

Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council

Our Commitment to Carers 2021 – 2026

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It is vital we recognise the contributions unpaid carers make to their families and local communities, workplaces and society. At a time when the demand on carers has significantly increased it is important the challenges unpaid carers face are appreciated and recognised.

Foreword

We know from national statistics that large numbers of Carers feel lonely or isolated as a result of their role and increasing numbers are struggling to make ends meet. Locally our Carers report a decrease in quality of life and a significant drop in social contact compared to recent years.

Through our All Age Carers Strategy 2021 – 2026 we aim to reach all Carers in West Cheshire. We will work with you to ensure you have access to the right support at the right time to help you achieve your personal potential. We want you to feel valued and empowered and are determined to put support in place to improve your health and wellbeing.

We want you to get involved and will continue to talk and listen to you to find out what matters most to you. This will help us to reflect and shape our priorities. Please get in touch at CarersStrategyConsultation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk to share your carer experience.

Councillor Armstrong

Councillor Cernik

Supporting our children and young people, whatever their background, to get the best start in life is a priority I am passionate about. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers face increased family pressures that can often make life tough at an early age. Our All Carers Strategy 2021-2026 puts a real focus on supporting our Young Carers, particularly offering help as young people transition to adulthood.

We also recognise we need to increase our knowledge of our diverse range of Carers in Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, LGBTQ+ and Gypsy and Traveller

communities. I will be working with our health and care partners to provide appropriate help for all our Carers.

Our strategy supports Carers across all ages and from all backgrounds. It aims to ensure no one is held back and no one is left behind. We will refine our services and systems so that they work for all, creating opportunities for Carers to spend more time doing the things you want to do. Together we will all play our part so our Carers can thrive.

Helen Brackenbury

Director of Early Intervention and Commissioning, Cheshire West and Chester Council

The role of Carers in supporting not only their loved ones, but the Cheshire NHS, should not be understated. Without the often unseen support of Cheshire's Carers, it would be extremely difficult to provide the level of care and support required to enable vulnerable people to continue living in their own homes and communities.

This includes many Young Carers who either support a family member who is ill or help by looking after other members of the family while they can't.

Carers often draw a very real sense of pride, satisfaction and joy from caring for a loved one. However, we also recognise that caring can have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the Carers themselves.

Too often Carers are either unaware of the support available to them, or are perhaps reluctant to ask.

That is why all Cheshire GP practices are encouraged to record whether you are a carer or not. This information helps your GP practice provide you with information about the range of help and support available to you and to refer you for a Carers Needs Assessment if you would like one.

Further help and support that your GP practice may be able to provide include appointment times which fit in with your caring role, referrals to organisations which support Carers and their families and priority health checks and flu jabs.

As Cheshire's health and care partners collectively respond to the challenge of an ageing population and longer life expectancies, now more than ever we need to support people to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

It is imperative that Carers are involved in decision-making and that we listen to their concerns. Only then can we best support Cheshire's Carers to continue to fulfil their vital roles.

Clare Watson



Accountable Officer, NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Acknowledgments

Carer Strategy Group

This strategy has been developed with involvement from the Cheshire West and Chester's Carer Strategy Group. Since the previous strategy the Carer Strategy Group has been involved in representing Carers and their views across different professional forums and has made valuable contributions to the development of this strategy. There is Carer Strategy Group representation on the Interagency Group.

Interagency Group

There has also been a wide range of involvement from providers and key partners through our regular interagency group meetings which have helped to provide feedback into the carer strategy.

The interagency group has representation from:

- Cheshire West Carers
- Cheshire Young Carers
- Crossroads Together
- Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust

- Neuromuscular Centre
- Wellbeing
- Bren Project
- Opal Services
- Making Space
- Neuro Therapy Centre
- Cheshire's Clinical Commissioning Group
- Alzheimer's Society
- Joshua Tree
- St Luke's Hospice
- Hospice of the Good Shepherd

Young Carers Forum

This strategy has been developed with involvement from the Young Carers Forum who have highlighted the impacts that their caring roles have, what is important to them moving forward and how services can be shaped better to meet the needs of our Young Carer community.

There has also been early engagement with local care groups including the Chester and Ellesmere Port and the Vale Royal District Carers Groups.

Cheshire West and Chester council and the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group would like to thank everyone who shared their knowledge and expertise as well as their own personal experiences throughout the development of this strategy. This positive engagement ensures that the priorities identified in this strategy are those that will have the most potential to improve the lives of Cheshire West and Chester Carers and that the implementation of the action plan will have the biggest impact in supporting Carers in their everyday lives.

Introduction

This is a joint strategy with the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group and outlines key legislation and key national policy. The strategy has been developed and informed by comprehensive research through the Carers Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (CJSNA) which analysed local and national data and trends. This in turn has had extensive engagement from local Carers, service providers and key partners. We have also taken into account the information gathered through the bi-yearly Carers Surveys and the personal experiences of Carers fed back through the number of carer groups held across the borough.

Carers of all ages play a very significant and important role within the communities of Cheshire West and Chester and estimates indicate that in Cheshire West and Chester, there are approximately 38,300 Carers. During the development of this Strategy we have been afforded the opportunity to review and evaluate current services and identify gaps and areas of focus moving forward.

There are many definitions to describe Carers and the caring role. Carers Trust defines a Carer as “anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.”(Carers Trust: <https://carers.org/about-caring/about-caring>).

The recent National Carers Action plan takes a broader view point on the definition and states “a carer” is considered to be anyone who spends time looking after or helping a friend, family member or neighbour who, because of their health and care needs, would find it difficult to cope without this help regardless of age or whether they identify as a carer”. (Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting Carers Today: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carers-action-plan-2018-to-2020>)

A parent carer is someone over 18 who provides care to a disabled child for whom they have parental responsibility. A non-parent carer of a disabled child is someone over 18 who provides care to a disabled child for whom they do not have parental responsibility (such as a grandparent).

Young Carers are children under 18 with caring responsibilities”.(Carers UK: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/young-carers-and-carers-of-children-under-18>)

Principles

The following principles will direct our approach to working with all Carers in the Cheshire West and Chester area.

We will endeavour to:

- See Carers as partners in care with expert knowledge, experience and understanding of the person you care for.
- Help Carers realise and release your potential
- Support Carers to have a life outside of caring with good quality assessments and access to breaks away from their caring responsibilities.
- Ensure that Carers have good quality information and advice so that you and the person you care for can make informed choices at a time and a place where you feel you have control.
- Recognise the impact on a Carers health and well-being by enabling access to annual health checks and support systems in the event of emergencies.
- Work together in partnership as agencies and professionals so that we clearly identify and monitor what is available to Carers in the borough of Cheshire West and Chester and use this to influence future commissioning approaches.

Vision

Throughout this strategy we want Carers of all ages in Cheshire West and Chester to feel valued, empowered and have access to the right support at the right time. We want to champion the diversity of Carers throughout the Borough and work closely with Carers as well as health and social care partners to provide appropriate support where needed. We want to focus on improving quality of life and the health and wellbeing of Carers of all ages within the Borough.

Aims

This Strategy aims to give an overview of national and local policy, using these to inform and shape Cheshire West and Chester's priorities. We want to demonstrate

how our priorities in Cheshire West have been created through the review of the data produced from the Carers Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the review of our current provision. We also aim to draw on and reflect the lived experience of Carers across Cheshire West and Chester and use these to help shape our priorities.

Priorities

- Priority (1) Early Identification of Carers
- Priority (2) Supporting Carers to achieve their full personal potential
- Priority (3) Accessing the right support at the right time
- Priority (4) Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Carers
- Priority (5) Providing services and systems that support all age Carers

Objective

The objective of this strategy is to provide a direction and plan of future service developments that have been shaped by national and local data and co-production with local Carers. It will also endeavour to provide clear, recordable and demonstrable outcomes. This will be achieved by implementation, monitoring and review of the Carers' Strategy Action Plan.

1. Why do we need a Carer's strategy?

Carers are integral to our communities and to develop the right services and support for Carers we must take into account the legislation, national and regional policy drivers that outline the legal requirements and policy commitments that are in place to support Carers and which are detailed in this strategy.

1.1 What has been achieved since the last strategy?

Following on from the last strategy Carers in Cheshire West and Chester have had a central point of contact for accessing support, advice and help: Cheshire West Carer Support.

The commissioned carer hub has been in place since 2017

Cheshire West and Chester has also appointed a Carer Lead Liaison officer who has established key links with partners and providers and ensured Carers are considered part of the local care network. This has also strengthened the communication and relationships with our Carers as well as supporting to direct and shape Carers support throughout the local authority.

The Carers' Strategy Group has appointed a Carer Chair and Carer Representatives and a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed by relevant partners to ensure quality of services and a collaborative approach is maintained.

Cheshire West and Chester Council has provided support for working Carers and working parent Carers through its membership of Employers for Carers and ensures that information and advice is available through the Carers Hub.

In response to the Care Act 2014 there has been an increased focus on Carers assessments and the development of online training for social care professionals.

In collaboration with the local Clinical Commissioning Group the development of the G.P Link Worker Role has provided improved links between the Cheshire West Carers support service and 52 G.P surgeries to identify an additional 2600 unpaid Carers. Other successes include training within practices and the development of Carer Champions within individual surgeries.

Since January 2018 there has been the implementation of emergency support systems being put in place through the emergency card which enables Carers to record contingency plans that can be accessed in an emergency situation including emergency respite. To date there have been 1581 emergency cards issued.

Cheshire West and Chester Council has supported the introduction of an emergency fund for Carers who can get financial support in a crisis as well as the essentials fund which can cover essential items that enable a caring role to be maintained.

Carers can now receive improved quality information and advice through the information and advice line run by the carer hub who also provide support around financial advice, including benefits.

Carers have been offered breaks from their caring role through the carer breaks scheme which has been running for over a decade and predates the Local Government review in 2009. From March 2018 until March 2020, 15,000 carer breaks have been provided equating to 39,700 hours of service delivered which is managed by the carer hub.

There have been significant numbers of carer events supported by Cheshire west and Chester Council, 6 per year since 2018. The majority of events are centred on Carers Week in June and Carers Rights Day in November. These are typically 4 local events attracting 20 - 30 Carers and 2 larger borough-wide events with 60-80 Carers attending.

1.2 What do we know about Carers nationally?

We know that there are as many as 8.8 million adult Carers in the UK (Carers UK (2019) Juggling work and unpaid care, www.carersuk.org) with projections that point to a significant increase in the number of Carers over 65 from 1.4million to potentially over 2 million. This would be an increase of 43% between 2011 and 2019. ([carersuk.org/stateofcaring-report\(2019\)](http://carersuk.org/stateofcaring-report(2019)))

The current Carers support is estimated at £132 billion annually (<https://www.carersuk.org>) but comes at a high personal cost to Carers where we see increased reports of loneliness, social isolation and increasing financial pressures. 81% of Carers who responded to a recent survey by Carers UK reported having felt lonely or isolated as a result of their caring role (carersuk.org/stateofcaring-report (2019)).

We are seeing increasing reports of Carers struggling financially with a recent survey by Carers UK indicating an increase from 37% to 39% of Carers stating that they are struggling to make ends meet with one in five Carers stating they do not know how they going to pay for their retirement. (carersuk.org/stateofcaring-report (2019)).

There are increasing numbers of Carers who are reporting that their caring role has caused them feelings of stress. The Personal Social Services Survey of Adults Carers in England (SACE) puts the figures at 60.6% in 2019 up from 58.7% in 2016-

17. (<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/personal-social-services-survey-of-adult-carers/england-2018-19>)

Research from the Mental Health Foundation, which draws on data from the Carers UK 2014 survey, saw an increase in the number of Carers feeling stressed by their caring role, up from 82 % the previous year to 84 %. They also saw 55% of Carers reporting feeling depressed.

(<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/fundamental-facts-about-mental-health-2016>)

A policy briefing from Carers UK in conjunction with Sport England looking into Carers and physical activity identified that over half of Carers who responded to their survey reported they had reduced the amount of exercise they take due to their caring role. 81% said that they are not able to do as much physical activity as they would like. (<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/carers-and-physical-activity-policy-briefing-jan2020>)

Young Carers are 1.5 times as likely to be from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities and twice as likely not to have English as a first language according to the British Journal of General Practice (2017 Young Carers in the NHS <https://bjgp.org/content/67/664/527>)

The total number of Young Carers that Barnardo's supports across the country who have been identified as being from non-white communities is just under 20% of all Young Carers.

Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Young Carers are less likely to receive support both financially and practically and continue to be more isolated and hidden from services. Language barriers and stigma seem to be the two main barriers to accessing support. <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/blog/caring-alone-young-carers-who-struggle-get-support>

The Children's Society produced a report which looked into improving assessment and support for Young Carers transitioning into adulthood and the impacts and issues they face. It identified that out of 153 Young Carers engaged in this report, 13% reported that they had received a transition assessment, 51% reported that they had not received a transition assessment and 36% reported they did not know if they

had received a transition assessment.

https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/young-carer_transition_report.pdf

1.3 Key Legislation

1.3.1 The Care Act 2014

The Care Act replaces previous legislation regarding Carers and people being cared for and has the following provisions:

- All Carers' have the right to an assessment when they appear to have needs
- All Carers have the right to support if they meet the eligibility criteria
- Local Authorities are required to provide information to Carers
- Local Authorities may arrange for other organisations such as charities or private companies to carry out assessments of need
- Local Authorities have a duty to promote an 'individual's wellbeing'
- Local Authorities must support Carers to achieve the outcomes they want in day-to-day life
- Local Authorities must have regard to whether the Carer works or wishes to do so
- Local Authorities must have regard to Carer participation in education, training and recreation

The Care Act ensures that Carers have as many rights for support as those they care for. For those assessed as having eligible needs, authorities are required to provide advocacy and personal budgets.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

1.3.2 Young Carers

The Care Act 2014 also makes specific provision for Young Carers in the transition from children's to adult's services. A young carer is someone aged under 18 who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or

alcohol problem. Young Adult Carers are young people aged between 16 and 25 who are caring for another child or young person, or an adult.

In relation to Young Carers, the Care Act requires that:

- Where it appears to a local authority that a Young Carer is likely to have needs for support after becoming 18, the authority must assess
 - Whether the Young Carer has needs for support and if so what those needs are
 - Whether the Young Carer has needs for support after becoming 18, and if so what those needs are likely to be

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

1.3.3 Assessments for Young Carers

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to consider the needs of Young Carers if, during the assessment of an adult with care needs, or of an adult carer, it appears that a child is providing, or intends to provide care. In these circumstances the local authority must consider whether the care being provided by the child is excessive or inappropriate; and how the child's caring responsibilities affects their wellbeing, education and development.

Local authorities should ensure that adults' and children's services work together to offer Young Carers and their families an effective service, are able to respond to the needs of a young carer, the person cared for, and others in the family. This avoids the need for multiple assessments where children and adults find they are expected to give the same answers to professionals from different services, coming into their home at different times.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

1.3.4 The Children and Families Act

The Children and Families Act 2014 gives Young Carers the entitlement to the same help and support as Adult Carers. The legislation means that all Young Carers under the age of 18 are entitled to an assessment of their support needs. The Local Authority has to consider what services it can provide to meet these needs. Specific duties for Local Authorities under this legislation are:

- Taking reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are Young Carers in their area with needs for support and, if so, what those support needs are
- Carry out an assessment for Young Carers upon request

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

1.3.5 The Children Act 1989

A Local authority in England must assess whether a parent carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are. A local authority in England must take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are Parent Carers within their area who have needs for support.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

1.4 Key National Policy

1.4.1 The Government's Carers Action Plan 2018 – 2020 'Supporting Carers Today'.

This remains the current national policy for supporting Carers. The plan sets out the cross-government programme of work to support Carers until 2020. It is structured around the following themes:

- Services and systems that work for Carers
- Employment and financial wellbeing
- Supporting Young Carers
- Recognising and supporting Carers in the wider community and society

- Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for Carers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carers-action-plan-2018-to-2020>

1.4.2 The Prime Minister's Challenge on dementia 2020

The Prime Minister's challenge on dementia 2020 sets out a vision to create a society where those with dementia, their Carers and families, receive high quality compassionate care from diagnosis to end of life across all settings; at home, hospital or care home. Carers of people with dementia provide a vital role and we know that the availability of appropriate care and support and the quality of services has a significant bearing on whether Carers feel able to take a break from their caring responsibilities and providing Carers with better information, training and coping strategies, including emotional and psychological support, improves their quality of life.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-ministers-challenge-on-dementia-2020>

1.4.3 NHS England's Commitment to Carers 2014

This identifies eight priority areas for the development of increased support to Carers in Primary Care. These are:

1. Raising the profile of Carers
2. Education, training and information
3. Service development
4. Person-centred, well-coordinated care
5. Primary care
6. Commissioning support
7. Partnership links
8. NHS England as an employer

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/commitment-to-carers-may14.pdf>

1.4.4 NHS Long Term Plan (Jan 2019)

This plan outlines a revised health model in which patients get more options, better support, and properly joined-up care at the right time in the optimal care setting. Supporting Carers is recognised as an important strand to this model, and in particular the following priorities are identified:

- Greater recognition and support for Carers in both primary and secondary care (including the implementation of Quality Markers for GP practices developed by CQC)
- Particular focus on supporting Carers in vulnerable communities
- A more proactive approach to identifying and supporting Young Carers
- Develop digitally enabled support
- Include Carers themselves in the development of Carer services

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

1.4.5 NHS Care Quality Markers 2019

The NHS has introduced Care Quality markers that have been created through working in partnership with Carers Trust, Carers UK and The Children's Society, and have been endorsed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The markers consist of six questions that can be used by care services to demonstrate how effective they are in recognising and supporting Carers.

The questions have been based on what Carers, and their representatives, have told us matter most to them, and require the care service to show how they go about supporting Carers for each of the six themes identified. Each question is supported by a number of practical ideas that care services can put into place to help them

develop the support they give to Carers. The care service completes an annual declaration as evidence of how it is supporting Carers and this evidence can be used for CQC inspections.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/supporting-carers-in-general-practice-a-framework-of-quality-markers/>

1.4.6 Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and Carers UK

Guidance issued June 2019 on providing and commissioning Carers' breaks, plus advice and information for Carers on how to get a break. Research by Carers UK shows 46 per cent of unpaid Carers were unable to get a break in the last five years, even though they wanted one. Evidence indicates that there needs to be a wider choice of breaks available, and to ensure they are accessible, personalised and enjoyable for both the carer – and the person they care for.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/carers/breaks/adults/commissioning>

<https://www.scie.org.uk/news/mediareleases/carers-respite-press-release>

1.5 Key Local policy

Cheshire West and Chester Council recognise the diversity of the caring role and aim to offer the right support at the right time through a whole system approach through all of its policies and strategies. Below are some key local policies that highlight the ongoing support for Carers

1.5.1 Cheshire West Place Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy underpins the Cheshire West Place Plan and sets out the strategic framework for improving health and reducing inequalities across Cheshire West and Chester. The Place Plan has been developed through, and is overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Carers Strategy supports the following priorities of the Place Plan.

Priority 1: Starting Well

Giving every child the best start in life and supporting children and young people, together with their families and Carers, to realise their full potential, which is key to reducing inequalities. In Cheshire West and Chester we want to create an environment that ensures children and young people have the best start in life, are ready to start school, and are able to thrive and develop skills to enable them to live well. We want to ensure that every child and young person grows up in a safe environment that enables them to achieve their full potential.

- Key indicator 7. Local 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Priority 2: Living Well

Health and wellbeing is influenced by a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors, some of which are influenced by large-scale universal trends and others by individual behaviour. Local authorities, health services and others can do much to support and promote healthy lives. In Cheshire West and Chester we want to create an environment that enables people to lead more healthy lifestyles and to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

- Key indicator 10. Carers can balance their caring roles and maintain their desired quality of life.

Priority 3: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our mental health is as important as our physical health. Poor mental health and wellbeing, including social isolation and loneliness and the stigma that surrounds these conditions, presents one of the biggest burdens of ill health for the people of Cheshire West and Chester.

- Key indicator 4. Proportion of adult social Carers who have as much social contact as they would like.

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-and-performance/council-plans-and-strategies/place-plan/Cheshire-West-Place-Plan.aspx>

1.5.2 Learning Disability and Autism Strategy 2019-2023

The vision of this document is to commission effective, efficient and high quality services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, which ensure good outcomes so that people can reach their full potential.

In developing the strategy there was engagement with service users, Carers, staff and external providers. The following outcomes were identified;

- Outcome 1: More people with learning disabilities and/or autism will be supported to live a good quality and meaningful life.
- Outcome 2: People with a learning disability and/or autism will be supported to live, work, socialise and be as independent as possible throughout their life, within the local community, close to family, and friends.
- Outcome 3: Support for people with a learning disability and/or autism will be person-centred and effective to help ensure that they can achieve their goals, aspirations and person-centred outcomes.
- Outcome 4: People with a learning disability and/or autism and their Carers are able to access the appropriate level of information and advice when they need it.
- Outcome 5: People with a learning disability and/or autism feel safe in their community
- Outcome 6: Services provided will be of high quality, safe, caring and responsive to people's needs.
- Outcome 7: People will be supported to maintain an optimum level of physical and mental health
- Outcome 8: People will be supported to access coordinated health and social care services when they need them.
- Outcome 9: Services will be cost effective, innovative and provide value for money for both the Council and people with learning disabilities and/or autism and their families.

1.5.3 Dementia Strategy 2017-2020

The vision for this strategy is ‘to create a borough which supports and is inclusive of people with dementia and their Carers so they can enjoy the best possible quality of life and remain independent longer. We will do this by working with communities and those with, and affected by dementia, to improve support and services thereby ensuring there are opportunities to enable healthy, safe and fulfilling lives’.

The Dementia Strategy sets out the strategic framework for reducing the risk of dementia (or delaying its onset) and enabling people living with dementia and their Carers to live well, in Cheshire West and Chester. We are clear about the responsibility that our organisations have to help shape and deliver a better model of health and social care for our residents who have, or may develop dementia and their Carers, by building a collective response to the challenges.

The strategy will help us to make better decisions about how we:

- Value and understand those living with dementia and their families and Carers
- Enable independent living for longer
- Raise awareness and understanding amongst our residents
- Use our existing assets and resources
- Design and provide services
- Encourage service providers to work together
- Encourage partnership working between services, service users and their families and Carers

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/social-care-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/dementia/dementia-strategy-latest.pdf>

1.5.4 Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership Plan

The Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership Plan has committed to actions that need to be taken across Health and Social Care and considers a more joined up approach to supporting all age Carers.

1.5.5 Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group Commissioning and Contracting Intentions 2020/21

The Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group recognises the importance of Carers within their Cheshire Commissioning & Contracting Intentions 2020/21. Priority one is the development of a new service model to deliver person centred care for individuals and their Carer's.

The CCG wants to see:

- Increased number of people accessing support via social prescribers
- Increased focus on personalised care and people feeling empowered to self-care using digital options to make informed choices
- Reduced demand for appointments – GP, Hospital and Community Services
- Improved staff awareness of personal health budgets (PHB)
- Support Carers to maintain their caring role
- More people to access support to maintain their caring role
- Increase support to Young Carers
- Consistent offer for Carers across Cheshire

They plan to implement this by

- Supporting the implementation of social prescribing link workers
- Continue to expand on current PHB offer and expand to children and young people and section 117 aftercare
- Community Contracts to support staff development and training around person patient centred care.
- Continue to build on programmes such as One You, Healthy You and the NHS Long-term Plan
- To develop digital options for people to manage their own wellbeing
- Further developing an all age model to support Carers across Cheshire

<https://www.cheshireccg.nhs.uk/media/1782/cheshire-commissioning-and-contracting-intentions-2020-21.pdf>

1.6 What do we know about Carers in Cheshire West?

1.6.1 Census Data

There were 37,121 self-reported Carers in the Borough in 2011 (11.3%). This was slightly higher than the England average (10.2%)

35.5% of Carers provided 20 hours or more care a week.

The greatest proportion of Carers were aged 50 to 64 (21.5%)

612 Young Carers (1.1% of the 0 to 15 population).

12.8% of the female population were self-identified Carers compared to 9.8% of the male population

Neston and Willaston Care Community had the highest proportion of self-reported Carers (13.4%). Care communities also above the Borough average were Frodsham and Helsby; Rural; and Ellesmere Port Care Communities.

General health reported by Carers decreased with the increasing amount of care provided, with 81.2% of Carers who provided 1 to 19 hours of care reporting “very good or good health” compared to 55.7% of Carers who provided 50 hours or more care.

Between the 2001 and 2011 Census, the Authority saw the largest increase in Carers aged 65 plus. There was an increase in all age groups except for those aged 23 to 34 where there was a 25% decrease, and those aged 35 to 49, where there was a 9% decrease. England saw a 19% increase in Young Carers but The Borough did not follow this trend having a smaller increase of 2%.

1.6.2 Healthwatch data

Healthwatch Cheshire

Healthwatch Cheshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care in Cheshire and helps shape and improve local services. The organisation is a statutory member of our Health and Wellbeing Board. As well as

championing local views Healthwatch shares views and experiences across the local health and care system and with Healthwatch England who make sure that the government put people at the heart of care on a national level.

In a Carers survey in 2019 Healthwatch Cheshire identified that around two out of every three people they spoke to had registered with their GP Practice as a Carer. This appears to be positively influenced by the work of the existing services available to Carers.

29.1% of residents in Cheshire West and Chester were not aware they could register as a Carer with their GP Practice.

Of those who were aware they could register as a Carer, but had not, Healthwatch findings suggest that they are not aware of the support on offer to them by registering.

Of those registered as a Carer with their GP, a minority felt they had benefited and received a good service. Most people did not appear to receive the full range of possible expected benefits highlighted by the Care Act 2014 and Carers Federation as good practice.

According to Healthwatch a majority of respondents did not feel they had benefited a great deal from registering with their GP Practice as a Carer. Of those Carers that registered as a Carer with the G.P the following benefits were identified; providing appointments at convenient times: free annual health check and annual flu Jabs: practice staff being aware of the caring role; and being involved in the care planning of the cared for person.

Carers feedback highlighted the need to improve training available to staff around raising awareness of Carers roles, Carers rights and the knowledge of current services and support available

<https://healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Experiences-of-Unpaid-Carers-Registering-with-their-GP-Practice-in-Cheshire-Report-1.pdf>

2. Who are our Cheshire West and Chester Carers?

Anyone can be a Carer – young or old. Carers play a very significant and important role within the communities of Cheshire West and Chester. A carer is someone, who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability. The carer may be an adult, a child or a young person.

Carer experiences

S, 67, cares for her husband, 73, with dementia. T's dementia has progressed rapidly over the past couple of years and S can't leave him for more than a few minutes. Before T's decline, S would attend carer hub support groups to meet and chat with other Carers, and she very much missed this interaction. Carer hub referred her to Crossroads Together for her to take advantage of their respite service, enabling her to return to the support groups, with enough time left over for an hour to herself to shop or meet a friend. This has enabled her to have peer support and a break away from her caring role.

G, 51, cares for his son, L who is 22. L has autism and has a personal assistant four days a week. As a result of this he enjoys a varied week of activities and nights out. G is very grateful for this care package but he works full time, and struggles to find time for himself because of juggling work and care. G often feels frustrated, and, because of his work/caring role, struggles with low mood and isolation. G had help from the Carers Hub to fill out his son's Personal Independence Payment application and found out about the working carer evening groups. G now attends regularly and is a great asset to the group as he has acquired a vast amount of knowledge over the years through supporting his son through school and in many other areas and this is invaluable for other members of the group that are going through many of the same challenges. G feels a sense of purpose attending the groups, and that he's getting his voice heard more this way.

R, 63, cares for her mum D, who is 85 with cancer and dementia. R works full time but has no problems juggling work and care, as her employer is fully supportive. R struggled with the decision to move her mum to a care home, as she wasn't

managing safely in her own home anymore. A carer support worker from the carer hub helped her to arrange home care in the first instance to see how she would manage, and when it became apparent that a care home was the best thing for D's safety long term, the Trust advised on what to look out for, and how this might be paid for.

2.1 Carers known to the Council

During 2019, there were 1,415 Carers receiving support from the Council. This is approximately 3.7% of the estimated number of Carers expected to be residing in CW&C suggesting that few Carers seek support and are known to the Council.

Of those Carers known to the council in 2019, 69% were female and 31% were male. Where age has been captured, half of Carers were older people aged 65 plus.

In Cheshire West and Chester, 5% of the population are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. The census findings for 2011 confirmed that of our BAME Carers, 97% identified as White British, 3% identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

There is a higher proportion of Carers known to the Council who live in Ellesmere Port and Northwich (22% and 20% respectively), and fewer in Frodsham and Helsby and Neston and Willaston (6% and 5% respectively).

116 Carers across the Borough reported an existing health condition or illness.

41% of Carers said they had significant or severe difficulty developing and maintaining contact with people they care about

1,262 people known to the Council are being cared for by an unpaid Carer. For those where the primary reason for care had been recorded, 99.9% were receiving long term care, and 12.2% had also received short term during the year for a short term need.

The most common reason for care was the need for personal care and support

The disabilities and conditions of the individuals cared for was captured for 1,199 people. Almost a third (32.1%) had a learning disability, a quarter had dementia, and just under a quarter had a physical disability.

Carers were most likely to be looking after a partner/ spouse (31%) or a parent (29%), followed by a child (24%).

Carers are most often supported through a Carers Assessment, and/or information, guidance and advice.

During 2019, 185 Carers were in receipt of a carer's payment by direct payment, 13% of the carer cohort.

151 unique joint Carers assessments were completed in 2019/20 which is down significantly from 371 that were completed in 2017/2018. Individual Carers assessments have remained stable over the last three years.

The number of overall joint carer assessments completed is down from 371 in 2017/18 and 325 in 2018/19 to 251 in 2019/18

The number of overall individual Carers assessments completed is down from 264 in 2017/18 and 284 in 2018/17 to 240 in 2019/20.

The number of Carers signposted to information and advice by Cheshire West and Chester Council has remained consistently at 339/338 over the last two years but is down from 574 in 2017/18.

2.2 How we identify Carers in Cheshire west and Chester

Cheshire West and Chester recognise the importance in identifying Carers as early as possible to ensure that appropriate support, advice and information is offered. We currently have multiple functions to aid us in identifying Carers.

2.2.1 Referral through Community Access Team

Carers can currently refer themselves or be referred through our Community Access Team our adult and children's social care gateways. This can be via telephone or email.

For Adult Social Care Telephone: 0300 123 7034

For Children's Social Care Telephone: 0300 123 7047

Alternatively Email : Accesswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

2.2.2 Carers assessment

Under the Care Act 2014 any young adult or adult carer who appears to have needs for support can have an assessment by the local Council. They are entitled to an assessment regardless of the amount or type of care they provide, their financial means or their level of need for support. They don't necessarily have to live with the person they are looking after or be caring full-time to have an assessment. They may be juggling work and care and this is having a big impact on their life.

Carers can have an assessment whether or not the person they are looking after has had a needs assessment, or if the local Council has decided they are not eligible for support.

If the carer and the person they are looking after agrees, a combined assessment of both their needs can be undertaken at the same time.

Within Cheshire West and Chester all carer and joint carer assessments are currently conducted by a social worker or social care assessor. A carer assessment can be requested at any time through the Local Authorities' Community Access Teams or directly through any assigned social care professional. Carer assessments should be reviewed annually.

2.2.3 Register with the G.P

Carers may also register as a Carer at their GPs who should have in place Carer Registration forms. Once a Carer has registered they should have their status as a carer added to their notes. G.P surgeries can then refer to Cheshire West and Chester's Carer support service and are regularly supported by G.P Carer Link workers who can offer support and advice.

2.2.4 Identify as a Young Carer through school/college

Young Carers can identify themselves with schools and colleges who will support them to refer to the Young Carers Support Service or to the main social care Access Teams where they are entitled to have a Young Carers assessment completed.

2.2.5 Young carer assessment

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act to make it easier for Young Carers to get an assessment of their needs and to introduce 'whole family' approaches to assessment and support. Local authorities must offer an assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care

2.3 Who are our future Carers?

We can estimate the number of current Carers (38,000) by applying the Census 2011 rate of Carers to the Mid-year 2018 population estimates from the Office for National Statistics.

2.3.1 Clinical commissioning and contracting intentions 2020/2021 Data

By 2025 it is predicted that the population is forecast to increase by around 19,200 (6%), The number of children (aged 0-15) is forecast to increase by around 3,900 (7%), The number of working age residents (16-64) is forecast to remain steady, The number of older people (aged 65+) is forecast to increase by around 15,200 (21%)

By 2029 the percentage of those aged 65 and over will increase by 50%.

This data shows an increasing aging population which will have an effect on the number of future Carers.

<https://www.cheshireccg.nhs.uk/media/1782/cheshire-commissioning-and-contracting-intentions-2020-21.pdf>

2.3.2 Carers and employment

In 2019 Carers UK conducted a survey and produced a report that found 39% of respondents were juggling paid work with caring compared to 31% in 2015. Further research by Carers UK found that the number of those working and caring could be far higher than previously thought – around 4.87 million (compared with 3 million in

the Census 2011). 38% of all Carers reported that they had given up work to care and 18% had reduced their working hours. 1 in 6 Carers (17%) said that they work the same hours but their job is negatively affected by caring, for example because of tiredness, lateness, and stress.

<https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/news/state-of-caring-report-2019>

Through data received from the Adult Social Care Survey we have seen a decline in the number of full time workers over the last two surveys and an increase in the number of Carers who are retired.

2.3.3 Financial impact on Carers

The recent report for Carers UK “State of Caring 2019” highlighted the increasing financial pressures Carers are facing. It states that almost two in five (39%) Carers say that they are struggling to make ends meet which is up 2% on a similar survey conducted in 2018. It also identified that 53% of Carers who are receiving Carer’s Allowance are struggling financially.

<https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/news/state-of-caring-report-2019>

Data received from the Adult Social Care Survey also shows an increase in the number of Carers reporting they are experiencing increased financial difficulty due to their caring role.

2.3.4 Younger Carers

The last census in 2011 found there were 166,000 Young Carers in England aged five-17 years.

New research carried out by BBC News and Nottingham University found more than a fifth (22%) of the children who completed a questionnaire provided some care for a family member with an illness or disability. Of those children, 32% were classed as doing a high level of caring, with nearly a tenth (9%) carrying out the highest amount of care.

The questionnaire was completed by 925 children across England from two year groups - 11 to 12-year-olds and 14 to 15-year-olds. If the survey was extrapolated

across England it would correspond to more than 800,000 secondary-school age children carrying out some level of care.

Of those, the survey suggests more than 250,000 Young Carers are carrying out a high level of care, with 73,000 taking on the highest amount of care.

(https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Being_a_young_carer)

Young Carers can identify themselves with schools and colleges who will support them to refer to the Young Carers Support Service or to the main social care Access Teams where they are entitled to have a Young Carers assessment completed. To support Young Carers further young people have requested specific identification card to assist with health / education, training applications and appointments.

2.3.5 Equality Analysis

Like all public bodies the Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to analyse the effect of its policies, services and functions on the workforce and service users and to publish the results of the analysis and evidence information used. (see appendix 1)

The purpose of an equality analysis is to ensure that our services, policies and practices do not directly, indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against the users of our services or our staff. Where a negative impact is found, we will mitigate the impact through the development and implementation of equality improvement plans. -

3. What support is currently in place?

Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group currently offers support to Carers through the Cheshire West and Chester Carers Support Service. This is a commissioned service that is currently provided by Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust who work in partnership with specialist carer support services. These services range from general information and advice to specialist wellbeing and carer break services. This includes an offer for Young Carers through Crossroads Together who deliver targeted support to Young Carers. This following section details what services are currently provided for our carer community.

3.1 Cheshire West and Chester Councils Commissioning intentions

Cheshire West and Chester Council recognises the important contribution that unpaid Carers make to adult social care and this is represented by the current financial commitment made towards services that support Carers in their caring role

Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning group currently spend over £900,000 each year to provide support for Carers made up of:

- Carers Support Service contract
- Carers Emergency Card
- Carer Break Services
- Carer Lead Liaison Officer
- Employers for Carers Umbrella Membership

This funding consists of contributions from the Better Care Fund, Local Authority contribution and Care Act funding.

In addition to this Cheshire West and Chester also currently spend over £400,000 in Carer Direct Payments each year.

The Young Carers Contract is currently valued at £94,000 of which there is a £21,000 contribution from the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group

This strategy sets out the commissioning intentions for the way in which Cheshire West and Chester intends to support carers, over the next five years from 2021 – 2026. These commissioning intentions include:

- The review of all commissioned and non-commissioned provision considering how impact is measured
- Making appropriate amendments to current commissioned services to reflect the needs of carers in the remaining contract life.
- Developing the right services and levels of support
- Strengthening the partnership with NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group to create a new service model.
- Streamlining pathways and processes to ensure Carers can easily navigate services
- Creating the vision of an All Age Carers Hub
- Commission a new all age carers service hub for 1 January 2023

3.2 Carer Hub

Cheshire West and Chester Council currently commissions Carers services through Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust who deliver a number of services either directly or through the management of subcontracted providers. Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust are the Lead Provider of the service. They have resource centres in Northwich and Chester which provide the core elements of the service including:

- Carers Helpline (0300 102 0008) Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm offering information ,advice and support with answerphone facility outside of these hours
- Benefits advice, form filling and advocacy
- Regular newsletter (typically 3 times a year)
- Events for Carers throughout the year highlighting Carers Week and Carers Rights Day

- Monthly Luncheon clubs in Northwich, Chester and Ellesmere Port
- Monthly support groups in Northwich, Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston
- Bi-Monthly support groups in Winsford and Frodsham
- Wellbeing sessions and events
- Carer's training programme
- Carer awareness training for professionals
- Essentials Fund to pay for white goods, gardening or decorating which support the caring role
- Personal Budget to enable Carers to take a break
- Carers Emergency Fund
- Working Carers service with support and resources from Employers for Carers
- Early identification of Carers in Primary Care
- Weekly drop ins at each resource centre
- Emergency Card with access to emergency respite
- Carer events throughout the year

3.3 Current providers

3.3.1 Support for Dementia Carers

The Alzheimer's Society is a commissioned service that offers one to one support for Carers and people with dementia. It provides specialist information (including managing difficult behaviour, and planning for the future), advice and emotional support. The Alzheimer's Society also delivers a range of groups and activities that Carers can access both individually and with the person with dementia. Activity groups and Singing for the Brain groups are in place across the borough.

In addition to this, they offer a telephone carer befriending service that provides a weekly telephone call to Carers who are unable to attend the office or groups on a regular basis.

3.3.2 Support for working Carers

The Bren Project are working together with the Carers Hub on the Working Carers Service but, whereas the Carers Hub focus on supporting working Carers with issues relating to either employment or their caring role, The Bren Project works with local employers to raise awareness of Carers in their workforce, to encourage them to become Carer friendly, and to support and train those employers so that they can work towards a “Carer Confident” accreditation.

3.3.3 Support for Carer Respite

Crossroads Together is one of 3 organisations (see also Rural Community Services and Neuromuscular Centre) who provide a respite service as part of Cheshire West Carer Support Service. This enables Carers to take a break and to find a balance between caring and looking after themselves, particularly if they have other commitments, such as family or a job. They can provide one-to-one respite care at home for the person with care needs for up to 12 weeks.

3.3.4 Support for Neuromuscular conditions Carers

The Neuromuscular Centre is one of 3 organisations (see also Rural Community Services and Crossroads Together) who provide a respite service as part of Cheshire West Carer Support Service. This enables Carers to take a break and to find a balance between caring and looking after themselves, particularly if they have other commitments, such as family or a job. They provide emergency respite care for adults with a neuromuscular condition at their centre in Winsford.

3.3.5 Support for Rural Carers

OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire) is one of 3 organisations (see also Neuromuscular Centre and Crossroads Together) who provide a respite service as part of Cheshire West Carer Support Service. OPAL Carers Connect service is provided for Carers 60 or older or where the person with care needs is 60 or older. The service enables Carers to meet other Carers and take part in activities to help them find a balance between caring and looking after themselves, particularly if they have other commitments, such as family or a job. The service also offers the opportunity for the person with care needs to attend some sessions if needed. The service runs in Rural West Cheshire.

3.3.6 Support for Learning Disability and Mental Health Carers

As part of commissioned carer services, Making Space provide support for both Carers of people with mental health issues and Carers of people with a learning disability. For Carers of people with mental health issues, they will provide both information and wellbeing sessions on a one-to-one basis, including help around managing difficult behaviour. They also run events and activities to enable those Carers to develop peer support networks with other Carers.

Carers of people with a learning disability can access similar information and wellbeing sessions, along with support around the transition from children's services to adult services. Social events and activities for those Carers are also available. They also can get support with planning for the future as part of the "After I am Gone" training.

3.3.7 Support for Young Carers

Support for Young Carers is commissioned by Cheshire West and Chester Council and delivered by Crossroads Together Young Carers service. It is aimed at supporting children and young people who are between the ages of 6 and 18 who are helping a member of their family that may live with issues relating to Mental ill health, Substance Misuse, Learning disabilities, Physical ill health or Physical disability and who are on a multi-agency plan such as Team Around the Family (TAF), Child in Need (CIN) or child protection (CP). Young Carers are offered group sessions and one-to-one support to mitigate the impacts of caring by building up their resilience and life skills through workshops, targeted interventions and social interaction. Crossroads Together also work with schools to increase identification, understanding and support through staff training, assemblies and guidance on how schools can work towards the young carers in schools award.

3.4 Carer breaks services

Cheshire West and Chester Council, in partnership with the new Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group, grant fund ten organisations to deliver carer breaks and support services for Carers across the Borough. This is funded through the Better Care Fund pooled budget and is accessed and managed through the Carer Hub. A breakdown of all thematic carer breaks available to all Carers is detailed below.

3.4.1 Support for Carers of Children and Young People with an Autism Spectrum Condition

Cheshire Autism Practical Support (ChAPS) delivers Yoga and Arts sessions in Northwich and Winsford twice a month. They also offer eight week mindfulness courses, delivered in Northwich, Chester, and Ellesmere Port. Love Yourself, Heal Your Life are ten week courses delivered in Northwich. This service is for Carers of children and young people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition. Parent carer support groups and family activity sessions

3.4.2 Support for Carers ages 18 and over

The Carers Hub deliver You Care You Choose which is a programme of activities co-produced with Carers that change each month and are chosen by the Carers. For Carers aged 18 and over.

3.4.3 Support for Young Carers

Cheshire Young Carers provide monthly drop in sessions and activity breaks. For Carers aged 6-18.

3.4.4 Support for Carers of someone affected by a Mental Health Issue

Making Space provide group breaks offering a range of bespoke activities, and educational workshops. The workshops cover a range of issues such as crisis management, illness versus behaviour, impact and conflict, and relaxation. This service is for Carers of people with a mental health issue.

3.4.5 Support for Carers of someone affected by a Neuromuscular Condition

The Neuromuscular centre offer day breaks, short breaks onsite groups and activities as well as offsite activities. They range from baking, crafts and social activities, complementary therapies, mindfulness, woodworking/craft/gardening clubs, respite for the person with care needs at the Centre to enable the carer to choose how they spend their day.

3.4.6 Support for Carers of someone affected by a Neurological Condition

The Neuro Therapy Centre offer a range of activities for Carers along with respite for the person they care for at the Neuro Therapy Centre, support and advice offered by qualified Healthcare professionals including counselling and relaxation classes. They also offer opportunities to meet other Carers and benefit from peer support in a welcoming environment or to volunteer for the Centre in a range of different settings. The service is for Carers of someone with a neurological condition including MS, Parkinson's, MND, Fibromyalgia and ME.

3.4.7 Support for Rural Carers

OPAL Service (Rural West Cheshire) currently provide the OPAL BreakTime service offers bespoke breaks to Carers living in Rural West Cheshire, aged 60+ who are caring for an older person. The service offers support of a flexible nature which is tailored to the needs of the carer and allows the carer some personal respite time to use as they wish, for example, to undertake a leisure or social activity, attend an appointment, or just relax. Volunteers support the person with care needs by offering companionship, taking part in leisure activities, in their home, or by taking trips out.

3.4.8 Support for Carers of someone affected by a life limiting illness

The Joshua Tree offer a variety of family events and activities, as well as wellbeing therapies. This service is for Carers of a child with a diagnosis of cancer or leukaemia.

St Luke's Hospice provides a Time Out group, one to one complementary therapies, counselling and Relaxation Plus (two six week courses to enable Carers to better manage stress and to learn relaxation techniques). This service is for Carers of someone affected by a life limiting illness.

The Hospice of the Good Shepherd offers complementary therapies and counselling sessions with little or no waiting time. This service is for Carers of people with an advanced life limiting illness.

3.5 Key Partners

3.5.1 Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Cheshire West and Chester Council have worked in partnership with the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to develop this All Age Carers Strategy with the overall focus of improving the lives of carers in the Cheshire West area. The Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group was recently formed when the decision was made for the four Cheshire CCG's (West Cheshire, East Cheshire, South Cheshire and Vale Royal) combined to make one CCG over the whole of Cheshire. This enables the delivery of more consistent, joined-up care across the county as well as providing the region with a more powerful voice in championing the needs of local people.

3.5.2 Carers strategy group

Cheshire West and Chester's Carer Strategy Group is a carer chaired forum of Carers that meets Bi-monthly. The group focuses on working with Carers, professionals, and colleagues from across key partnerships, programmes and service departments (including employment, leisure and housing) to develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan to enable better support and quality of life for Carers.

This will entail partnerships, programmes and services to explain their service offer to Carers and what they propose to put in place to improve their service support offer.

The group also supports the development of a communication and engagement campaigns and briefs relevant committees and forums across the various Cheshire West and Chester partnerships.

"The new Carers' Strategy follows extensive consultation and collaboration between Carers, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Commissioners, voluntary, statutory and community sector partners.

Despite fundamental changes to the delivery of Health and Social Care recently these partners have been building the foundations for more accessible and inclusive Carer services.

Since 2017 Carers in Cheshire West and Chester have had a central point of contact for accessing support, advice and help: Cheshire West Carer Support.

A Carer Lead Liaison Officer has been appointed and has established key links with partners and providers and ensured Carers are considered part of the local care network.

The Carers' Strategy Group has appointed a Carer Chair and Carer Representatives.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed by relevant partners to ensure quality of services and a collaborative approach is maintained.

The recently completed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has given all of us a chance to review, take stock and plan ahead. (Sue Walsh Carers Strategy Group Chairperson)

3.5.2 Carers District groups

The District Carer groups are made up of the Ellesmere Port and Chester District Carers Group and the Vale Royal District Carers Group. In addition to the carer membership there is also representation from the Local Authority, and NHS services. The groups meet quarterly to discuss any identified carer concerns within the local area and offer the opportunity to engage with Carers and seek views on forthcoming initiatives.

The Groups are also represented on the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

3.5.3 Learning Disability Partnership Board

The Learning Disabilities Partnership Board is a large group of people from many different backgrounds which acts as a forum to discuss issues of concern and interest to people with learning disabilities, their Carers, professionals and provider

agencies. It is founded on the key messages from “Valuing People” that people with learning disabilities should have the same rights and choices as everyone else and are treated with dignity and respect. It seeks to promote effective co-ordination between services so that people with learning disabilities can reach their full potential and live as safely and independently as possible.

The Board helps to influence and challenge policy and strategy makers, contributes to service design, monitors quality and acts as a communication channel between its members and with other groups. The Board is part of the family of groups which are affiliated to the Cheshire West and Chester Health and Wellbeing Board. A particular feature is the strong, supported involvement of service users, including a user co-chair and the dedicated input of Carers. Normally, the Board meets every other month and has a number of specialised sub-groups, such as those for employment, profound intellectual and multiple disability (PIMD) and friendships and relationships. It is attended at senior level within the Local Authority and NHS partners, including the Deputy Chief Executive, People as chair and the Council’s Cabinet Member for adult social care and public health.

3.5.4 Health and Wellbeing board

Cheshire West and Chester Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory committee of the Council, established in response to the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It brings together senior leaders from many key agencies and sectors who between them can develop plans and strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of our diverse communities. This also includes the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, such as good housing, strong communities, economy and physical activity. Partners on the Board include the council, all the main NHS agencies operating in the Borough, Police, Fire, Healthwatch, voluntary and community, housing and physical activity sectors.

The Board’s terms of reference include oversight of the Borough’s Place Plan, which includes the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a commitment to tackle the inequalities between our most deprived and more affluent communities. Affiliated to the Board are a number of other significant partnerships, including the Carers Inter-agency Group.

3.5.5 Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership

Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership (CWICP) is a collaboration of six organisations – NHS providers, GP federations and the Council's adult social care and public health services - hosted by the Countess of Chester Trust.. Its care model is based on nine 'care communities' in which GPs, care professionals, local groups and community teams work together to provide care and support for populations ranging from 20,000 to 70,000 people. A GP primary care network has been established to ensure effective links between practices and the local areas.

4. Our priorities

One of the key areas we want to focus on is the identification of Carers. We know from the JSNA data that there are possibly over 32,000 unidentified Carers in Cheshire West and Chester and it is important that we start to improve how we identify Carers, increase the number of services being offered, accessed and make sure that Carers are receiving the right support at the right time. We want to see an increase in the number of carer assessments carried out. We also want to see a focus on individual carer assessments to give Carers every opportunity to relay their feelings and needs without any barriers. In 2019/20 151 unique Joint carer assessments were completed which shows a continual decline in the number of joint carer assessments since 2017/18 when 368 assessments were completed. The number of unique individual carer assessments has remained stable over the last three years.

4.1 Priority (1) Early Identification of Carers

- **Increased carer assessments** – Cheshire West and Chester Council recognises the importance of carer assessments and wants to see an increased focus in raising Carers awareness of their rights under the Care Act 2014 to have their own care and support needs assessed due to their caring role. This will be done via raising awareness through a promotion campaign with partner agencies and where Cheshire West uses all of its current communication streams to publicise the benefits of requesting a Carers assessment.

Cheshire West and Chester Council are committed to working with Adult social care to improve the pathways for Carers assessments to make it easier and more flexible to access.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will continue the development of our online platforms with a view to Carers being able to complete their own assessments at a time of their choosing.

- **Improve the offer of support available to Carers** – This will be completed by educating and training social care professionals regularly on the range of services available to Carers. As part of the promotion Cheshire West and Chester Council will highlight the benefits and range of support on offer for Carers. A full review of the current service offer will allow us to make sure that Carers are offered support that is meaningful and personalised to them.
- **Identify hidden Carers** – The promotion of Cheshire West Carer Support and carer services is central to reaching the wider public and highlighting what a Carer is, the diversity of the role and getting people to recognise the benefit of registering as a Carer.

Cheshire West and Chester Council Will work in conjunction with all community partners and initiatives such as community connectors, G.P link workers, Carer champions and social prescribers to identify Carers within the community and raise awareness of the services available.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure we are engaging with key partners and identified points of intervention such as G.P surgeries, pharmacies and dentists.

Cheshire West and Chester will work in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group to develop processes within the hospital setting to identify Carers and ensure that the relevant information on services is provided. This may involve working with the Patient Liaison Teams and developing a key carer lead.

- **Increase the early identification of Young Carers in Schools**– Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with local schools, colleges and Young Carers themselves to raise awareness of the needs of Young Carers and the current support available. We are committed to working with Young Carer groups to develop awareness training and will encourage the development of

Young Carer Champions within every school and college within Cheshire West. As part of the proposed Carers charter Cheshire West and Chester Council will ask every school and college to sign up and commit to raising awareness of Young Carers. We will develop with schools, colleges and Young Carers a questionnaire that may help identify Young Carers within the education system.

- **Create an identity for Carers** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will look to develop a media campaign that recognises and celebrates the role of Carers in our local communities.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will help our Young Carers to understand and recognise when they are Young Carers.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work closely with carer groups and work towards developing a Carers partnership board to ascertain what matters most to Carers and ensure that Carers are represented at all levels.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work at developing a Cheshire West and Chester Carers Charter in partnership with the CCG.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will look into the implementation of a carer card for all age Carers and work with local businesses to look at linking this to tangible rewards.

- **Improve the efficiency of support** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will review the current pathways for support and look at where these can be improved and they will look to increase the number of pathways to support so that we can be more flexible. This will include pathways into retirement for Carers, and Young Carers identified at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work innovatively to develop our online pathways of support.

We also want to focus on Carers being supported to achieve their personal potential and a key priority in this is to support Carers in employment. We know from the JSNA data that Cheshire West and Chester has approximately a third of Carers in employment and we have seen an increase in Carers not being in employment due to their caring responsibilities. We also want to see more of a focus on Young Carers

achieving their potential as we know from the JSNA that on average Young Carers have higher absence rates and lower attainment scores. We also want to see the right support in place for Young Carers transitioning to adulthood. This transition is a statutory obligation and a key focus of the government carer action plan and we know from data contained in the JSNA that nationally that this requires improvement.

4.2 Priority (2) Supporting Carers to achieve their full personal potential

- **Promote range of support available for Carers to access employment, education or training** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will work closely with Employers for Carers and local businesses to promote the resources available under the umbrella membership.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will promote the current support services available to all working Carers and support local employers to adopt carer friendly policies. Cheshire West and Chester Council will look at how support can be best tailored to the self-employed.

- **Work with local employers to support Carers in the workplace-** Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with local employers to be more confident in supporting Carers in the workplace and promote the carer confident kite mark.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will look at the development of an online resource for local working Carers and employers where they can get up to date information regarding employment law and the caring role.

- **Improve support to Young Carers at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training-** Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with local schools and colleges around the identification of Young Carers who are at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training.

- **Define the transition to Adult Carers process** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will raise awareness with Young Carers around their rights to assessment and will look at the development of dedicated leads within teams whose duty it is to support, manage and monitor Young Carers.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will raise awareness with Social care teams of the statutory obligation to provide clear transition plans for Young Carers.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will develop a program of wellbeing and life skill support for Young Carers entering the transition process.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will develop the carer partnership board to review the current processes and systems in place to support the transition of Young Carers to adulthood within Cheshire West and Chester Council.

We want Carers to be able to access the right support at the right time and we want the services to offer a range of diverse support to ensure that all Carers have the opportunity for carer breaks and respite in line with Cheshire West and Chester's Respite Policy. We know from the JSNA that there are significant physical and mental impacts which a carer can face during their caring role. We know too that Young Carers are at higher risk of bullying and are at an increased risk of not being in education, employment or training which has been associated with mental health problems and social isolation in young people. In line with the Government priorities we want to make sure that every young carer has an opportunity to access the right support at the right time.

It is important that Carers feel well informed in a way that best suits them as individuals

4.3 Priority (3) Accessing the right support at the right time

- **Review the carer break and respite offer** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will conduct a survey with all Carers who access the current services and ask them to rate the functionality, practicality and effectiveness of the services offered.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with the existing Interagency Group and Carers from each of the service areas and look at how the services can be improved.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work towards an all age carer partnership board that is fully representable of our carer community.

- **Ensure that Carers receive adequate information using accessible web-based support** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will review the current platforms that routinely provide information and advice for Carers.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will look to increase the pathways in which information can be distributed. We will explore the opportunity afforded by all aspects of social media and assess the suitability of each for providing information and advice.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will look at how best to support Carers who lack access to online resources and will look how best to share information in the community such as areas of engagement, format of information and accessibility.

Cheshire West and Chester council will review the impact and efficiency of the “Who will care when I’m gone project”

- **Assessments are robust and reviewed** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure that awareness is raised within social care teams and with professionals about the importance of Carer assessments. Operational teams will be tasked with reporting routinely on the number of carer assessments that are completed as part of their reporting schedule. Cheshire West and Chester Council will ask that Carers assessments are included as part of the regular case audits that are completed by Team managers and as part of the senior leadership case audits.
- **Increase access to wellbeing support** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure that 1-1 support and wellbeing support is part of the service offer for Young Carers moving forward. Cheshire West and Chester Council will look at the implementation and promotion of Peer to Peer support within the Young Carer community.
- **Improve Young Carers care planning** - The Young Carers Forum will review and assess the current processes in place around Young Carers and Young Adult Carers Care Plans. This will include the promotion of transition plans.

From the JSNA data we know that Carers are at a higher risk of health issues due their caring role and we know that a high proportion of Carers report that their caring role has had a negative impact on their mental health. It is therefore important to work with the local CCG’s and prioritise the support for Carers.

We also know from the data that Carers are reporting that they are facing increased financial difficulties and it is clear that we need to provide support and advice to help Carers avoid financial hardship

4.4 Priority (4) Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Carers

- **Increase Carer registration at all GP practices across Cheshire West and Chester-**

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to review the success of the current G.P Link service. Cheshire West and Chester Council will continue to offer training and education to G.P surgeries around identifying Carers and the support available to them.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will continue to promote registering as a Carer as part of a promotional campaign around raising awareness of the support available to Carers.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will promote registering at the G.P's as a carer through all of the communication channels available to the local authority.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will consult with Carers via a survey to better understand the barriers around Carers registering with the G.P.

- **Include Carer representation in the Mental Health Strategy workstream –**

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to look at the Joint Mental Health Strategy and ensure that Carers are adequately represented.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will work together in the promotion of the current services and support available to Carers of people with Mental Health issues.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure that health and social care professionals within mental health services receive awareness training and information on the current support and services available to Carers.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will encourage attendance of Carers who support individuals with a mental health issue at the quarterly Carers meetings and have representation at the Carers Partnership Board.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will also ensure that Carers issues are cross-referenced with the Mental Health Partnership Board

- **Improve pathways to wellbeing groups** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure that wellbeing groups are part of the carer offer in future commissioned services if this is identified by Carers themselves as something they would access.
- **Improve support to avoid financial hardship** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure that Carers continue to have access to information and support through our Cheshire West Carers Support Service that helps them where possible to avoid financial hardship. This will include benefits advice and employment support. Cheshire West and Chester Council will continue to provide through commissioned services access to an emergency fund and essentials fund.
- **Increase opportunities for Carers to engage in the decision making process**– Cheshire West and Chester Council will continually promote the Carers groups as platforms for engagement by Health and Social Care and will continue to work towards having carer representation at all relevant boards.
- **Promote access to health checks for all Carers** – Caring can adversely affect the health and wellbeing of Carers, regardless of their age. It is important therefore that we consider how we can ensure all Carers have access to regular health checks.
- **Promote positive activities, physical exercise and social contact** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with key partners, including our social prescribers and our in house sports and leisure company, Brio, to develop an offer to Carers that promotes positive activities, physical exercise and social contact.
Cheshire West and Chester Council will work in partnership with our arts and culture partners to promote existing events and opportunities within the community and will support the development of carer led social contact groups.
Cheshire West and Chester Council will explore the possibility of the current Local Authority bike scheme being available to Carers.
- **Promote Befriending services** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will support and develop befriending services in partnership with the volunteer

sector and explore the use of assistive technology and other methods to establish a peer to peer carer support network.

Carers often have extensive contact with the health and social care system, so it is important that services value and involve Carers. Services and systems need to be aware of the diversity of Carers and their circumstances. They also need to be responsive and flexible, recognising and supporting Carers at different stages in the caring journey.

4.5 Priority (5) Providing services and systems that support all age Carers

- **Raise awareness of Carers within health and social care services and key partners** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will work in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to review and redevelop the current training package available to Health and Social Care professionals.
Cheshire West and Chester Council will ensure that the message on what is important to Cheshire Carers and the current support available is consistent in all health and social care settings.
Cheshire West and Chester Council will look at the redevelopment of the G.P link worker role to also include hospital settings in conjunction with the Patient Liaison Service.
- **Involve Carers in the development of services-** Cheshire West and Chester Council will make it part of the Commissioned services contract that services must routinely demonstrate that they have consulted with Carers on what services matter to them and identify any changes within services that are needed.
Service changes or suggestions will be a standing item on all future carer group meetings and will be included as an update on any future interagency group meetings.
Young Carers will meet with a representative from commissioners on a bi-monthly basis. Young Carer representation will be encouraged and supported at all carer groups.
- **Shape Carer groups so they are representative of all Carers** - Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with Carers to re-evaluate the structure

and process of the current carer voice groups, to broaden membership and ensure that there is diversity of Carers.

- **Define pathways of support to all Carers** – Cheshire West and Chester Council will complete a review of the current systems in place to support Carers and research other local authority systems to ensure that the current provision in place offers the most flexible and responsive options. Cheshire West and Chester Council will consult with Carer groups to gather intelligence on which areas are the most problematic for Carers. Cheshire West and Chester Council will work with the Clinical Commissioning Group to see if there are any areas of good practice within systems that can be replicated to allow a more efficient joined up service delivery.

5. Outcomes

Ultimately it will be the views of Carers themselves that will be the key in determining whether or not the outcomes from the identified priorities have been achieved. We will continue to engage with carer groups including the Strategy Group and seek their views. These views and feedback will then be used to assess the effectiveness of support services, and the extent to which key agencies and front line services consider their needs and aspirations. Carers will tell commissioners and providers how successful they feel the overall implementation of this Strategy has been.

In conjunction with this process there are several key areas that we can also monitor to measure the outcomes of the identified priorities.

5.1 Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework

The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people. The ASCOF is used both locally and nationally to set priorities for care and support, measure progress and strengthen transparency and accountability. In relation to Carers we report on the following outcome measures:

- carer reported quality of life

- The proportion of Carers who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like
- Overall satisfaction of Carers with social services
- The proportion of Carers who report they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for.
- The proportion of Carers who find it easy to find information about services.

These outcome measures are generated from a bi-annual Carer's Survey. The latest survey was undertaken in 2018/19.

In general, ASCOF results nationally and regionally are declining gradually (Cheshire West results are in line with the National and Regional ASCOF results).

The percentage of carers who answered that they have enough social contact has fallen from the 2016/17 survey.

Carers responded more positively to feeling involved and being consulted, compared to England and the North West.

5.2 Carers assessments

Carer assessments are a key tool in monitoring the effects the caring role is having on our Carers. It is important that we see an increase in the number of carer assessments completed and in the quality of the data recorded.

5.3 Auxiliary data

There are other supporting data streams that we can monitor that will provide further evidence that the outcomes are being achieved:

- Number of Carers registered with their G.P
- Number of referrals to Carers Hub
- Number of Carers accessing the Carers Hubs and services
- Number of local employers adopting Carer friendly policies
- Number of Carers receiving a personal budget

- Number of Carers identified as having low attendance, attainment scores or identified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

5.4 Overarching outcomes

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an overarching theme across all outcomes for Carers. The Council and its key partners will co-operate in safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable adults and children as set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Children Act 1989. This means that we will ensure that Carers know how to raise concerns about the person they are caring for or themselves, and that Carers are supported appropriately in the event of any allegations made against them.

Co-production

The National Occupational Standards describes co-production as “A way of working whereby citizens and decision makers, or people who use services, family Carers and service providers work together to create a decision or service which works for them all. The approach is value driven and built on the principle that those who use a service are best placed to help design it” This is an overarching outcome that we aim to deliver through this Strategy.

6. Pathways for support

6.1 Carer’s pathway

1. All Carers – Cheshire West Carers Services and Information:

Information, advice, support available to all Carers, through the Carers Hub

2. How to get a Carers Assessment - You can request a Carers Assessment through Cheshire West and Chester’s Community Access Team. The Carers Hub will also signpost Carers to appropriate areas of support, including how to register for a Carers Assessment.

3. Carers can choose to have their needs considered alongside the person they care for in a joint assessment and Support Plan – Carers' needs can be considered jointly as part of the 'Cared for' person's needs assessment.

4. Carers who choose to have a separate carer's assessment – Carers can have their own needs assessed separately in their own right.

6.2 Young Carers and Young Adult Carers pathway

1. All Young Carers - Young carer support, advice, information and signposting. Referral for support can be made directly to the commissioned Young Carers support provider for any young carer under the age of 25.

2. Young Carers who choose to have their needs considered alongside the person they care for - Whole Family Assessment Young carer's needs can be considered jointly as part of the 'cared for person's (adult or child's) assessment.

3. Young Carers who need a separate young carer's assessment or transitional young adult carer's assessment –

- Young Carers Assessment and Support Plan Early Help Notification and Assessment
- Transitional Young Carers Assessment and Support Plan by Children's or Adult's Services depending on age of 'cared for ' person - This must be offered to any young carer who is likely to have needs for support after becoming 18 and should take place at a 'point of significant benefit' (assuming this will be roughly between the ages of 16-18), in order to consider what that post 18 support might be. If the young carer is caring for an adult, this will need to be undertaken by worker undertaking assessment of adult with care needs. If the young carer is caring for a child, this will be undertaken by Children's Services

4. Assessment of a Young Carer who is also considered a Child in Need - Child in Need Assessment and Child in Need Plan completed by Children's Services Social

Care. Child in need: Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines a child as being in need in law if:

- He or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision of services from the Local Authority;
- His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the Local Authority;
- He or she has a disability.

(Childrens Act. Section 17. 1989)

7. Governance and Monitoring

This is a five year Carers Strategy and Action Plan that will be monitored at the Carers Partnership Board. Carers will be invited to provide comments and raise issues to ensure that the Strategy remains carer led and focused. An annual report will be drafted and this will be reported formally to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

This Carers Strategy covers the years 2021 – 2026 and we will provide an annual report on our progress on ours and partner websites on the anniversary of the launch date. An in depth review will be held after three years.

Cheshire West and Chester will take responsibility to review the Strategy as necessary in response to changes in legislation or national policy.

As part of this monitoring and evaluation we will have some key questions to discuss with Carers

- Do our services meet the needs of Carers?
- Are any groups of Carers not accessing the support they need?
- How can we help individuals and communities to overcome those barriers?
- Where are there gaps and under provision?
- Where is there over provision or scope for better co-ordination between services?

Commissioned services will have continual performance monitoring meetings with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Commissioning and Contracts Team which will review the key performance indicators set within the commissioned Carers Hub contract. The commissioned services will also be expected to provide evidence on the expected outcomes using a recognised outcome based accountability tool.

As previously discussed in the outcomes section of the Strategy, Cheshire West and Chester Council gives an account of its performance to the Department of Health on the National Outcome Measures for Adult Social Care (ASCOF).

7.1 Action Plan

See appendix.