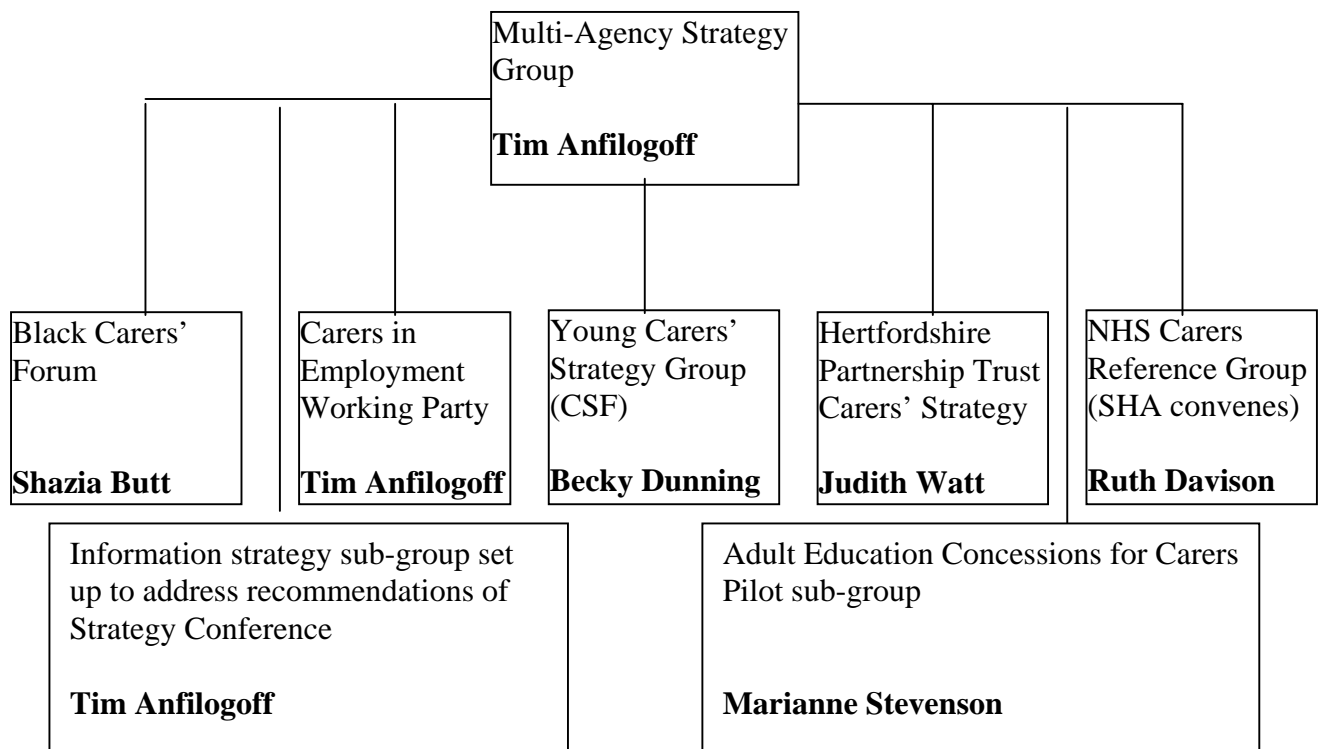


Hertfordshire Multi-Agency Carers Strategy, as at 9 August 2004

1. Background

The Strategy has been in place in a variety of forms since 1996. It has been designed and reviewed to incorporate all the main headlines raised in consultations with carers, the Carers' Topic Group, the Hertfordshire Carers' Strategy Group (carers and professionals from a range of agencies) the *Black and Minority Ethnic Carers' Forum* and by *Listening to Carers Days* etc

2. Working Groups/Reference Groups under the Strategy and Contact Names



3. National Involvement

Sarah Pickup continues as carers' lead for the Association of Directors of Social Services and chairs the Carers Reference Group, with representation from all key national carers' voluntary organisations. She has been involved in discussions on the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act which has now received Royal Assent and comes into force in April 2005.

HCC and its partner agencies in the Carers' Strategy are working with Carers UK on a bid for European Social Fund monies to improve support to working carers. If successful, the development phase will begin in October 2004 with the project commencing in May 2005.

HCC is entering an application for Beacon Status (deadline 9 September) in relation to supporting carers.

HCC's work in co-ordinating the multi-agency strategy and the SHA's negotiation of a target on registering carers in the Local Delivery Plan with PCTs is included in the guidance on Beacon Status as an example of best practice.

The innovative Early Onset Dementia project developed in Dacorum using Carers Grant to provide breaks for carers through one to one work with users gave a presentation as part of Community Care Live in May 2004

4. The Ten Key Themes of the Strategy: A few examples of Recent Developments

1. Information

- The Carers' Information Sub-Group produced new flyers and posters promoting www.hertsdirect.org/carers as a single key place for carers to access information whether directly or *more likely* through professionals accessing them on their behalf
- National posters for Carers' Week, and the local posters and flyers for the hertsdirect promotion were distributed to all 51 libraries. In addition, 18 libraries offered free one-to-one Internet Taster Sessions for Carers between 14th June and the end of the month
- Number of visits to Carers Pages - rose from 2 in week commencing 1 May 2004 to 26 in week commencing 3 July
- Numbers of carers contacting Carers in Hertfordshire continue to increase following the Nothing Registered, Nothing Gained campaign. A presentation to Topic Group will set out further details.

2. Recognition

All aspects of the strategy relate to this theme. Carers Week (June 14) was a key point in the year to tell previously 'hidden' carers about what is on offer. There were 29 Hertfordshire events for carers listed at www.carersweek.org

Some recent developments in hand are:

- Nothing Registered, Nothing gained campaign
- ACS staff offering carers' assessments direct to carers at a drop-in at the Carers Centre in Dacorum and at The African and Caribbean Elders Project in Watford
- New part time Carers in Hertfordshire posts funded out of Carers Grant have been filled in London Colney and Hertsmere, and will be recruited to in Welwyn Hatfield in September
- Increase in numbers of carers' assessments (14%) over the last financial year, and in carer satisfaction levels following introduction of carers' specialists across services. Carer satisfaction with having their needs

heard in the assessment process in 03-04 was 88% and with staff attitudes was 95%

- The Practice Audit of Assessment and Care Management in ACS began in June with the first visits to some of the 35 carers who will be face to face surveyed between June and November. In all, 70 users and carers will have a chance to tell us about their experience of our practice and their files will be among the 210 files across Elderly and Physical Disability and Learning Disability Teams that are audited. This will feed into reports to each of the 14 teams, and into a Board report in December about the whole process
- The pilot of concessions for carers in Adult Education in Stevenage commences in September 2004 and will be monitored closely to assess its benefits

3 Time Off

- Carers Grant spend by HCC led to an additional 8,662 breaks being provided in 2003-04, with 4,474 carers of all disabilities and age groups receiving services funded in whole or part by the Grant. Of those 649 breaks were provided to black and minority ethnic carers
- Crossroads schemes provided 20,000 hours for £274k in 2003-04. This is an increase of 17% on the previous year
- A new live intra-net-based booking system is having a positive impact with figures of take-up for blocked contract beds reaching 83% for July, the highest figure since records began
- CSF allocation of Carers Grant to Carers in Hertfordshire increased from £66k in 2002/03 to £87.5k in 2003/04, which coupled with £30k from the Children's Fund contributes to: school based work, breaks and activities, new work around substance misuse, consultation with young carers by a wide range of agencies, young carers' own web-site and young carers council

4 Emotional support

- 3,920 carers were supported by Carers in Hertfordshire last financial year (802 more than in previous year) through 44,142 contacts with carers during that period. Some 3,300 carers were on the Carers in Hertfordshire database receiving some kind of service (minimum = 4 newsletters per year) as at June 2004
- Flexible Carers' Services are now well bedded in and following publication of an article in the ADSS newsletter other authorities are making contact to hear about how they are working
- In 2003-04, 311 carers received services (mainly in the form of direct payments) at a cost of £102k (average spend £328). Of these, 207 were in older people's and physical disability services, 65 in mental health and 39 in learning disability. All these services have an emotional support impact because they are designed with the carers to promote their health and well-being
- Additional resources for Carers in Hertfordshire in 2004-05 is already allowing more staff time for talking to and listening to carers

5 Training and support to care

- A moving and handling course for carers has been trialed in Dacorum and is now being rolled out to Wel/Hat, N Herts, St Albans and Ware
- Discussions are underway with Hertfordshire Partnership Trust around possible roll-out of the SPEACH course for mental health carers developed by *Carers in Hertfordshire* (Support Programme for Education and Advice for Carers in Herts)
- A new role of Carers Health Visitor is being discussed with PCTs and should be piloted from April 2005 in at least one area, helping carers preserve their health and well being
- The Practice day (15 October) for Professionals from across a range of agencies in the Autumn will focus on recognising the needs of Young Carers so as to ensure they are not taking on inappropriate caring tasks.

6 Financial security

- 70+ carers who work for HCC attended a conference in Carers Week. Messages were heard about the need for better promotion of the Carewise policy. Carers were keen to use their own personal experience to feed into the training of managers. ACS was the best represented Department. Carers who work for other Departments may be less aware of the issues and this will be picked up through work with HR leads
- Carers who work for the NHS also took part and a group similar to the HCC Carers Only group is planned. HCC and NHS carers will get together each year during Carers Week to compare progress on these agendas
- HPT has a new policy allowing paid carers leave in an emergency (up to five days)
- An integrated approach to supporting working carers, as part of the strategy has been worked up with Carers UK into a European Social Fund bid. If successful, development work would begin in October 2004
- The Money Advice Unit continues to provide benefits advice to carers through its specialist project, which has expanded with further support from Carers Grant to employ an additional part time worker. The new adviser will work particularly with Carers in Hertfordshire and help to meet the increase in demand created by their expansion. This should lead to an overall increase in the amount of additional benefits being accessed and cut the waiting time for carers.

Verified benefit outcomes for April 03-04 now stand at £241,232 for 81 clients, representing an average weekly gain of £57.27 per client last year, with many more claims still to be verified. The extra money gained for carers and those they care for, from the start of the project up to August this year, now stands at £441,116 per annum.

From April 04 to date, 132 new referrals have been received, 135 new claims for benefit made and 148 home visits conducted.

The project has also continued to provide benefits advice, training, talks

and information to people working with carers and staff have attended major carer's events throughout the county. As well as assisting HCC and voluntary sector staff, the project has seen an increase in the number of referrals from the health service, particularly MacMillan nurses. The Carers and Benefits booklet was updated and re-printed in April and a revamped version will be available for next year's edition.

7 A voice

- Social Work Students have worked with the Users and Carers Section to help users with dementia and their carers to comment on their experiences of Berkhamsted Day Centre and this has been fed into the annual review of the service
- The new *Having Your Say* form for respite (a separate form for users and carers) will routinely be used from this summer to gain users' and carers' views about short breaks in residential care
- Local strategy events have taken place such as a very successful event in Hertsmere building on the work of the local carers strategy group (*ACS, PCT, Carers in Hertfordshire, CSF, Crossroads and others*)
- Carers fed into the County consultation event on the Single Assessment process (*A better way to assess your needs*) in March 2004 both directly and - for the first time - through video statements
- Hertfordshire Partnership Trust is in the process of setting up a mental health carers' council with a worker to support it
- 40 carers attended the County Strategy Event at Great Offley in June. While they expressed great satisfaction with the event it was felt that it was not the most effective use of the professionals who attended. The multi-agency Strategy Group has agreed that next year's county conference will be made up of delegates from the local strategy groups (a mixture of carers and professionals) working together on difficulties they face which require county action and hearing about what has worked well locally
- ACS is continuing to provide a small amount of funding to the 8 PCTs to encourage the involvement of carers locally
- The Young Carers Project has funding to develop and support a Young Carers Council

8 Quality Services

- Some 1,000 professionals have contacted Carers in Hertfordshire in the last year for support and advice in delivering appropriate support to carers
- Part time hours at *Carers in Hertfordshire* funded by CSF have been identified to develop support and a greater voice for parent carers
- In EPD all 7 areas currently have part time carers' co-ordinators (8 in post) working to team managers with a carers' lead to ensure improvements in practice and recording and increase numbers of carers' assessments
- The QE2 Hospital Social Work team has the first hospital carers' co-ordinator in post since June 2004, allowing follow up work with carers after discharge

- All Community Learning Disability Teams now have a nominated carer's lead and in Hertfordshire Partnership Trust most Community Mental Health Teams have carers' assessors and are identifying lead managers
- Michael Francis is the new Head of Access in ACS, taking over the chair of the Service Improvement Group at the Customer Service Centre and working across HCC to streamline access to help

9 Equity of access and appropriate support

- Carers' Grant Funding along with money from the Practice Development Programme and Physical Disability and Sensory Services Best Value Review has been used to appoint Shazia Butt, the new Black and Minority Ethnic Users and Carers Worker. In post since January, her role is designed to ensure that users' and carers' views and experience actively inform ACS' practice, through feeding back users' experiences gained through meeting groups or through face to face surveys. She will visit 100 clients and carers in this financial year
- Shazia also facilitates the work of the Black and Minority Ethnic Carers Forum and its links to local networks
- Work is underway through the ethnic sub group of the Service Improvement Group attached to the Customer Service Centre and the new Head of Access, Michael Francis, to identify the best way of supporting community groups in making referrals and ensuring easy access to those who do not speak English

10 Quality management information about carers

- The new computer system, IRIS, will provide, in effect, a register of carers ACS is working with and should be fully implemented early in 2005 allowing much more straightforward involvement of carers in surveys etc
- IRIS is being designed in a way which ensures all the relevant data about carers' assessments is adequately captured, and work is in hand to ensure the new Performance Indicator from the Department of Health can be accurately informed
- *Having Your Say* has been reviewed to maximise the quality of data it provides about assessment in terms of helping users and carers to achieve the kind of independence they want, and to address issues around choice.

Tim Anfilogoff, Policy Manager Users and Carers, 9 August 2004