

REPORT TO: Health Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 9th November 2010
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Adults & Community
SUBJECT: Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy 2009/12
WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the Board with the Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy 2009/12 attached at Appendix 1, which has recently been updated/refreshed.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board: -

- 1) Note contents of the Report
- 2) Comment on the Strategy and associated action plan

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The initial Commissioning Strategy was presented to the Board in September 2009. This updated version now includes outcomes and results from targets set within the Strategy's original action plan and it outlines the achievements over the last 12 months as a result of the Carers Consultation event, held in January 2010 and the on going work of the Local Implementation Team (LIT) Sub Groups and the independent Carers Reference Group (Chaired by the Manager of Halton Carers Centre)

3.3 The main objectives of the Strategy are to continue to develop a process for the joint commissioning of services across Halton and to continue to assist in the identification of hidden carers and improve information and access to support services. A balance will need to be maintained between commissioning and the work that continues to take place in supporting voluntary sector organisations e.g. Parkinson's Society, Connect etc to develop their services. Some support and information is already being offered to the third sector, in order that they prepare appropriately for the anticipated changes with funding streams, to encourage and advise them to access alternative support, draft funding bids and collate evidence to demonstrate service need.

3.4 The LIT Carer Sub Groups and the multi agency Carers Strategy Group will continue to undertake the monitoring of the implementation of the Commissioning Strategy and associated action plan for the immediate future.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 A section on Safeguarding Vulnerable adults has been added to the Joint Commissioning Carers Strategy 2009 – 2012 in order to highlight the potential that Carers can also be vulnerable and at risk of abuse.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 With the change of focus towards a Commissioning Strategy for Carers, resources will continue to be identified in order that the Strategy is effectively implemented and appropriate monitoring frameworks developed.
- 5.2 The introduction of a Joint Commissioning Strategy in 2009 was critical in ensuring that the Carers Grant continued to be ring fenced for use with carers as the Grant now forms part of the Area Based Grant. It should be noted that the Carers Grant funding is only available until the end March 2011 and consideration of funding arrangements past this date will need to be considered once the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review are known.
- 5.3 In advance of this, work has already commenced within the Carers Strategy Group on the development of the “sustainability” of the current services for Carers past April 2011. This will involve looking at alternative sources of funding from partner organisations or the redistribution of other funding available to the Local Authority. The involvement of the external funding team within Halton Borough Council will need to be developed further.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Partnership working has increased with both the local authority and the third sector in order to strengthen the transitional frameworks for Children and Young Carers. The strategy aims to continue to raise awareness for the future provision of Carers Services which would benefit children and young people under 18 who have caring responsibilities, whose lives are often restricted in some way because they are supporting or taking responsibility for the care of a person who is ill or who has a disability etc.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Partnership working has increased between Jobcentre Plus, Halton People into Jobs and other carers services in order to increase the accessibility of opportunities for work, education and learning for Carers in order that their skills etc are maximised to their full potential.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The strategy clearly demonstrates the Council’s commitment, as a major stakeholder, in recognising the needs of Carers and in promoting their health and wellbeing within the Community. Funding for 2010/11 from the Carers Grant has been agreed via the LIT Sub Groups to ensure that Carers health needs are considered when funding carers breaks.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The Strategy and associated action plan aims to address issues for carers in Halton in a structured way thus ensuring that, through working in partnership with Health, Voluntary Agencies and Carers that carer’s needs can continue

to be met. In light of the new Government's possible changes and announcements it is important that Halton steps up its stance on the needs of Carers and the vital role and impact that Carers Breaks have on the health and wellbeing of Carers.

- 7.2 The Directorate and it's partners recognise and value the essential role that carers play in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community. With that in mind the risks of losing some of the previously "hidden carers" or severely reducing the amount of support that we can offer to those carers poses a real risk, given that the Carers Grant ceases in March 2011.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Using the new corporate procedure, a Community Impact Review and Assessment (CIRA) has been completed, to reflect the changes within the Joint Commissioning Carers Strategy.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 9.1 There are no background documents under the meaning of this Act.