BACKGROUNDD

As part of its ground breaking report “Care at Home” in 2010, the University of Glamorgan highlighted the important finding that paid carers provide some 12 million hours of care in Wales compared to the 280 million hours provided by unpaid carers - paid carers are trained and supervised often with a career framework while unpaid carers are untrained, unsupported and unpaid - that is the point of the Carers Demonstrator Project initiated by Carmarthenshire Carers Forum and taken up as a pilot by Hywel Dda Local Health Group and Stakeholder Reference Group, Carmarthenshire Social Service, Crossroads Care and the Care Council for Wales. Funding for the pilot has been provided by Hywel Dda LHB, Care Council for Wales and Crossroads Care with a steering group of health, social care, education, workforce development and 3rd sector staff. Two associates commissioned by the Care Council for Wales, Sue Gwynne and Rhys Hughes have provided invaluable input while the Hywel Dda Stakeholder Reference Group has featured the project as a priority for 2012-13 and 2013-14 in its desire to support unpaid carers while identifying an important area of workforce redesign.

THE PILOT

The aim is to train paid carers such as home care assistants, health care support workers, reablement workers, crossroads care workers and others through the development of a Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) course and an associated training programme to enable paid workers to undertake the role of a paid carer demonstrator in addition to their usual role. Once trained the above workers would provide a 2-3 hour demonstrator programme for unpaid carers in their own homes. Many of the unpaid carers would have no other support or help and would receive invaluable, friendly and practical support in helping them to be able to carry out practical care techniques with additional help with signposting and advice (including welfare benefits and carers services)

This initiative fits in well with not only the Carers Measure Sustainable Social Services and the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Bill but also the Hywel Dda Clinical Services Strategy.
The QUALL programme which is a nationally recognised training initiative involving 2 days training for paid carers who have attained at least QCF (NVQ) 2 or 3. So far 10 people have successfully undertaken the programme and plans are in place for an additional 2 training programmes enabling another 30 paid carers to be trained.

NEXT STEPS

The 40 unpaid carers (once the training programme is completed) will begin to undertake the demonstrator programme with unpaid carers across the Hywel Dda catchment area. Coleg Sir Gar and Pembrokeshire College are actively involved in developing and innovative programme.

Referrals for the programme will involve GP’s, Health and Social Care staff in Secondary, Primary and Community Care locations, 3rd Sector and, hopefully self referrals.

In Hywel Dda catchment area terms it is estimated that 47 million hours of care are provided to people in their own homes by unpaid carers, compared with 2.3 million hours of care provided by paid carers. Supporting this vast army of unpaid carers (well over 40,000 in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire) is vital to the NHS, Social Services, 3rd Sector and other Stakeholders. A supported unpaid carer workforce (effectively that’s what they are) is necessary for the future as emphasised in the Carers Measure.

A further update will be scheduled for the October SRG meeting. Interest in the Hywel Dda pilot is attracting considerable interest across Wales, as well as England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Kenneth John Jones