

## **Carer Consultation Summary and Headlines**

### **February - March 2017**

The carer consultation that took place throughout February and March 2017 proposed a 50% reduction in the budget to both Herefordshire Carers Support (H.C.S) and Crossroads Care.

HSC received 123 written responses to the consultation and attendances from 57 carers over three consultation meetings in different locations in Herefordshire. An assumption has been made that these are additional people to the HCS written responses

This is a 4% return from the carers whom HCS reports that it has registered on its database.

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Herefordshire council received 53 responses via the online questionnaire.

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#### **Summary**

A key finding of this consultation is that of the predicted 21,000 unpaid carer population in Herefordshire, only a small audience chose to engage with us regarding the budget reductions to carers support services. At best, if none of the figures within the strands of this survey are duplicated, the total count only remains at 233 people who have taken part in this consultation.

The census figures in 2011 tell us that nearly 21,000 people in Herefordshire were providing at least an hour of unpaid care a week. This represented around 11 per cent of the population, just slightly higher than England & Wales (around 10 per cent).

From this we can deduce that the proposed budget reduction is a significant issue for those that have engaged and receive support from HCS, which is a small proportion of the carer population in Herefordshire.

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#### **The online survey** - Of the 53 people who responded

- 87% of respondents in the 26-64 age range,
- 9% of respondents are over 65 years

62% of respondents are in employment and  
17% of respondents are a full time carer

It is significant that the majority of the respondents are working age adults.

Of the people who responded to the survey 62 % are registered as a carer

Respondents were asked what their relationship was with the cared for.

- 63% mother/father
- 18% child (SEND)
- 4% grandparent(s)
- 18% other family member

Of the 53 respondents, people were asked where they received support from. When analysing the results into categories they are as follows

53% received support from natural support networks and third sector  
 25% received support from commissioned services (HCS/Carers support/ Wish)  
 12% received support via schools  
 10% received support from the councils (social services)

When asked what things would help the most and how frequently people accessed types of support all domains scored high, indicating the solutions are very personalised. However the top 4 responses were;-

- Flexible support from employers
- Help with personal career development
- Training with caring role
- Online help

When asked peoples thoughts on reduction of funding to Crossroads care and HCS by up to half by the end of 2018

50% of respondents said this would be a “*Significant impact*”

#### **When asked what carer support service people would like**

- More information given to parents re support groups and support with accessing babysitters who have experience with young people with SEND.
- More trained staff in eating disorders for teenagers. Access in emergency directly onto children's ward not via A&E.
- Formal counselling services
- Requests for services delivering information and advice, which demonstrates more opportunities for WISH to reach more people.

This is significant as the services above are not specifically covered within the current contract.

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**HCS formal responses** - 233 people who responded to the survey and to consultation meetings.

The responses took the form of letters, emails and notated phone calls/ messages from HCS members, as well as attendance at meetings.

The content of the majority of responses was very personal and in the main described the impact of the role of the carer upon their lives and the involvement of HCS.

Below are some of extracts from the text, which demonstrate the emerging themes.

## Quotes from carers

*"The support I have received from you (HCS) has been exceptional and lifesaving when I was at my lowest ebb"*

*"Many of us are just hanging on to the last thread we can give and if Carers support is taken from us or significantly limited due to the lack of funding we will not be able to hold on for much longer"*

*"Quite frankly I feel sure my own health would have suffered greatly without their strength of knowledge and support"*

*"We are saving the NHS and social care services millions of pounds, we are increasingly high in number, and becoming increasingly older ourselves, in many cases. "*

*"I can't envisage that self-help and volunteers would bridge the gap in this structured and vital need. The social breakdown will bring pressure to other services and despair and social isolation to many who are already suffering "*

*"Being a carer you can feel isolated, that no-one understands, Herefordshire carers support help with these difficult times enabling us has carers to carry out our caring role. Herefordshire carers support are the first point of contact for us carers, we rely on this amazing service. "*

*"Coming to the group makes me feel better and able to carry on. You never feel quite so alone when you hear other carers talk about their situations"*

## Emerging themes

- Helplessness and feeling lost / lacking the correct information - Empathetic responses with useful advice and signposting is helpful
- Loneliness and isolation - Talking, listening and meeting others in similar situations is helpful

## Some examples of how HCS have helped

"The one most recently was when I needed help filling in DLA forms for my son. I was completely overwhelmed & struggling to work, make ends meet & manage the level of care my son needs. We now receive middle band DLA & I have given up supply teaching allowing me time to focus on my son & work from home which helps keeps things calm & now means I feel like I can breathe.

Following the advice I received from your team I have registered with my doctors who now have steps in place to support me & my son. "

"Contingency planning; Legal & wills etc. Also the Facebook pages are a lifeline to us carers, keeping us abreast of the times & events. Also the Christmas party for carers is another chance for us all to meet, relax & take ourselves out of our 'Caring' world."

Some people we met told us they had widened their social networks as a result of the network groups, and this has already generated a number of spin off groups/friendship groups, an example of empowering people to self-help.

## **Myths**

That the funding reduction will;-

- Leave people without any support.
- Young carers funding will be cut.

## **Ideas raised by members of HCS in response to reduction of budget**

- Giving pages on websites and crowd funding.
- HCS becoming a paid membership group with an annual fee.
- Less frequent network meetings.

## **Enclosures**

Appendix 4 (4.1 and 4.2) Consultation survey results

Appendix 5 (5.1 and 5.2) Consultation meeting feedback