

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: NHS CARER INFORMATION STRATEGIES: DRAFT GUIDANCE
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 5 OCTOBER 2004	Ref: GS/MW	

**1. Purpose of Report / Introduction**

This report advises Committee about the consultation exercise currently being undertaken by the Scottish Executive on draft guidance for NHS Boards to put in place Carer Information Strategies.

**2. Background**

2.1. Section 12 of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 enhanced the rights of carers, in particular the right for carers with regular and substantial caring responsibilities, to have an independent assessment of their willingness and ability to continue to provide care. In addition, the Act gave Scottish Ministers the power to require each NHS Board in Scotland to produce a Carer Information Strategy.

2.2. The purpose of NHS Carer Information Strategies is to ensure that all carers, including young carers under 16 who come into contact with NHS services, are identified and provided, at an early stage, with targeted information to help support them in their caring role. The aim is to create a more consistent and strengthened approach to informing and empowering carers by building on existing activities that deliver outcomes for carers.

**3. Proposals/Considerations**

3.1. The Guidance outlines the purpose of a Carer Information Strategy along with a comprehensive account of what NHS Boards are expected to include in it. In line with the Joint Future agenda, effective means of informing carers should be developed by NHS Boards and local authorities in partnership with local carers.

3.2. The Guidance outlines a range of key elements to be incorporated into Carer Information Strategies. These are:

- recognition that carers should be recognised and treated as “key partners in the provision of care”.
- a commitment to provide information and support that is accessible to all carers, including young carers under 16 and black and ethnic minority carers.
- ensuring that the Strategy builds on existing partnerships and joint working arrangements to facilitate more effective carer support.
- identification of a lead officer and specific staff in key areas to ensure systematic and effective implementation of the Strategy and provision of information.

- specifying arrangements for involving all carers, along with other stakeholders in the development and review of the Strategy.
- setting out monitoring and reviewing arrangements that fit in with accountability to the Executive for other areas, including identification of joint performance indicators and outcomes for carers.

3.3. It is anticipated that Information Strategies will be implemented and incorporated within the range of NHS activities already achieving outcomes for carers. Such activities would include:

- the routine identification of carers as part of mainstream NHS activity.
- the provision of targeted information to identified carers at the appropriate time, including their potential legislative right to an independent assessment of their support needs as a carer.
- referrals of carers by NHS staff to sources of support/advice.
- improved carer awareness amongst health practitioners.
- recognition that a wide range of health professionals and staff have a crucial role to play in identifying carers at the first point of contact, both in the community and hospital settings.
- better partnership working with carers in relation to care management and discharge from hospital arrangements.
- mainstreaming of support for carers into the day-to-day functions of the NHS.

#### 3.4 North Lanarkshire's Position

In North Lanarkshire there have already been a number of partnership developments that have recognised the importance of providing carers with information:

- an information sub-group of the Carers Strategy Implementation Group has been set up to develop information for carers. An outcome from this work has been the setting up of a freephone information line for carers.
- a Carer Co-ordinator post has been created at Monklands Hospital to ensure that carers are assisted around the admission and discharge of the person they care for and that staff are made aware of the needs of carers.
- a Hospital Carer Information Pack is in production and will be distributed to all hospitals in Lanarkshire.

3.5 The contents of the draft Guidance underlines and reinforces the work already being undertaken in collaboration with NHS Lanarkshire and carers. Through the work of the Carers Strategy Implementation Group, carers have participated in planning and identifying a range of support for carers. The NHS Carer Information Strategy will provide the framework for NHS colleagues working with Social Work, carers and carers' organisations to consolidate achievements to date and to ensure better outcomes for carers.

#### 4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

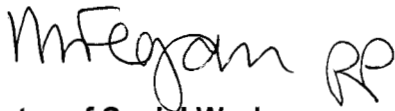
4.1. There are no financial/legal and personnel implications at this stage for North Lanarkshire Council.

4.2 Work is progressing to produce a new Joint Strategy for Carers 2004/2005 to 2007/2008 that includes a section on information provision for carers. Reference will be made in this document to the requirement for NHS Lanarkshire to produce an Information Strategy. In addition, a number of action points that will enhance the provision of information in general for carers in North Lanarkshire will be included.

#### 5. Recommendations

5.1 Committee is asked to :

- (i) note the contents of this report.



**Director of Social Work**  
**8 September 2004**

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