

**P-06-1209 Create a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 30.01.23**

To whom it may concern,

Myself and another unpaid carer recently met with Andy Pithouse (Advisor to Julie Morgan) and presented him with a possible solution to setup costs and working in partnership with a company called CaresCard UK. During this meeting we were also advised that the Ministerial Advisory Group would be further discussing the carers register in March/April of this year and I asked if it would be possible to be invited to that meeting to put the idea forward. As of this moment in time I am unaware if the information I provided to Andy Pithouse has been presented to Julie Morgan or the Ministerial Advisory Group as I have heard nothing further since our recent meeting.

I also recently met with Russell Berry from CarersCard UK which is when I first saw the potential for the information gathered to be used as the basis for a register. On the face of it CarersCard UK is essentially a scheme for unpaid carers similar to the Blue Light Scheme and provides carers with access to national discounts at a wide variety of retailers and leisure services. However, when you begin to look deeper it is actually so much more than that. It provides a place for unpaid carers to store a carer plan for the person they care, share notes and information with others within the caring circle whether they be professionals or family members and it also provides a QR code which can be scanned by the emergency services to gain access to the information in the case of an accident. Councils, Regional Partnership Boards and third sector organisations can buy into the scheme and also offer local discounts to carers within their area and they can either charge a small fee for the cards or provide them for free. The information gathered here as carers sign up to such a scheme could easily be transferred to provide the basis for a carers register.

Whilst I understand the cost and data collection implications of such a register I still strongly feel that it is something that is needed. This also presents the Welsh Government with an opportunity to produce something pioneering within the four nations of the UK.

As I've said before, many unpaid carers in Wales feel that a register of unpaid carers would be advantageous to them in many ways such as, access to information and grants, future Covid and flu vaccines, access to support and recognition to name but a few. A carers register could help carers gain access to information and support sooner rather than later and possibly prevent carer burnout which in the long term would save money and help carers avoid needing medical assistance and/or care themselves.

Whilst I appreciate the funding the Welsh Government has provided for the Carer Support Fund and also the short break funds I feel that access to these funds can only be enhanced by the introduction of a Carers Register and improved dissemination of information.

In her response Julie Morgan states that unpaid carers are a hard to reach group and we don't always identify ourselves as unpaid carers. My response to that is, ask those of us that have identified as unpaid carers to come forward and we will as we proved during the vaccine rollout. As for those who don't identify as unpaid carers just yet, better access to information on what an unpaid carer is and GP, hospital staff and other health or social care professionals asking the right questions may help many of those people identify themselves as unpaid carers. Something was mentioned to me the other day that perhaps the situation needs to be flipped and rather than unpaid carers self identifying that services themselves need to be more proactive in identifying carers. The House of Lords has recommended that there should be a duty of care upon the NHS to identify carers and support them while the person they care for is in hospital and throughout the discharge process and once identified at admission/discharge carers could then be added to the register.

Information to make a start on a carers register is already available via the DWP, GP surgery carers registers and information provided by carers during grant applications and also the application for the first round of covid vaccines, which if I'm not mistaken, also included an option for your details to be included on any future register.

I don't know if it is at all possible, but prior to the petition being put before the committee on Monday 6th February I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter further with committee members or even have the opportunity to present my thoughts at the committee meeting itself.

Further to my meeting with Andy Pithouse I have also requested a meeting with Julie Morgan herself and am currently awaiting her office to get back to me with a proposed date to discuss this matter and others.