

Hertfordshire Multi-Agency Carers Strategy, as at 18 October 2005

1. Background

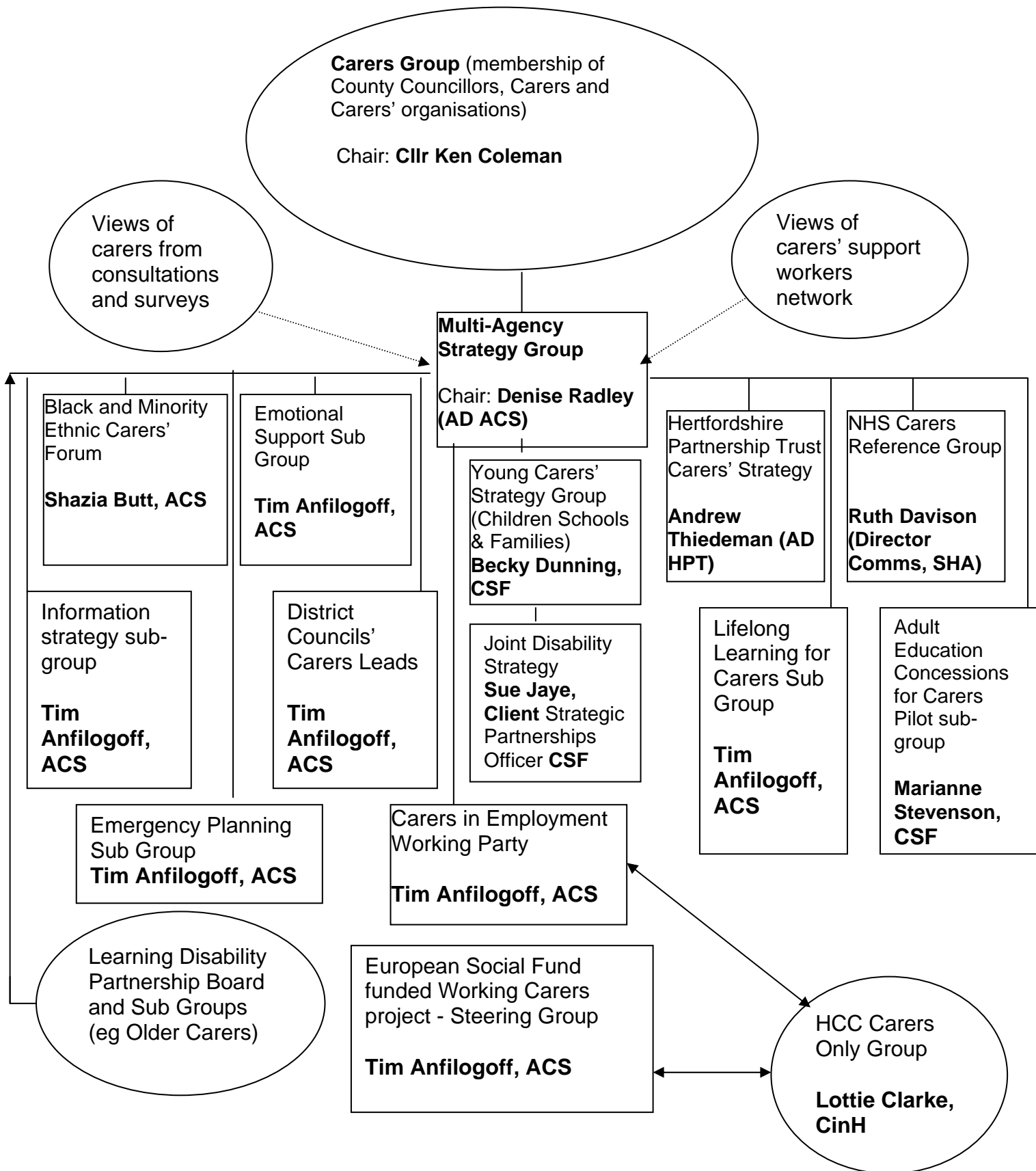
The Strategy has been in place in a variety of forms since 1996. It has been designed and reviewed to incorporate all the main headlines raised in consultations with carers, the Carers' Topic Group, the Hertfordshire Carers' Strategy Group (carers and professionals from a range of agencies) the *Black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

Currently there are 14 sub-groups working on aspects of the strategy.

The strategy won Hertfordshire Beacon Status for 2005-06 for Supporting Carers.

2. Multi-Agency Carers' Strategy Groups as at 18 October 2005

Note: All groups are multi-agency



3. National Involvement

- HCC was awarded Beacon Status for Supporting Carers from April 2005. In the words of the panel: *'A well organised, sophisticated, dynamic multi-agency approach'*
- Sarah Pickup continues as carers' lead for the Association of Directors of Social Services and chairs the Carers Reference Group
- Tim Anfilogoff has served on the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) advisory group which produced the Practice Guide to the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act. This is available on-line at www.scie.org.uk
- HCC and partners attended a reception in honour of the first ever Trans-national Partnership meeting of European Carers Organisations hosted by Carers UK to which we are linked through our ESF Funded Carers and Employment Project
- HCC's strategy was used as the framework for the toolkit designed to help local authorities assess their own strategy's performance – this is now available at www.idea.gov.uk/beacons/carers . HCC's work on implementing the act has also been uploaded on to this site to help other authorities think about how they might approach this work
- HCC and partners ran workshops in Manchester in July and have been involved in various talks and events nationally since April. Our own Beacon Open Day is 23 November and already 65 external delegates have signed up
- Plans to spend the Beacon Reward monies of £67k include focus on additional resources of use to carers including: video clips for carers in minority languages, new signposting tools, training materials for managers on supporting working carers, possible additional events following the open day etc
- Shortlisted for Carers in Employment Employer of the Year Award, 2005

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

4.1 Information

- www.hertsdirect.org/carers now includes new links to fit in with section 2 of the Act (duty to include work learning and leisure in carers' assessments) outlining access points for carers
- Three new Fact Sheets have been made available to front-line staff to help them signpost carers to the same help

4.2 Recognition

- Joint work on a new sign-posting booklet and other tools promoting the partnership of all key agencies – aim: to ensure minimum level of information wherever a carer 'hits the system'

- For the first time following a presentation to District Council Chief Executives in Carers Week, all 10 DCs have agreed to identify carers' leads – first meeting 20 October 2005
- Minority ethnic video clips (English and 3 other languages) to be available by media-player on www.hertsdirect.org or to be shown to community groups on DVD or video. Launching on 23 November at Open Day. Aim: to encourage bme carers to approach for help and prevent language issues discouraging them
- Carers' Assessments recorded last year 4,353 (up 18% despite under-recording). Satisfaction of carers (from Having Your Say forms) that their needs were listened to was 86% (88% last financial year).
- Expansion of *Carers in Hertfordshire's* staff team and services following additional resources from the Grant this year is now under way. This was to promote equitable access and is linked to an increase in carers in contact to about 6,000.

4.3 Time Off

Carers Grant increased for the last time in 2005-06. Most projects are up and running as planned (see separate report). Some of the key outcomes from the grant last year were:

- 4,627 carers received breaks services in 2004-05 and we predict a further 10% increase this year
- 568 carers received flexible carers' services (up 83%) at an average cost of £302 per carer. This allowed a huge range of low-level flexible responses. More details of this work can be read (as a beacon 'case study') at www.idea.gov.uk/beacons/carers

4.4 Emotional support

- Joint work with PCTs, CSF, HPT, *Carers in Hertfordshire*, Relate, Age Concern and others produced a questionnaire on what types of emotional support are available to carers and where. So far 30 questionnaires have been returned providing the basis for a directory – though more work is required, including particularly on linking in with PCT providing counselling services

4.5 Training and support to care

- Moving and handling course for carers has been rolled out across the county – 5 events organised as at end November (potentially 80 carers). Excellent feedback has been received from carers who received it so far
- SPEACH (support project for education and advice for carers across Hertfordshire) – tailored programme for mental health carers – being rolled out by CinH and mental health services across the county
- A new role of Carers' Health Visitor cannot now be piloted this year owing to match-funding problems on the part of PCTs.

4.6 Financial security

- Carers from the HCC Carers Only Group are providing written case studies and video testimony in a CD Rom designed to support County Personnel in training managers in making best possible use of Carewise flexibilities – to be launched on 23 November
- The new Carers in Employment project commencing May 2005 is fully functioning with 6 staff:
 - Carers in Employment Project Manager (Jill Akroyd)
 - 2 full time equivalent caseworkers (3 staff with CSF, EPD and external experience) helping ensure packages that will help carers to stay in or get back to work
 - 1 Money Advice/Welfare Benefits Adviser (Carers and Work) to produce ‘better off calculations’ and one part time interviewer
- This project has a free helpline for any working carers in Hertfordshire to ring (0800 028 3699), as well as taking referrals from ACS, CSF, HPT staff
- Feedback from the 40 cases so far handled will inform our new in-house guidance on the act which is being drafted currently

4.7 A voice

- In terms of assessment in older people's settings, in July 2004 – June 2005, 272 people identified themselves on Having Your Say forms as carers. Of these 93% were satisfied that when our staff discussed their/their family's situation with them, that they understood their needs and concerns and 88% were satisfied that when we discussed their needs, we offered them choices about the way in which we would meet them
- Positive comments include examples like, *‘I appreciated being helped to take the decision about respite care slowly and carefully with full understanding about my doubts and fears’* and *‘We are progressing with the right speed and approach that is needed to suit our specific situation’* demonstrating the emotional impact of best practice
- Negative comments include: *‘You were not prepared to meet the needs. No discussion was allowed, therefore no choice was offered.’* Or *‘Only outcome was the offer of a bed support to help x up/down in bed’*
- Among a broad range of activities in partnership with *Carers in Hertfordshire*, carers took part in a forum on Homecare in April giving us clear messages about the difficulties they faced sorting things out when they went wrong – this had led to new work clarifying roles and responsibilities and communicating them to users and carers
- Carers are taking part in a consultation event on 31 October facilitated by the Action for Carers in Employment Project (ACE) helping carers to be part of a national carer-led response to the Joint White Paper consultation (closing date 4 November). We will also ask them for input on a range of local issues
- Income Section has arranged 4 events where voluntary organisations and members of the public can comment on draft proposals on charging. Remaining events include: Wed 16 Nov at Nightingale House Day Centre,

Hitchin, Tues 22 Nov at Marsh Lane Day Centre, Ware, SG12 1SD, Mon 28 Nov, Jarman Centre, Hemel Hempstead

4.8 Quality Services

- Interviews for two workers to support older carers of adults with learning disabilities have taken place and both posts are likely to be filled

4.9 Equity of access and appropriate support

- The BME Involvement Worker carried out a piece of work with users and carers benefiting from Direct Payments. While it is positive that a high percentage (15-25%) of Direct Payment users are from BME communities (ie we are helping the community to find its own solutions) there are also questions about why mainstream services cannot always offer culturally appropriate services
- New video clips mentioned above (are being piloted for more effective outreach to BME carers) along with raising awareness of need for effective use of interpreters, and the huge value of care-workers learning a few words of users' first languages (clips containing 10 key words in Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati will be available as part of the first pilot, as these are the largest minority languages in Hertfordshire).

4.10 Quality management information about carers

- A 40% increase in carers' assessments was projected over 2003-04, and an 18% increase was actually delivered. This is partly to do with under-recording in areas that are still bedding in IRIS
- The Department of Health and the Council for Social Care Inspection as well as other authorities have asked for details of the Having Your Say process as a way of measuring outcomes for users and carers rather than just outputs.

Tim Anfilogoff, Policy Manager Users and Carers, 21 October 2005