

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORTS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE 17 JUNE AND 9 SEPTEMBER 1999

NOTE: A full copy of the reports mentioned below are available from Peter Hull, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford.
(Telephone: 01992 555565)

NATIONAL CARERS' STRATEGY: PROPOSALS FOR SPENDING SPECIFIC GRANT FOR BREAKS FOR CARERS 1999/2000

The Social Services Operations Sub-Committee in February 1999 endorsed a Multi-Agency Hertfordshire Joint Action Plan for Carers which has been developed under the auspices of the Carers Impact Project of the Kings Fund, with a Steering Group Membership including both Hertfordshire Health Authorities, NHS Trust, District Councils, carers in Hertfordshire and other voluntary organisations and individual carers.

Over 117,000 Hertfordshire residents (over the age of 16) are regularly helping a relative, friend or neighbour who need support because of ill health, frailty or disability. Caring about Carers is designed to be an integrated response to their needs. This involves a range of issues that are not solely for the Social Services department to address, but include:

- carers' health
- carers in employment and return to work
- housing needs of carers (especially support at school).

In order to address the problem the Secretary of State for Health has provided a carers special grant for 1999/2000 to promote independence for carers. The new grant for Hertfordshire will yield £380k in 1999/2000, approximately £950k and £1.3m in the two subsequent years.

The grant is intended to enhance provision of community care services:

- to allow carers to take a break by stimulating greater diversity and flexibility of provision and a greater awareness by local authorities of the need for services in their areas which are more responsive to the needs of carers
- to enable carers and their organisations to be involved in work by local authorities on the appropriateness of current provision and the possibility of greater diversity.

The main conditions of receiving the grant are that:

- the entire grant must be spent on community care services (including meeting the costs which are directly associated with the administration and planning of such services) for people who live at home and receive substantial amounts of care on a regular basis from informal carers
- services should support carers in their role, relieve carer stress, promote their social inclusion, maintain their health (including mental health) and enable them to continue to provide care
- local authorities must work in partnership with the NHS and take account of relevant recommendations in caring about Carers
- local authorities should form their own judgement of what amounts to 'substantial' and 'regular' care and make their views known.

The following allocation has been agreed for the first year of the grant (1999/2000):-

	Proposal	Care Group	£k
1.	Expansion of breaks at home services to all types of carer across the county (adults)	All adults	100
2.	local volunteer sitting schemes	Older people	35
3.	Expansion of breaks at home services for parents of disabled children to whole county	Disabled children	50
4.	Expansion of playschemes, after school clubs etc to whole county	Disabled children	50
5.	Specialist bed for people with profound learning and physical disabilities for the county	Adults with profound learning and physical disability	30
6.	Develop one new befriending scheme in the East of the county	Adults with learning disability	25
7.	Increase day services opportunities for ten people with chronic mental health problems, 2 days per week in E Herts	Adults with mental health problems	20
8.	Pilot booking of 20 weeks of holidays for severely mentally ill people through NSF	Adults with mental health problems	10
9.	Developing Minority Ethnic Elders Day Care	Ethnic elders in Watford	30
10.	Develop weekend and holiday breaks for young carers	Young carers	20
11.	Undertake research for Breaks Information Strategy		10
	TOTAL ALLOCATION		380

A condition of receiving the specific grant is that the Secretary of State is provided with a Short Term Breaks Plan. Procedures require that such a Plan should contain certain key elements, namely:-

- background to support for carers in Hertfordshire
- assessment of the need for Community Care Services to give carers a break
- an Action Plan for developing services in 1999/2000 using the specific grant monies
- priorities for development in 2000/2001 and 2001/2002
- a carer involvement strategy for the three years of this specific grant
- expenditure in 1998/1999 on breaks for carers.

The short term breaks plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for Health. A copy is available on request.

Julia Price
Chairman
County Hall
Hertford

17 June 1999
9 September 1999