

Carers Support Centre Forum October Meeting

Date

22/10/2019

Time

1.30pm-3pm

Attendance

7 members of Carers Support Centre Forum.

Amy Deakin.

Chris Jeffreys - Mending the Gap.

Stephen Bahooshy - Croydon Council.

Apologies for absence

Lydia.

Introduction & housekeeping

Carers Partnership Board

- Stephen Bahooshy attended to ask Forum about the Carers Partnership Board. The board is a meeting with council staff, carers and one councillor (Cllr Jane Avis) and meets quarterly (four times a year) to discuss carer issues and make decisions on carer services.
- Stephen wanted to know whether a member/members of the Forum would be willing to attend quarterly board meetings and report on the Forum's activities.

Discussion (carer questions in bold/responses in regular font):

- **When does the board meet?** The board meets on a Wednesday morning 10am-12noon. It is chaired by director of adult social care.
- **How does the board inform decision making? What is its impact?** Board does make a difference - last meeting reviewed data from borough-wide carer survey by Department of Health. Discussed how to improve. Previously board has decided intentions for the local Carers Strategy and made final decisions after wider consultation. Also shares best practice in carer support and plans events such as Carers Rights Day and Carers Week.
- **Do board decisions get implemented?** Yes they do.
- **Which types of carer attend?** Board needs to review membership. Current regular attendees are Pat Knight (mental health/Healthwatch) and Jeff Wills (Carers Support Centre Forum/CASSUP). Need more carers on board. Two other carer members who do not attend.

- **Should Jeff attend as he is already on the board?** Amy - suggested we decide at next meeting who will attend.
- **Can we access the meeting minutes?** Not publically available but will be sent to Amy to circulate.
- **How many attend?** 16-20 on average.
- **Do other councillors attend?** Only Cllr Avis currently - new member.
- **Can we have access to meeting minutes from previous meetings to get a flavour of what was discussed?** Potentially yes.

Actions

Agreed that we will decide representative for **18th December 10am-12noon Carers Partnership Board meeting** at next Forum (**12th November**) and Amy can attend as supporter if required.

Members to consider if they are available/interested.

Amy to send meeting minutes to members once Stephen adds her to board mailing list.

Forum evaluation - Amy Deakin

Amy presented to the Forum on evaluation based on feedback forms.

Positive feedback:

- 100% agreed that they felt better informed and supported.
- 100% agreed they'd met other carers.
- 100% extremely likely to recommend.
- Members feel they know more about what is going on for carers locally.
- Members feel they are making a difference.
- Members feel they are having their say on services.
- Members feel they are able to contribute during meetings.

Suggestions:

- More opportunities to meet with heads of key services and those with power to change things.
- Make sure there is a plan for replacing members if someone has to step down.
- Review frequency of meetings.
- Make more use of members' skills.
- Engage with different groups of carers e.g. younger carers.

Discussion:

- Frequency should be based on what we want to achieve - don't want to become a "talking shop".
- Members present all able to generally commit to monthly meetings, aside from caring circumstances.

- Important to keep current day of the week and time for some people rather than change frequency.

Actions:

- All members to consider any skills they have which could benefit the forum, and any groups/organisations they are involved in. Members should send that information to Amy by email or be ready to share at the next meeting.

Local campaign discussion/Forum priorities - Amy Deakin

Note - this discussion began as a proposal for a local campaign with one key aim, but it was decided by the forum that the issues were too broad to focus on one area, so members planned key Forum priorities instead. These will be used to guide planning for next year at the next Forum meeting.

Discussion:

- Amy suggested that Forum plans a local campaign for Carers Week 2020 and decides on a single key aim. Shared previously discussed priority themes and actions.
- Peter - need to review themes/actions in advance to make a decision, can we have a copy?
- Amy - will circulate copies with members before next meeting.
- Yvonne - didn't we decide that education/training was our top priority?
- Amy - yes we did, explained we had already spoken with Beth and gained Forum feedback, do we want to stick with it?
- Yvonne - right, understand we are reviewing priority for next year.
- Debra - raised point of employers who are not carer friendly being an important issue.
- Peter - need to know your rights as a carer.
- Angela - what are other organisations doing next year? What are their priorities? We should work with them.
- Amy - suggested that rather than find single aim, shall we look at general priorities instead?
- Members agreed this was a better idea.
- Amy suggested that a CCG representative had asked to attend next meeting to discuss Health & Care plan - members said this was good but we ought to have wider public meeting as well to raise awareness.

Priorities:

Amy recorded priority aims/objectives as follows (note - I have arranged these into aims/objectives after the meeting for clarity):

1. To inform carers of their rights.

- Invite relevant organisations to speak to Forum about carer rights.
- Explore how we as a Forum can ensure other carers know their rights.

2. To raise awareness of carers/carer issues in the community and with professionals.

- Ask other carers what their key issues are e.g. survey.
- Use members' contacts to raise awareness about the Centre and the work of the Forum.
- Explore other ways of reaching carers in the community and sharing our knowledge.

3. To promote key carer issues with decision makers/budget holders and hold them to account.

- Invite key decision makers to meetings.
- Use previously agreed priority themes and actions to plan meetings.
- Find out the key priorities of decision makers e.g. council, NHS, etc.
- Make greater use of statistics and other forms of evidence to support our arguments.
- Work more closely with other carer organisations e.g. invite Healthwatch.
- Make greater use of members' skills to support our work.

Actions

Amy to circulate priorities list with members before 12th November.

Mending the Gap - Chris Jeffreys

Chris Jeffreys spoke on behalf of the Mending the Gap campaign - shared personal experience as a disabled person cared for by his wife, who is a working carer. Campaigning for 5 days of paid carer leave to be rolled out nationally/enforceable by law.

Discussion:

- Brigitte - Centrica currently offers paid leave in private sector, as does Aviva.
- Debra - wholeheartedly relate to issue.
- Amy - how can forum help campaign?
- Chris - raise awareness of Mending the Gap, look at website.
- Angela - pleased there is cross-party political support on Disability All Party Parliamentary Group. Issue with carers not saying they are carers and not getting any help at work.

Actions:

- Amy to circulate Mending the Gap link to members: <http://mendingthegap.co.uk/>

AOB

- Meeting with Sarah Jones MP - delayed due to current Parliamentary business and staff illness - Amy to continue to pursue.
- Amy asked if members OK for her to approach other MPs?
- Members happy for Amy to invite them all to a meeting.

- Discussion whether to hold event at Centre or go to them - members potentially open to both.

Actions:

- Amy to email all local MPs to arrange a meeting - may be in 2020.

Next meeting date

Date of next meeting given as **12 November 2019 at 1.30pm** at the Carers Support Centre.