

## Thoughts Regarding Welsh Government Recovery Roadmap

Whilst the response to the coronavirus pandemic by friends and family who have stepped in to care for the vulnerable in our society has been substantial, this is not a sustainable solution.

The Alliance strongly suggests that the following matters be addressed when developing any health and social care recovery plans and guidance.

### Protecting and promoting Carers Rights

- Reaffirming carers rights as laid down in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. This should be monitored through the Welsh Government's Performance and Improvement Framework carer metrics.
- Ensuring Carers' voices are at the heart of designing recovery solutions going forward to ensure they, and the people they care for, are heard, respected and equal partners in the process.
- Reinstatement of support following lifting of lockdown restrictions e.g. social services support plans (whether or not the carer had initially requested that the service cease due to potential infection risk).

### Access to Information

- Ongoing need for clarity of guidance and messaging in relation to social distancing/shielding e.g. how carers can continue to protect themselves and the ones they care for as society begins to 'open up' and they face challenges such as kids going back to school, or their need to potentially return to work.
- There are large number of new unpaid carers since the start of the lockdown and many existing carers have taken on additional caring responsibilities. Identifying carers and supporting access to information and advice is critical. Local authority responsibilities in this area should be reinforced and we also believe that GPs have a significant role to play in systematically identifying carers and supporting them to access relevant information. This role should be formalised.

### Services

- Access to services, both key services that existed before the pandemic and new services that may now be required since e.g. bereavement support, counselling, respite, employment support.
- Funding for carers services should be secure and long-term, despite the challenges health and social care budgets may experience post lockdown.
- A pre-requisite of planning future services is that carers should be involved. Unpaid carers should be involved in the decision-making that affects their lives.
- Clarity about how quickly access to routine medical and social care assessments be reinstated.
- Understanding that the needs of those being cared for will have amplified during the lockdown and how carers are supported with these e.g. impact that months of isolation has had on people's independence, communication skills and confidence – how can people

living with and affected by dementia be supported to continue to live their lives e.g. using public transport, shopping, increased opportunities.

- A key factor in provision of social care services for carers and those they support is the social care workforce. We would like to see a proactive approach to supporting the existing social care workforce through a new Social Care Workforce Strategy for Wales, as well as encouraging new recruits into this work area to help meet current and future demand.

## **Finances**

- Unpaid carers, like others, should have access to hardship funds, as many have had to give up paid employment to care and many others have eaten into savings to cover the costs of caring during the lockdown. Carers will have saved statutory bodies millions of pounds through the lockdown. It is not morally right that they should not receive financial support as a result.

## **Support to Care at Home**

- Clarity and commitment that unpaid carers need access to testing and PPE.
- Prior to the pandemic there was an expectation that more care would be increasingly provided in the home. The pandemic has amplified the needs of carers to receive proper support to do this e.g. administering medication, equipment and home adaptations. Plans should be put in place to support carers with skills development and support. We are becoming increasingly concerned that there will be an increase in hospital admissions as a result of poor support and carer breakdown. We suggest that hospital admissions be monitored for potential increases.
- Improvement in hospital discharge processes, to ensure carers are involved in the discharge planning and have support in place to support safe discharge. Strong relationships between health and social care is essential in this.

We believe that the Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers should be pro-actively planning for short, medium and long term needs of carers as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The Wales Cares Alliance will to proactively support this work.

On behalf of the Alliance members:

Age Cymru  
All Wales Forum of Parent Carers  
Alzheimer's Society  
Care and Repair Cymru  
Carers Trust Wales  
Carers Wales  
Children in Wales  
Hafal

Learning Disability Wales  
Macmillan Cancer Support  
Marie Curie  
MND Association  
MS Society Cymru  
Parkinson's UK Cymru  
SNAP Cymru  
Stroke Association