

Midlothian Short Break Strategy 2010 - 2013

Enhancing support systems for carers

Introduction

In 2008 the Scottish Government published guidance on planning and implementing personalised short breaks (respite) for informal unpaid carers. The guidance lays out recommendations to put in place robust planning for short breaks to help local partners to demonstrate how they are contributing to the national outcomes and indicators. The guidance advises that local authorities should consider highlighting action in this area in their Single Outcome Agreements, linking them to local indicators and *“increasing the proportion of people needing care who are able to live independently, which is underpinned by the 16 measures in the National Outcomes Framework for Community Care, including that on carers’ feeling supported to continue caring.”*

Background

The main purpose of the SG guidance is to help local service planners improve short break provision in line with the overall principles of protecting young carers, enabling self care and working with adult carers as partners in care by:

- improving planning of short break services;
- shifting the balance towards preventative support; and
- personalising support to improve outcomes both for carers and those with care needs.

Within Midlothian a short break is valued as an essential part of the overall support provided to unpaid carers and those with care needs, helping to sustain caring relationships, promote health and well being and prevent crises. In the case of young carers, the overall aim is different, focused instead on preventing inappropriate levels of caring, but short breaks can bring similar benefits of promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

From the joint arrangements that were agreed between COSLA and the Scottish Government in 2008 on the delivery of the Concordat commitment on extra respite weeks across Scotland, Midlothian has developed this strategy to encompass the key components. It was also agreed that additional resources would be made available through the local government finance settlement of £1.37m in 2009-10 and £2.82m in 2010-11. The concordat is expressed in terms of extra weeks whereas the SPI separately measures the number of respite nights and number of day time hours. Therefore a basis for counting was established which would be determined by number of weeks and a commitment to deliver 10,000 extra respite weeks a year by 2011 was put in motion. Within Midlothian Council Social Work division much development has taken place to develop more efficient

performance recording systems to aim to capture all short breaks (respite) that are available and taken up.

Definition

The SG guidance sets out its description of short breaks and this is used to set the broad scope of the whole range of short break services that need to feature in planning. Midlothian has used these definitions when recording short breaks to ensure compliance with reporting requirements. It describes short breaks as providing the aim of enhancing and developing the quality of life of a person who has support needs and their carer (where there is one), and to support their relationship. The distinctive feature of short breaks is that they should be a positive experience for both. Short breaks can be provided within or out with an individual's home.

The guidance uses the term 'short break' to cover all such situations, including:

- where there is no carer present, but the person with care needs requires a break from their normal situation;
- breaks from caring' where the carer needs a break;
- emergency crisis support' where a carer needs an urgent break to prevent or respond to a crisis;
- respite' appears in the title because it is widely understood but the broader term short breaks' is generally used reflecting the broader scope of this guidance;
- Short breaks can be offered in a wide variety of ways including:
in specific short break units (specialist guest houses, community flats, purpose-built or adapted houses);
- breaks in care homes;
- breaks in the home of another individual or family who have been specially recruited (such as adult placement schemes, or fostering);
- breaks at home through a care attendant or sitting service (often short term but sometimes longer breaks);
- facilitated access to clubs, interest or activity groups;
- supported breaks in a chosen setting for the person with care needs either with or without their carer;
- befriending schemes where volunteers provide short breaks;
- peer support groups (e.g. for young carers);
- breaks in supported accommodation;
- breaks using self-directed support.

Policy context

Short breaks are an important focus of the *Strategy for Carers in Scotland* (1999), *The future of unpaid care in Scotland* (2005) and the (then) Scottish Executive Response (2006). These documents, as well as the Kerr Report *Building a Health Service fit for the Future* (2005) and *Changing Lives* (2006), contain a number of themes which are fundamental to this guidance:

- working with (adult) carers as partners in providing care;

- joint-working;
- shifting the balance of care towards preventative support and enabling self care; and
- personalisation of support.

Midlothian is committed to the Personalisation agenda of services and improving outcomes for individuals. There are also important aspects of our priorities for services for children and young people described in *Getting it right for every child* and in guidance on integrated services planning and quality improvement.

Strategic Planning

Responsibility for the planning and delivery of short breaks lies with the local partnerships which plan, design and deliver services for service user's and their families/carers. Midlothian Council has taken the lead role in short break planning and within Midlothian consultation and evaluation are well underway to design, plan and implement more flexible personalised short breaks for carers and those they care for.

Service development aims and outcomes

Within Midlothian work has been undertaken to develop this strategy and action plan for short breaks and has focussed on key outcomes for improved service delivery.

1. It has been essential to examine and review the current range and usage of short break services/resources to establish a baseline and evaluate which services are well used and why; and those that are underused and why.
2. Improving the process and effectiveness for offering and encouraging carers to have carers' assessments undertaken and completed that feel meaningful to them.
3. It has been important to ensure recording of all short breaks (respite) is accurate, consistent and identify areas for improvement to provide accurate information to assist in efficient planning of improved service delivery.
4. Establishing future demand and range of need for short breaks is imperative to ensure carers are supported effectively and individuals experience a positive break.
5. Developing more flexible, personalised and needs led options for short breaks is vitally important following feedback from users, carers groups, providers and professionals.
6. Having a financial framework to enable practitioners more flexibility to offer more personalised breaks at short notice when needed in line with eligibility criteria.

These outcomes are outlined more fully in the action plan for short breaks.

Consultation

In April 2009 Shared Care Scotland published its Manifesto for Change which was also work in progress in terms of gathering views, experiences and ideas from around the country to deliver short break services and supports in the right places. Their campaign to transform short break services in Scotland includes a number of aims that aspire to their vision of

“everyone will be able to take a break when they need it with a choice of services to meet different needs, circumstances and aspirations.”

Within Midlothian consultation has taken place in various formats with a range of people including providers of short breaks, from users of short breaks and a variety of carer support groups from all client groups to establish what people’s experiences have been both positive and negative. The consultation also sought to establish areas for improvement/development for increased flexibility to enable future service delivery to be more personalised. Feedback has also been received from practitioners who have described the complexities and difficulties identifying suitable breaks for service users and their carers/family members when competing with the criteria for the eligibility.

Feedback from consultation both nationally and locally has highlighted indicators of good practice for short breaks that they:

- are based on thorough assessment of service users’ and carers needs, on-going review and clear communication,
- are appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the carer,
- are appropriate for the age, sex, culture and level of need of the care recipient,
- maintain or improve the well-being of the care recipient,
- are delivered by appropriately trained and caring staff,
- include suitable transport where necessary, so that this does not become a barrier,
- are affordable, and
- reliable.

The SG government guidance provides examples of good practice short breaks and it needs to be stressed that the short break should be a positive experience for both the user and carer. Trends within Midlothian for usage of bed based respite in care homes is declining and people are preferring to use other options i.e. a carer coming into the home of the individual, people using direct payments and seeking more personalised breaks. Statistics released in 2009 from the SG also demonstrate a decline in bed based respite for those aged 65+ since 2006/7 and a rise in hours used through the day. In 2008/9 there were a total number of 1,090 respite weeks provided to those aged 65+ and a total of 1,840 respite weeks provided to those aged 18 to 64 (the majority of the latter being used through the day time). There are of course different trends between client groups’ and this also must be taken account of when planning and delivering more personalised breaks.

Resources

Currently within Midlothian there are a range of short break resources that are provided by a number of organisations including the council, NHSL, private and voluntary organisations and not forgetting the invaluable time provided by informal carers. The budget for 2009/10 for short breaks/respite in Midlothian was **£1.307m as set out in Appendix 2**, however this

does not include a range of small services that are provided by voluntary organisations which is difficult to capture and record as short break provision.

Financial framework

Currently in Midlothian all those assessed as requiring a short break/respice are offered 42 days per year and this can be used in a variety of ways. Establishing a financial framework for the strategy will assist in ensuring people are still offered their assessed entitlement but should have greater flexibility of how they use it. The framework will outline the resources available and the costs of the resources. It will outline what the budget will be for the financial year for short breaks and what is available for the different client groups.

The additional monies from SG of £23K for 2010/11 will be used to develop more flexible personalised approaches to offering respice for all ages. This will be managed through the resource panel for adults and through a self directed support model for children with disabilities. For adults it will be targeted through existing services of Alzheimers Scotland and Crossroads to increase their capacity to provide direct respice support to those meeting the eligibility criteria in line with shifting the balance of care. The previous allocation of monies for increased respice care was split with C&F and 29% went to children's services and 71% to adult services.

(Please see Appendix 2 for breakdown of respice spend)