Edinburgh Joint Carers’ Strategy – Use of logic modelling

The City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian are working collaboratively with carer organisations and carers themselves to redefine their strategic approach to commissioning support services for carers. The development of its three years Joint Carers Strategy for 2014-2017 involved the application of logic modelling to create a focus for consultation with carers on priorities and support required.

Background

According to the 2011 Census, unpaid carers make up almost 8% of the total population in Edinburgh and of these 21% provide 50 or more hours per week of unpaid care.

The City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian recognise the critical role undertaken by unpaid carers and therefore the importance of providing good quality support to them at the right time and place. With the advent of self-directed support (SDS), carers can expect to receive more personalised support.

VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian) in its 2013 survey found that 63% of carers felt they knew little or nothing about SDS. Key needs identified were around financial planning and maximising benefits. 89% of carers stated that financial planning for the future was very important to them and 74% that maximising benefits was important.

In March 2013 the previous 5 year carers’ strategy - ‘Towards 2012- Joint Carers Strategic Action Plan for Edinburgh’ was reviewed by a working group made up of stakeholders from the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian, third sector carer support organisations and carers. The working group’s remit was to develop a new three year Joint carers’ strategy starting in 2014. This strategy would inform the commissioning and procurement of support services on behalf of carers.

The partnership approach adopted set outcomes for carers at its centre. Its aim was that the carers’ strategy would be the main roadmap for support and improved outcomes for both young and adult carers in Edinburgh over the next three years.

Scope and focus

Early on in its discussions the working group agreed to use a tried and tested tool for developing an overarching strategic framework which would set out key outcomes to be achieved by the strategy.

1 http://www.vocal.org.uk/
The tool chosen was *The Wisconsin Logic Model*[^2]. Logic modelling provides a simplified picture of a proposed programme, in this case a carers’ strategy, and the logical relationships involved – inputs, outputs, and short term, medium term and long term outcomes for carers.

The perceived value of this logic model as both a planning and evaluation tool was that:

- It brings detail to broad goals
- It helps to identify logical gaps in strategies
- It is outcomes focused
- It builds consensus about what the strategy is and how it will work
- It makes underlying assumptions explicit
- It helps to clarify what is appropriate to evaluate
- It summarises complex strategies to communicate with stakeholders
- It enables effective competition for available resources.

**Approach**

The logic model was developed by members of the working group over a series of meetings. These sessions were facilitated by an in-house member of Edinburgh City Council staff who is expert in the use of the Wisconsin logic model, supported by a member of the Ready for Business team.

Development of the logic model involved following an ordered process of reflecting on the following elements:

- A review of the current situation, informed by a mapping of current carer support in Edinburgh, feedback from carers, and other data such as the 2011 census and national and local policy
- The desired outcomes/impact distinguishing between short term, medium term and long term outcomes
- Mapping inputs and activities/outputs against these outcomes
- And finally exploring the assumptions about why the strategy would be effective and the external factors that would either support or hinder impact.

From these discussions the members of the Working Group identified 6 priority areas for carers in Edinburgh for the next three years, namely:

- Identifying carers
- Information and advice
- Carer health and wellbeing
- Short breaks / respite
- Young adult carers
- Personalising support for carers.

The Working Group then identified a set of questions under each theme on which it would seek feedback from carers themselves including suggestions as to what type of support was needed under each heading. A user friendly questionnaire was developed and made available in various written formats plus an on-line version, and a range of consultation events held.

**Overcoming obstacles**

While some members of staff were aware of logic models, none had used this particular approach. For the two members of the working group who were carers this type of approach was completely new and potentially very daunting.

It was therefore very important that everyone in the working group had a similar level of understanding of why this tool might be useful for outcome planning, how it worked and the stages involved. Therefore the first facilitated session involved getting to know the tool and trying it out to develop an agreed vision of how the Joint carers’ strategy might improve the lot of adult carers.

‘Our vision for adult carers is that they are able to live healthy, fulfilling lives and that they will be valued as equal

[^2]: [http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodelworksheets.html](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodelworksheets.html)
partners in the provision of care and inform decisions about carer support. Carers will be able to sustain their caring role, if appropriate and it they choose it.’

It was also agreed to link the strategy for adult carers with young carers. The vision for young carers is,

“We want to ensure that young carers are enabled to be children and young people first and foremost and relieved of any inappropriate caring roles to allow them to have a quality of life.’

A series of further discussions were built into the monthly working group meetings to gradually fill out ideas on the activities (outputs) that might contribute to the suggested overall prioritised outcomes.

Members of the working group were keen not to be over prescriptive to allow carers themselves to say whether these six priorities were the right ones and what support activities were required to help them undertake their caring roles. Although the Draft Strategy included a copy of the logic model the consultation focussed on the overarching themes rather than the details within the logic model.

**Key achievements**

The working group were keen to see whether the logic model helped them to produce key themes which carers themselves felt were important.

The responses from carers confirmed that these were areas where support was needed. By using the logic model tool and breaking down the possible range of service areas the working group were able to encourage feedback from carers on improvements that could be made to these service areas as well as identifying other areas for improvement.

“I got the sense from groups of carers that I met that having a clear pathway about how we arrived at our strategy helped people to understand what was needed and why.” Gordon Dodds, Planning & Commissioning Officer (Carers), The City of Edinburgh Council

The feedback from carer members of the working group and representatives of carer organisations on how the log model tool had supported the development of the draft strategy was very positive.

“Personally, I like the ‘outcomes-focus’ approach, and in this case it enabled speedy progress. By concentrating on the model stages avoided us getting stuck in the past.” Carer

Service planners also found the tool useful.

“I personally found the logic model as a tool very useful for prioritising our joint strategic planning, future direction, outcomes and priority areas. It was demanding but exciting collaborative approach which helped colleagues from different areas work well together and share their ideas.” Gordon Dodds, Planning & Commissioning Officer (Carers), The City of Edinburgh Council

Having the discussions facilitated was seen as important to members of the working group.

“I think the use of a facilitator was very helpful in including a non-professional on an ‘equal’ basis for discussions at the meetings.” Carer

**Future Directions**

Following the consultation with carers, The City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian are now working on the final version of the Joint Carers’ Strategy.

Having experimented with the use of logic model members of the working group are positive about the contribution that such a tool can make to involving service users themselves in getting strategies right for their needs.

“The tool helps to encourage participation by service users and is a visual and simplified way of getting information across. For commissioners at a macro level it will be very useful tool to shape future carer support. For micro commissioning for service users and carers they may wish to refer to the logic model.” Members of working group

Appendix 1a: Edinburgh Joint Carers’ Strategy- Logic Model
Below is a simplified extract. For full version of the logic model, please download from www.edinburgh.gov.uk/jointcarersstrategy