

**Gwenda Thomas AC/AM**  
**Y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Wasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Deputy Minister for Social Services**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Our ref/ Ein cyf: LF/GT/14/10

Angela Burns AM  
Chair  
Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

6th May 2010

Dear Angela

### **Proposed Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure**

Thank you for your letter of 29 April following on from the meeting of the Finance Committee earlier that day when we discussed the financial implications of the proposed Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure. You raised a number of issues which I agreed to clarify.

The Committee asked me to clarify whether the £5.8 million allocated by the Welsh Assembly Government to resource the strategies is new money, or whether it is intended to be diverted from existing provision elsewhere in the budget. It also asked for confirmation that the £5.8 million is available to implement the strategies.

The funding of £0.9 million for year 1 will be accommodated within the existing carers' policy implementation budget, and in years 2 and 3 the funding will be met from within existing Health and Social Services budgets. This is funding which has not previously been allocated and the question of diverting funds from existing provision elsewhere does not therefore arise. Our explanatory memorandum for the proposed Measure sets out the case for effective investment in carers' services against a background of forecast demographic change and the need to ensure that health and social services in the community are sustainable. The Minister for Health and Social Services and I are agreed that, in light of this, supporting carers in the way set out in the proposed Measure should have a high priority. I do need to add the caveat though that while these are the priorities of the present Assembly Government, we cannot future-proof these against decisions that may be taken by a future administration.

The Committee has also asked for further information on how the Welsh Government is planning to monitor the funding of the strategies following incorporation into the Revenue Support Grant following the initial 3 year period and the impact this may have on local authorities and local health boards' ability to retain funding levels.

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It will be for a future administration to decide what will happen after year 3 but I am confident that the existence of a statutory duty to prepare and to implement carers' information strategies will ensure that this continues to be given a high priority in resource decisions.

You asked me to confirm that funding for strategies for young carers would be made available in addition to the £5.8 million already identified, and how much additional funding would be provided.

I am glad to confirm that the funding of £80,000, £150,000 and £200,000 in years 1,2 and 3 respectively is additional to the £5.8 million and will be accommodated within the existing carers' policy implementation budget.

And finally, you asked if I could provide the Committee with details of all the money which is currently available to carers and into which budgets it is allocated.

Local Authorities have the statutory responsibility for assessing carers' needs and for providing appropriate services and the proposed Measure will not change this arrangement. Budgetary decisions are a matter for individual local authorities but the resources available to them via the Revenue Support Grant include £5.9 million under the former Carers Grant that was transferred to the RSG in 2005-06 and a further £4 million under the former Mental Health Carers Grant that was transferred to the RSG in April this year. Services such as respite that are provided by the NHS are not separately identified in their budgets. Within the Assembly Government in 2010-11 we have a total of £343,000 in the National Strategy for Carers BEL within the Health and Social services MEG.

I trust that this information provides the clarification you were seeking.

Yours sincerely



**Gwenda Thomas AC/AM**