



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

29 JULY 2021

REPORT TITLE	CARERS SERVICES AND CARERS STRATEGY REVIEW
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is to update members on the current offer to carers, to request support for the establishment of a Carers Partnership Advisory Board (CAPB) and to propose a review of the Council's Carer's Strategy.

This matter affects all Wards in the Borough.

There are no key decision requirements arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee are requested to: -

1. Support the development of a new Carers Strategy for Wirral for 2022 and to receive a further report back to a future committee.
2. Support the relaunch of a Carers Advisory Partnership Board to deliver the carers agenda subject to a review of the Terms of Reference

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- The Carers Partnership Board has lapsed and needs to be relaunched.
- There are no plans for a new national Carers Strategy, however, the Adult Social Care Green Paper was expected to include carers as vital partners in the health and care system.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- Not to have a strategic board for Carers.
- Not to have a Carers Strategy.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The report refers to a carer as someone who provides, unpaid, physical and/or emotional support to a family member or friend who has a physical or learning disability, ill health, frailty due age, a mental health or substance misuse problem and without help would not be able to remain living in the community. A carer can be under or over 18 years of age.
- 3.2 Under the Care Act 2014, there is a statutory duty to identify, support and assess carers and for carers to be treated with parity of esteem alongside the vulnerable people whom they are providing care. There is a requirement to provide support to prevent or delay the needs of the carer, and the person they care for from increasing. The carers services provided in Wirral are designed to assist Wirral Local Authority to achieve the requirements of the Care Act.
- 3.3 According to the Census 2011 there are 40,340 Carers in Wirral, it is expected that this figure will increase when the 2021 Census figures are released in spring 2022. The estimated economical value of the contribution made by Wirral carers is £851 million per year.
- 3.4 Through the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21 the activities of the carers support have been limited due to Covid-19 restrictions, where possible support has been provided through virtual, electronic and tele communications. Where there has been a lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, providers have maintained social distancing, PPE measures and risk assessments put in place.
- ### **4.0 Early Intervention and Prevention and Carers (Young and Adult Carers) – EIAP and Carers contract**
- 2.1 In 2017 Wirral Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Public Health and NHS Wirral CCG brought together a range of separate contracts that were being delivered by a variety of voluntary, community and faith sector organisations (VCF). The intention was for the services to be delivered through a single

delivery vehicle (SDV) to improve the pathway for support for vulnerable people and carers, and to offer a seamless, joined up service.

2.2 The contract was awarded to Wirral Health and Wellbeing CIC, the partners for the delivery of the contract are:

- Wirral Information and Resource for Equality and Diversity (Wired)
- Age UK Wirral
- Wirral MIND
- Barnardo's Wirral
- Health Junction

The contract length was 3 years from October 2017 – 2020. This was extended for a further year due to Covid-19.

2.3 An advantage to the SDV was to develop closer working across the sector and improve the identification of carers in Wirral. Carers can be any age, gender, and the level of the care they provide varies depending on the condition of the person they care for. The majority of carers are not known to statutory services, or access support provided by VCF organisations. Many carers only seek support when they feel they are not able to cope with their caring responsibilities, due to lack of support or understanding on how to manage the condition of the person they care for. Early identification of carers can help to alleviate the need for emergency support due to carer crisis/ breakdown, by offering information, advice, and support in a timely way.

2.4 The services offered include:

- Carers register - to receive regular information about services and events.
- Carers Emergency Contact scheme - to provide a peace of mind service to trigger alternative support if a carer is not able to provide care.
- Carer Connectors - will assist with the online adult Carers Assessment, help carers to access community support and universal services.
- Dementia Carers Support Service - carer's coffee mornings, carers courses.
- Carers Helpline - to provide up-to-date information and a 'listening ear' to carers.
- The Carers Grant or leisure passes - one-off payments to carers that will help to improve a carers health and wellbeing and help to meet their own needs.
- Carer Awareness training for professionals.
- Counselling.
- Carers courses, activities, and events i.e. during national Carers Week or Carers Rights Day.
- Day Care for frail and older people with dementia.
- Day Care for people with Early Onset dementia.
- Young carers support service for young people under 18 years who have caring responsibilities for an adult, usually a parent, or have a significant role in supporting a sibling who has additional care needs.
- Young Carers Assessment using a whole family approach.

- Drop-in facility, this includes a range of group sessions, including walking, bereavement, anxiety, yoga, and women's groups.
- Training sessions.

This is a large and varied offer that covers carers and all ages of people seeking support.

5.0 Short Break Beds

- 5.1 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there were 15 beds commissioned for older people across 3 independent care home providers. The purpose of the beds was to provide carers of older people the opportunity to arrange a planned break from their caring role, through a social worker referral, or for a bed to be accessed in an emergency due to carer breakdown.
- 5.2 When Covid-19 restrictions came into force in spring 2020, 13 of the 15 short break beds were decommissioned due to the limitations of the Covid-19 pandemic and the short-term admissions to care homes.
- 5.3 With the introduction of effective Covid-19 testing regimes, and the successful roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Wirral, the Council will now look to recommission short break beds in Quarter 3 as part of its commissioning plan, subject to member approval at September 2021 Committee. This would enable short break beds to be allocated based on assessed needs and offer carers the opportunity to book short breaks in advance and on a planned basis.
- 5.4 There is an existing 10-bed short break bed facility for adults with a learning or physical disability. This service has been operating through 2020 offering emergency placements; it will now start to re-provide a short break bed service within a Covid-19 safe environment. The service is operated by Sanctuary Housing and has a contract length of 5 years, 2019 – 2024 with an option to extend for a further 24 months.

6.0 Carers Partnership Board (CPB)

- 6.1 A Strategic Carers board (in various formats) has been in place since 2000 – 2019, the membership included professionals from across the health and social care system, 3rd sector providers including commissioned services for carers, and carers. The CPB was chaired by an elected member Carers Champion. The CPB has not met since the end of 2019.
- 6.2 It is recommended that Carers Advisory Partnership Board is established
- 6.3 Carer's involvement would be an essential and necessary inclusion for a Carers Advisory Partnership Board and a system for identifying representative carers will be in place to ensure fair representation.

7.0 Wirral Strategy for Carers

- 7.1 Wirral's Strategy for Carers 2014 – 2017 was developed through the Carers Partnership Board; the government were expected to launch a new national Carers Strategy in 2018, following the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) extensive Carers Call for Evidence consultation in 2016. The issuing of a national strategy was replaced with the launch of the Carers Action Plan 2018 – 2020.
- 7.2 The focus of the work of the CPB in 2019 was to review and renew the Wirral Carers Strategy and launch a new strategy in 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that no further action was taken on this, as the priority for health and social care was to tackle the issues arising from the pandemic, supporting the community care market and the 3rd sector organisations to prevent the spread of covid-19 amongst the most vulnerable. A newly formed Carers Advisory Partnership Board would take the lead on the new multi-agency and co-produced Strategy for Wirral carers, support and monitor the implementation of any actions.
- 7.3 In 2018, the Chair and Carers Officer presented a report to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The draft Memorandum of Understanding on an Integrated Approach to Carers in Health was proposed and agreed, and later that year was presented to the CCG for approval. A refresh of the MOU would assist to progress the NHS Commitment to Carers.
- 7.4 It is recommended that members support the development of a new Carers Strategy for Wirral 2022, and to receive a further report back to a future committee.

8.0 Carers Strategic developments locally

The commitment to improve support for carers has continued, through the Carers Partnership Board; beyond the CPB and despite Covid-19.

8.1 Wirral Council's Working Carers Policy

In 2018/19, Wirral Council launched the Working Carers Policy, to recognise and support the staff in the Council that have caring responsibilities. Followed by a series of Carer Awareness training sessions for managers, establishing a staff network group and introduced the Working Carers Passport scheme. The identification of staff with caring responsibilities was promoted during Carers Week 2021, with staff members sharing their experience on how this has assisted them in the caring role.

8.2 Carers Emergency Contact Scheme (CECS)

During the lockdown period, Wired have undertaken a review of the CECS scheme with Medequip who provide the 24-hour response service. This has resulted in cleansing the system to improve the data and an improved referral process.

8.3 Carers Covid-19 Vaccinations

Wired assisted the CCG in the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme for Carers (Cohort 6) during March and April 2021. Supported by volunteers

from Wirral Council. Approximately 1,500 Carers that were previously not known to primary care were identified and placed on the Carers register.

8.4 **PPE for Carers**

Wirral have supported the distribution of the second round of the IPC funding to support carers to access PPE.

8.5 **Improved Identification of Carers**

Senior managers and commissioners from across the social care and health system have been working together to improve identification of carers in the acute hospital, as part of hospital discharge procedures, and in the community. Covid-19 increased awareness in primary care about identifying carers within their own GP practices.

8.6 **Digital Resource for Carers**

Wirral Council subscribes to the Carers UK Digital Resource for carers. This is a package that is available to all Wirral carers free of charge. It is regularly updated and new materials added. The digital resources include:

- *Jointly – a Carers App* that assists the carer to co-ordinate the care they provide, create circles of support contacts, record medication, tasks and improve general communication.
- A range of e-learning courses covering nutrition, building resilience and young adult carers 18 – 24 years offering advice and information.
- Information factsheets and booklets, including Being Heard: a guide to self-advocacy for carers.

8.7 **Unpaid Carers Project**

Wirral Council have been working with a technical design organisation, on a project to develop an innovative platform for carer's information. The project is ready to pilot with some of the 3rd sector organisations that currently deliver the Early Intervention and Prevention and carers contract. The technical design organisation has sourced its own funding and is using Wirral as a site to test pilot the project.

Members are asked to note the developments to improve support for carers. These will be reviewed as part of the development of the new Wirral Carers Strategy.

8.8 **Carers Grant Review**

Carers Grant payments have been administered as part of the EIAP and carers contract. This service is going to be retendered in August and the specification is in development. The Council would like to strengthen its position in relation to Direct Payments for carers and is considering how this can be achieved through the recommissioning process.

8.9 **NW ADASS Carers Policy Network**

The North West Region has an established Carers Policy Network which links in to the ADASS workstreams. The Carers Policy Network provides feedback on national developments and shares good practice.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on 7th June 2021 agreed delegated authority to the Director of Care and Health to award the contract for the retender of the Early Intervention and Prevention and Carers services. The adult services are funded through the Better Care Fund and Children's services fund the young carers and other children's services that are currently in place.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Authority is bound by duty to meet the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

12.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Restoration of services for carers, and the people they care for, are risk assessed prior to, and throughout, re-opening.

13.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

The development of a Carers Strategy will require public consultation, which will be led by the adult Health and Care commissioning team.

14.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Carers come from all areas of Wirral regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, or belief. Carers are entitled to be recognised for assisting to maintain the health and wellbeing of the people they care for and their contribution to the health and social care system.

Equality Impact Assessments will be completed at relevant stages of commissioning, and strategy developments.

15.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Commissioners will aim to minimise environmental impact through its commissioning process.

REPORT AUTHOR: Carol Jones
Commissioning and Carers Lead
telephone: 0151 666 5200
email: caroljones@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

There are no appendices with this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Wirral's Strategy for Carers 2014 – 2017 [Carers Strategy Final 2013 \(wirral.gov.uk\)](http://wirral.gov.uk)
- NHS Commitment to Carers <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commitment-to-carers/>
- Carers UK, Breaks or Breakdown, June 2021 ['Breaks or breakdown', Carers Week 2021 report - Carers UK](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Multilabel Commissions for 2021-</i> Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	7 June 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MOU - Supporting an Integrated Approach to Carers in Health - Health and Wellbeing Board	18 July 2018