

Informal carers' rights to an assessment of needs

Example from the UK

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Introduction: main objectives, key-issues addressed, status

- Sub-theme: Legal framework
 - Key issue: legislation which explicitly addresses LTC with respect to informal carers
- Status of the example



Why was this project developed/implemented?

- Carers are often marginalised and their health and well-being can be at risk
- Prior to 1995 carers were viewed as a resource for caring for older people at home without considering their own needs
 - Pressure from carers groups to recognise the true value and burden of caring

Main features of the example (description)

Three successive Acts:

1. Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
 - Assessment for carer introduced; carer viewed as a resource
2. Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
 - Carer seen as co-client; carers can receive services/money directly
3. Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
 - Opportunities for carer equal to those of non-carers; consideration for non-caring wishes related to work, leisure, education and training

Applies only to carers who provide (or intend to provide) a substantial amount of care on a regular basis.

What are/were the effects?

- Personalisation agenda – carer's recognised as needing support and having choices
- Evidence that assessments are leading to increased support provided to carers
- Increased support schemes available to carers, particularly short term breaks (respite)

Strengths and limitations

- Strengths
 - Consideration given to what carers themselves need
 - Carers can receive support directly
- Limitations
 - Local authorities can provide support direct to carers, but it is not a duty
 - Carers should be informed of their right to an assessment by local authorities; this does not always happen

Conclusions

- For practice: carers require support tailored to their needs to continue caring
- For policy-makers: funding is required to meet needs flexibly (Carer's Grant)
- For research: How long can carers continue caring if they are well supported? – quantifiable outcomes