

Final Evaluation Report

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| Review | Carers' Demonstrator Site | Date: 28.04.2011 |
| Type | | Client Group: Carers |
| Value | | Period: |

Purpose of the Service

The aim of the Sunderland carers break project is to improve the quality of life of carers through providing personalised breaks to enable all adult carers to access opportunities outside of their caring role and to lead a fulfilling life. The project is delivered in partnership between Sunderland City Council, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust and Sunderland Carers Centre.

Service Delivery

From the start of the project to the end of March 2011, there were 573 carers applying for breaks from the Carers Centre (79% of these were carers aged 18 to 64), with 389 carers accessing 590 breaks prior to 31 March 2011. During the same period Direct Payments Short Breaks funded from the Local Authority was 1,062 breaks. Funding was also provided to Community Support Groups to enhance / support the role of carers.

Feedback from those involved in a series of focus groups (carers, Development Workers and Consortium Group members) conducted as part of a mid evaluation of the Demonstrator highlighted that it is possible that many people don't consider applying for the fund as they don't think their applications would be successful. Some of the carers spoken to, for example, suggested that they had hesitated to apply because they thought it was means tested or that their own situation wasn't severe enough to qualify (even though this may not have been the case). It was also raised that it wasn't clear where to access the form initially. All participants felt that clearer information to make it more apparent that access to breaks and opportunities is quite broad and also where to access the forms would help encourage more people to apply. In support of this the Consortium Group also highlighted that more advertising was needed, for example in doctor's surgeries, libraries and so on.

Overall the average length of time for informing the carer of the application/break decision is 16 days from the initial referral, with 90% of applicants being informed within 28 days. All carers who participated in the mid-evaluation focus group reported that they had received the decision around their break very quickly and were extremely happy with the speed with which this decision was made. However, in some cases the Development Workers stated that some applications have been unnecessarily delayed where Team Managers have checked against existing records of people already known to services and this was inequitable as others who were applying for the fund and not known to services had their application approved first time and therefore more quickly. Nevertheless, this issue had been addressed prior to the mid-evaluation taking place. Issues around decision making that were highlighted in the mid-evaluation were also around whether carers of people in hospital or residential/nursing care are still eligible and also whether extended family members qualified for a break/opportunity (i.e. some carers won't take the break without additional family members but these family members are not themselves carers).

Up to March 2011, 10 carers from BME communities had accessed breaks (equating to 1.7% of all carers receiving breaks in the period). 199 carers who received a break in this period were resident in the 30% most deprived

areas of Sunderland (equating to 34% of all carers receiving breaks in the period).

Since the carers break project was introduced, 84 carers caring for individual with drug and/or alcohol addiction have received a break.

Overall 133 carers have been signposted to additional carers' services since the start of the project. It was felt by the Development Workers and Consortium group members during the mid-evaluation that one of the key positive outcomes of the project was providing an opportunity to support carers to access services and support out-with the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Fund and had helped to publicise what support is available to carers in general.

All first and second reviews were held within appropriate timescales, within 7 working days and within 6 weeks of the carer accessing the break, respectively.

Finance & Cost-Effectiveness

The total spend on carers breaks allocated in 2009/2010 was £547,200 with a further £889,141 spent during 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 – total of £1,436,342. From the start of this project until the end of March 2011 the average unit cost per carer break is £869.46. This average unit cost above includes all staffing, non-staffing costs and the cost of the break (funded from DOH, TPCT and Local Authority). The cost comparison for short breaks for carers depends on the client group. The form of financial support to carers has positive outcomes, which includes:

- Reducing carer burden
- Reducing carers' mortality
- Reducing carers' unmet needs for support
- Increasing carers' physical or emotional health
- Increasing carer well-being
- Increasing carers' social interaction
- Increasing carers' satisfaction with services
- Increasing carers' employment

The demo site makes financial savings as aimed at reducing the level of stress for carers for two main reasons:

1. Reducing the negative effects of caring on the carer on the psychological may incur personal costs that may be largely immeasurable in financial terms – however, it may also lead to financial costs, associated with increased demands by carers on the health / adult services.

2. Reducing the level of strain of carers may help them to continue caring and thereby prevent institutionalisation of the client. For example the average gross unit cost for an Older Person supported in Residential Care is approx. £420 per week or £21,840 per year.

- Since the project started, there have been 42 carers known to the project, caring for 46 people who have received an ongoing service from adult social care, 7 of whom received intensive home care packages (more than 10 hours per week); none of the cared for persons have been admitted to permanent care since the carers break.
- From an analysis of people receiving intensive home care packages from adult social care in 2009, it is estimated that 20.6% of people

were admitted to permanent residential/nursing care within the subsequent 2 years. Thus, based on the 7 people receiving intensive home care packages, there is potential that the carers break could have assisted in the prevention of at least 1 permanent admission to care within the next 2 years with a potential saving of £21,840 per year.

- If all the 389 carers who have received a carers break up to the end of March 2011 had been known to adult social care then we would estimate that 59 of the cared for people would be receiving intensive home care packages. Therefore the provision of a carers break could have assisted in the prevention of up to 12 admissions to permanent care over the next 2 years with a potential saving of £262,080.

We are continuing the project as a mainstream service from 2011/12. It will run in the same way as the project, enabling carers who need a break to access one without having to be assessed as having a social care need to access a break or opportunity.

Organisational Capacity & Standards

- Qualitative feedback received by carers about the service provided by the Development Workers was excellent. Feedback from the Development Workers themselves suggested that they were a highly motivated staff team who enjoyed a good level of job satisfaction.

Customer Outcomes

- Feedback from the first review, held within 7 working days of the carer receiving the break, indicated that 99% of the carers were 'at least' very satisfied with the break/opportunity provided. Indeed qualitative feedback from carers themselves as part of the focus group strongly supported this high level of satisfaction. All participants in the focus groups, including carers, reported that one of the major benefits of the project is that it has supported a range of really creative breaks and opportunities which in some cases have changed carers lives; for example one carer was able to access driving lessons and another carer was able to purchase specialist garden furniture. The flexibility of carers being able to apply for breaks/opportunities that genuinely reflect their individual needs and preferences is likely to be key to this high level of satisfaction and this is further reflected in the fact that 98% of carers felt involved in choosing the break they received.
- The key benefits of the accessing a break/opportunity through the fund were cited by carers as; allowing them time to themselves, providing a break from the same routine and the cared for person/caring role, providing relief from stress, relaxation and the opportunity to do something for themselves rather than the cared for person or others. The Development Workers also commented that depending on the type of break/opportunity accessed, carers have gained a sense of achievement (for example in gaining a new skill). Results from the second reviews show that overall 98% of carers felt they had achieved the outcome goals which were defined during their application and qualitative feedback from the carers' focus group strongly supports that this is the case. For example, one carer is currently accessing a course of 25 weekly alternative therapy sessions which has allowed him to have the time away from his caring role that he felt he needed, providing him something to look forward and as a result he reported that both directly and indirectly these sessions have improved his health and wellbeing.

- Further feedback from the second review showed very positive messages in that 98% of carers stated that they were involved in identifying their outcome goals during the application process. Moreover qualitative feedback from carers' highlights that they felt involved in identifying their own outcome goals but that the support received from the Development Workers was invaluable in helping them think through the benefits they hoped to achieve through their break/opportunity and to put this in to words. However, one carer stated that she had struggled to fill the form in and was not aware that she could receive help with this from a Development Worker but if she had been she would have found this help useful. She felt that clearer information indicating that help is available to fill in the forms was required.
- Feedback from carers as part of the focus group however highlighted that all felt that their wellbeing had improved and that all participants felt it was easier to continue in their caring role as a result of receiving their break/opportunity (98% of carers reported that they felt it was easier to cope in their caring role as part of their review). It was suggested that the impact of the break on feelings of wellbeing lasted around 1-2 weeks but in some cases the impact of the break/opportunity accessed was far longer than this, for example one carer was able to purchase a bike thorough the project meaning that he can enjoy a break away from his caring role on a regular and sustained basis.
- All participants in the focus groups commented that the Demonstrator Site feels very different to any other support and services previously or currently available to carers and this is one of the positive aspects of the project. For example this is particularly around the flexibility of the service which has allowed things to be done that aren't normally possible. However, it was commented by the Consortium group that this does sometimes mean that expectations are raised.
- Consortium Group members suggested that the fact that the Demonstrator Site is a specific service for carers has led carers to feel more valued and this was confirmed by all the carers spoken to. For example, one carer stated that the break she had received had helped her to start thinking of herself more and all carers commented that it felt refreshing to be offered the opportunity to be able to do something purely for themselves. Feedback from the Carers' Centre has suggested that the Demonstrator has represented a shift from a focus on providing a break for the cared for person (which in turn provides a break for the carer) to looking at what can specifically be done for the carer (which has resulted in a better quality of break and a purer focus on what would benefit the carer).
- 80% stated that they felt confident that the person they cared for was appropriately cared for whilst the carer accessed their break and 79% stated they were involved in the support planning for the person they cared for whilst they accessed their break.
- 98% of carers who accessed the fund stated they were satisfied with the information and support they received and 98% stated they were satisfied with the service provided. Again, this is strongly supported by feedback from carers as part of the focus groups.

Recommendation

It is clear that the outcomes achieved for carers through the Demonstrator site have been excellent with the strength being that that the breaks and opportunities provided have been highly tailored around the carers own needs and preferences with some really flexible and innovative breaks/opportunities accessed as a result. This is a key aspect of the Demonstrator that all stakeholders would be keen to see continued in any future service. There will also be a need to ensure that the genuine partnership

working that has developed through the Demonstrator site continues.

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| Reviewer | Paul Allen, Performance & Information Manager, Directorate of Health, Housing & Adult Services Sunderland City Council | Date: 28.04.2011 |
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Additional Organisational Learning from Service

- The Development Workers felt that some Social Workers/Care Managers are referring in to the Demonstrator Site more than others and felt that teams could be reminded about the project more regularly to ensure that all Social Workers/Care Managers were referring in where appropriate. Feedback from some carers highlighted that their Social Worker/Care Manager had not mentioned the scheme and that they had heard about it via other means. They felt that promotion of the scheme to carers by Social Workers/Care Managers was one area for improvement.
- One of the key benefits of the project is that it has promoted genuine partnership working between the LA, PCT and the Carers Centre and has resulted in an integrated service for carers. However, it has been noted that although the PCT has put money in to the scheme, there needs to be more involvement in terms of representatives 'on the ground' e.g. telling GPs/District Nurses etc about the breaks so that they can pass this information on to carers who could benefit and so on.
- Looking to the future, there will be a need to ensure that cross working continues to happen at all levels. One example is around getting information to Social Workers about what can be done for isolated carers e.g. in terms of them passing on names of carers (with their permission) and the Carers Centre putting together groups that can enjoy a break together.
- The Consortium Group noted that Learning Disabilities sets up very creative and flexible support packages for it's service users and carers and that the project has highlighted the differences between this service area and others by allowing carers of other client groups to access similarly creative and flexible breaks and opportunities through the fund.
- Team Managers/Social Workers/Care Managers stated that in the past they had some difficulty understanding the ways in which holidays and breaks helped carers but that the project has allowed them to see the positive outcomes of these very clearly which had resulted in them thinking differently about situations. Feedback from the Carers Centre has supported this and the view that this dynamism needs to be maintained i.e. the individual and innovative/quality breaks rather than volume of breaks provided.
- Feedback from the Carers Centre has pointed out that in the future when taking the model forward there will be a need to ensure that all systems/services work together effectively and responsibilities are clear around carers' breaks. E.g. Brokerage service-how this will fit with carers breaks i.e. when would a Social Worker use the Brokerage Service vs. the Carers Centre when looking to put a break together?
- Without demonstrator site as a 'driver' there is a concern that we could revert back to the old system - i.e. assessed breaks vs. Holidays and opportunities fund system. Moreover, there is a danger of inequality if two systems operate-those who can navigate the 'system' more effectively may end up accessing an assessed break and a non-assessed break.

