

NHSL CARERS INFORMATION STRATEGY: UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

This Paper updates the Board on actions to implement NHSL Carers Information Strategy. The strategy was endorsed by the Board in March 2007 and subsequently signed of by the Chief Executives of South Lanarkshire Council and North Lanarkshire Council, and the Chairs of South Lanarkshire Carers Network and North Lanarkshire Cares Together.

It also flags up the process by which the recently announced Scottish Government allocation around the Carers Information Strategy will be utilised.

The Board will recall that NHSL's Carers Information Strategy sits in the context of the broader carers strategies for North and South Lanarkshire. These strategies have been led by the North and South Carer Strategy Groups chaired by social work colleagues.

2. IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

A workshop of all stakeholders was held in August 2007 to agree an action plan. The action plan is being pursued by a Carers Advisory Group which pulls together a consistent approach to implement the strategy by the five signatories to the strategy i.e. North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Carers Network, North Lanarkshire Carers Together and NHSL.

The August action plan was the basis of a report to the Scottish Government in October 2007. Feedback has been positive and after a recent meeting in March an updated response is expected from the Scottish Government.

Key action from the Carers Information Strategy was to set up a carers support team to raise awareness of carers for NHS staff, and thereby ensuring that NHSL staff inform and support carers. The team will comprise five members with strong roots into carers organisations, and clinical practice within NHSL. The team will be in place in May 2008 and will comprise three part-time carer co-ordinators based at each of the acute hospitals but with strong links into Primary Care, a clinical secondment into North Lanarkshire

Carers Together, and a SLCN employee funded by NHSL. The team will be performance managed through linked work plans facilitated by the Carers Advisory Group.

Linked with this is the current work to update the Home from Hospital Carers packs which are made available to carers on the discharge of the cared for from hospital. The aim of the packs is to empower carers with information as to what should happen when the cared for is discharged, and the range of services available in the community. The packs also signposts carers to sources of advice on financial benefits, the Princes Royal Trust Carers Centre and the right to have a carers assessment. The review will improve signposting, reflect on the position of young carers and include reference to the General Medical Services Local Enhanced Service.

The team's link with General Medical Practitioner's will be reinforced by the GMS- Local Enhanced Service for Carers for 2008/09 which builds on the previous GMS Direct Enhanced Service for Carers. So far 95% of practices have signed up to the Local Enhanced Service. In the first year the LES requires practices to have a register of carers, appoint a liaison contact within the practice in connection with carers, and refer carers to information and support as appropriate.

To help raise awareness of carers amongst NHSL staff, an article on NHSL's work around carers has been running in Pulse for the last three editions, and a carers hand-out is now available as part of the induction of new staff. This is in addition to the carers briefings already made available to NHSL staff and practices in the past which will be reinforced systematically by the Carers Support Team

Board members may have noticed the carers posters in Community Pharmacists. It is hoped that this campaign will help raise the profile of information and support available to carers. The poster campaign arose out of negotiations between NHSL and the Chemist Contractor Committee.

Other actions will be pursued in line with the detailed action plan, and expected response from the Scottish Government. It is intended to strengthen actions around young carers using the allocation described below.

3. NHS CARERS INFORMATION STRATEGY- FUNDING ALLOCATION FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

The Scottish Government has allocated funding to pursue implementation of NHS Carers Information Strategy as noted below

2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
108	323	539

The Scottish Government advises that although some of the funding can be spent on enhancing NHS staff training in partnership with local or national carers organisations, it should also be used to deliver information and carer training through local carer centres. Discussions with Scottish Government colleagues confirm that the allocation's use should reflect local circumstances which in Lanarkshire will include the NLC-SLC-NHSL funders agreement with the local Princess Royal Trust Carers Centre.

The Scottish Government require a progress report on the intended use of the Allocation by the end of May 2008.

A report will be put to NHSL's Corporate Management Team setting out recommendations on the use of the allocation reflecting advice from the Carers Advisory Group and NHSL colleagues. The recommendations will enhance delivery of the Carers Information Strategy and deliver value for money.

Each proposal will include evaluation so that by 2010/11 an informed discussion can take place about either implementing an exit strategy or if funds permit continuing the services where appropriate.

4. CONCLUSION

The Board is asked to note progress to date, and the approach to strengthening delivery using the Scottish Government allocation.

R. SHORTER
20 March 2008