

## Health and Social Services Committee HSS-09-01 (p.4)

**Date:** 6 June 2001  
**Venue:** Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales  
**Title:** Caring About Carers - A Strategy for Carers in Wales Implementation Plan - First Report

### **Purpose**

1. I launched '*Caring About Carers - A Strategy for Carers in Wales Implementation Plan*' in July 2000. '*Caring About Carers*' made a commitment to establish a Carers' Strategy Review Panel and that the Panel's assessment would inform the Minister's annual report to the Health and Social Services Committee.
2. Annex A to this paper reports to the Committee on '*Caring About Carers*'. Annex A provides the (near final) draft of '*Caring About Carers - A Strategy for Carers in Wales Implementation Plan - First Report*' which will be published in Carers' Week on 12 June.

### **Recommendations**

3. That the Committee notes progress made on commitments made in '*Caring About Carers*', July 2000 and new commitments made in the First Report.

### **Background**

4. The Committee has taken a keen interest in carers and issues affecting carers and supported the publication of '*Caring About Carers - A Strategy for Carers in Wales Implementation Plan*' in July 2000. This strategy which followed the Prime Minister's launch of the '*Caring About Carers: A National Strategy for Carers*' in February 1999 underpins the National Assembly's commitment to carers and those for whom they care.
5. For the first time in 2000-2001 the National Assembly has provided funds via a in Carers' Special Grant directly to local authorities for breaks for carers and the development of carers' services. A summary of each local authorities' carers' special grant plans is given at Annex A to the attached document.

### **Timing**

6. The Committee will wish to note progress detailed at Annex A in advance of my statement on the Carers Strategy in plenary on 12 June. Publication is scheduled to coincide with the plenary statement on the Strategy, approval of the Carers' special grant and commencement of the Carers and Disabled

Children Act 2000 and associated regulations.

## **‘Caring About Carers - A Strategy for Carers in Wales Implementation Plan - First Report’**

7. The Report at Annex A provides a commentary on progress on Strategy commitments made since July last year and rolls the strategy forward. It follows the format of the Strategy categorising the Assembly’s commitments under five broad headings:

- Health and social care;
- Information;
- Support;
- Young Carers;
- Carers and Employment.

8. Of particular note are:

- commencement, subject to Assembly approval, of the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 - carers will be entitled to a carers’ assessment even where the cared person cared for has not been assessed or is not in receipt of community care services and local authorities will be able provide services directly to carers;
- implementation on 1 December 2000 of the Health Act 1999 Partnership Framework (the flexibilities) which promote and facilitate joint working at the health and social care interface will enable the NHS, local government and the voluntary and independent sectors to work closely together to better serve users and carers;
- the Assembly’s funding to enable local authorities to provide free bus travel to pensioners and disabled people from April 2001 which sits squarely with the Carers’ Strategy and illustrates very plainly the cross-cutting nature of this agenda; and
- Assembly’s commitment to setting to the pace on carer friendly employment practices. On 1 April 2001 Assembly staff were provided with additional flexibility to balance their work and home lives.

9. I particularly welcome the establishment of the Carers’ Strategy Review Panel, membership of which is listed at Annex B to the First Report, as that will ensure that the Strategy is developed and reviewed in close collaboration with carers and their representative organisations. A full account of progress made and a new commitment is given in the 1st Report at Annex A.

## **Financial Implications**

10. A total of £20.7m has been allocated to the Carers’ Strategy in Assembly budget proposals for 2001-2004. The breaks down as £4m in 2001-2; £5m in 2002-3 and £6m in 2003-4 to carers special grant and policy development, and £1.1m in 2001-2; £2m in 2002-3; and £2.6m in 2003-4 for the new burden imposed by carers’ assessments on local authorities. The later element is being paid to local authorities

as part of the local government revenue settlement.

11. In 2001-2002 I have allocated the £4m thus:

- £3.7m Carers Special Grant as been committed to the Carers special grant;
- £300,000 for policy development, research, publicity, publications and capacity building to assist Carers' National Association and Crossroads in working with the Assembly to develop and implement the Carers Strategy in Wales.

**Jane Hutt**  
**Minister for Health and Social Services**

**Contact**

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