

# **The Voice of Carers in Kingston**

a forum for all family and friends caring for someone in the borough

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

## **Carers present:**

Indu K, Eva M, Samir M, Rosemary N, Sheena C, Mary R

## **Others present:**

Kate Dudley, Kingston Carers' Network (Chair), Jo Maye, Kingston Carers' Network (Notes), Anne Blanche, Carers UK

**Apologies:** None

## **Welcome and introductions**

Introductions were made.

## **Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting**

Minutes were agreed.

## **Agenda**

Anne B has been encouraging carers to join Carers UK as well as joining Kingston Carers' Network.

Kate asked if there was anything that carers wanted to raise in front of the Carers Board. Anne feels that more information is needed for new carers about the Care Act. There is a session in Surbiton Library tomorrow about the Care Act. There is Mental Health specific session being run on ??? KCN will run a session at Noble Centre in April.

## **Getting and staying in Employment**

It is an important issue, in particular, for young adult carers. We have just been awarded £15 from Carers Trust to focus on young carers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Carers Trust have suggested that young carers achieve, on average nine grades lower than their peers. It can be hard to get support with applying for jobs as there is often a tight timescale. KCN have a Wellbeing and Inclusion Worker who can help carers look for work or training. It was felt that supporting carers back in to work should be core to the carers assessments as a lot of carers don't realise that they have a choice over whether they care or not. It was agreed to put this on a future agenda. There needs to more support for carers that would like to return to work or combine working and their caring role.

## **One Click Resource**

RBK have recently launched an exciting new online resource linking people to support, information and local advice services. It should not be a replacement for specialised, personal advice and support but it is a good basic resource. Anne B felt that improved public access to the internet is essential, including 24 hour access. The website is being run by Kingston CAB. KCN are concerned

that it is not comprehensive enough to replace face to face advice. The One Click resource can give carers an idea of what benefits they might be entitled to and KCN can help them with the whole process right from identifying what they should be entitled to, completing and sending off the forms, appealing any unsuccessful applications, right through to High Court Tribunals. Kate stressed that it is important to access the support available to complete the form correctly first time to save the headache of appeals.

### **Carers' Assessments**

As part of the Care Act and the duties on the local authority, any carer that wants an assessment is now entitled to one, not just those providing regular and substantial care. KCN have been commissioned to provide a 12 month pilot of Trusted Carers' Assessments. The local authority is still responsible for Carers Assessments but KCN will be carrying out some of the. The local authority recently held a voice of the customer event which highlighted some dissatisfaction with their carers assessments and even some carers who were unaware that they had had one. The assessments that KCN will be carrying out are the local authority assessments, not the community care assessments. It was highlighted that often carers are asked what they need but they might not know what is available. The assessments should be very broad and look at a carers whole situation including how much caring you are doing, do you have a good network of support, are you able to access respite, is your financial situation ok, how is your health etc. (how caring affects your life including, physical, mental and emotional needs and are you able and willing to carry on caring) KCN will not be able to commission services but will pass the results back to RBK.

### **Information Sharing**

There is a carers board meeting next week and Kate asked if there as anything that anyone would like to raise that Kate can take to the board on behalf of the carers. The need for good support for carers is very important If a nurse calls to talk to cared for, they won't share information with the carer and if the cared for doesn't want to speak to the nurse it is very difficult. It can reach crisis point before the lines of communication are fully opened. There should be a focus on preventative medicine. It can be very difficult when the people being cared for won't engage with services.

Home Treatment Team have not had a good impact on some carers lives. Sheena C felt that coaches would help people living with conditions to cope with their condition. It might be that a proper care assessment would help to access a personal assistant to help.

Mary R felt that assessments have not been thorough in the past and when there is more than one condition present, the "lesser" condition is ignored.

Parents and carers are not always listened to and valued. There can be a long wait and you can end up lurching from crisis to crisis.

Anne B raised that she recently spoke to her GP who she has told she is a carer but it hasn't been recorded on her file. She was told that she couldn't be registered as a carer as the person being cared for was registered at a different GP surgery. When she asked about Carers Champions, they were unaware of what a carers champion is. As part of the lottery funding, KCN are now asking new referrals if they are happy for KCN to highlight them as a carer with their GP. There is a new document around improving the way GPs support carers. Ruxi and Kate will be attending a GP workshop to look at improving GPs awareness of carers and the ways in which they should be supported.

It is documented that carers do not look after themselves properly and present late with symptoms and conditions. It can be very difficult for carers to book appointments with GP surgeries at times that fit around the person they care for. It would be helpful to be able to leave a message for a specific doctor. Sometimes the receptionists are very unfriendly and unhelpful. It was felt that secretaries should be keeping carers more informed and follow up on things. The Patients Advice Liaison Service did not have a very good reputation.

### **Any Other Business**

7<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm it is likely that David will be giving a talk on Universal Credit, the new benefit as it is coming around quickly.

Anne B went to a council meeting where they approved their budget in which there is an increase to the people on benefits. It was 75% of income that was taken in to account but it is now 100% of the income that will be taken in to account. This will result in some people losing between £4 and £60 a week. The consultation has been extended to the end of June. ???NEWSLETTER??? 1000 letter had been sent out but it was very short notice. It is very hard for carers to be part of consultation as it is tricky for them to get to consultation events and they are often drowning in paperwork. Kate will ask a ??? to come to ????

KCN have been asked to do a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which is designed to help inform the local authority of the needs of the people in the borough. KCN will be interviewing 60 carers, between 18 and 65, in depth about their needs, their journey through caring etc. If anyone is interested in taking part and being interviewed they will be thanked with a £20 gift voucher.

Kingston at Home is a scheme to help people stay in their home but it has failings as it often puts more pressure on carers and they don't understand the impact it has.

Kate will look at inviting David, Chief Exec of Tolworth??? To a support group at Tolworth hospital and ask him to update on how things have changed since he was appointed.

The next meeting will be arranged as soon as Councillor Julie Pickering gives Kate her availability.