

## Implementing the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 Regional events, April-May 2006

The following questions were posed as a means of stimulating discussion:

- From the carer's experience (good or bad) what messages can be drawn out to facilitate good practice?
- Thinking of ways that would not require additional funding, and taking into consideration the resources showcased today, are there ways in which support for the carer could have been improved?
- Thinking about your own workplace and/or experiences, are there ideas or examples of good practice that have not been covered during the course of the day that you would like to share?

The feedback was general and based on what is needed to bring about better carer support:

### **Information**

- Better access to information and advice
- Better communication between agencies involved in supporting carers
- Ensuring information is up to date and timely
- 'one stop shops' that provide information on a range of resources
- Plain English - no jargon
- Raise carer awareness
- Encourage involvement from local media – profiling carers
- Joint information sessions for carers– health, social care and local partners giving information and offering assessment
- Better information on how to support individuals with particular conditions
- Carer's information packs

## **Inclusion**

- Director level professionals to have dialogue with carers organisations
- Proactive inclusion of carers from the start and at all levels
- Value carers as experts in the field
- 'Buddying' – linking carer's together for mutual support or older carers with young carers
- Carers representatives to be involved in the allocation of the carer's grant
- Involving a diverse range of carers in decision making and planning – not just a select few

## **Services**

- Joint approach to carer support, starting at planning level
- Clarity about boundaries and confidentiality which may effect good communication
- Low level support for carers – 'someone at the end of the phone'
- Out of hours support for carers
- Service flexibility through vouchers and direct payments
- Building extra capacity into respite resources and accepting that vacancies are for emergency use
- Flexible outreach teams to provide emergency respite
- Proper discharge planning which includes carer assessment
- Assistance for those who need to catch up on sleep including night support services
- Recognise the need for a resource centre as a meeting place
- Free leisure services for young carers
- Strategic commissioning - decommission poor services and reinvest in new, person centred ones, support local organisations to develop services
- 'Pamper days' to enable carers to relax and take a break
- Promote lifelong learning
- Confidence building for carers
- Decorating grants for carers
- Flexible opening and appointment times
- Develop support for small employers to enable them to support carers

## **Assessments**

- Contingency planning for carers
- Recognising the degree of unpaid work carried out by carers
- Timeframe for completion of assessments
- Specialist carers assessment workers
- Respect carer's views and value their opinions
- Time to talk and be listened to

- Assess the impact of caring, not the volume or number of hours
- Focus on outcomes
- Person centred and individualised
- Focus on how carers want to spend their time

## **Training**

- awareness training for GP's and all front line staff
- to encourage social workers to think creatively and use mainstream resources
- social work students to visit carer led groups and have placements in carer's organisations
- carers as expert trainers

## **General**

- Better national targets
- Local authorities should work to maximise access to funding that is available to voluntary sector
- Carers should be treated as a client group in their own right with sufficient resource allocation
- Staff audits to establish numbers of working carers in local and health organisations
- Voluntary services to provide support and access to legal advice for carers who need help to challenge their local authority