

Carers Support Centre Forum May Meeting

Date

28/05/2019

Time

1.30pm-3pm

Attendance

5 members of Carers Support Centre Forum:

- Yvonne Webster
- Matty Doherty.
- Freda Pearce.
- Lydia Stewart.
- Patrick Buckley.

Amy Deakin.

Apologies for absence

Liza, Ann, Maurice, Brigitte, Jeffrey and Vaz.

Introduction & housekeeping

It was agreed due to the low turnout that future scheduled meetings should avoid dates just after bank holidays. All future Forum meeting dates are not scheduled after a bank holiday.

The Forum welcomed Freda who had not previously attended.

Liza has decided to step down as she has difficulty attending meetings due to other commitments. Angela Flood will be taking her place on the Forum.

Priority setting

Amy reintroduced the Forum to the list of agreed topics discussed in the first forum meeting. Forum members reviewed these ideas and discussed which themes stood out. The group came up with the following key priorities in each of the areas:

- One stop shop (particularly for council services).
- Education & training for carers.
- Listening by services and action as a result.
- Awareness raising of carers' existence (in the community and with professionals).
- Carers receiving access to information at the right time for the individual - access to carer support out of office hours, online, information on sources of practical help, etc.
- Timely, joined up services.

- Need for keyworkers for the person being cared for.
- Better access to social workers and key council staff.
- Health and wellbeing support.

Members then voted on these priorities using a dot voting system. Members were given five dots and asked to place as many dots against the priorities they were most supportive of. Carers were allowed to use more than one dot per item to show strength of support. The results are as follows in priority order:

1. Education & training for carers (7).
2. Health and wellbeing support (5).
3. One stop shop (particularly for council services) (3).
4. Carers receiving access to information at the right time for the individual - access to carer support out of office hours, online, information on sources of practical help, etc (2).
5. Awareness raising of carers' existence (in the community and with professionals) (1).
6. Need for keyworkers for the person being cared for (1).
7. Timely, joined up services (0 votes).
8. Listening by services and action as a result (0).
9. Better access to social workers and key council staff (0).

Further discussion

Freda raised concerns about the Croydon Council localities project discussed at the April meeting. She felt that it may not be achievable given funding constraints. Amy suggested that Freda makes a note of her ideas and brings them up at the June meeting. (Note - an overview of the localities project for those who did not attend in April will be provided at the June meeting.)

Matty asked why the DWP does not tell carers about the support available when applying for Carers Allowance and why the earnings limit is £120. Amy mentioned that Universal Credit offers a carers element.

Yvonne expressed reservations about Universal Credit. Amy mentioned that a researcher from the Department of Work & Pensions will be attending the Carers Support Centre to improve the process of applying for carers. The date is to be confirmed but Amy will update Forum members once the date is confirmed.

Patrick mentioned that there will be a programme about care workers on Wednesday 29 May at 9pm on BBC which members may wish to view.

Action planning

The Forum took the top priority Education and Training and planned the following actions:

What could training contain?

- Yvonne mentioned the previous Carer Education and Support Programme for carers of someone with a mental health problem:
 - Coping skills.
 - Mental health information & awareness.
 - Self-care for carers.
 - Support with grief.
 - Practical information to support the cared for person.
- Other types of training suggested were:
 - Moving and handling.
 - Nutrition.
 - Basic health checks for the cared for person.
- Training should specialise based on the cared for person's condition.
- Training & education should not always be face-to-face - online forums, multi-media (especially for younger carers).
- Help with administration - Blue Badges, benefit forms, etc. Group general information training rather than one-to-one.
- Better access for education & training - awareness raising and more funding.
- Care workers also need better training, especially those hired by Croydon Council.

Who needs to be involved?

- Professionals/people with expertise in certain fields.
- Trained carers - have the empathy and understanding.
- People in charge of funding.

What actions can we take as a forum?

- Volunteer as carer champions - raise awareness locally.
- Involve the MP - invite MPs to a meeting (Sarah Jones, MP for Croydon Central has expressed an interest in hearing from community groups).
- Invite decision makers to meetings.
- Invite those in charge of the money to meetings.
- Explore peer support & possibility of a carer buddy scheme. More experienced carers can help newer carers. Support needs to be sustainable and Forum should look at barriers to accessing this type of support (e.g. lack of awareness, lack of confidence, etc.)

What actions can the Carers Information Service take?

- Disseminate information to carers about support groups in the community.
- Connect the Forum with decision makers and funders.
- Provide support/guidance with writing letters to MPs.
- Invite colleagues responsible for planning Carers Support Centre training to a future meeting.

Carers Week

Amy reminded carers that Carers Week will take place 10-16 June. Lydia asked how Forum members can champion Carers Week. Amy suggested that carers can share information with their networks and contacts. Amy will send round details of events for members to circulate with their contacts.

Next meeting date

Date of next meeting given as 25 June 2019.

AOB

There were no AOB items.