

Joint Strategic Commissioning
A Briefing Paper for Carers



August 2014

What is Joint Strategic Commissioning?

Joint Strategic Commissioning is about planning and delivering services and support for people in a new way. It includes identifying the needs of individuals and communities, enabling people to decide what will best address those needs and working together with agencies to put the right services and support in place.

This means that instead of different agencies working separately to plan and deliver support for people, the NHS, local authorities and other key partners will work together and with people to plan, purchase and deliver services. This includes sharing the resources that are available to them to help them do this.

This approach means carers, service users, and other partners such as third and independent sector providers will play a greater role in shaping the future of people's services.

Why is Joint Strategic Commissioning important?

Health and Social Care Services are in the process of being re-shaped to better respond to the current and future needs of people and their carers. The aim of this is to enable people to live at home, with the support they need, for as long as possible. This is what most people and their carers want. It also allows resources to be invested in community support, including support for carers, rather than on unplanned admissions to hospital and nursing and residential care.

Joint Strategic Commissioning is part of the Scottish Government's move towards greater integration, partnership working and improving outcomes for people. It is based on a desire to ensure people have a good quality of life, that they remain healthy and independent, and are able to stay in their own home or community for as long as possible. The strategic planning of services and supports is therefore essential to ensure the right outcomes are achieved for people, unnecessary admissions to hospital or long term care are prevented, and people have more power and control over the services and support available to them.

What is happening to enable Joint Strategic Commissioning?

Changes to older people's and some adult services are already underway. For the last few years the government has made money available to every local area through a Reshaping Care for Older People's Change Fund to allow them to set up new services and supports and extending those which are working well in supporting older people to live well at home.

The next stage is to look at all other adult services in the same planned way. Part of this new way of working is about focusing on what works best for people and produces the best outcomes for them in terms of having a good quality of life, keeping well and remaining independent. This often means providing a small amount of support to people and their carers to help them manage better themselves, rather than waiting until they can't manage any more and they require more substantial and costly support and services. Providing support in a timely way also helps to avoid the potential negative impact caring can have on an individual's quality of life.

Legislation has recently been passed to help support this, and the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014 states that all Health and Social Care Partnerships across Scotland must produce Strategic Plans (Joint Strategic Commissioning Plans) which detail the needs of their local populations and how they will support them. These plans should be produced with the inclusion of service users and carers who are required to be involved in decision-making processes on the development of supports and services. Service users and carers are to contribute fully to newly formed local 'Strategic Planning Groups' which will make these decisions.

In addition, the Act requires Integration Authorities to identify at least two localities and to include representatives from these localities in the strategic planning group. Locality planning arrangements will vary across the country but whatever shape they take, these are part of the strategic planning process and will form a key means of engaging a range of local stakeholders in local design and delivery of services and support. Carers input to both these levels of planning will be extremely important as their knowledge of local communities and what is required is invaluable to the process.

Why should carers get involved?

Carers have been recognised as equal partners in care with health and social care professionals. This means their experience and expertise in providing care is valued and they should be included in local and national decision making processes. Carers are the largest group of care providers in Scotland, providing more care than the NHS and local authorities combined. They know what works well in supporting people and where there are areas for improvement. Their role has now been further strengthened with the introduction of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014.

Any re-design of services has an impact on people and the carers that support them. In the case of developing Local Strategic Plans (Joint Strategic Commissioning) it is essential that carers play a central role in local developments and add their voice and experience as to what works and doesn't work, on what they need to fulfil their caring role. As services shift from hospital and residential settings to more support within the home and wider community settings, more pressure could be placed on carers if their needs are not taken into account.

As services shift from hospital and residential settings to more support within the home and wider community settings we need to avoid additional pressure being placed on carers. Taking account of their needs will ensure positive outcomes for both carers and the people they care for.

What does it look like when it works well?

There are many examples from across Scotland where services have developed in relation to the Older Peoples Change Fund and are already producing better outcomes for older people and their carers including:

In Highland...

...Connecting Carers have helped the Scottish Centre for Enabling Technology develop and test apps for iTunes and android which act as an emergency planning tool for carers and a jargon buster. They have followed this up with a programme of IT training for carers.

In Inverclyde...

...a Carers Hospital Discharge project has been established. Through the Change Fund, a carers' centre worker was seconded to work with the hospital discharge team at Inverclyde Royal Hospital raising awareness amongst staff of support for carers and providing support directly to carers. The funding has been extended for a second year and increased to roll out wider within the hospital.

In West Lothian...

..."Dementia Specific Carer Support" provides tailored person-centred support, information and advice to older people caring for a family member or friend with dementia throughout their caring journey - from initial diagnosis and through the progressive stages of the illness.

Similar examples exist across other care groups and it is hoped that more positive outcomes can be achieved with all care groups, this is more likely to happen if carers are involved in the process.

How carers can get involved in Joint Strategic Commissioning

Every local area has been consulting with older people and their carers in relation to developing their Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan for older people. These plans are at a very early stage of implementation and there are still important decisions to be made about how they will be taken forward. And as detailed above there will also be a similar process for all other adults as required by 2015.

This is a good time for carers to have their say and influence the future of services in their area.

You can get involved in the following ways:

- Get a copy of your local plan and make your views known.
- Similarly if there are any existing plans for other care groups ask for a copy and make your views known.
- If you are a member of a carers group or forum, invite the lead officer for Joint Strategic Commissioning in your area to a group meeting. They will be able to tell you more about what is happening and will be interested hearing your views. Strategic Planning Groups are in development in many areas; it is vital carers have a place on these groups therefore find out from your Joint Strategic Commissioning Lead how to be involved in these groups to represent the collective voice of carers.
- Each area should have a carer representative on the local planning group for Joint Strategic Commissioning. It is their role to represent the views of carers and ensure their needs are taken into account in relation to re-shaping services. They should already have links with local carers through carer support organisations, carer forums or support groups and can feed in your views.
- Feedback matters – if you, or the person you care for, currently use a service for support you may be asked to give your views on what you value about it and where there may be room for improvement. This feedback is important in planning services for the future.

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland have produced Best Practice Standards for carer engagement which set out good practice for involving carers in local decision making. For a copy of these standards, contact the Coalition (see below).

For more information contact:

The Coalition of Carers in Scotland

Tel: 01786 850247

Email: coalition@carersnet.org

Web: www.carersnet.org