Create a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Tachwedd 2021
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Petition Number: P-06-1209

Petition title: Create a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales

Text of petition:

The Welsh government have said for a long time now that identifying unpaid carers is a difficult task, so this petition is to ask for the creation of a national carers register to make identifying unpaid carers easier.

1. Background

Stakeholders have been calling for better identification of unpaid carers for many years, to improve carers' ability to access advice and support. Carers Wales' research shows the vast majority of carers are not having their needs assessed or getting the support needed. According to Carers Wales' latest report, only 15% of carers in Wales had received a carers needs assessment, despite carers having a right to an assessment under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Carers Wales told the Fifth Senedd's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee:

> We would like to see better systematic identification of carers through the NHS; we'd like to see more responsibility on the NHS to identify carers. And also within local authorities, when carers make contact, that they are identified as a carer, and there's clarity about what that carer can access. We would like to see minimum service expectations for carers across the whole of Wales, and carers being viewed as key workers—they've been absolutely essential through this pandemic.

Carers Wales has called for the creation of a national carers register by 2023 to enable services to identify local carers and offer them advice and support.

2. Welsh Government response

The Deputy Minister for Social Services says providing better support for unpaid carers is a Welsh Government priority, and she recognises that early identification of carers is vital to realise this ambition.

The Welsh Government's response highlights the range of activity that is underway to support carers to self-identify and access the information, advice and support. But it "will continue to consider whether introducing a register would further complement this work".

The Deputy Minister says she has asked officials to bring the suggestion of a register to the Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers and would be happy to update the Petitions Committee on the outcome of these initial discussions.

The Welsh Government says work to improve early identification of unpaid carers is also already underway via various streams of work including commitments in the new Strategy for Unpaid Carers; the Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant 'Carer Aware'; a second phase of its national carers' rights publicity campaign; and plans to create a young carers national ID card with local authorities. The Welsh Government also says it will work with partners to explore how statutory services can better identify and record information on unpaid carers.

The Deputy Minister notes that one of the Welsh Government's working groups on the unpaid carers strategy delivery plan has considered the suggestion of establishing a national database or register for unpaid carers during its early discussions regarding delivery plan actions. She says it was apparent that a more

in depth consideration is required to determine whether a register would add value to the activity outlined above and mechanisms already in place.

> For example, a number of GPs across Wales allow unpaid carers to register their caring role with them, and carers can also make themselves known to local carer charities, many of which are commissioned by local authorities to provide support on their behalf. I am also keen to understand how a register would comply with privacy and personal information regulations