

## THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE CHANGE IN THE NHS IN SCOTLAND: A SUMMARY GUIDE

### Background – Building a health service fit for the future

In May of 2005, the report *"Building a Health Service Fit for the Future"* was published. A group led by Professor David Kerr, with a number of sub-groups addressing specific issues including children, older people, health inequalities, unscheduled care and rural health services, had produced the report. Carers Scotland were involved in the specific sub-group looking at the role of self-care, carers and the voluntary sector.

The report outlined a framework for the way in which NHS services in Scotland needed to change in future to respond to a changing Scotland, where although the population is becoming healthier, it is also becoming more elderly. There has been a growth in long term conditions and a trend of rising emergency admissions of older people, but, health technologies and practices are also advancing and all of this means that the way health services are provided needs to change too.

The significance of carers in supporting health services was clearly highlighted within the report; their importance in reducing emergency admissions and enabling hospital discharge and in supporting sick, disabled and elderly people in managing their own health.

The report made 5 key recommendations for the NHS in working with carers:

- **Make carers health a public health issue**
- **Implement fully NHS carer information strategies**
- **Encourage carer participation and partnership involvement in planning**
- **Develop and provide carer training**
- **Build "carer awareness" into professional training**

Since then, the Scottish Executive has been examining the recommendations and have now published their response, which forms the framework for service change in the NHS.

### Delivering for health

The Executive response, *"Delivering for health"* was published in November 2005. The framework identifies a range of targets for health improvement, waiting times, service redesign, improving patients' experience of health care, reducing health inequalities and utilising technologies.

The response again highlights the importance of carers and states clearly that the current health service must change from the current view where **"carers are undervalued"** to one where **"carers are supported as partners"**. Supporting carers is seen as **"a central theme for future health care policy in Scotland"** and carers are highlight in

- |   |
|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourage carer participation and partnership involvement in planning |
|---|

particular as being integral to support those they care for in managing long term conditions.

*“Supporting self care and self management means more than giving patients information about their condition. It also means that health care professionals must empower patients (and involve their family carers) to take greater control over their own care...”*

The Executive will establish a Scottish Long-Term Conditions Alliance in 2006 to support self-management and one of the three key initial tasks will be to *“ensure that patients and their carers have the skills and knowledge they need and someone they can contact if required.”*

- Implement fully NHS carer information strategies
- Build “carer awareness” into professional training

The importance of providing carers with the information and training they need for their caring role alongside building carer awareness training into professional training is also focused upon and further guidance on how this will happen will be issued in the form of guidance on the implementation of NHS carer information strategies.

- Develop and provide carer training

Timescales and actions will become clearer once guidance on NHS carer information strategies is published. This is expected to be in April 2006.

### **Finally**

The report has accepted most of the recommendations in relation to carers. However, the recommendation that carers’ health be seen as a public health issue has not been addressed within the response. However, the recommendation has been incorporated into “Care 21: The future of unpaid care in Scotland”.