The UK’s National Carers Strategy 2008: How did we get there and where are we going?

Conference or Workshop Item

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THE UK's NATIONAL CARERS STRATEGY 2008
How did we get there and where are we going?
March 2012
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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION
• Key facts
• The National Carers Strategy 2008 in context
• The National Carers Strategy 2008
• The next steps........

KEY FACTS
• carer (UK) = caregiver (Finland)
• carers = “people of any age who spend a significant proportion of their lives providing unpaid support to family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems”
• 12% of the UK population are carers
• save the UK around £119 billion every year
The journey so far ........

This has been facilitated through:

• the carers movement
• research
• legislation and government initiatives

Carers movement

• growth in the size and power of national and local carers organizations
• advocacy role increased
• Carers UK – “the voice of carers” (http://www.carersuk.org)

Research

• burgeoned since the 1980s
• carried out at national and local level by a variety of bodies, such as voluntary organisations, government departments and academic institutions
• highlights many aspects of carers’ lives
Legislation and government initiatives

_________________________________________________________________________

National Strategy for Carers (1999)
Employment Relations Act (1999)
Carers and Disabled Children's Act (2000)
Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act (2004)

National Carers Strategy (2008)

THE NATIONAL CARERS STRATEGY 2008 -
“Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own”

• strong prime ministerial and cross-departmental support

• “by 2018, carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities. Support will be tailored to meet individual needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, while enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen”

• carers’ role, value and importance is now widely recognised
The vision for carers........

- respected as expert care partners
- access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role
- to have a life of their own alongside their caring role
- to be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role
- supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity
- children and young people to be protected from inappropriate caring

OUTCOMES of the journey so far...

- carers now have a high political profile in the UK
- entitled to their own assessments and several benefits: eg Carer’s Allowance, Housing benefit
- Carers are empowered eg
  - carers organisations are consulted about policy
  - carers involved in design & delivery of education & training
  - carers respected as “expert care partners”
  - information and training for carers
  - specific training for health professionals

THE NEXT STEPS....

- the National Carers Strategy has driven an emphasis on mainstreaming carers in strategy and policy development and reform of the carers’ legislation
  - cross-Government strategy
  - how the Coalition government will work with carers and carers organisations
  - builds on the strategic vision for carers in the National Carers Strategy 2008
Priority areas until 2014

- support carers to remain mentally and physically well
- personalised support for carers and those they support
- fulfil their educational and employment potential
- involve them in designing care
- recognise their contributions
- identify carers at an early stage

THE FUTURE?

- there is evidence that efforts to support carers will continue and up until now the government has been willing to commit resources to support to carers
- BUT....... there is an economic recession