



Fife Centre for Equalities (FCE) is a new project of Fife Voluntary Action, funded by Fife Council and supported by NHS Fife. Our goals are to:

- **Reduce inequality for people and communities of Fife;**
- **Promote the rights of the individual in all situations;**
- **Give communities a voice so they can have their say in the planning and delivery of local services;**
- **Develop partnerships with public, private and third sectors to boost equality, diversity and social justice here in Fife.**

We would like to make the following responses to the call for views on the Carers (Scotland) Bill - Stage 1 consideration by the Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee.

CARERS (SCOTLAND) BILL

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE CONSULTATION QUESTION SET

Question 1

Do you support the Bill?

Response: We support the Bill wholeheartedly as it places the involvement of carers at the core of this new legislation. The Bill also recognises that needs of carers have to be met in order to ensure the best care will be provided to those who are cared-for.

Question 2

What do you feel would be the benefits of the provisions set out in the Bill?

Response: The benefits of the provisions are -

- **'Personal outcomes', a carer-centred approach**
- **Support plan/carer statement, an agreement with the carer and other interested parties with clear action points, responsibilities and a mechanism for review**
- **Local eligibility criteria, transparent information to help carers understand the support they are entitled to**
- **Duty to provide support, places a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide support to carers**
- **Duty to involve carers in carer services, as well as having a say about their own support plan, carers' views will be taken into account when planning services for carers in general**
- **Local carer strategy, this will enable services to jointly plan services and avoid duplication or possible gaps of services**
- **Information and advice service for carers, this will enable carers to seek support from a wide range of services**



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Question 3

How do you feel the Bill could be amended or strengthened?

Response: We believe that the Bill could be strengthened by adding clarification for the following –

- **The distinction between ‘adult carer support plan’ and ‘young carer statement’ - without explanation this may cause a misconception that a statement has a lesser position in law or policy and subsequently young carers may be or feel less entitled, valued or supported.**
- **We hope ‘factors to be taken into account’ will include the complex needs of carers who fall within one or more of the nine protected characteristics¹.**
- **Currently the Bill states that support plans/carer statements need to include ‘information about the support available’, however this does not address a lack of appropriate support especially for those carers who have complex needs due to their protected characteristics.**
- **In determining local eligibility criteria, a local authority must have regard ‘among other things’ to such matters as specified by the Scottish Ministers seems unspecific and less important. We hope all local authorities will consider the possible positive and negative impacts the eligibility criteria will have on carers due to their characteristics.**
- **The term ‘eligible needs’ will require a national framework to avoid differentiation of how local authorities may choose their own interpretation. Without a national framework, there is likely to be different levels of support depending on which local authority a carer resides in (in effect, a ‘postcode lottery’).**

Question 4

Is there anything that you would add to the Bill?

Response: We would like to suggest a separate section on complaint/resolution is added to the Bill to help carers who are genuinely unsupported to raise their grievance against their local authority because of the local authority’s failure to implement their duty under the act.

Question 5

Is there anything that you would remove from the Bill?

Response: There is nothing we would suggest for removal from the Bill.

¹ Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex and sexual orientation.