

Key: FS1: Female Speaker 1

FS2: Female Speaker 2

Supporting Carers

The Commissioner

Tim Anfilogoff: The biggest challenge facing carers at the moment, I think, is the combination of some really difficult economic decisions that are going to have to be made over the coming while, with the fact that the whole Self Directed Support agenda is still developing.

Narrator: Tim Anfilogoff is a commissioner with the Adult Care Services at Hertfordshire County Council. Today he is meeting with the team to discuss home care quality monitoring.

Discussion

FS1: There's another issue I saw about carers, and I'm talking about family carers of course, that if carers need to go out to work in the morning it's really critical that the home care is delivered at the time that's been agreed. That doesn't always transpire in terms of deliver and so we do try to say to home care agencies, please flag up these carers, it is another commitment.

Narrator: With a budget of £3.5 million, Tim's responsible for ensure the Council delivers a quality service to both service users and carers.

Tim Anfilogoff: I think there's some tensions in there and if personalisation works the way it should, people will have much more of that sense that they're in control and I think we've got a long way before we get to that sort of Holy Grail but for me that's the challenge that the systems always tend to work for the system and very much everything we've been talking about is how you try and remind the system that actually the purpose of it is to help this person get the best service they possibly can.

FS2: There was just one other thing I thought of because I've had an email back this morning ...

Narrator: With the introduction of self directed support through Direct Payments, it's Tim's job to look at how services can be best delivered to meet individual needs.

Tim Anfilogoff: I think as a commissioner, the challenge is always to identify the need effectively, make sure that the solution is the right one, I'll have time to monitor and evaluate that it actually was against the backdrop of all these other demands and all the other possible needs. I think it's a reasonably complicated process, particularly with carers, carers are one in ten of the population of Hertfordshire, and so it's a big group with lots of diverse needs.

Narrator: Tim believes that listening to carer's experiences is vital in delivering the best possible service for users and carers. Today he's meeting with Mari, who cares for her 30 year old daughter Fiona who has diabetes and Down's syndrome.

Mari Stevenson and Tim Anfilogoff

Mari Stevenson: My biggest frustration, well there are two really, not being listened to and not having the information where I need to find it, and three actually, not responding back with information and just being ignored.

Narrator: The meeting with Tim allows Mari to discuss her personal experiences in sorting out arrangements for her daughter, who is due to move out of the family home.

Mari Stevenson: My daughter's a diabetic and moving into her flat, the PA's will need to be able to be responsible for altering her insulin levels as and when because for diabetics it's not a static number and there don't seem to be any guidelines set up to help with that. So, what we decided was to meet with the diabetic nurse and the team leader and I, which is what we wanted, but it's something again, that I had to arrange. And we seem to have come across this time after time that the people you think would know where to go to or what answers to provide, don't. So, therefore, unless you want to wait forever, some things we were still waiting for a response to and we went ahead and did them anyway but it's sort of that kind of thing, it's constantly stressful for everyone.

Tim Anfilogoff: Obviously, if we can sort it once we can sort it a 100 times so we need to make sure that that gets shared and gets held in the right place, so that other people going through that get the right answers straight away not after lots of trying.

Mari Stevenson: They talk about linking closer links don't they with the ...

Tim Anfilogoff: I think the benefits of the personalisation agenda of carers are thinking about what it's actually like to be the person using the service or the carer, both have to

be done carefully and properly and if you don't get that initial assessment, initial conversation with people about what their lives are like, what they want their lives to be like, the rest is just process again. I think there's a really risk with some of these things that we get all excited about the means to the end and personalisation, SDS, Self Direct Support, all of that stuff, really important as a means to an end, it is not an end in itself.

Mari Stevenson:

So it's all about sort of thinking and getting someone to think, not just what's the right thing to do but let's think in a creative way. So, if you have someone like we've met a new line manager who we're very impressed with who at the review brought it all back to Fiona, it really focused on Fiona and the whole process was much less stressful than we thought it was going to be.

Tim Anfilogoff:

Brilliant, well it's great to hear that and it's great to hear when positive changes get made following feedback.

Narrator:

The department has received Beacon status for its work with carers and it continues to champion their needs in a challenging economic climate.

Tim Anfilogoff:

We go back to this view that carer is a kind of bolt on thing that you can sort out if you've got time and money but otherwise just concentrate on the service user. Hopefully, the last ten or fifteen years we've established that that is an absolutely crazy idea and it's really important to support the carer because they're doing most of what's happening anyway.

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