach will be used in the context of carers. Managers will be able to advise on initiatives that are taking place in the local area, and will be fully aware of care services that can be offered. Furthermore, they can ensure that advisors are kept aware of such things as training opportunities that suit their client's needs and the care facilities available in the area.

Government will enable Jobcentre Plus to promote in a more proactive way the advantages of greater flexibility to employers in terms of increasing the potential pool of applicants for their vacancies.

There is no carer specific programme within the current system and few carer 'experts' within Jobcentre Plus to deal with the special needs of carers. Government will therefore improve the help and advice available to carers wishing to re-enter the labour market by:

- **Improving information about flexible job vacancies in Jobcentre Plus job banks**
- **Introducing care partnership managers in every Jobcentre Plus district**
- **Introducing specialist training for Jobcentre Plus advisors who work with carers**
- **Funding replacement care for those who are participating in approved training**
- **Ensuring carers have access to appropriate employment programmes**
- **The DWP and Jobcentre Plus investigating the feasibility of providing return to work support through third sector organisations**

Employers

The role of the employer is crucial in enabling a carer to combine paid work and caring. It is not just the offer of flexible working but a recognition of the specific needs of carers, at work, such as access to a telephone if the person they support needs to call them or an understanding that at certain times the carer may have to leave suddenly.

Although many employers already enjoy the advantages that employing carers can bring, other remain to be convinced of the benefits. **Government are committing to working with business to produce a good practice guide for all employers on the benefits of employing carers.**

Training and Skills

Many carers are unable to access training and education opportunities because they conflict with their caring responsibilities.

To allow carers to have every opportunity to ensure that their skills are such that they can combine work and caring, government will encourage more flexible opportunities for lifelong learning to be made available to carers, in particular those who have been out of the workplace.

From 2010, government will introduce national skills accounts to motivate individuals into learning by giving them greater purchasing power over their training. Skills accounts will enable carers to update their skills, increasing their opportunity to return to work if they would like to do so. They will also help break the isolation some carers face by offering a life outside caring.

Government are working to create a more effective and integrated employment and skills system which gives adults the support they need to find sustained employment and to progress in work. Alongside this, an adult advancement and careers service is being developed which will offer a universal service to adults and provide advice and guidance and other support services. Work will be undertaken to ensure that the adult advancement and careers service has close ties to the new information helpline and website for carers. The new service will work in close partnership with Jobcentre Plus to deliver a better integrated system.

Short term: Commitments

- Review the flexible working definition of a carer
- An awareness raising campaign for employers around the right to request flexible working
- Produce a good practice guide for employers around supporting carers and integrating them into the workforce
- Improve the support offered to a carer by Jobcentre Plus
- Ensure that skills training is provided in a flexible manner to it is accessible for carers

Longer term: Identified priorities

- Reviewing the structure of the benefits available to carers in the context of wide benefit reform and the fundamental review of the care and support system

Chapter 5: Health and Well-being

Vision: Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and be treated with dignity

Every carer should be supported so that caring does not adversely affect their health. The services and support available to carers must be such that they are able to stay mentally and physically well throughout their caring role. Carers should be treated with dignity and respect both as carers and as individuals in their own right. A major step towards this is recognising that carers must be treated by professionals as partners in care.

Emergency Break Provision

In October 2007, local authorities were provided with funding for emergency care provision, to set up systems so that carers and the people they support can have immediate access to alternative support in emergency or crisis situations. This funding assists in ensuring that there is no break in care provision for the person being supported and in doing so gives the carer peace of mind.

Prevention

Preventative and early intervention measures can make a significant contribution to supporting individuals to manage their own health.

Government are piloting annual health checks for carers in a number of PCT areas. It is envisaged that these health checks will focus on carers in the highest intensity roles. The pilots will collect evidence as to the cost effectiveness of the initiative and the benefits that both the health service and carers feel they derive from them. Subject to a positive evaluation, government will explore the possibility of extending the health checks more widely.

Government will also explore the possibility in the longer term of providing replacement care to allow carers to attend hospital appointments and screening. This will seek to ensure that carers' vital health issues are not compromised by their caring role.

NHS Choice

Carers often find that their caring responsibilities prevent them from accessing health services both for their own needs and on behalf of the person they support. Government are introducing a number of measures that seek to improve the choice and control offered by the NHS for service users.

From 1 April 2008, PCTs are expected to provide more choice for people with long term conditions. For these people and their carers, choice means working more closely with their health professional and being given options over how to manage their condition. As part of this process, carers should be supported to make decisions about their own lifestyle, culture, preferences, circumstances and priorities.

Choice will be further promoted through personalised and integrated care planning. By 2010, government are committed to ensuring that everyone with a long term condition will be offered a care plan. Guidance for commissioners will be published in summer 2008 and emphasises that the needs of carers should be built into the care planning process.

The Choose and Book system should provide benefits for carers in terms of enabling them to arrange convenient appointments for themselves and the people they support.

Emotional Support

Carers are more likely to report high levels of psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, loss of confidence and self-esteem, than non carers. Stress may lead to a deterioration of relationships, carers may neglect their own health or even mistreat the person they care for.

Government have committed additional investment rising to £173 million per year by 2010/11 to develop psychological therapy services across England. In addition, government recognise the important role the third sector plays in providing emotional support to carers. As part of the DH review of grants to third sector organisations, they are considering identifying projects offering emotional support to carers as a priority category.

Commissioning

The NHS Operating Framework for 2008/9 sets out an expectation that PCTs should aim to create a more personalised service that provides support for carers by recognising their need for breaks from caring.

One of the 11 competencies of the World Class Commissioning programme concerns engagement with the public and patients to shape services. Carers should be encouraged to become involved every time they encounter health professionals to make their voices heard and influence the commissioning of services so they are tailored around their needs.

The new guidance on Practice Based Commissioning specifies that PCTs should consider a menu of interventions including the purchase of respite care to allow carers to take a break.

GPs

GPs are often the first point of contact for carers and will normally continue to be the professional in closest contact with them. Three QOF points relate to carers – “the practice has a protocol for the identification of carers and a mechanism for the referral of carers for social services assessment”.

In the longer term, government have identified a need to discuss with GPs and other health professionals the measures that can be taken to give a sharper focus to the distinct needs of carers.

Building on a Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the Royal College of General Practitioners' (RCGP) initiative to improve knowledge and understanding of carers and carers issue among primary care, **the DH with the RCGP will work to develop, pilot and evaluate a training programme for GPs to help them better understand carers' needs. This will help ensure that they are able to provide more personal support in recognition of the contribution that carers make to the care of the person being supported.**

Subject to a positive evaluation, this training programme may be rolled out nationally, training thousands of GPs to understand and support carers.

Partners in Care

For the first time in a government document, this enshrines the concept of carers as partners and experts in care. Central to this will be the involvement of carers in all care planning from diagnosis to discharge and beyond. Treating carers as partners in care will also ensure that the health or social care professional takes into account the health of the carer to ensure that there is continuity of care for the person being supported.

Information prescriptions will be issued by health or social care professionals and will guide carers to relevant and reliable sources of information, specific to their needs and locality. These are part of a person centred approach. Information prescriptions will also support professionals in sharing information with those who use services and assist them in their role of navigating people around the system.

Government will work to establish the legislative or other requirements needed to enable carers to receive appropriate information, especially in cases where mental capacity is an issue.

Short term: Commitments

- Piloting health checks for carers
- GP training pilots
- Improving emotional support offered by third sector organisations to carers

Longer term: Identified priorities

- Develop a full training package for all GPs, dependent on the result of the pilots
- Consider providing carers across the country with annual health checks
- Consider providing replacement care for carers to attend hospital appointments and screenings

- Discuss with GPs and other health professional the measures which can be taken that will give a sharper focus to the distinct needs of carers
- Work to establish the legislative or other requirements needed to enable carers to receive appropriate information especially in cases where mental capacity is an issue

Chapter 6: Young Carers

Vision: children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the Every Child Matters outcomes

Extensive or inappropriate caring can be damaging, constraining young people's time and contributing to poor outcomes. Young carers can be at greater risk of social isolation and bullying. The transition to adulthood and independence can bring particular difficulties.

The vision for 2018 is one in which professionals in front line services who are in most regular contact with young people have the knowledge they need to identify problems early and encourage young carers to come forward for the help they may need. The vision is also one of prevention – protecting young people from falling into inappropriate caring. By 2018, it is the aim that all areas will be delivering better joined up, whole family support to families affected by illness, disability or substance misuse who have young carers.

Universal services

Universal services – schools, GPs, hospitals, have a vital role to play in young carers lives.

Over the coming three years, **government will invest in a new programme of work to embed support and guidance on young carers through the National Healthy Schools Programme and to ensure tailored and up to date resources are available for staff to draw upon as part of their SEAL and Personal, Social, Health and Economic education programmes. Furthermore, Government will liaise with the new further education improvement body to ensure that learning from developments across schools informs approaches in colleges and other further education settings. It will also work closely with the Children's Workforce Development Council and the Training and Development Agency to ensure that the new resources made available inform future developments in training for school staff and everyone who works with children.**

Government commit to providing funding to support broader awareness raising across schools and other children's settings on caring in families and the issues this raises.

Over the next two years, Government will fund the development of tailored training materials to be used with GPs and hospital discharge teams. The aim is to ensure the best possible support to staff in these key settings, helping them to take better account of young carers's needs as children and as carers,

Targetted support for young carers

The new national carers' helpline will include a specially tailored service for young carers.

Over the coming year, government will commission further research to assess the different approaches and forms of targeted and project based support available and to capture and distil best practice. It will also examine where caring may bring particular disadvantages for particular groups of young people and review approaches to address that. Government will ensure the learning from this research is shared across all areas so provision continues to grow in quality and impact.

Government will invest in a new programme of work to ensure that the learning drawn from existing young carers' projects and other forms of support feeds into and helps shape the planning of provision across newer settings and programmes. The Extended Schools and Targeted Youth Support developments will be particular priorities.

Whole family support

There is a need for better support for the family and the person cared for. Young carers express particular concerns about the lack of high quality and reliable support for the person they care for. Many felt they had no choice other than to step in to fill the gap.

£16 million has been invested in the new Family Pathfinder programme which will run in 15 selected local authority areas over the next 3 years. This includes £3 million for an Extended Family Pathfinder programme in 6 local authorities to look specifically and in greater depth at how to build better, more preventative forms of support around families at risk of relying on the care of a child.

£370 million from 2008-11 has been invested in PCT baseline allocations to increase support and short breaks to families with disabled children.

A Parenting Implementation Project will include piloting new ways of reaching and supporting vulnerable or hard to reach parents, including parents with disabilities whose children may be young carers.

To accelerate the pace of systems change and help more local areas shift their support for families with young carers towards active prevention, the Extended Family Pathfinders for Young Carers programme will be extended. An additional £4 million will be invested from 2009-11 to enable a further 12-13 local areas to participate in the programme.

Government want to also ensure that the contribution made by third sector young carers projects feeds into and supports the prevention agenda.

Over the next 2 years, government will make £1 million available to support new and innovative work by projects focused on lifting young carers out of excessive caring. Government will look to projects bidding for funds to work closely with local authorities and PCT funded services that are already supporting the family, so that approaches can be tailored to the needs of the whole family. Mechanisms for delivering funding will be announced later this year.

Additional funding will be invested in an expanded programme of local and regional training on whole family working for staff in local services. Adult mental health teams and substance misuse services will be particularly targeted. The new investment will directly support commitments to strengthen support for families and protection for dependent children.

Over the coming year, **government will commission work to investigate the patterns of support needed in families affected by disability, illness and substance misuse. The work will review the evidence on the scale of inappropriate or excessive caring by children. It will examine where and to what extent further service change might be needed beyond 2011 to ensure children are protected from inappropriate caring.**

Short term: Commitments

- Funding to embed support and guidance for young carers through the Healthy Schools Programme and to ensure tailored and up to date resources are available for staff to draw upon as part of their SEAL and PSHE programmes
- Funding to support broader awareness raising across schools and other children's settings on caring in families and the issues this raises
- Tailored training materials to be used with GPs and hospital discharge teams to build awareness and skills in dealing with young carers
- Programme of work to ensure that the learning government draw from existing young carers projects and other forms of support feeds into and helps shape the planning of provision in the future
- Preventing children from falling into harmful levels of caring: further action to build effective joined up support around the family and the person cared for and to shift systems of support towards active prevention
- An expanded programme of local and regional training on whole family working for staff in local services

Longer term: Identified priorities

- Ensuring protections for young carers are fully embedded: further measures to be considered in the light on research findings over the next two years

Chapter 7: Implementation

Robust arrangements need to be in place to help form a strategic overview of progress in taking forward the strategy. The arrangements need to fit within the new performance framework set out in the Local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities.

The Standing Commission on Carers will play a key role in advising on progress in implementing the strategy. The Chair of the Commission will publish an annual report which will be shared widely.

A programme board will be established to complement the work of the Commission. The Board will be responsible for ensuring that the preparatory work is undertaken to support the delivery of the longer term proposals contained in the document, as well as ensuring the longer term commitments made for the next two years are implemented.

Regional and local oversight of progress will take place within agreed performance frameworks.

The new local performance framework offers a major opportunity for carers to feature more prominently as a client group in their own right and as part of the general social care user population. The current National Indicator on carers NI135, is a useful output measure and sends a powerful message about the priority placed on meeting carers' needs, however it does not give a clear enough indication of carers' experience of the way that services are provided and it counts only those carers who have received an assessment and some sort of service from their local authority.

To support the move towards greater measurement of carers' experiences of services, Government are working to develop a carer experience survey for local authorities to undertake on a voluntary basis in 2009-10.

Government have secured additional funding to ensure that a question on carers is included in recommendations to Parliament for the 2011 census.

Government is also committing to fund a module on carers in an Omnibus Survey in 2008-09, which contain a number of questions about carers and will be tailored around the strategy. It will ask about employment, income and housing.

Key elements of the transformation of adult social care that relate to carers include:

- A new skills academy to improve the commissioning of services and leadership in social care, and local workforce development strategies to raise skills levels
- The development of forums, networks and task groups, actively involving people who use services and their carers to design and oversee the change to a personalised system

- Support for third sector innovation and social enterprise

Short term: Commitments

- Establishment of a cross government programme board
- Module on carers in an Omnibus Survey
- Inclusion of a question on carers in the 2011 Census
- A national carers' experience survey

Longer term: Identified priorities

- Review of the National Indicator Set to ensure that carers' experience of services is measured