

Response to the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel, Re Carers Support.

Foreword

The Bureau is pleased to respond to a review of the **Carers Support Service**, the year to date continues to see a high demand for our services with income support and relationship breakdown being in the top five enquiries. In 2014 the economic climate continues to give policy makers cause for concern and at the Bureau we see how this impacts on individuals and their families.

The provision of a health care system that is fit for purpose is desirable in any society, and we are aware that specific investment and changes to healthcare strategy in Jersey are overdue and therefore we were happy to get involved in helping to re-shape the way that health services are delivered in Jersey.

General Comment

The Bureau has been involved in the Health and Social Services White Paper, in particular, the development of a Carers Support Service to identify 'hidden carers' and to make better quality information and access to care services available to all via a 'Citizens Portal' or online directory.

We see the provision of better quality information as being pivotal to the overall strategy of allowing individuals to make decisions and choices that are based upon care needs, rather than economic necessity alone.

In relation to the two specific questions posed by the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel.

- **How successful has the service been?**

The Jersey Online Directory (JOD) provides 'three click' access for anyone who wants specific information on care needs, whether they are health professionals, carers, family or individuals with care needs themselves. The Bureau provides print-outs from the directory, for those who do not have computer access.

The software developers, Open Objects, have clear and consistent customer testimonials concerning their websites and are responsible for approximately 50% of the County Councils up and down the UK.

The site is designed to operate efficiently with both traditional PCs and touch screen technology and a mobile app ensures that the site renders efficiently, whichever type of device is used to access it.

The biggest benefit is the way that the site integrates and once assembled, solutions for care needs can easily be sent to a third party by email or SMS (text) to mobile devices and smartphones.

The website went live at the beginning of January, 2014. Work on the Jersey Online Directory is still on-going, with refinements and up-dates being attended to on a daily basis.

The feedback that we have received, thus far, has been extremely positive with users liking the simplistic design and ease of use. The visitor numbers are increasing daily and, to date, 5,908 pageviews have been recorded on Google Analytics.

We have had excellent media exposure, this has helped us to reach out to hidden carers who may not have been aware of the totality of services and support groups that are available to them.

- **What impact, if any, the new service has had on your service users**

Taking on the carers support service and, in particular, the piece of work surrounding the launch of the JOD was, of course, a huge piece of work for a small operation such as ours. The work was mainly carried out by two members of staff, one of which was me! However, we were determined to hit our launch on time and within budget and both of these targets were achieved.

The provision of advice around carers needs has dovetailed very nicely with the existing advice that our staff and volunteers provide and therefore, once up and running, the impact on our service users, although heavy, has been manageable.

We have had very good practical support from Derek Hoddinott, Deputy Director of Commissioning at Health and Social Services We have also had strong moral support from other charities and members of the Cares Support Group, the Association of Jersey Charities and the VCS in general.

Malcolm Ferey
Chief Executive
Jersey Citizens Advice Bureau Limited