



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Monday 6 March 2023

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL ADULT CARERS STRATEGY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Wirral Adult Carers Strategy.

A report was previously submitted to the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in July 2022, at which approval was granted to co-produce a new Wirral Adult Carers Strategy and establish a Carers Partnership Board, which will oversee the development of the Carers Strategy.

This development supports the work of the Wirral Plan 2026 in the categories:

- Safe and Pleasant Communities – Working for safe and pleasant communities where our residents feel safe and are proud to live and raise their families.
- Active and Healthy Lives – Working to provide happy, active, and healthy lives for all, with the right care, at the right time, to enable residents to live longer and healthier lives.

This is a key decision which affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is requested to endorse the final Wirral Adult Carers Strategy 2023-2026, recognising there will be continuous development with stakeholders, to be overseen by the Carers Partnership Board.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee requested the renewal of a Wirral Adults Carers Strategy to be co-produced and are confident that the final Wirral Adult Carers Strategy provides a good starting point from the co-production events. The Carers Partnership Board will update the strategy as it is developed further and undertake an annual review of progress.
- 1.2 The 2021 Census information on unpaid Carers was expected to be released in January 2023, it is important to include some of the local data before finalising the Strategy, although only partial data has been released so far, the data on the age, gender, geographical location etc. will be included in future refreshed versions once released. The Wirral Adult Carers Strategy is ready for consultation with key stakeholders.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Earlier release of the Wirral Adults Carers Strategy in 2022 was considered, however, with the 2021 Census expected in early 2023. It was felt that it would be premature to release the strategy without including 2021 Census data for comparison on changes to the number of Carers since the 2011 Census.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Census 2011 and 2021 - Carers in Wirral

- 3.1 According to the Census 2011 there were 40,340 adult Carers in Wirral, the equivalent of 1 in 8 of the population (12%).
- 3.2 The data analysis for the 2021 Census on Health, disability and unpaid care was published on 19 January 2023. There was an expectation that there would be a considerable increase in the number of Carers locally, and across England. However, the results show a decrease in numbers across England and Wales from 11.4% in 2011 to 9.0% 2021, approximately 5.8 million to 5.0 million Carers. In Wirral the percentage of Carers has decreased by 1.1% to 10.9% of the reported Wirral resident population (320,200), which is approximately 34,266 Carers.
- 3.3 The Census Bulletin offered the following potential explanations for changes in the provision of unpaid care:
 - coronavirus guidance on reducing travel and limiting visits to people from other households
 - unpaid carers who previously shared caring responsibilities may have taken on all aspects of unpaid care because of rules on household mixing during the coronavirus pandemic

- there were a higher number of deaths than expected in the older population at the beginning of 2021 due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and other causes; this could have led to a reduction in the need for unpaid care
- changes in the question wording between 2011 and 2021 may have had an impact on the number of people who self-reported as unpaid carers

3.4 Both nationally and locally, the proportion of people providing 19 hours of care per week has significantly decreased, whilst in Wirral, those providing over 20 hours of unpaid care per week has increased, with a slight decrease in those providing over 50 hours per week.

3.5 The 2021 statistics show the number of unpaid care hours provided by Wirral Carers as higher than the North West and England average.

Table A

3.6 Hours per week of unpaid care provision of usual residents (aged five years and over) Wirral – North West – England (2011 to 2021)

Classification	Wirral (%)		North West (%)		England (%)	
	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021
Does not provide care	86.6	89.1	87.9	90.3	88.7	91.1
Up to 19 hours	7.9	5	7.2	4.5	7.2	4.4
20 – 49 hours	1.9	2.4	1.7	2.1	1.5	1.8
50 hours or more	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.1	2.7	2.7

Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 and 2021

3.7 Carers UK research, June 2022, estimated that one in five of the UK's adults (approximately 10.58 million people) are now supporting a relative, close friend or neighbour because of chronic illness, including mental ill health, dementia, disability, or older age. However, the 2021 Census data shows the number of Carers to be more than half this estimation at 5.0 million.

3.8 Any further Census data released on unpaid Carers will be used to inform the development of the strategy.

Young Carers

3.9 There are an estimated 2,840 Young Carers, under the age of 18 years in Wirral. It is particularly difficult to predict the actual number of Young Carers because many young people who are providing care to an adult or having a significant input in to the care of a sibling remain 'hidden' to professionals and in their communities. Barnardo's Action with Young Carers Wirral (part of the Early Intervention and Prevention & Carers, services.) take a whole family approach to provide support to Young Carers and their families. Barnardo's have a delegated role to carry out the statutory Young Carers Assessment on behalf of the local authority. Barnardo's

supported the co-production of the strategy to ensure the voice of Young Carers were included in the development of the strategy.

Wirral Carers Strategy

3.10 The purpose of the co-production events was to engage and gather the Carers views on what is most important to them, and their aspirations for future support.

3.11 The emerging themes from the co-production events are:

- Carers health and wellbeing, physical and emotional support
- Identification of Carers, particularly in primary care and hospital settings
- Skills training for Carers
- Digital Inclusion support
- Issues relating to isolation and loneliness
- Access to quality information and advice / CADT referrals for assessments
- Contingency planning for emergencies and Carer breakdown
- Flexible and personalised support e.g. Direct Payments, outcomes from assessments
- Access to Carers Groups
- Access to short breaks from caring
- Improved understanding of issues faced by Carers of people with dementia
- Improved knowledge by professionals supporting people with dementia
- Parent Carers support
- Transition of young people from children to adult services
- Information sharing across agencies
- Adult and Young Carer pathways
- Support for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers
- Greater Carer involved in co-production and co-design.
- The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on finances and caring
- Support for former Carers when their caring ends

3.12 From the emerging themes, the following six priorities were identified:

- Information and Advice
- Carers Health and Social Care Support
- Carers Health and Wellbeing
- Finance and Benefits
- Short Breaks for Carers
- Communications with professionals

The next stage is to consult more broadly on the final draft.

3.13 Using the six Priorities, an Action Plan will be developed through the Carers Partnership Board, the Terms of Reference for the Board will include how progress

will be monitored and reported on annually through agreed governance arrangements.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implication arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The 2025 Census data may be an underestimate of the number of Carers providing unpaid care, therefore do not reflect the actual numbers. Further research and data will be monitored.

7.2 The Council will not meet its Care Act duty if Carers are not aware of their rights and their eligibility for a Carers assessment. The Action Plan will identify steps to improve awareness and understanding of Carers Rights.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 In October/November 2021, Wirral Council undertook the mandatory 2021-22 Survey of Adult Carers in England, NHS Digital provided a pre-set questionnaire, instructions, and guidance on how the survey should be conducted. The survey was sent out to 981 Carers known to Adult Social Care on the Liquidlogic record system, the Carers identity remained confidential as a unique ID number was allocated to each Carer. The Survey consisted of 35 questions covering all aspects of caring, including the age of the Carer and cared for; their gender and support and services that they had accessed in the previous 12 months, with a specific section of support during the pandemic. The final question on the survey asked if people would like to take part in follow-up research, and 117 people responded positively to this question and provided their name and address for future contact.

8.2 As a starting point to the co-production of the Wirral Adult Carers Strategy, a letter was sent to those Carers who had completed the survey (Appendix 1).

8.3 Further correspondence was sent out via the commissioned service, Wirral Information Resource for Equality, WIRED Carers Register and the Healthwatch Wirral's website, to promote the events further.

8.4 At each event, the key questions for the group were:

- What is important to you as a Carer?
- What do you think should be the overarching themes?
- Prioritise the themes (1-3, based on what is a priority for you)

8.5 During the co-production events it became apparent that there needed to be wider engagement and not to restrict the co-production solely with adult Carers, so additional events were organised. The Young Carers event was supported by Barnardo's Action with Young Carers Wirral, and the Positivitree Parent Carer Support Group.

8.6 The following face-to-face Carers Co-production events took place during 2022:

- Thursday 18 August, am, Earlston Library, Wallasey
- Friday 19 August, pm, Westbourne Hall, West Kirby
- Thursday 25 August, am and pm, Birkenhead Town Hall
- Tuesday 20 September, pm, Bebington Library
- Tuesday 27 September, am, Birkenhead Town Hall
- Wednesday 9 November, am, Positivitree Parent Carers Group
- Tuesday 15 November, am, Birkenhead Town Hall
- Attended the West Kirby Carers Support Group, Thursday 6 October, pm

8.7 Online events were held:

- Tuesday 12 April, am – Providers meeting
- Tuesday 12 April, pm – Carers Focus Group
- Wednesday 13 April, am – Carers Focus Group
- Wednesday 21 September, am – Healthwatch Special Bridge Forum for Working Carers

8.8 For the co-production event on Tuesday 15 November, all the Carers who attended the earlier events were invited to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to consolidate the information and feedback received to date; develop a collective agreement on the themes and key priorities. The group also agreed additional content, such as what data should be included, any good practice examples and feedback from Carers.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 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.

9.2 Caring for someone can be demanding both physically and emotionally, which can affect the Carers own physical and mental health. People who take on the caring role living in areas of deprivation are likely to experience poorer health and reduced quality of life.

9.3 Caring for someone can have a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the Carer, as well as on their work and education prospects, social and personal relationships, additional disability related cost of living and their ability to pursue hobbies and activities in the community.

- 9.4 Equality Impact Assessments will be completed at relevant stages of commissioning, and strategy developments. This can be located - <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2021>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Commissioners will aim to minimise environmental impact through its commissioning process. The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no significant impact on carbon emissions.

11.0 COMMUNITY AND WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Improving support for Carers in Wirral, with the care they provide or outside of their caring role, will enhance the quality of life for those individuals, assist to reduce health inequalities and enable Carers to access, or remain in, education, employment, and take part in community and leisure opportunities.
- 11.2 People are generally living longer but not necessarily in good health. As a society we rely on the unpaid care provided by family members and friends to support those people who need necessary support, for them to remain living in the community and preventing people being admitted to hospital or going into long term care. A large number of people will not approach statutory services for support and may remain unknown to services. A 2015 Carers UK report on research by the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield calculated that the level of unpaid care in the UK had an estimated economic value of £132 billion, and the economic contribution made by Wirral Carers was £851 million per year.
- 11.3 Improving support for working Carers through adopting Carer friendly employment practice makes economic sense, employers are able to retain valuable skilled staff, and Carers are able to remain economically active.
- 11.4 Public Health England (PHE) analysis of the findings from the GP Patient Survey analysis of Carers for any population, including those caring for older people, showed that carers are at increased risk of illness, and specifically musculoskeletal conditions, cardiovascular disease, generalised cognitive deterioration and function, and poor sleep. PHE concluded that there is mounting evidence that unpaid caring should be considered a social determinant of health.

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

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Letter to Carers

Appendix 2 Carers Strategy (DRAFT)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Adult Social Care Reform White Paper – People at the Heart of Care, December 2021
- NHS Long-Term Plan
- Unseen and Undervalued – Carers UK November 2020
- Making Carers Visible, Valued and Supported – Carers UK 2022
- [Make Caring Visible, Valued and Supported - Carers Week 2022 report | Carers Week](#)
- Valuing Carers – Carers UK 2015
- Office for National Statistics - [Census 2021 Excess deaths in England and Wales](#)
- Public Health England - [Caring as a social determinant of health](#)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in accordance with Section 2.2(a) and (b) of its Terms of Reference: adult social care matters (e.g., people aged 18 or over with eligible social care needs and their carers) and promoting choice and independence in the provision of all adult social care).

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	25 July 2022
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	29 July 2021