

West Dunbartonshire Local Engagement Network**Open Forum Discussion: Adult Carers****16 May 2017 in the Carers of West Dunbartonshire Centre, Clydebank**

The session began with an introduction and scene setting by Soumen Sengupta, Head of Strategy, Planning and Health Improvement with the Health & Social Care Partnership. The caring responsibilities of workshop attendees spanned dementia, learning disabilities, long term conditions and mental health.

The workshop discussion, chaired by Barbara Barnes highlighted the following key points:

- The group had mixed experiences around accessing information and advice on their respective caring roles
- Managing information and service access across geographical boundaries was problematic (e.g. where the carer lives in West Dunbartonshire and the cared for person in Glasgow) with carers feeling that they often lost out by 'falling through the gap'
- Information relatively easy to find on the internet but need to know it is from a trusted source
- Pathways through and across services not clear
- Transition points are problematic – into school, primary to high school, children to adult services etc
- Can be difficult to gain appropriate information when the cared for person moves within the system eg. during hospital admission
- Access to services is needed outwith office hours (9-5)
- Carers of West Dunbartonshire services are good
- Social work support can be patchy depending on the worker involved and the level of knowledge the worker has about the cared for person
- More befriending support is needed for young adults with complex needs
- Increase awareness and support around Power of Attorney and mandates would be helpful
- Levels of support are better for older people than adults in general

- Too much emphasis is put on crisis point activity and not enough on anticipatory planning
- Need to improve awareness of carer support at points of diagnosis
- Increase the opportunities for carers to network and share experiences
- Focus on recruitment and training of paid carers to ensure they better understand the nature of the caring relationship and how their role fits within it
- Need to improve opportunities for condition-specific carers groups to develop
- Consideration of positively managing any ending of a caring relationships
- Increase awareness of the choice of service providers available for people needing support

Main Feedback

Generally participants felt that more could be done to help support the caring role. In particular, those attending felt that the focus should be on:

- Clear information and support at points of transition
- More anticipatory planning and less reliance on crisis support
- Improved cross-boundary partnership working with the cared for person and carer at its heart
- Better service availability outwith office hours
- Increase staff knowledge of the role of carers to help develop better partnerships
- Better promotion of mandates and power of attorney
- Faster appointment of key workers
- Broader access to Carers Centre information