**Feedback on DSS draft paper for a new integrated carer support service through co-design**

Overall, the ideas for the new integrated carer support service seem comprehensive and positive.

**Some positives:**

* Comprehensive with focus on multiple factors e.g. awareness, information provision, education, peer support, planning etc.
* The idea of having training for carers both online and locally; not everyone is motivated to learn online, so local in person training/learning opportunities are needed as well.
* That there will be a carer specific service that is focused on carers even after the implementation of NDIS. (Hopefully the services will be established soon though as NDIS will come in or that there is a transition period for the existing services until the new one is up and running)
* The idea of a nationally consistent carer service
* Carer services should hopefully be easier for carers to navigate and the service system won’t be so complicated (one concern regarding this, if that means that there are less agencies providing a service, it reduces carers’ choices – hopefully if this is the case, the local agencies providing the services will be flexible enough and accommodating to the carers’ needs.)
* Focus on improving the carers’ awareness of services available is important and awareness within the broader health sector – my experience has been that there are a lot of people who don’t know of services available to them, and it’s very hard to find all those carers. Promotion on a big scale would be a positive.
* More counselling options for carers would be great, as at least in the past Carers Vic waiting list for counselling has sometimes been prohibitive for carers to want to access it.

**Some suggestions:**

* It would be beneficial for the future service for carers to be simplified and streamlined when it comes to administrative tasks. This was not discussed to a great extent in the document, but it would make the services more cost effective and more carers would be able to access services, if for example the paper work required was minimal. This is where encouraging the use of self-assessment tools would be useful too.
* When it comes to information provision, maybe it would be useful for local services to undertake surveys with carers to establish what information/training is needed so that training/information is more likely to be tailored to a carer’s individual situation?
* As for education element of the service, the document posed the question as to how the future service could help the carers be aware of and access education offered by other organisations. Possibly it could help if the central website for carers had a function where other organisations can post their events/training for carers. This way carers can find it on the website and the people working in the future carer service will have a way of having the information to share with carers. This still relies on people from other organisations being aware of the website and uploading their information.
* Peer support should definitely be able to be accessed without pre-conditions, as that may be the only form of support some carers want. It would also reduce the work load/overheads if there are no processes to go through to access peer support.
* Maybe an awareness campaign for schools with posters etc. and educating teachers could help identify young carers more effectively, or local agencies reaching out to the local schools?
* Having some professional support available for peer support groups would be good, even if it wasn’t viable to have professional facilitators – maybe in the form of grants, occasional guest speakers, support for facilitators or other?
* Hopefully mental health carers will have equal access to multi-component support. As it’s not viable to provide it to all carers, mental health carers might sometimes miss out as the nature of mental health is that it can fluctuate.
* In multi-component support, I don’t think that the ongoing coaching should be a mandatory part of it, since carers have differing needs and not everyone will feel like they need it or want it.