

REPORT TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

21 APRIL 2009

REPORT BY HEAD OF SERVICE: PERFORMANCE, COMMISSIONING AND CHANGE

SUNDERLAND CARERS STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to the Board and seek endorsement of the final draft of Recognising and Valuing Carers in Sunderland: a multi agency approach to supporting carers and to outline the feedback received during the consultation period.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Board gave its commitment to support the development of a local multi agency carers strategy early in 2008 and regular updates have been presented to the Board outlining the development of the strategy. The Board received an update at its last meeting, which outlined the consultation process.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Formal consultation on the draft strategy was carried out between January and March 2009. Around 2,800 people, the majority of which were carers, but also organisations and members of the public, were invited to take part in the consultation by completing a questionnaire based on the vision and outcomes of the draft strategy.
- 3.2 From a total of 2,848 questionnaires that were distributed, 141 were returned. Overall, the draft strategy was very well received by carers, members of the public and professionals and the vision and outcomes were seen as the right ones needed to support carers. The strategy was seen as a positive move forward in recognising the contribution made by carers and in supporting them as carers and as individuals.
- 3.3 From the feedback received the area of the strategy where changes have been made are to the Carers with Learning Disabilities outcome.

Feedback from respondents highlighted that the draft strategy did not address the needs of carers with disabilities or older carers. Therefore, the Carers with Learning Disabilities outcome has been strengthened to be inclusive of all carers with disabilities and older carers.
- 3.3 A workshop was held with staff from various organisations, including Health, Housing and Adult Services, Children's Services, Job Centre

Plus, Community and Cultural Services and Family, Adult and Community Learning. The purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness of the Strategy, to engage staff around their role in the delivery of the strategy and to identify any challenges from a front line practitioner perspective. The workshop was very positive and the points raised by staff will be taken into consideration during the implementation of the strategy.

- 3.5 A report of the consultation is currently being prepared and will be shared with the Board at a future meeting.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Strategy is being launched during Carers Week on 10 June. Board members are invited to attend this event and will be receiving a formal invitation.
- 4.2 In order to oversee implementation of the Strategy and to report progress back to the Board, the Multi-agency Carers Strategy Group will be reconvened once the strategy is launched.
- 4.3 It is being proposed that a Carers Strategy Reference Group will be established so that carers are involved in monitoring the implementation of the strategy and to gather feedback from carers as to whether their experiences of services are being improved and they feel better supported. This will be developed in the near future.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Board are requested to receive this report for information and formally sign off the Carers Strategy.