

Informed Carers

Cwm Taf Carers Information
and Consultation Strategy

2012 – 2015



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Health Board



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
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1. Foreword

Welcome to the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure Information and Consultation Strategy for Cwm Taf Local Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

About the Proposed Measure

Cwm Taf Local Health Board has worked collaboratively with both Local Authorities to develop this document. Colleagues from the Third Sector and Carers themselves have also been a part of the multi agency steering group in the development of the Strategy. We have listened to the views of Carers of all ages to identify what is needed to improve services, and together we will implement the Strategy and improve provision of support to Carers and the Cared for. This will ensure that Carers are involved in decisions that affect their lives and that they receive relevant and timely information.

Purpose

The Carers Measure is a statutory requirement on the NHS and Local Authorities in Wales to work in partnership to prepare, publish and implement an Information and Consultation Strategy for Carers by October 31st 2012. Each Local Health Board in Wales and the Local Authorities which fall within their area must work together in preparing and publishing a Strategy setting out how they will work together to support Carers in their caring role.

Summary of key points

- There is now a new duty on Health and Local Authorities to work with partners to develop local information strategies that will ensure Carers get “appropriate information and advice”.
- There is a new duty on the NHS and Local Authorities to actively engage with partners to involve Carers when making decisions about the provision of services to, or for Carers, or the person cared for. This duty applies to the overall planning, commissioning and delivery of local services that affect Carers or the people they look after.

The partnerships are not only with Social Services in the Local Authorities, but should include other areas such as housing, education and leisure. Other partners should include the voluntary and private sectors. The provisions of the Measure encompass Carers of all ages, including young people under 18 who are caring.

Engagement with Carers

The development of this Information and Consultation Strategy has included the involvement of Carers at all stages, including representation on task groups and in workshops. Carers will continue to be engaged throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everybody, including Carers, for taking the time to participate in the engagement and consultation process. We have taken account of all the comments made as part of the exercise in the development of the Strategy. We will also ensure that we keep you informed of progress in implementing the new Strategy. This will only be a success if we all commit to work together to deliver our shared aims and action plan which puts Carers at the heart of everything we do to support them.



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2. Carers Definition

Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure Definition

The Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 defines a Carer as:

An individual, whether an adult or a child, who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for:

- A child who is disabled within the meaning of Part 3 of the Children Act 1989,
or
- An individual aged 18 or over

“Carer” does not include an individual who provides or intends to provide that care:

- By virtue of a contract of employment or other contract of any person,
or
- As a volunteer for anybody (whether or not incorporated)

Cwm Taf Carers Measure Definition:

For the purpose of this Strategy the definition is:

“Carers look after family, partners or friends in need of help and support to achieve independent living, because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide can be physical, social or emotional. This definition includes Young Carers and Parent Carers of disabled children. The term Carer includes people who may or may not be a relative and who may or may not be living with the person they care for. The care they provide is not part of an employment relationship and is unpaid except for Carers related allowances”.

The Carers Measure Strategy definition was developed from the local Carers Strategies and through consultation with Carers and professionals. It was felt that this definition provided a more detailed description of what a Carer is and provides a robust explanation for individuals who have limited knowledge of Carers. It should be recognised that the Carers Measure definition is designed to be comprehensive in order to encompass the training needs of all staff to enable them to recognise Carers. The Local Health Board (LHB) Training & Education Group was part of the consultation process and agreed with the rationale.

Young Carer Definition

The following definition of a Young Carer was developed by a national group of Young Carers, including Carers from the Cwm Taf area, for the Welsh Government and is the definition used in our strategy:

‘A Young Carer takes responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, elderly, experiencing mental distress or affected by substance use, or has substantial responsibility for caring for a sibling.

A Young Carer could be from any family and is under 18. They may be providing all of the care or helping someone else provide care. The care they provide is not only the things you see such as changing bandages, cooking, cleaning or helping someone to use the toilet or have a wash, but also things you can’t see, such as how the Young Carer feels or thinks because of their caring role.

The care tasks undertaken by a Young Carer exceed what an ‘average’ child of their age would undertake e.g. a teenager helping with some housework, a child spending time playing or sitting with a younger sibling’.

Carers aged between 18 and 25 are often referred to as Young Adult Carers and their needs will also be considered in the development and implementation of this Strategy.

3. Carers: an Overview

The 2011 census shows that there are 370, 230 Carers in Wales. This has increased by 9% since the 2001 census. Carers provide 97% of all care in the community

Many Carers live in the same house as the person they care for. Others live nearby and visit regularly. Some live a distance away and visit weekly or monthly. Some provide care for a limited period of time or as part of an informal family support network. Some provide care for more than one person. Caring often impacts on the whole family, not just on one person.

- We recognise that there is no typical Carer. Carers are individuals who may not see themselves as Carers, but above all as a parent, child, wife, husband, partner, friend or neighbour. Carers circumstances vary enormously, as can the type of support they give. For example, a Carer supporting someone with a fluctuating mental health problem may provide emotional support. Someone caring for a person who is sick, disabled or frail may provide personal care (i.e. help with washing) and assist with practical tasks.
- Caring can be a gradual process or it can happen overnight. For example, someone can be plunged into caring when a partner has a car crash or a stroke. Other people move more gradually into a caring role when a relative's health deteriorates over time. This can be seen as part and parcel of family life. They don't recognise that as the person they look after needs increasingly more support; they are becoming a Carer.
- Caring for someone can be both physically exhausting and emotionally stressful. Carers often feel isolated, unsupported and alone. Many may themselves have a stress-related illness or long-term health problem as a result of caring without adequate support. Analysis of the 2001 census shows that Carers who provide over 50 hours care per week are twice as likely to suffer from poor health as other people. The Office of National Statistics found that Carers who do not get a break are twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems as those that do.
- Carers often experience a lack of financial security because of the cost of caring. There are particular difficulties for Carers accessing support to enable them to balance caring with work. We recognise that accessing information and advice at an early stage gives Carers choice and control over their lives and often means that Carers can continue to work.
- From research, we know that Carers who do not get the right information often give up work to look after their relative and as a result pay heavy financial, social and health penalties.
- When people are first faced with a caring situation, it is really important that they are given the advice and information they need as quickly as possible so that they have access to help and support, making better decisions for themselves and their families. Helping people to realise they are Carers as early as possible helps ensure that they don't miss out on essential information, advice and help for years because they simply don't realise they are Carers. They also need on-going information as their caring role may need to change over time.
- The importance of Carers and Young Carers cannot be underestimated and it is vital that priority is given to ensuring that this Carers Information and Consultation Strategy has the necessary commitment from professionals across Health, Local Authorities, the Third and Private Sectors.



4. Cwm Taf Population Profile

In order to develop the Strategy and the action plan, it is important to understand the local population, both in terms of Carers and the people they are caring for.

Demography

- Cwm Taf LHB area covering 3% of the land mass of Wales is the 2nd smallest and 2nd most densely populated LHB area in Wales after Cardiff and Vale University LHB area.
- In 2008, the total population of Cwm Taf was 289,900 – 234,400 in Rhondda Cynon Taf and 55,600 in Merthyr Tydfil.
- Population projections for people aged 65 and over, show an expected increase from 48,200 in 2008 to 72,300 in 2033 and for people aged 85 and over from 6,200 to 14,000. This has implications for the number of people who may need care and the age of Carers themselves.

Life expectancy

- In Cwm Taf the average life expectancy levels have steadily increased over the past ten years. Latest health needs assessments statistics show us that in Cwm Taf life expectancy at birth for men is 75.4 years and for women 79.9 years (2005-2007). However this is substantially below the Welsh national average.

Healthy life expectancy

- Healthy life expectancy (HLE) is an estimate of how long people can be expected to live in 'good' or 'fairly good' health. The latest available HLE estimate for Wales is 67.7 years. This means that people in Wales are currently estimated to live to just under 68 years in good health.
- However, in Cwm Taf, people have fewer years of good health - the figure for HLE for Merthyr Tydfil Local Authority is 61.7 years meaning that people living in Merthyr Tydfil are estimated to live for just under 62 years in good health while the figure for Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority is 64 years of age.

Factors Effecting Health and Wellbeing

- In Cwm Taf 37.4% of the population live in areas that are the most deprived in Wales and 9.5% live in the least deprived areas. However, in Wales as a whole, only 19.1% of the population live in the most deprived areas and 20% in the least deprived.
- This means that the level of deprivation in Cwm Taf is considerably greater than the rest of Wales, resulting in a higher burden of ill health. This has implications for both Carers and the cared for.

Mental Health and Mental Illness

- In Cwm Taf 13% of the adult population reported being treated for a mental illness compared to the average for Wales of 10%. With the development of the new Mental Health Measure there are now improved mental health services focusing on early intervention and prevention which we will promote to Carers and their families.

People with a disability

- In Cwm Taf the annual population survey (2009) shows that there are 25% of people of working age with disabilities, compared to the Wales average of 22%
- The economic inactivity rate for people of a working age with disabilities in Cwm Taf is 64% which is considerably higher than the Welsh average of 54%

Older People

- Merthyr Tydfil shows the highest proportion of the population aged 65 and over reporting limiting long term illness in Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second highest.
- The proportion of people aged 75 and over who live alone in Merthyr Tydfil is the second highest in Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taf is the ninth highest.
- In 2005 Merthyr Tydfil had the highest proportion of people aged 65+ admitted to hospital on an emergency basis in Wales; Rhondda Cynon Taf was the fourth highest.

5. Carer Profile in Cwm Taf

- In 2001 13% of the household population in Wales provided unpaid care for family members, friends or neighbours
- In Merthyr Tydfil 12.6% of the usual residents provide unpaid care. This represents an absolute increase of 1 , but the proportion of the population has remained the same as the 2001 Census
- In 2001 12.6% of the population in Merthyr Tydfil and 12.5% in Rhondda Cynon Taf provide care to a family member, friend or neighbour

Breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Cwm Taf

Table 5.1

Local Authority	Provides care 1-19 hours	Provides care 20-49 hours	Provides care 50+	Total number of Carers per area
Merthyr Tydfil	3,785	1,098	2,159	7,042
Rhondda Cynon Taf	16,363	3,888	8,747	28,998
Total	20,148	4,986	10,906	36,040

* Data taken from the Census 2001

Table 5.2

Local Authority	Provides care 1-19 hours	Provides care 20-49 hours	Provides care 50+	Total number of Carers per area
Merthyr Tydfil	3,779	1,285	2,363	7,427
Rhondda Cynon Taf	15,671	4,580	9,389	29,640
Total	19,450	5,865	11,752	37,067

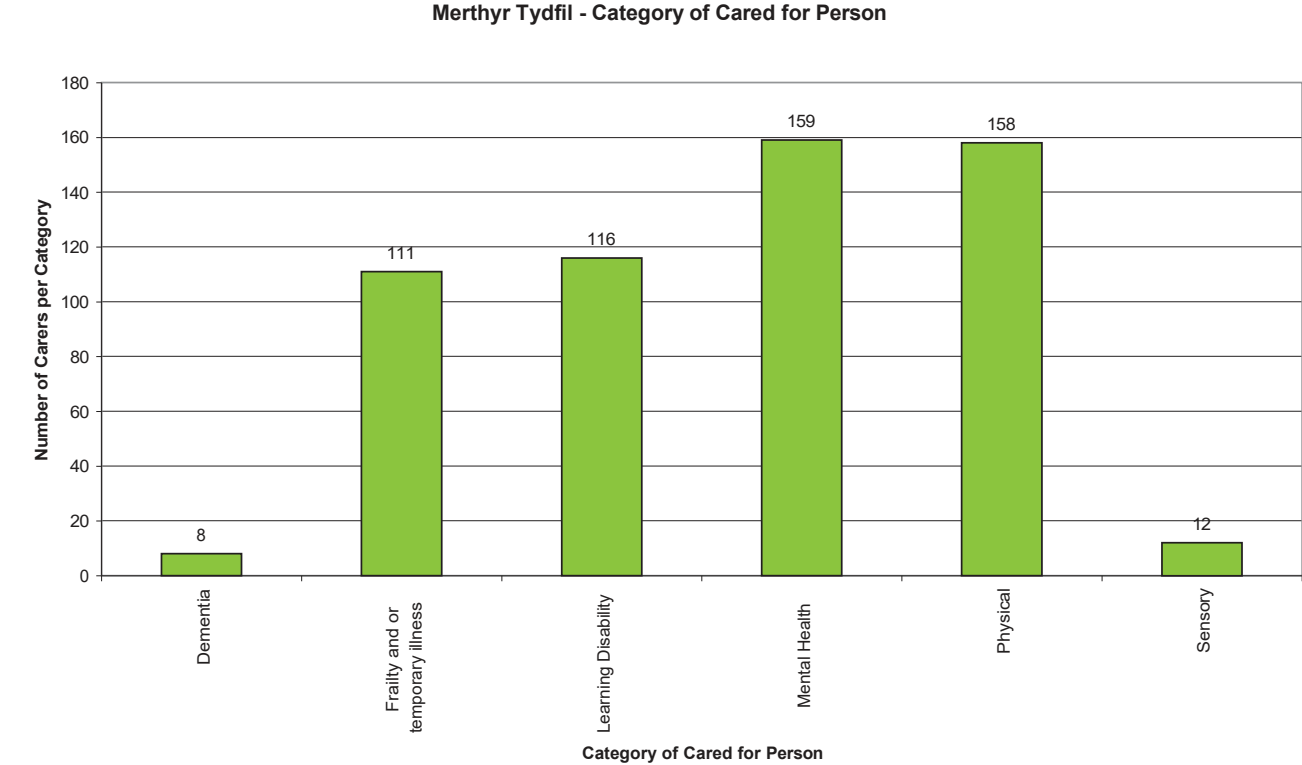
* Data taken from the Census 2011

- The 2011 census figures showed that in RCT there were 29,640 Carers and in Merthyr there were 7,427 Carers. The combined total of Carers in the Cwm Taf area is 37,067. A total of 11,752 Carers provide over 50 hours of care per week. This has increased by 9% in Merthyr Tydfil and 7% Rhondda Cynon Taf since 2001 Census. This evidences that Cwm Taf Carers are providing more substantial care, which can often impact on the health of the Carer.

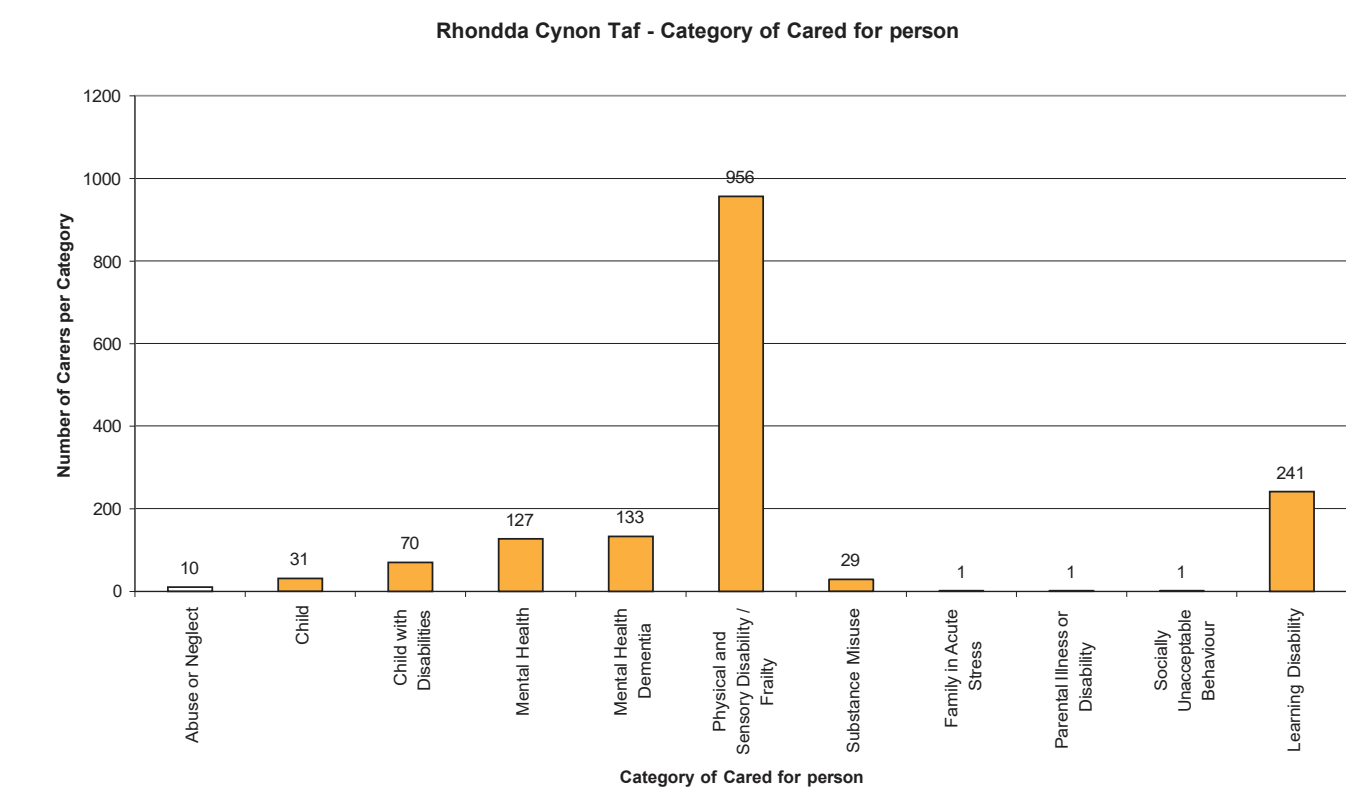


- It is possible that the number of Carers within Cwm Taf LHB is even higher as the 2001 census data indicates,65,055 people reported they had a long term limiting illness yet only 32,497 reported they were Carers. Whilst not everyone with a limiting long term illness would have a Carer it is surprising the number of people reporting themselves as a Carer is not higher.
- The numbers of people living in the Cwm Taf LHB area from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups is statistically comparatively small. However, there are likely to be 300 – 500 BME (2% of carer population) Carers living locally. As part of the Strategy, Cwm Taf LHB and Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Councils will be liaising with the Multi Agency and Diversity Forums to promote Carers Awareness and increase the support available to BAME.

Category of Cared for in Merthyr Tydfil (known to the Authority)
Table 5.3



Category of Cared for Rhondda Cynon Taf (known to the Authority)
Table 5.4



Future Impact for Cwm Taf Carers

The Census 2011 figures show us that the amount of time that Carers spend caring for someone has increased sharply since the 2001 census. Undoubtedly, with an ageing population this will increase further over the next 10 years, thus placing more demand on Carers to provide more extensive, regular and substantial care.

Along with this, statistics show that Mental Illness has a higher prevalence in Cwm Taf compared to the national average and also the healthy life expectancy is many years below the national average, which further suggests that Carers in Cwm Taf will be caring earlier and for longer periods.

It is critical that Cwm Taf Carers are recognised throughout the life of their caring role in order for them to receive the support needed to carry out their caring role effectively with minimal impact on their own health.

6. Young Carers in Cwm Taf

As with Adult Carers, there is no typical Young Carer. They may be in a lone-parent household looking after a mother with, for example, multiple sclerosis; they may be in a two-parent family but still be the primary Carer for the sick or disabled parent(s); they may be supporting a brother or sister with special needs. Many Young Carers are the primary Carers – the only person providing care – while others share the responsibility with other family members. They have needs which are unique to them as children and young people. Young Carers have adult caring responsibilities while having the legal status of children.

The 2001 census estimated that there are 175,000 Young Carers in the UK, including 13,000 caring for over 50 hours per week. However, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers indicates that “the real number of young Carers is much higher because the census makes no mention of alcohol or drug problems and many Young Carers are ‘hidden’ due to the stigma attached to these conditions”

Examples of Young Carer Tasks

Young Carers perform a range of caring tasks such as:

- **Domestic tasks** such as cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing
- **General care** such as nursing type tasks – giving medication, changing dressings, assisting with mobility
- **Emotional support** – observing care recipients emotional state, providing supervision or boosting the morale of the cared for
- **Intimate care** – washing, dressing and assisting with toilet requirements
- **Child care** – helping with younger siblings in addition to other caring tasks
- **Other** – helping with household and other administration tasks, bill paying, accompanying to hospital etc.

The Impact of Caring

There are positive effects of caring that are reported by Young Carers themselves such as learning practical skills, feeling good about themselves because they are supporting someone close to them and an increased sense of responsibility. However Young Carers often miss out on many everyday activities that other young people take for granted. The impact of this can include:

- Educational problems (Young Carers are often not recognised by professional staff)
- Bullying
- Limited opportunities, horizons and aspirations
- Limited opportunities for social and leisure activities
- A lack of understanding from peers and restricted friendships
- Isolation, a feeling of exclusion and being outsiders
- 'Stigma by association' related to physical disability and in particular mental health
- Fearing what professionals might do
- Living with silence and fears
- Health and emotional difficulties including self harm
- Unexpected and early rise to adulthood often resulting in difficulties in transition to becoming an adult

Cwm Taf Young Carer Profile

The 2001 census provided the following statistics relating to Young Carers in RCT showing that there are 948 Young Carers living locally; 180 aged 5-11, 430 aged 12-15 and 338 aged 16-17.

A survey carried out by the BBC /University of Nottingham, published in 2010, revealed that over 700,000 children in the UK could be Young Carers. This is 4 times as many as previously thought. If the survey reflects the UK as a whole, this figure could be more than 4000 in Cwm Taf.

RCT Young Carers Assessments are carried out by the Young Carers Assessment Officer. In Merthyr Tydfil Young Carers Assessments are undertaken by Barnardos Young Carers Project.

Young Carer Population in Merthyr Tydfil

Merthyr Tydfil's Young Carer's Project works with Young Carers aged between 8 and 18 years of age; the mean age is 13 years old. The following figures represent Young Carers known to the service 2011-12. (Previous years figures are not currently available however, can be produced on request)

Table 5.5

Gender	
Female	42
Male	35
Total	77

Table 5.6

Needs of Cared for Person	
Disability	59
Mental Health	14
Substance Misuse	4
Total	77

Note: these are the main reasons for caring and not the sole reason, for example, some cared for individuals may have both a disability and a mental health issue; this is not reflected in the figures.

"Merthyr Tydfil Young Carers Service supported 77 Young Carers in 2011-12. This number reflects only the number of service users being actively supported by the service within that period. A further group of children and young people are known to the service, through previously accessing this, who are still Young Carers but are able to cope with their responsibilities without the support of the service and so are not current service users."

Young Carer population in Rhondda Cynon Taf

During the last 5 years, 590 referrals have been received by the Young Carer's Service. Of those, 442 have received a Young Carer's Assessment and subsequent services. The following figures represent Young Carers known to the service 2011-2012

Table 5.7

Age	
3 - 11	69
12 – 15	109
16 – 17	53
Total	231

Table 5.8

Gender	
Female	106
Male	125
Total	231

Table 5.9

Needs of Cared for Person	
Mental health	81
Physical disability	95
Effects of cancer	9
Substance misuse	14
Sibling	32
Total	231

Note: these are the main reasons for caring and not the sole reason, for example, some cared for individuals may have both a disability and a mental health issue; this is not reflected in the figures.

Table 5.10

Rhondda Cynon Taf Referral Source	
Childrens services	218
Adults services	96
Education	65
Word of mouth	64
Family support services	59
Carers project and voluntary organisations	53
Health	35
Total	590

Rhondda Cynon Taf Young Carers Strategy

Rhondda Cynon Taf has a Young Carers Strategy that has been in place since 2007, including an updated Action plan for 2010-2013. The action plan has 5 main aims:

- To ensure that Young Carers are identified and their needs are acknowledged
- To ensure Young Carers aren't expected to carry out inappropriate levels of care by providing each Young Carer with an assessment of their needs
- To ensure that Young Carers receive the support, information and advice they need, when it is needed
- To ensure that all Young Carers have a voice regarding the services they receive and the issues that affect them
- To ensure that staff in educational establishments are able to support Young Carers to achieve their full potential

Current provision for Cwm Taf Young Carers

Merthyr Tydfil

Whilst there is not a dedicated Young Carers Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil, Merthyr Tydfil Carers Strategy 2012 -2017 ensures the needs of Young Carers are met in each aim including:

- Raising the profile of Young Carers through improved identification arrangements so that Young Carers will be known to agencies, including schools, at an earlier stage.
- Developing an employment pathway for Young Carers by linking support services to the Transition into Employment project.
- Support the training needs of Young Carers to take full advantage of all opportunities for educational achievement and life successes.
- All secondary Schools to record whether a pupil is a Young Carer.
- To host 2 training sessions to support better identification of Young Carers for professionals who have regular contact with young people outside of the school setting annually.
- At least 50% of recorded Young Carers receive support in developing coping skills.
- The project continues to develop systems to ensure that Young Carers are engaged in all decision making processes on issues that affect their lives.

Merthyr Tydfil's Young Carers Project has also developed a strong partnership with Merthyr Tydfil Local Authority Multiple Intervention Assistance (MIA) Team, which demonstrates a 'family focus'.

In addition, work is ongoing with schools. At present each of the four comprehensive schools in Merthyr has a named Young Carers link teacher. The Young Carers Service has also developed and introduced the delivery of a PHSE (Personal Health and Social Education) lesson to all year 7 pupils in these comprehensive schools. This has the dual purpose of identifying hidden Young Carers and reducing the stigma attached to Young Carers.

The project has effective partnership working within the Local Authority to deliver specialised support for Young Carers e.g. working with the Biodiversity Officer to deliver environmental themed activities, Leisure Services to deliver swimming lessons and the Social Care Development Workforce Partnership to deliver training e.g. first aid, food hygiene, etc...

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf has acknowledged that Young Carers are important and need recognition and support. Five years ago the Local Authority appointed a Young Carer's Assessment & Development Worker to sit within Children's Services and act as a central point for all Young Carer's contacts. Since then the service has developed and currently consists of:

- **The Young Carers Assessment & Development Worker** – based within Children's Services and responsible for the Young Carer's Strategy and carrying out all Young Carer's assessments
- **The Young Carers Support Worker** – based within Children's Services and responsible for carrying out individual, intensive support to the most isolated Young Carers
- **The Young Adult Carer Development Worker** – (Big Lottery funded) based within Children's Services and responsible for developing a service to support Young Adult Carers through transition to Adult Carers
- **The Young Carers Project** – Action For Children

The Local Authority commissions the project to support Young Carers needing ongoing support and intervention. The project provides social opportunities for Young Carers as well as individual support and workshops on a range of issues and topics.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Young Carers Project has teamed up with RCT Leisure Services to offer Young Carers up to 60% off the price of Pay as you Play leisure activities. The aim of this is to support the health and wellbeing of Young Carers. The Young Carers Assessment and Development worker also works closely with RCT's Social Care Development Workforce Partnership (SCDWP) and provides training and engagement activities for Young Carers.

Partnership Working for Young Carers

Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Young Carers Services plan to hold joint Young Carer Consultation events in order to further develop the Carers Measure. The first consultation event will take place in March 2013 to consult with Young Carers on the development of the Young Carers Module of the awareness raising e-learning toolkit. Part of the event will be "Team Building". This will bring together the Young Carers from across Cwm Taf, helping them to develop social skills, confidence and self esteem. Their input into the development of the awareness raising e-learning toolkit will be invaluable.

Specific issues for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf

- Referrals are received from a wide range of sources however, referrals from Health are lowest. Therefore, there is a need to raise awareness within Health so that Young Carers are identified and offered support. As part of this Strategy, Cwm Taf Health Board are procuring the 'Young Carer Aware' e-learning package to begin to address this issue and are believed to be the first in Wales to do so.
- Barriers facing Young Carers include being able to access mainstream services, e.g. due to transport and costs.
- Parents unable to attend Parent Evenings
- Capacity of the service – Rhondda Cynon Taf Young Carers Project receives over 100 new referrals each year and each of these requires an assessment of need. If ongoing specialist support is needed for the Young Carer then they are referred onto the Young Carer's project. However, the project only has the capacity to support approximately 30 new Young Carers each year, on top of those that are already engaged.
- Young Carers are regularly consulted about the issues that are affecting them so that work can begin to address these issues. Some of the current issues are:
- They have raised concerns about the lack of understanding by staff in both Primary and Secondary schools. RCT has a high number of Comprehensive schools – 18 in total – and it is difficult for workers to consistently carry out raising awareness activities throughout all the schools.

- Young Carers say they want to speak to professionals, such as their GP, about the condition of the person they care for but don't feel that they are taken seriously. They also need support to understand their parents' mental health but don't know who to ask.
- Transport is an issue across Cwm Taf due to the geography of the area. Young Carers say they find it difficult to get to and from social events because their parents aren't well enough to transport them or because public transport isn't reliable or safe enough for them.
- Young Carers also say that they need all relevant information and contacts in one place so that it is easily accessible. This could be in the form of a booklet or on a website for example.

Not all of the above issues will be addressed by the Carers Information and Consultation Strategy, some already sit in the local Carers Strategies and will be addressed within those action plans

7. Young Adult Carers

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Following funding from the 'Big Lottery', the Young Carer's service has expanded to provide services to Young Adult Carers from 18 - 25 years old. These 18 - 25 year olds are known as Young Adult Carers and have specific support needs during this transition phase from Young to Adult Carer.

The 'Young Adult Carers in the UK' report by Princess Royal Trust for Carers suggests that 5 - 7% of that age group are Young Adult Carers. Using the census (2001) information, it suggests there are 1500 Young Adult Carers in RCT. The service is currently supporting 35 Young Adult Carers aged 18 - 25; 27 Female, 11 Male.

The work so far has concentrated on raising awareness of Young Adult Carers to encourage them to identify themselves and gain access to support, as well as reducing their social isolation by organising a programme of residential breaks.

Merthyr Tydfil

At present there is no Young Adult Carer support service in Merthyr Tydfil, therefore limited support is available to signpost Young Adult Carers when they reach 18 years of age. Options to develop this service will be explored during the life of the Strategy.



8. Strategic Links

Both Local Authorities, together with the LHB, have existing multi-agency Carers Strategies for service development and support, which outline the commitment and action plans to achieve their vision statements. The implementation of these Carers Strategies with their robust action plans and accountability ensures that the right level of support is given to Carers through on-going engagement.

The new Carers Measure requires the LHB with its partners to improve the way Carers are identified and signposted to services. The development and implementation of this Information and Consultation Strategy will sit alongside the present Carers Strategies to complement them and is included within the aims of the local Strategies. Health and Third Sector representatives attend each Strategy Group and feed into each of the action plans.

The Health Social Care and Wellbeing (HSCWB) Strategies for both Merthyr Tydfil and RCT 2011-2014, highlight our priorities to Carers and how the LHB and Local Authorities ensure that their independence is maintained. Within the current Health Social Care and Wellbeing plans, Maintaining Independence and recognising Carers of all ages, are identified as priorities and Carers needs are considered and addressed in relation to the outcomes of the plan.

The HSCWB plans and the Children and Young Peoples Plans will be superseded by the Single Integrated Plans for RCT and Merthyr Tydfil (SIP) in April 2013. Importantly, both SIPs have recognised that supporting Carers is a priority. The theme of Promoting Independence makes reference to Carers of all ages and the actions needed to raise awareness and promote the recognition of Carers.

Other Strategic Links are:

- The Cwm Taf Engagement Strategy
- The Older People's Strategy -with an increasingly ageing population it will be vital to ensure that links with Older People and Carers are maintained. This is particularly important as it is predicted that there will be a higher prevalence of dementia in Cwm Taf, thus impacting on both Health and Social Care Services
- Cwm Taf LHB, and Merthyr Tydfil CBC and RCT CBC Equality Schemes and action plans
- Cwm Taf LHB Mental Health Strategic Framework
- Families First Plans
- Cwm Taf Local Safeguarding Childrens Business Plans
- The Operational Plans for Cwm Taf LHB and RCT and Merthyr Tydfil CBC's
- Policies and Procedures for the LHB and L.A's

All the above Strategic Links recognise Carers as equal partners in care. Each Strategy seeks to recognise and promote the rights of Carers.

9. Present Carer Services

Present Provision

Both Merthyr and RCT have Carers Support Projects and Young Carers Support Projects. These services have been developed through consultation with Carers in order to shape their delivery to meet Carers needs. The range of services currently provided by both Local Authorities and the LHB includes:

- Training for Carers, from manual handling through to stress management.
- Access to further education courses.
- Information and Consultation events to ensure that Carers can access relevant and timely information and inform service direction.
- Information resources, such as Carers A-Z, Young Carer's information guide, regular newsletters and leaflets made available in the community and accessible online.
- Carers support groups and forums run by the Local Authority but also supported by the LHB to enable Carers of all ages to meet and share experiences.
- In RCT there is a Carers Freephone line (0808 100 1801) which is available from 9-5pm, 5 days a week to take people's queries and signpost or refer Carers on for further support. There is also a Project Officer within Adult Services and a dedicated Young Carers Assessment and Development Worker, a Young Carers Support Worker and a Young Adult Carers Development Worker, all located within Children's Services. In addition to this there is a Parent Carer Worker who supports parents of disabled children and young people up to the age of 25.
- In Merthyr Tydfil there is a Carers Development Officer and other Carer support groups such as Merthyr Tydfil branch of Carers Wales, Barnardos for Young Carers and Parent Carer Groups.
- Within both Local Authorities the Carers Officers are available to discuss, advise and signpost Carers as required.
- The LHB Patient Experience Officers based at both Royal Glamorgan and Prince Charles hospitals signpost and support Carers to access appropriate services and information resources.
- As part of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure (2010) service developments, Carers needs will be taken into consideration and their contribution to the overall care package will be reflected within the assessment and care planning documentation.
- Work is being undertaken to promote the use of Carers Champions within GP settings. Whilst 25 GP practices have Carers Champions already, it is recognised that training is required to be able to support the Champions in their work. In July, the GP Continuous Professional Development (CPD) event will include a presentation on the Carers Measure to ensure that we raise the profile in a "training environment". This will be followed up by a Practice Managers Event and further training for the Carers Champions.
- Work has been undertaken to identify Carers in nursing documentation and further training will be needed to ensure that following identification of the Carer, the necessary signposting to appropriate services is given if required. A snapshot of in patient nursing documentation was completed at ward level in August 2012 as part of the development of the Strategy in order to provide an insight of the appropriate signposting upon identification of a Carer. It was identified that further training is required for nursing staff in order to develop their knowledge of services available to Carers resulting in improved support for Carers and signposting to appropriate services.

- A national nursing group has been established with the remit of reviewing present documentation and ensuring consistency with reference to the identification of Carers; Cwm Taf is represented on this group. A representative will be part of the Training Task Group to ensure that training is targeted to relevant staff groups.
- Regular training is provided within both Local Authorities regarding the skills, knowledge and approach required to undertake holistic person centred assessment and care planning. This is inclusive of identifying Carers, their needs and the support they provide to the cared for person. As part of all assessments and reviews and in line with existing legislation and guidance, Carers are informed of their right to a Carers needs assessment.
- Social Services directorates in both Local Authorities carry out Carers needs assessments, with Merthyr undertaking 186 and RCT carrying out 891 in 2011 – 2012. Carers will continue to be involved in the needs assessments, reviews and care planning of the individuals they care for in line with both unified assessment and the care programme approach, whether the assessment or review is undertaken by a health or social care employee (where joint teams apply).
- Cwm Taf LHB operates a flexible working policy which supports their staff who are Carers to maintain their caring role.
- Both Local Authorities are working with the Open University Carers Project to provide courses to both Carers and Past Carers free of charge. These courses aim to reduce isolation, develop self-esteem and provide a basis for which further study can be sought. Undertaking these courses enable Carers to gain transferable skills which can support them back into employment.

10. Carers and Employment

We recognise that Carers and Past Carers often feel isolated and unsupported and we need to ensure that they are able to live as full a life as possible with minimum disruption to both their work and home lives. When we engaged with Carers we were told that we need to support Carers to remain in employment and where appropriate help support them to enter or re-enter the workforce, whilst being mindful that unemployed Carers often lack confidence and self esteem. Carers requests for help in developing CV's and interview skills was noted as part of the consultation process.

Whilst it is not appropriate for all issues relating to employment to be dealt with in this Information and Consultation Strategy, we will work with partners and Job Centre Plus to ensure that the necessary skills are developed and information provided. This will be incorporated into the two SIP action plans which identify worklessness as a priority.

This is particularly important with the potential impact of the welfare reforms and the increase in support which will be required.

11. Consultation and Engagement of Carers

Cwm Taf recognise the importance of patients and Carers getting their voices heard and that both Carers and service users are engaged and consulted where possible to ensure that their needs are being met. It is essential that Carers are recognised as key partners in care and that their specific Carer perspective is invaluable when developing future services and service direction.

Carers in Cwm Taf are involved in service review, quality assurance, evaluation and development of services. Current opportunities for involvement include:

- Annual quality assurance questionnaires to Carers regarding homecare and sitting services in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil
- Carer and Young Carer consultation events were held to consider the implications of strategic or commissioning related decisions by both Local Authorities
- Consultation with Carers of all ages through face-to-face, group work and questionnaires are carried out by both Carers Support Projects and Young Carers Projects and are held throughout the year to ensure Carers needs are identified and met by the service.
- Within Cwm Taf LHB, Carers are able to participate in service reviews, the LHB Stakeholder Reference Group and various forums and planning groups such as the Patient Experience Forum. They can also attend consultation events and relevant engagement events. Additionally, a non-executive member of the Board also has a remit of Carers Champion
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority encourages the engagement of Carers and Service Users through their Carers and Service Users Involvement in Training (CSUIT). This is a 6 week course which provides Carers and Service Users with the necessary skills and knowledge in order for them to become involved in the training of professionals. Through Carers participating in training delivery, this further allows awareness raising of Carers amongst professionals, presenting them with 'real life' Carers and enabling them to gain knowledge of the needs of Carers and the barriers they may face.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project work with the Social Care Development Workforce Partnership (SCDWP) to provide Carer representatives who sit on recruitment panels for Social Care posts as part of the interviewing process. This allows the Carer to provide professional panel members with the 'service users' perspective
- Throughout the development of this Strategy we have involved Carers through consulting with them as a separate group, as well as inviting and encouraging Carers to participate in workshops and task and finish groups. Carers were and are continuously involved in the development and implementation of this Strategy and action plan through representation on the Carers Measure Steering Group. Engagement on the development of the Strategy and the action plan was fed back through a variety of means including face-to-face discussion, group work, presentations and email responses.



Innovative Consultation and Engagement

Consultation has been conducted in a variety of innovative formats, including the “Big Bite” Health and Wellbeing Event. This event is a three day public event held in Ynysangharad Park in Pontypridd. The footfall is approximately 20,000 visitors throughout the weekend and the LHB utilises the event to signpost people to various health and wellbeing services. The LHB coordinates over 50 information stands to signpost the public to health and social care services. In August 2012 the event was used to consult with Carers on the Key Aims of the Carers Measure Information Strategy. This also doubled up as an awareness raising event.

Over 300 people completed questionnaires and the team engaged with Carers and “unidentified” Carers to raise awareness of services and signpost appropriately.

Additionally, in July 2012 a similar event was attended in Merthyr Tydfil (Global Village Event) whereby again over 100 people were consulted about the Carers Measure Information and Consultation Strategy. This event celebrates the differing cultures that are now within the Valley’s communities, thus fulfilling the objective of raising awareness of Carers amongst minority communities.

Across both events over 400 people were approached and consulted on the Carers Measure Strategy. Partnership working is essential in such events and many local service providers, such as MacMillan Cancer Support, Alzheimer’s Society, Journeys (Mental Health), Stroke Association, Drugaid, etc were involved in the dissemination of information to the public.

Carers will continue to be engaged throughout the lifetime of this Strategy and their views and experiences will continue to inform the process.

Further innovative work:

- The Local Health Board in conjunction with “1000 Lives” stories for improvement project have recently established a multi disciplinary team to take and use digital patient stories to drive service change and improvements across the organisation. As a result of this a patient story has been produced to demonstrate the impact that the lack of involvement of the Carer in the care planning process, and a lack of understanding in relation to dementia patients, can have on all concerned.
- A bespoke programme for Carers has been produced by NLIAH (National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare) and has been implemented across Cwm Taf within the Education Programme for Patients.

Partnership Working

Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authorities, in partnership with the Local Health Board, will be holding a Carers Measure consultation and feedback event in March 2013. The aim of this is to raise awareness amongst Carers of the work that is being undertaken as part of the Carers Measure and gain feedback about what has been achieved to date. We will also be demonstrating the Carer Awareness E-learning toolkit which will be used to train staff in the recognition of Carers.

12. What Carers have told us so far

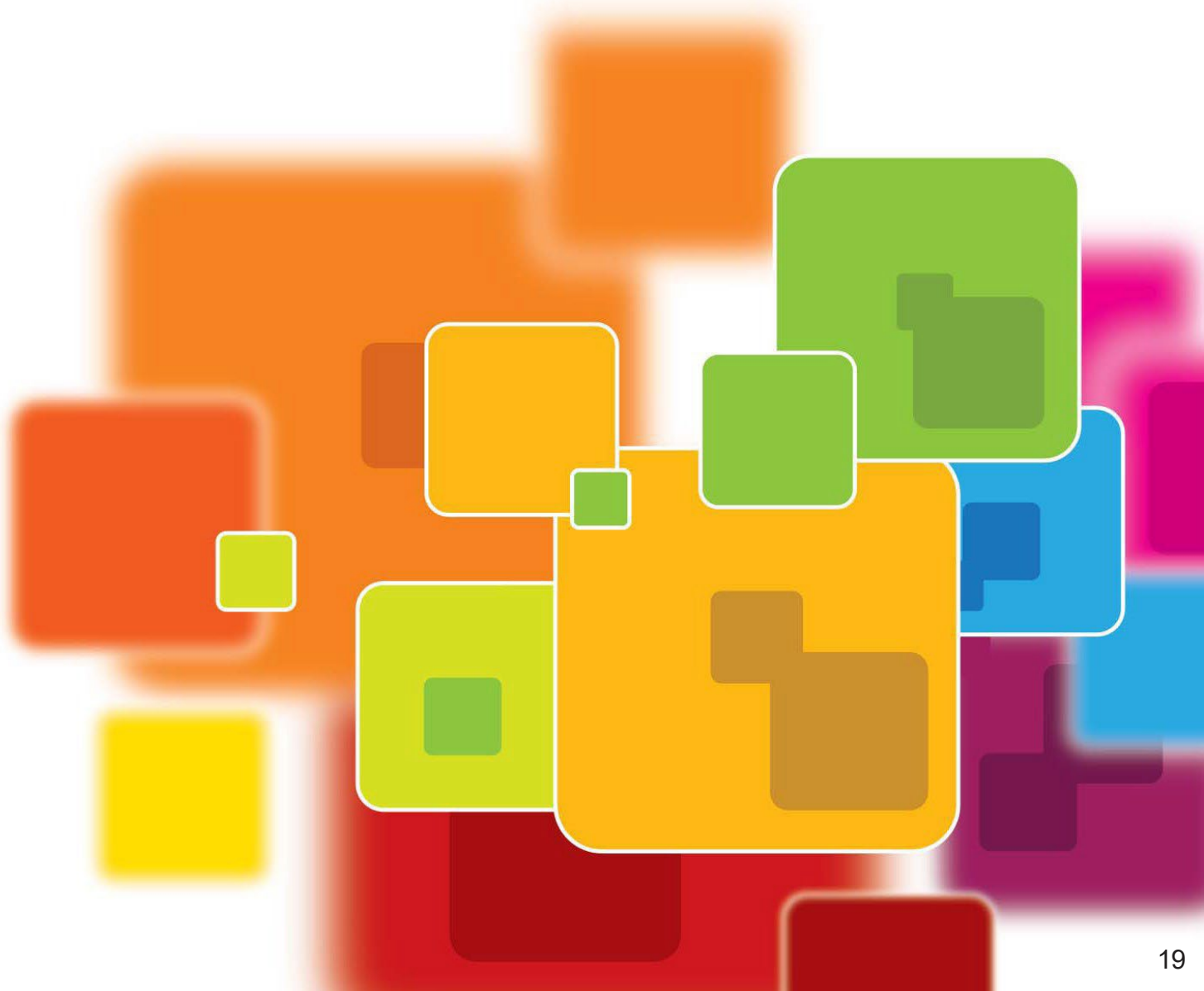
Carers were engaged in a variety of workshops and meetings on the development of this Carers Consultation and Information Strategy. This included representation from Carers on the main Steering Group for the development of the Strategy and also on Task and Finish Groups. Appendices 1 and 2 provide feedback from 2 of the events held to engage with Carers, but additional responses can be provided if required. These include comments provided by Carers and professionals as part of the Carers Measure consultations.

Consultation feedback has highlighted the following areas that Carers feel are important to them and which we have considered in developing our action plan. Some of the issues identified are not appropriate to be dealt with through this Strategy but will be fed into other relevant local plans, including the Carers Strategies and Single Integrated Plans.

- Ensuring appropriate and timely information, particularly at time of diagnosis
 - o Developing the role of Carers Champions within GP surgeries and on wards
 - o Ensuring staff and Carers are aware of the range of information available
 - o Following up diagnosis/appointment discussions with written information
 - o Ensuring professionals communicate eg educational psychologists and GP's
- Having one number or one point of contact which holds accessible information and can signpost Carers effectively to appropriate sources of support
- Developing Carers' services, including
 - o Replacement care for the cared for person when the Carer is unwell
 - o Advocacy and emotional support services such as befriending services
- Recognising the role of Carers when making hospital or GP appointments – enabling alternative appointments to be offered where possible
- Enabling Carers to meet with other Carers with similar issues to share experiences and learn from one another
- Sharing information between organisations and departments to ensure that the Carer and cared for person's situation is known, with particular emphasis on sharing information and improving communication between health and education
- Supporting Carers to get back into the workplace (if they choose to do so)
- Ensuring staff are suitably trained to identify Carers and signpost them to relevant information as quickly as possible.
 - o Ensuring that education and social care frontline staff, nurses and primary care staff are prioritised within the training plan as key community contacts
 - o Involving Carers in the design and delivery of training about Carers to ensure that staff understand and appreciate their reality
- Working with partners to develop partnerships with employers and help them develop strategies for supporting Carers in their employment. Also support them in providing Carers and Past Carers with further education opportunities in order to enhance their employability and develop key life skills.
- Working to promote flexible working within organisations across the Cwm Taf region, including the private sector.

Children in Wales recently supported Young Carers from various counties across Wales, including Young Carers from across Cwm Taf, to come together to gather their views, experiences and needs, to represent all Young Carers in Wales. The following areas have been identified for consideration:

- Professionals should be given information packs and core training, including presentations, about Young Carers and how they should be supported appropriately
- Young Carers should be recognised as such and should be informed about the diagnosis of the person they care for and how they are being treated
- Medical workers need to use less jargon because some people don't understand and get confused and start to worry more. They need to explain in simple understandable language.
- ID cards for Young Carers may help with collecting medication, gaining support discreetly in school and helping to manage financial arrangements
- When Young Carers are assessed they should be able to highlight the training they may need
- Guidance is needed on tasks that Young Carers shouldn't be doing, such as administering medication, toileting and manual handling
- Young Carers need to have a say and be listened to, to make sure services support them
- It is essential that professional staff in all schools are able to identify Young Carers, for example, as pupil absenteeism can sometimes be related to Carers issues. Often they are late for school or haven't had sufficient time to be able to do homework and are in need of support from professional staff to be able to lead a "normal life". They can also be socially excluded if they do not have time to be able to go out with friends.



13. Key aims - What are we going to do

Improving outcomes for Carers

We recognise the need to improve Carer involvement in decision making within Cwm Taf to ensure that Carers are valued as partners in care and that the care and support they provide is recognised. Having reviewed our current services and approach, reflected on the Welsh Government guidance and taken on board the views expressed during engagement with Carers and staff, we have developed the following 6 key aims:

- Carers of all ages are always be able to access relevant and timely information
- Carers of all ages will be recognised as partners in care and recorded on appropriate systems
- Carers of all ages will be able to access appropriate training to suit their needs and circumstances
- Staff training and development will enable staff at all levels to identify and support Carers appropriately
- Carers needs assessments will be undertaken by all appropriate and trained staff
- Carers will be engaged in decision making that affects them and the person they care for – this varies from individual decisions regarding care planning to involvement in service reviews and developments.

The following sections outline what we intend to do, with more detailed actions being included in the action plan. (see Appendix 3).

Aim 1. Carers of all ages are always able to access relevant and timely information

Public Information

We have reviewed the public information which is currently available in order to identify gaps against the regulations, with reference to specific information required, as well as ensuring the accessibility within community and hospital settings.

As part of the ongoing work to ensure that we remove the current gaps and address issues of Carers accessing information in a timely and appropriate manner, we will map with Carers their experience and journey through health and social care services to identify the best way to meet their information needs.

As part of this process we will consider the impact of 'information overload' on Carers and the importance of having face-to-face discussion and time for questions to ensure that Carers and the person diagnosed are informed appropriately. We will work to ensure that simple, understandable language is used during these discussions .

A-Z Guide

We will amalgamate current Carers guides and address information gaps to ensure that a single comprehensive source of information is made available to Carers. Currently both Merthyr Tydfil and RCT have separate Carers A-Z Guides which reflect both the national and local supportive services available to Carers. We will work collaboratively to develop Cwm Taf Carers A-Z Guide amalgamating RCT and Merthyr's current Carers A-Z Guides and incorporating RCT and Merthyr Tydfil's Older Persons Guides.

Innovative Methods of communication

We will increase the resources available through making best use of technology and communication methods, as well as increasing information distribution more widely. Carers literature will be made available on hospital wards, in clinics and GP practices, as well as with community nurses, frontline staff and educational professionals, for example teachers and Attendance and Wellbeing Officers.

We are currently exploring opportunities to develop an online forum for Carers working in partnership with Digital 2.0. Along with this we will utilise social media, including the LHB's and RCT's Twitter accounts and RCT's and Merthyr Tydfil's Facebook pages. We will also raise awareness of Carers through the use of local radios, the local media and Carer awareness raising at public events, for example the Big Bite, Global Village and World Mental Health Day, Carers Week, Carers Rights Day and Older Peoples Forums. This will include demonstrating the digital patient stories produced by the LHB to raise awareness of Carers.

Young Carers will be consulted about their specific information needs and how they would prefer to receive this information. They will be involved in developing or updating the current information booklets and any further information needed.

There will also be an easily accessible dedicated web resource for information for Carers of all ages provided by the LHB.

Communication Hub/One Stop Shop

As part of this work we will explore the opportunities to work with the Communication Hub and One Stop Shop service developments, recognising the information needs of Carers and working in partnership to ensure that appropriate and timely information is made available through these and other appropriate services. We will also develop a marketing plan to ensure that Carer awareness is raised in communities.

In summary, what we plan to do:

Key actions through the life of the Strategy are:

- Ensure wide ranging distribution of relevant information in the community
- To meet identified gaps in current information available
- The LHB will work with RCT and MT LA's to create a Cwm Taf Carers A-Z
- Develop a marketing strategy to provide a range of material raising Carer awareness

Timelines for delivery are included in the Action Plan

Aim 2. Carers of all ages will be recognised as partners in care and recorded on appropriate systems

All staff will be trained to recognise Carers and help individuals to recognise that they are Carers. This will allow signposting to relevant services if required.

Corporate training plans across the LHB and both Local Authorities will ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge to be able to recognise Carers. This will ensure that Carers receive the support required in order to sustain their caring roles. Carers' Champions will be the key workers in this process and will be identified in various teams across the LHB and both Local Authorities. This will include housing, leisure and education.

The management information systems will be developed to ensure accurate recording of both the Carer and the person/people they care for. Appropriate mechanisms will be explored to monitor the recording of Carers and eliminate duplication. It should be noted that presently there is an information exchange barrier between Local Authorities, the LHB and Third Sector, as all have unique recording systems.

The Carers Measure Steering Group will receive quarterly reports on the number of Carers identified and will review to what extent Organisations are identifying Carers and providing them with information, advice and guidance.

In summary, what we plan to do:-

Key actions through the life of the Strategy are:

- Develop the recording process for newly identified Carers
- Develop management information systems to provide reports on Carers
- Develop training plans across organisations to include training on the Carers Measure

Timelines for delivery are included in the Action Plan

Aim 3. Carers of all ages will be able to access appropriate training to suit their needs and circumstances

Currently in Cwm Taf a variety of training options are available to Carers. This includes manual handling, first aid, stress busting, anxiety management, healthy eating, etc. Carers attending each workshop are asked to evaluate the workshop provided. From these evaluations continuous improvements are made and training provided to address the needs of Cwm Taf Carers.

As part of the Carers Measure training available to Carers we will further review and develop Carer training. We will work with Carer representatives, lead Training Officers in the LHB and both Local Authorities, the Third Sector and JobCentre Plus to establish and develop the role and the function of the Carers Training Partnership. This will be a multi-agency partnership which will meet quarterly and oversee training available to both staff and Carers. This will include monitoring and evaluating the e-learning toolkits (Adults and Young Carers). The Partnership will be a key cornerstone to implementing the training action plans, reporting to the Carers Measure Steering Group on a quarterly basis.

The Partnership will also oversee the development of the range of training available for Carers that will assist them in their caring role. Initial work to be undertaken will include a review of adult education and training options, as well as specialist training designed for Carers. This will include one-to-one sessions in relation to the care and reablement of the person they care for, through to group Carer training such as anger, stress management and condition specific training.

Young Carers will be consulted as a separate group to ascertain and address their specific training needs.

In summary, what we plan to do:-

Key actions through the life of the Strategy are:

- To develop a Carers Training Partnership
- The development and implementation of training plans for staff and Carers

Timelines for delivery are included in the Action Plan

Aim 4. Staff training and development will enable staff to identify and support Carers appropriately

Training and awareness raising of Carers has been identified as a key priority within the first year of the Carers Measure action plan.

Three key Officers (Carers Measure Coordinators) across both Health and Local Authorities will be appointed to work with and identify Carers Champions across the Organisations. The aim of this will be to ascertain the required levels of training and ensure that training plans in departments reflect the requirements of the Measure.

A staff training plan will be developed by the key Officers, supported by Training Departments as part of their first year of work. Officers from Training Departments will sit on the multi agency newly developed Training Partnership. Training will also include issues around Young Carers. Carers will be involved in developing and delivering the training.

We recognise that we need to establish innovative ways of training of staff within the LHB and Local Authorities in order to raise awareness of Carers and ensure that a consistent approach is taken regarding the recognition and support available to Carers.

Four levels of training will be available:

- **Basic** – Carer awareness
- **Intermediate** – staff are able to recognise, identify, record and signpost Carers on
- **Expert** – staff are able to provide information, advice and guidance to Carers
- **Expert Plus** – staff are able to undertake Carers assessments

Each organisation will look to embed the Carers training into existing annual training plans across various departments, including Health and Social Care, as well as on a corporate basis to ensure that the overarching aims are achieved. The training and development opportunities will be tailored to the level of contact and engagement staff are likely to have with Carers. To achieve this aim the detailed action plan will include:

- Identifying the different types of staff groups, assessing their Carer contact and assigning the level of training to be achieved.
- Embedding carer awareness and Carer related training into existing learning and development opportunities.
- Developing resources for staff to help them be aware of their obligation to Carers under the new statutory duties.

The Carers Coordinator role will also involve monitoring and reporting staff completion rates

Carer Awareness

Carer awareness will be included in training packages across the LHB, both Local Authorities and the Third Sector. In addition, an e-learning toolkit has been procured for training purposes to ensure that carer awareness is embedded across organisations; Cwm Taf have been instrumental in the development of this training package. The e-learning approach has now been adopted by other LHB areas in Wales. The toolkit has been piloted and has had a positive evaluation by Dudley Council.

Cwm Taf will be one of the first to develop Young Carer awareness training, which will be delivered across Cwm Taf.

Carers Champions

We recognise the importance of Carers having access to information as a preventative measure to ensure their situations do not deteriorate, as highlighted through our consultations with Carers. Carers need to be identified and signposted to help and support. It is important that we don't just "hand them a leaflet" but that we take time to talk to them and explain options such as being able to have the opportunity for an assessment/benefits etc..

It is our intention that Carers Champions will be regularly trained across organisations to ensure that information for Carers is cascaded effectively. This will include Champions in Schools, Leisure Centres, Housing, Job Centres, GP Practices, on Hospital Wards, Accident and Emergency Departments, Clinics and in Communities. The list is not exhaustive and will cover all areas of organisations.

The Carers Measure Coordinators will ensure that staff are identified for Carer Awareness training and that relevant information is kept up to date and cascaded to staff and Carers as appropriate. The Carers Champions will liaise directly with the local Carers Measure Coordinators to ensure that the training process is embedded into organisations and that there are effective communication mechanisms for the provision of information.

In summary, what we plan to do:

Key actions through the life of the Strategy are:

- To develop 4 levels of e-learning training
- To further develop the network of Carers Champions
- To commission, develop and roll out the Carer Awareness E-learning packages for staff
- To ensure that Community based staff are 'Carer aware'
- To ensure that Carer related training is embedded into existing learning and development options

Timelines for delivery are included in the Action Plan



Aim 5. Carers Needs Assessments will be undertaken by all appropriate and trained staff

Carers Needs Assessments enable Carers to discuss their caring role with health and social care professionals in order to explore support options. Carers Needs Assessments look to explore the impact of the caring role on the Carer as an individual, needs that may arise from this and consider the sustainability of the caring role.

We will work to ensure Carers Needs Assessments are offered on Carer identification. Assessments will then be undertaken if required, by appropriate and trained staff, who are best placed to work with the Carer and cared for person. This will ensure that the caring role is sustainable and that Carers receive appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance.

It is unclear at this stage what the additional demand for Carers Needs Assessments will be, as this will depend on the success of the Measure to identify Carers and their desire to have an assessment. The potential resource implications for both Health and Local Authorities will have to be explored further.

We will ensure that:

- All identified Carers, including Young Carers, are informed of their legislative right to request an independent assessment of their individual needs as a Carer, to enhance the quality of their life and assist in maintaining their independence.
- The differences in practice between the LHB, two Local Authorities and the Third Sector will be explored to develop one regional approach to Carers Assessments and consistency in practice and documentation.
- It is envisaged that appropriate staff are identified, trained and supported to undertake Carers needs assessments, where they are identified as the most appropriate contact to do so. This will be supported through the use of the e-learning toolkit.
- The use of self-assessments will be explored with Carers and staff to consider how they could help Carers to identify their own needs in order to access sources of information, advice, guidance and support.
- The impact of increased requests for Carers Assessments will be monitored to consider capacity issues and implications for future services

In summary, what we plan to do:

Key actions through the life of the Strategy are:

- To work collaboratively to ensure that Carers Assessments are consistent across the Cwm Taf region
- To train and support all identified key staff to undertake Carers Needs Assessments

Timelines for delivery are included in the Action Plan

Aim 6. Carers will be engaged in decision making that affects them and the person they care for

As part of the training plans, staff will develop their skills to enable them to involve Carers of all ages in the care planning of the cared for person. Carers will be involved in decision making and staff will ensure that they are well informed of the diagnosis, prognosis and ongoing care needs of the person they care for. This should be done by using accessible language which is age and individually appropriate and jargon free.

Work will be done to enhance the recording of Carers involvement in care planning by both health and social care staff, and appropriate management information systems developed to demonstrate where Carers have been involved.

Carer Journey through Health and Social Care

A Carer's journey can vary through Health & Social Care. Often the first point of contact is the GP and we intend to develop the Carers Champions in GP Surgeries to be able to ensure that appropriate advice and support is provided. The Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) also requires GPs to provide support to Carers and we will work with GP's to provide as much information as possible to enable them to signpost appropriately. We will also ensure that GP's receive newsletters which aim to keep them up to date of current and future developments. These newsletters are distributed by both Carers Projects and the Royal College of GP's.

A key area for improvement is at the hospital discharge process. We intend to develop Champions on Wards to ensure that the process is streamlined and provides an effective means of ensuring continuous support to the Carer.

In recognition of some of the issues highlighted by Carers and staff during the consultation phase, work will be undertaken to review discharge planning, associated training and processes. The aim of this work will be to ensure that in the future, the Carers input to providing care in the home environment is identified prior to discharge from hospital. Prior to discharge staff should ensure that the Carers have the skills and the knowledge to provide this care and that they are signposted to supportive services in the community.

Through early identification of those who are likely to have a substantial caring role after hospital discharge, we aim to provide these Carers with timely, relevant information to suit their individual circumstances. We will ensure that they receive the right support to enable them to make better decisions for themselves and their families.

Carers will continue to be involved in wider decision making regarding services that affect them through their engagement in Carers and Young Carers Forums and groups, the Patient Experience Forum and through one-off consultations held specifically for Carers where appropriate. We will ensure that feedback from Carers consultations will inform continuous improvements of Carers services.



We will work to strengthen Carer involvement to illustrate the impact their input, time and contributions make to changes in service design, delivery and quality. The Carers Support Projects funded by Adult and Children's Services will continue to maintain and develop Carers services through consultation with Carers, to ensure that the services delivered meet their identified needs and are in line with the existing Carers Strategies delivered by the Local Authorities.

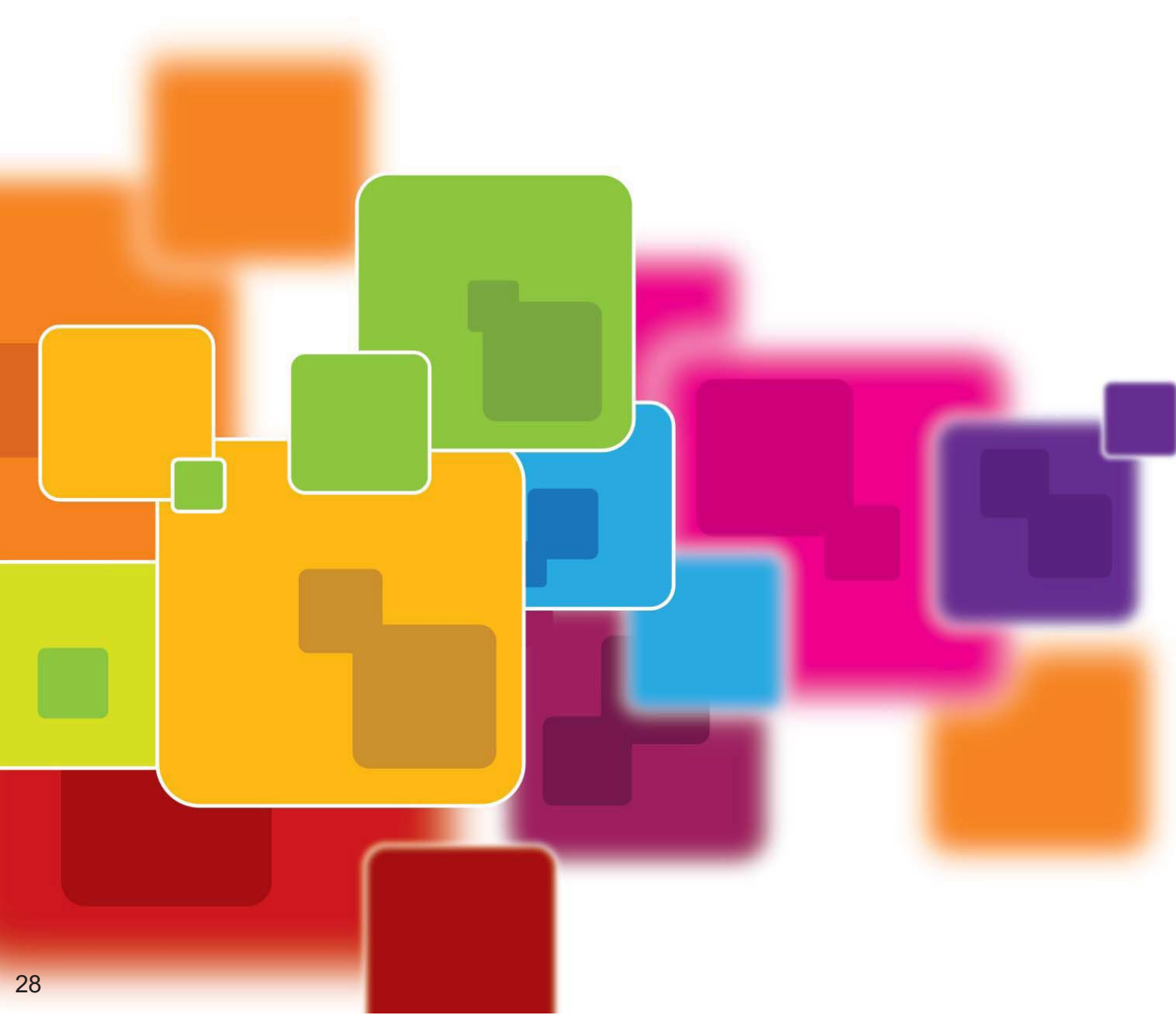
The Carers Measure Steering Group will review and consider the impact on the Local Health Board resources and the Local Authority funded services as a result of the Strategy in order to explore joint funding and utilising resources innovatively. This Information and Consultation Strategy will be a platform to enhance how we communicate with Carers to improve the quality of their lives.

In summary, what we plan to do

Key actions through the life of the Strategy are:

- To develop discharge planning processes to meet the needs of Carers
- To continue to consult Carers about services that affect them
- To ensure that Carers are involved in the Carers Measure implementation

Timelines for delivery are included in the Action Plan



14. Implementation and Delivery

Implementation of this Information and Consultation Strategy 2012-15 will require joint action by both statutory and voluntary sector partners, together with strong community engagement. The Carers Measure Steering Group will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Strategy and monitoring performance. From ongoing consultation with Carers we have been able to create an action plan tailored to meet their needs and inform and improve future services. The following will be important aspects in delivering the Strategy and ensuring we achieve the required outcomes:

Equality

It is recognised that the Carers Information & Consultation Strategy will impact on Carers and the Cared for person and the Strategy has therefore undergone an Equality Impact Assessment (available on request) This has considered the potential impact on all Carers, irrespective of age, disability, race, nationality, language, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or beliefs.

The Welsh Assembly Government BME Good Practice guide outlines the work required to meet the needs of these particular Carers. In the Cwm Taf area over the past four years there has been an increase in the number of migrant workers, mainly eastern European and Portuguese because of commercial developments (Cwm Taf Health Needs Assessment 2011-2014 and other sources ONS and PEDW). We will, as suggested in the Good Practice Guide, engage further with BAME groups to help determine what is required to meet their needs and ensure that they are aware of relevant information such as translation services and information and support.

We aim to engage with all minority groups providing translation and cultural specific support.

Annual Action Plans

The Information and Consultation Strategy is not a fixed and final plan but a framework which sets out what will be taken forward over the next three years. It includes detailed actions, lead responsibilities, timescales, resource implications and performance measures which will focus on the outcomes we want to achieve. This will ensure accountability over the life of the Strategy.

Performance Measures

To meet these aims we have developed an action plan. We will also ensure accountability through monitoring the robust performance indicators within the action plan on a quarterly basis. The Welsh Government has developed an outcomes framework which includes key performance indicators to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Strategy are achieved to ensure that the required outcomes for Carers are met. Performance will also include "soft data" from questionnaires, discussions and workshops.

The Carer Training Partnership and existing multi-agency Carer Forums will monitor and provide regular progress reports to the Carers Measure Steering Group. Carers will continue to be involved in monitoring and developing the action plan throughout the life of the Strategy through the Carers Measure Steering Group and annual consultation.

Monitoring and Reviewing

It is very important that we can measure clearly what progress is being made during the life of the Strategy and what difference it is making. The Carers Training Partnership will monitor and review the high level outcomes in those areas where it is felt agencies need to work together to maximise the impact on the Strategy.

Progress on the Action Plans will be monitored quarterly by the Carers Training Partnership and the Carers Measure Steering Group using the Carers Measure Outcomes Framework. Feedback will also be given regularly to a range of planning and partnership groups, for example, the Merthyr Tydfil Partnership Board the RCT Health Social Care & Wellbeing Board and Fframwaith in RCT.

Accountability

The individual organisations which make up the Carers Measure Steering Group remain accountable for the delivery of services for which they are responsible and are always responsible to their own governing authority. In addition, however, they are accountable to one another and as a Partnership to develop and deliver the Information and Consultation Strategy. .

Use of resources

It is impossible to consider the future without reference to the challenging financial circumstances in which we are operating. Working more efficiently and with less resources but with increasing demand will be a feature for public services during the life of this Strategy.

We will need to ensure we are making the best use of all our resources and can provide sustainable services. To do this will involve a range of service reviews and service redesign, workforce modernisation and performance improvement.

It is acknowledged that Welsh Government has provided funding to enable Cwm Taf to take forward the Carers Measure Information and Consultation Strategy and deliver specified actions. Expenditure for this funding will be agreed and monitored by the Strategy Development Steering Group and regular progress reports will be provided to Welsh Government as appropriate.

15. Associated Links

Copies of the Information and Consultation Strategy are available on the following websites:

- www.rctcbc.gov.uk
- www.merthyr.gov.uk
- www.vamt.net
- www.interlink.org.uk
- www.cwmtaflhb.wales.nhs.uk

If you require further information, please contact the Carers Measure Coordinator at Cwm Taf LHB on 01443 744844

This Strategy may also be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

