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Ymchwiliad i Effaith Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014 mewn perthynas â Gofalwyr

Inquiry into Impact of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to Carers

Ymateb gan Unigolyn

Response from an Individual

Dear Sirs.Madames,

In response to the call for comments and feedback related to carers and their charges, I have jotted down some notes that, due to time constraints i have not been able to fully flesh out in a document that directly related to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

However, here are some of my thoughts, which I hope will be taken on board.

'Social prescribing' has been touted as the future of healthcare and wellbeing and research supports its efficacy within the community - to some degree. However, there is no point in knowing the best way forward for future-proofing the healthcare service - especially for an ageing population - if resources (including better financial support for unpaid carers to continue to give up their own employment and risk short-term and long-term poverty) are not provided for. The social and financial risks for this group is higher than most people can possibly imagine.

Feelings are contagious. The caregiver and his/her charge feed feelings into each other - they jump from person to person, so depression and anxiety experienced by one are felt by both. Carers cannot suppress their own feelings about their life changes and new responsibilities without causing the elevation of stress hormones in their own bodies which sometimes can be so overwhelming that the coping strategies they have developed along the way fail. Immune systems are compromised, anxiety and anguish levels rise. It is hard to feel that I am surviving , let alone thriving. I often feel that my life is drifting away and getting smaller by each mundane task I undertake. Despite my best efforts to continue study and education to augment skills and training in order to earn a living again in the future, much of what I do on a daily basis has little to do with my own life goals - ones that I have worked hard to achieve all my life, and without social or financial security waiting at the end of it.

What live-in carers need is respite for themselves and actively involved, highly QUALIFIED and EXPERIENCED support workers who can suggest practical advice on how to relieve the stress of caring for an ageing parent. It is a full-time, unpaid job, is absolutely draining, especially when you don't get to 'escape' to your own home and switch off. It is a problem for many live-in carers with elderly parents, and is only going to get worse as we all become older and require support.

Thank you.

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