



Carers Trust Wales response to the Finance Committee call for information – Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2016-17

05 January 2016

About Carers Trust Wales

Carers Trust Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Finance Committee's call for information on the Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2016-17. Carers Trust Wales is part of Carers Trust, a major new charity for, with and about carers.

Carers Trust Wales works across Wales to improve support, services and recognition for the 370,000 carers in Wales living with the challenges of caring unpaid for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems. With our Network Partners, who are local service providers across Wales, we aim to ensure that information, advice and practical support are available to all carers.

Our strategic aims are to

- Raise the profile of carers and the caring role
- Support the growth and development of solutions for carers
- Influence society to improve carers' lives
- Work with local partners to develop a strong network

Together with our network partners, we provide access to desperately-needed breaks, information and advice, education, training and employment opportunities – working with 20,000 carers a year in Wales. Our network partners benefit from the provision of grants, advice documents and reports to improve carers' services. We give carers and young carers avenues to speak to someone and make their voices heard, offline via our carers' services and young carers' schemes and online via our interactive websites.

Our vision is a world where the role and contribution of unpaid carers is recognised and they have access to the quality support and services they need to live their own lives. With carers' needs, choices and voices at the heart of everything we do, we strive to ensure that the enormous contribution they make to society and to those they care for is fully recognised, appreciated and valued.

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Overview

1. There are at least 370,000 carers in Wales providing valuable unpaid care. Enabling carers to maintain their own well-being and the well-being of those they care for through carer-focused services is essential in promoting a healthier, more equal Wales.
2. The research and evidence base clearly demonstrates that support and services for carers plays a vital part in speeding up transfers in care, avoiding hospital admissions and safeguarding the NHS in Wales from increased and expensive demand.
3. Despite this, services for carers, including holistic information, advice and support services and regulated care services intended to provide carers with a break, are under mounting financial pressure and at increased risk of failure or closure. This is a result of the ongoing downward pressure on local authority budgets. The draft budget does not alleviate our concerns that the existing services for carers are at risk and there is a lack of investment in services for carers.
4. Carers Trust Wales recognises that the Welsh Government has finite resources and that difficult decisions have to be made. However, we believe there is a lack of focus or clarity on Wales' 370,000 carers in the budget. It is just not clear which funding is intended to support carers.
5. For the past three years, local health boards have been funded to deliver upon their carers strategies, developed with local authorities and as required by the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010. It is still not clear in the budget whether this small £1.1million funding to local health boards to implement their carers' strategies will continue, and if not whether it will still be used in other ways to support carers across Wales.
6. A small national investment in support for carers of around £1.4million, similar to Scotland's Short Breaks Fund and delivered by the third sector, would secure at least 54,000 hours of care to give carers a break, or 2,040 weeks of respite and would provide preventative services to carers that are safeguarded from local authority budget pressures.
7. In April 2016 the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 will come into force. The Act places carers on the same legal footing with the same rights and entitlements as those that they care for. We are concerned that there is not the sufficient resource in place to deliver upon these new rights and entitlements.
8. We are deeply concerned about the implications of the proposed £41million cut to the higher education budget. This funding is used to fund part-time and other priority

education areas. Part-time provision has been under significant pressure in recent years. For many carers part-time is the best option for them to enter higher education, this cut could present further barriers to this already disadvantaged group.

9. There are nearly 12,000 carers under 18 in Wales, Wales has the highest proportion of carers under 18 in the UK. Despite this, there continues to be a lack of identification or support of young carers in schools. Young carers miss or cut short nearly five weeks of school every year. By the time they reach 16 a young carer is more than twice as likely as their peer to be out of education, employment or training. We would welcome the pupil deprivation grant being explicitly extended to this vulnerable and disadvantaged group.
10. **Carers Trust Wales would welcome the opportunity to expand upon this response in an oral evidence session with the Finance Committee.**

Response

1. **What, in your opinion, has been the impact of the Welsh Government's 2015-16 budgets**
 - 1.1 The services carers receive and require are diverse and include a wide range of local and national services. Services include information, advice and support, short breaks, replacement care, palliative care, employment support, training and benefit support.
 - 1.2 The preventative value of these services, both in securing the well-being of individuals, and in avoiding additional costs to local authorities and local health boards, is well-established. For example:
 - A longitudinal study of 100 people with dementia found a 20-fold protective effect of having a co-resident carer when it comes to preventing or delaying residential care admissions¹
 - Carers providing more than 50 hours of care per week are twice as likely

¹ Banerjee, S, Murray, J, Foley, B, Atkins, L, Schneider, J, Mann, A (2003) Predictors of institutionalisation in people with dementia, *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry* 2003, 74,1315–1316.

to report ill health as those not providing care². Wales has the highest proportion of carers providing more than 50 hours of care per week in the UK

- One study found that problems associated with the carer contributed to readmission in 62% of cases³

- 1.3 Last year we expressed concern about the effect that the continuing pressure on local authority budgets would have on services for carers. Unfortunately, the services carers need are under increased and mounting financial pressure. Many local authorities are reducing the rate they are funding regulated care to a point where the provision of quality, third-sector, care is no longer sustainable. Similarly, other services for carers across Wales including services for young carers have had their funded cut or closed entirely.
- 1.4 A key example of this is the carers service provided in Cardiff. This service closed within the past two years as a result of financial pressures and being too exposed to local authority budget pressures. There is now no dedicated carers service in Cardiff.
- 1.5 Last year we welcomed the continued funding through local health boards of the implementation of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 in 2015/16. This amounted to approximately £1.1 million direct to local health boards to deliver their strategies. However, we have been concerned over the lack of accountability and scrutiny over the expenditure of this money.

²

19 Census (2011) Office for National Statistics

³ Williams, E, Fitton, F (1991) Survey of Carers of elderly patients discharged from hospital, *British Journal of General Practice*, 41, 105 –108.

- 2. Looking at the draft budget allocations for 2016-17, do you have any concerns from a strategic, overarching perspective, or about any specific areas?**
- 2.1 Carers Trust Wales recognises the finite resources available to the Welsh Government and the difficult funding decisions that have to be made in light of these resources. However, we believe that despite carers making up at least 12% of the population in Wales, there is a lack of clarity regarding, and prioritisation of, support for carers in the draft budget for 2016-17.
- 2.2 For the past three financial years local health boards have received £1.1million a year to implement the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010. This is one of the only specific national sources of funding for carers through local health boards or local authorities.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government has not made it clear whether the £1.1million currently used to support carers will continue into the next financial year. It does not appear to be possible to tell from the draft budget whether this funding will or will not continue.
- 2.4 Similarly, the continuing and increasing downward pressure on local authority budgets, which is proposed to be a cut of £114 million of the local government funding line in the MEG in the draft budget, will exacerbate the difficult environment in which local services for carers are operating. Wales is approaching a point where an increasing number of local services for carers will have to close. As demonstrated above, the evidence base on the value of these services is well-established and robust. The loss of these preventative, community resources will have a significant impact on the well-being of carers and the demand on local authority and local health board services.
- 2.5 It's worth noting that a small national investment in support for carers of around £1.4million, similar to Scotland's Short Breaks Fund and delivered by the third sector, would secure at least 54,000 hours of care to give carers a break, or 2,040 weeks of respite. This would enable the modest

but vital provision of additional preventative services to carers which are safeguarded from local authority budget pressures⁴.

- 2.6 We are also concerned about the proposed cut of £41 million to the higher education budget line. This budget is used by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to deliver and fund a range of provision including part-time provision. The proposals in the draft budget will inevitably place considerable pressure upon the institutional learning and teaching grant distributed by HEFCW in respect of part-time undergraduate students.
- 2.7 We know that for many carers, part-time is the best option that most effectively meets their needs and provides the flexibility they require⁵.
- 2.8 This cut could have profound implications of the viability of quality part-time provision that meets the needs of part-time students, making it more difficult for a group of students who already face significant barriers in accessing higher education to enter and stay in higher education.
- 2.9 While we welcome the continued (and increased) funding for the Pupil Deprivation Grant, increasing to £1,150 per eligible pupil, we are keen to ensure that this support reaches Wales' nearly 12,000 carers under the age of 18. Young carers face multiple barriers in attaining in school. The picture across Wales is varied and there is no consistent approach to identifying and supporting young carers, despite Wales having the highest proportion of carers under the age of 18 in the UK.
- 2.10 On average, young carers miss or cut short 48 days a year, that's nearly five school weeks a year. A quarter of young carers aged 14-16 reported

⁴ You can read more about our proposal for a Carer Well-being Fund in Wales in our manifesto:

https://www.carers.org/sites/default/files/carers_trust_wales_manifesto_english_web_final.pdf

⁵ NUS Wales & The OU in Wales, 'It's About Time'

<http://www.open.ac.uk/wales/sites/www.open.ac.uk.wales/files/files/ecms/wales-pa/web-content/It's-About-Time-2014-English.pdf>

being bullied in school as a result of their caring role⁶.

- 2.11 By the time they reach 16, a young carer is more than twice as likely as their peer to be out of education, employment or training⁷.
- 2.12 We would welcome the Pupil Deprivation Grant being extended to young carers, or the identification of young carers among the eligible groups forming part of the existing guidance for the Pupil Deprivation Grant. It's estimated that only around 60% of young carers are already in receipt of the Pupil Deprivation Grant as recipients of free school meals.

3. What expectations do you have of the 2016-17 draft budget proposals? How financially prepared is your organisation for the 2016-17 financial year, and how robust is your ability to plan for future years?

- 3.1 Carers Trust Wales is well-prepared for the 2016-17 financial year, and is able to plan for future years. However, our network partners, which are local services aimed at supporting carers, are currently facing a difficult, pressured funding environment that places their sustainability and viability at risk.
- 3.2 A 2011 report found commissioning for carers could equate to a saving of almost £4 for every £1 invested⁸. Failure to sustain existing services for carers, and invest in additional services for carers, will place additional pressures on local authorities and local health boards as well as risk the physical and mental well-being of carers and those that they care for.
- 3.3 Many of our network partners deliver regulated care that provides carers with a vital break from their caring responsibilities. The hourly unit cost that

⁶ https://www.carers.org/sites/default/files/ctw_time_to_be_heard_english_web.pdf

⁷ Audit Commission (July 2010), *Against the Odds: Re-engaging young people in education, employment and training*. Available online: <http://socialwelfare.bl.uk/subject-areas/services-client-groups/children-young-people/auditcommission/13593720100707-characteristicsofyoungpeopleneetforagainsttheodds.pdf>

⁸ Conochie, G (2011) *Supporting Carers: The Case for Change*; London: The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care.

local authorities commission this care at has been increasingly squeezed making it difficult for many charities that prioritise quality, consistency and training to survive. This pressure is largely the result of shrinking local authority budgets. Future developments including the National Living Wage only add to these pressures.

- 3.4 The UK Homecare Association (UKHCA) has calculated that the minimum price that care can be sustainably delivered at is £16.16 per hour⁹, yet the rates paid by local authorities vary from £11.67 to £16.24. With the introduction of the National Living Wage, the minimum price care can be delivered at will increase to £16.70.

4. The Committee are would like to focus on a number of specific areas in the scrutiny of the budget, do you have any specific comments on the areas identified below?

- **Preparation for the Wales Bill**
- **Local health board financial arrangements**
- **Approach to preventative spending and how is this represented in resource allocation (Preventative spending = spending which focuses on preventing problems and eases future demand on services by intervening early)**
- **Sustainability of public services, innovation and service transformation**
- **Welsh Government policies to reduce poverty and mitigate welfare reform**
- **Impact of the Welsh Government's legislative programme and whether its implementation is sufficiently resourced**
- **Scrutiny of Welsh language, equalities and sustainability**

Approach to preventative spending and how is this represented in resource allocation

Impact of the Welsh Government's legislative programme and whether its implementation is sufficiently resourced

⁹ http://www.ukhca.co.uk/pdfs/AMPFHC_150719.pdf

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- 4.1 We do not feel that the value that services for carers and services for carers play in preventing additional demand on local authorities and local health boards is sufficiently recognised in the draft budget. Carers contribute £8billion worth of care every year in Wales¹⁰, and as outlined above the research and evidence base is clear on the value in investing in carers.
- 4.2 Although we welcome the legislative emphasis on preventative services through the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015, we do not feel that this emphasis is clear in the draft budget for 2016/17. Many of the existing preventative services for carers operating across Wales are operating in a challenging, pressured environment that is placing long-term sustainability at risk.
- 4.3 Similarly, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 broadens the definition of a carer and places carers on the same legal footing as those they care for. This broader definition coupled with greater rights for carers will inevitably lead to a greater demand on local authorities for carer assessments and other forms of support. This does not seem to be reflected in the budget. Without a wider cross-government approach to investing in, recognising and supporting carers, then support for carers will continue falter impacting on the long-term viability of health and social care in Wales.

Welsh Government policies to reduce poverty and mitigate welfare reform

4.4 Many carers are unaware of the extra financial support they are entitled to. In 2010, a working paper by the Department for Work and Pensions estimated that uptake of Carer's Allowance across the UK was around 65%. We believe that a small funded campaign by the Welsh Government to encourage uptake of Carer's Allowance, and raise awareness of eligibility for Carer's Allowance, could improve the well-being of many carers across Wales.

¹⁰ <http://www.carersuk.org/wales/news/vale-of-unpaid-care-in-wales>

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