

Julie Morgan AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref Petition P-06-1209  
Our ref JMSS/10420/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

8 October 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence on 17 September where you set out the details of a petition from Mike O'Brien calling for the creation of a national carers register to make identifying carers easier. Responsibility for unpaid carers sits within my portfolio and your correspondence has been passed to me to respond.

I agree that early identification of unpaid carers is an important step towards ensuring they can access the support they are entitled to, when they need it. Many carers don't recognise themselves as being in a caring role and as a consequence do not access sources of information, advice and assistance, or a carers' needs assessment. That is why our new [Strategy for Unpaid Carers](#) includes commitments under Priority One to encourage more unpaid carers to self-identify by raising awareness amongst professionals who may have contact with them, across the statutory, private and third sectors. We will also work with partners to explore how statutory services can better identify and record information on unpaid carers. This will allow the needs of more unpaid carers to be addressed at an early stage, but will also provide valuable data relating to the numbers and circumstances of unpaid carers in Wales.

Work to improve early identification of unpaid carers is also already underway via our Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant 'Carer Aware'. The scheme is being delivered by Carers Trust Wales and Carers Wales, and the objective of the project is to work with staff at all levels of our social care and health systems to create meaningful cultural change to benefit unpaid carers in Wales. This includes:

- raising awareness about carers, the impact of caring and carers rights with the general public and relevant professionals;

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- supporting more carers to have their voices heard in the shaping and implementation of services and professional practice; and
- providing training and resources to inform and support a culture shift in how carers are identified, valued and supported within social care and health settings.

Under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, carers have an equal right to an assessment of the support they need and to have their eligible needs met as appropriate. The Act also places a legal duty on local authorities to promote the wellbeing of carers. Local authorities must ensure their approach to assessment and eligibility is clearly communicated so that individuals understand how to access an assessment and what is involved in the assessment process. As set out in the strategy, we have committed to using the data we collect via the evaluation of the Act and the revised Performance and Improvement Framework to work with local authorities to develop a range of solutions that enable them to deliver timely, effective statutory assessments that are responsive to individual needs of unpaid carers. This will include how statutory services can better identify and record information on unpaid carers.

We are also proceeding with a second phase of our successful national carers' rights publicity campaign later this year. It will be delivered by Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales, in close partnership with Welsh Government. The campaign will target all ages of carer, and aims to encourage individuals to self-identify as a carer so that they can access the support they need.

In terms of young carers, our ambitious plan to create a national ID card with all 22 local authorities is well underway to help improve recognition of young carers by teachers, GPs and pharmacists. The key objective of the project is that any young carer up to age 18 will be able to access a young carers ID card if they choose to, and wherever they live in Wales. In 2021-22 we are providing £186k to help drive the development and roll out of the national ID card project. At a recent learning workshop in September, local authorities and commissioned providers shared some of their progress so far. The North Wales project from Flintshire, Wrexham, Conwy and Denbighshire have had 300 young carers sign up to date, since their card was launched in March 2021.

Drawing these threads together, working with the Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers we have convened three working groups to coproduce a delivery plan that will help us achieve the commitments within the Strategy for Unpaid Carers. I intend to publish the delivery plan by the end of 2021. The plan will set out clear actions, timescales and measures for monitoring progress against each of the four national priorities.

In developing actions for the delivery plan, the working groups are considering the evidence collated for the [Equality Impact Assessment](#). This has shown that carers who are older, male or from ethnic minority communities are less likely to identify with the term 'carer' and this can result in information or support directed at unpaid carers not appearing relevant to those family and friends who provide support. Priority One seeks to address this by raising awareness amongst unpaid carers of how self-identification can lead to financial, emotional and practical support. The need for tailored actions to support these carers is being explored as the delivery plan is being developed.

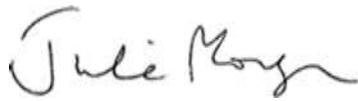
The working group responsible for Priority One has also considered the suggestion of establishing a national database or register for unpaid carers during its early discussions regarding delivery plan actions. It was apparent that a more in depth consideration is required to determine whether a register would add value to the activity outlined above and mechanisms already in place. For example, a number of GPs across Wales allow unpaid carers to register their caring role with them, and carers can also make themselves known to local carer charities, many of which are commissioned by local authorities to provide

support on their behalf. I am also keen to understand how a register would comply with privacy and personal information regulations.

I have asked my officials to bring the suggestion of a register to the Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers and would be happy to update you on the outcome of these initial discussions

To summarise, providing better support for our unpaid carers is a priority for this government and I recognise that early identification is vital if we are to realise this ambition. As outlined above, there is a range of activity already underway to support people with caring responsibilities to self-identify and access the information, advice and support they need, however, we will continue to consider whether introducing a register would further complement this work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Morgan', written in a cursive style.

**Julie Morgan AS/MS**

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