



The Coalition of Carers in Scotland - Report from our member meeting, 25th March 2015

Members of the Coalition of Carers in Scotland discussed the Carers (Scotland) Bill at their meeting on the 25th of March. This included an interactive session using message boards, providing participants with the opportunity to share their views on the Carers Bill, with a particular focus on whether eligibility criteria should be national, or applied on a local basis.

This is a report of the views expressed by our members. Just over 70 people attended the meeting and this was a mixture of carers and staff from local carer support organisations. The report sets out the questions posed via message boards and the responses received.

I support the introduction of **National Eligibility Criteria**

Strongly Agree 43

Agree

Don't know 1

Tell us your reasons why:

- To make all health board / local authority areas equal



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- Local eligibility criteria could be used as a cost cutting exercise by Local Authorities
- Should lead to more equality away from party politics
- There has to be national eligibility criteria or things will remain the same with care being a postcode lottery and Local Authorities interpreting the Act to suit their criteria
- Employment rights are not left to individual companies, childcare provision is not entirely left to local authorities. Other national criteria includes free personal care, national care standards, housing support rights, education of children, if left to local authorities, why carers rights!
- To ensure fairness for all carers
- This should provide some equality and constancy rather than the 32variable interpretations of the law
- Implementation of the carers rights charter is essential to the working of the act
- Minimum national eligibility standards will ensure that local authorities have to provide at least a minimum level of support
- Do away with postcode lottery. Minimum criteria is necessary
- It will mean equality – not necessarily the loudest voice!
- The professionals frequently cause us more stress than the ones we care for with the stupid rules they make

I support the introduction of Local Eligibility Criteria

Strongly Agree

3



Agree

Don't know

What principles should be embedded in eligibility criteria?

- Fairness, respect, equality
- Recognition, honesty and listening to carers
- Respect, listen to, honesty
- Basic criteria – if it set too high then no one access resources
- Recognised and valued for the crucial role they play and the sacrifice they give. We are all heroes
- Carers willingness, respecting carers as equal partners, listening to individuals
- Recognition at the start of caring and support and understanding no matter how long my caring journey took
- Capacity building in communities (carer today is tomorrows cared for) Valuing carers and ex-carers and benefitting from their knowledge and experience
- Recognition of carers as equal partners in care **at all times** not just when it suits for them to be so. Recognition of carers as experts in their own situation
- Should include some aspect of prevention – early intervention to avoid need for crisis intervention and the effect that has on the individual/family



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- Respected and supported by all agencies as a carer
- To be treated as an equal partner in care (2 responses)
- Recognition, fairness, support for carers young or old no matter what their caring role is
- Focus on prevention – by providing universal access to some carer supports it will inform and enable carers to continue caring and keep well themselves
- There needs to be a minimum national criteria – to ensure equity and enable hard to reach groups to access support
- The criteria should make short breaks available to as many carers as possible

What would fair eligibility criteria look like to you – what would it include?

- All to be valued and recognised
- Support all carers as some may cope better than others
- Provide more support to a loved one than would normally be expected
- Knowing the different support available
- Criteria to prevent crisis – universal right to needs being assessed with Adult Carer Support Plan in place
- Bereavement – carers who lose the person they care for continue to be supported and assisted to adapt to life outwith the caring role
- Services should be delivered at the right time and address need
- Recognition we also may have other family members to support



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- Minimum standard agreed by all stakeholders as acceptable baseline, recognition that good practice would be to raise provision above national standard level
- Universal and open to all unpaid carers with variations in levels according to needs assessment

What areas of The Carers Bill do you feel most need to be strengthened?

- Respite – Carers to be given the same holidays as an employee – 28 days
- Respite – Duty as a statute to all local authorities
- I feel more understanding of mental health and the very difficult job M.H carers have. It is so different from other caring
- Inclusion / involvement of health board and 3rd sector
- A key driver in carer support needs is hospital admission and discharge. The process of reviewing care support plans needs to include reference to this important change
- Support for hospital discharge duty. Example of good practice from NHS Tayside. Bad examples from NHS Lothian
- Inclusion of health to involve carers in hospital discharge
- We need basic eligibility to avoid crisis with funding resources out in place
- Carers having a length of their own. Stipulating why, when and how they will provide support. This needs to be recognised
- I am concerned that the parliamentary process is turning simple objectives into an overly detailed structure which risks swamping the original intentions of taking forward carers rights



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- LAs should not be allowed to establish services if carer centres are already there and are doing good work
- Respite open door policy.
- Who settles on the desired personal outcomes? Is the final say so with the carer? The key word is personal
- Can the Bill go through a poverty impact assessment? The policy memos assessment on carers and deprivation levels is stark. What can the provision in the bill do to ensure carers in most deprived quintiles are as well supported as those least deprived?
- Can there be a requirement for monitoring and reviewing needs at the request of the carers. Could the adult carer support plan be named 'my carer support plan' with it being signed off and owned (primarily) by the carer
- There needs to be aggregation of identified needs in plans
- Carer involvement – the provision should be a duty to **support** the involvement of carers
- Local carer strategies should be required to abide by EPiC principles and provide 5-10 year forecasts on carers needs / trends
- Timescales for assessments to be carried out
- Support for hospital discharge
- New act says consideration must be taken regarding if a carer needs a break – but should there not be a duty to provide some sort of break
- The Bill talks a lot about 'services' we need to be careful this does not make carers 'service-users' – they are care providers. This needs reinforced throughout the guidance
- Carers should be supported if they no longer wish to care for the person they look after. For example, if they want to go back into employment



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- Review of Carers Support Plan must be fixed time after completion by law
- Carers are not listened to when at meetings. We find the minutes don't represent much of what we said. We turn up to find the meeting has been cancelled but they didn't think we were important enough to tell us
- Emergency care planning should be made available to parent carers. But thought needs to be given on who will provide this and how it will be regulated
- Emergency care plans need to be part of the Bill
- Emergency care plans should be compulsory as it protects the cared-for and takes pressure of the carer
- Regular health checks should be available to carers
- Multiple caring roles need to be recognised in legislation
- **The Bill needs to recognise the role carers centres play. I did not want to let anyone know I could not cope until I came to the carers group. They have helped so much to get my life back on track**

What areas of The Carers Bill are you most pleased about?

- The removal of regular and substantial (3 responses)
- Duty to provide Adult Carer Support Plan (3 responses)
- Focus on young carers
- Getting the Bill/Act for carers to this stage is great news in itself



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- Carers rights being recognised
- Carers recognised and their voices taken into full consideration
- Importance of legislation which will mean a **duty** to provide support to carers who fit eligibility criteria
- Recognition that carers should have rights
- The fact that the Scottish Government has recognised the need for supporting carers and also recognising the very important resource carers are to government and local councils
- That there will be a Carers Act eventually
- Recognition for carers at long last
- Carers recognition – duty rather than a power
- Carers having a say at last
- Lots! – That it exists enables a full societal discussion with potential for real benefits for carers as the eventual product
- Just to get to this stage is fantastic
- 3 areas – 1. Support plan 2. Recognition of emotional impact and support for emotional aspects of care 3. Recognition that it needs to be financed-good investment – big returns
- Carers rights, embedded in legislation for the first time



CLEAR Reasons for National Eligibility Criteria

Carers want National Eligibility Criteria. Do you agree? Share your views

- Yes, it is important everyone is treated in the same way – one process
- Does away with the postcode lottery
- National eligibility would provide a service across the board and it would not rely on the LA budgets to determine the level of service
- Yes, but it needs to be funded and resourced properly. A national framework should eradicate the postcode lottery
- Will COSLA hold the key to unlock the door to the development of a national eligibility criteria?
- I agree with national eligibility criteria. It sets a baseline for everyone
- National eligibility would ensure all regions are equal and the onus of responsibility is on the local authority
- Yes, but there needs to be adequate resources (financial) to support local authorities needs to be addressed
- Carers have to support each other and stand together to get the Bill through, along with any amendments as required
- There will be a postcode lottery if there is local eligibility
- Don't give LAs loopholes to be able to ignore carers
- There needs to be flexibility within a national framework



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- EPiC principles should form the basis of national eligibility criteria. The principles are based on core outcomes, can accommodate local variation and form the basis of national standards
- We carers must be regarded as equal across the country
- Concerns about the dilution of good services, bringing services down, not bringing them up
- I agree because it wouldn't matter / depend on your postcode to get equality
- There should be national rights for carers
- Carer need to be recognised and national eligibility criteria will cover many carer who require support

We need to learn from other countries? Share your views

- This is a good gauge to see how other countries work with carers and how we work with carers. We should always be open for change and improvement
- Scottish Government must take this opportunity to implement best practice of other counties within Europe
- We cannot be narrow minded – must take heed of good practice
- Yes, it is important to learn new ways and work together
- Learning comes from many sources
- This should be an opportunity to look at the best practice in other countries and combine this with our own best practice
- Yes, it's good to learn what's positively working well elsewhere



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- Yes, learning is good, but also learning what not to do?
- We should take this as good advice
- Learn what is most likely to work and be fair. Stop re-inventing wheels
- I think it is important to look at what other countries are doing and learn from them

Equity – A fair system. Do you agree? Share your views

- National eligibility standards would give clarity against which both carers and councils could judge how much was needed and what the shortfall was
- National criteria will address issues for all groups and will remove it from party politics
- Yes, equity should be for all care groups across Scotland. Fairness for all groups is required
- Don't leave it to LAs, all carers should be treated equally
- Would not rely on party politics and LA budgets. Services would be a right and not a privilege
- Hard to reach groups find it difficult to have their voice heard. National criteria could help with this
- Should not be party political, depending on the 'colour' of the council. National criteria would avoid this
- National criteria will make it a fair system. Everyone will be treated equally
- Would help to standardize resource allocation
- Needs to apply to all care groups



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- For as long as there have been services/support there has been issues. An equal and transparent system would allow areas to plan appropriate support

Abolishes the postcode lottery. Do you agree? Share your views

- The postcode lottery needs to be abolished so that it is fair all over and equal
- Yes, definitely agree. Clarity for all right across the country = better use/less waste of resources
- To be listened to it requires many voices and many different types of carers as there are many caring roles
- The national standards should be applied across all LAs But discretion must be applied only to increase the level of support above the national standard, never to decrease it
- Universal and open to all unpaid carers with variations in levels according to the needs assessment
- Universal for all carers with greater support available for those most in need
- This is crucial in a fair society
- **The postcode has not a lot of bearing on caring . The impact of caring depends on the level of caring, how long you care for, the type of caring situation you are in. Not your postcode**
- It needs to be a duty for all councils to provide resources and support to carers and monitor the situation
- Yes, it is important the system is the same for every carer



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- True partnership in operation means that the carer is listened to, the carer's situation is improved, the cared-for person is happier and the carer is happier.
- Agree strongly. Carers' issues are of national concern
- There is a need to abolish the postcode lottery, fairness for all carers is a must. Some carers are not in the position to move home to receive quality support
- All authorities should have the same system. No carer should feel that they have to move or do without services
- Equal Partners in Care needs to be reflected in the development of any framework
- All carers should be entitled to the same services no matter what area they live in
- I Support the need to abolish the postcode lottery
- Abolishing the postcode lottery is essential to implementation. The Scottish Government should take a stronger, firmer stance with local councils

Rights –available to all. Do you agree? Share your views

- I think all carers should have the same rights
- Should be monitored to ensure it is happening
- All carers should have their rights and should know their rights and entitlements
- Yes, carers will be able to be confident in asking for support



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- All carers should have the same rights and entitlements
- Some can cope with a little support, others need a lot. All should have the right to state what they can and can't cope with. Rights for all!
- It should be a duty of care for all councils to provide care and support and monitor the carers situation
- We are all part of the same system. Our needs may vary but we still need support!
- Yes to rights available to all carers no matter who they care for, be it mental health, learning disability, young or old. They should all be treated the same.