

West Berkshire Council's Carers Strategy

2024-2027(Draft)



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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the West Berkshire Council's Carers' Strategy that covers the period 2024 to 2027.

Unpaid carers provide extremely valued services to the people they care for and to the community. These services are often overlooked and undervalued. This strategy sets out the actions that West Berkshire Council and its partners are planning to do to support carers and young carers. This is to help them in their caring responsibilities and to help them develop their own lives.

The strategy has been developed in conjunction with carers and young carers to ensure that their views were considered.



Councillor Patrick Clark
Executive Member
for Adult Social Care and
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West Berkshire Council

DRAFT

Summary

The Vision and Purpose of the Strategy:

This strategy explains how Adult Social Care and partner organizations will work together to support carers of all ages over the next three years. Carers make a valuable contribution to the lives of people with care needs. In West Berkshire we want carers to feel recognized, listened to and supported enabling them to carry out their caring roles.

The Priorities of the Strategy:

1. Raise awareness and increase the identification of carers (including hidden carers) to enable them to access help and support.	2. Provide information and advice to carers and young carers.	3. Enable access to peer support groups for carers and young carers.	4. Support carers to improve their physical, mental, emotional and overall wellbeing.	5. Support carers and young carers to take breaks from caring.	6. Support a life outside caring to enable carers and young carers to achieve their potential.
<p>Raise Awareness Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership will continue to organize campaign events. The campaigns are to raise awareness of caring and the role of unpaid carers. Various events are organized during the year: National Carers Week (annual event in June) and Carers' Rights Day (annual event in November).</p> <p>Link up with Volunteer Centre, Community Centre, Newbury Library and Citizens Advice to make them aware of these events to promote among unpaid carers.</p> <p>Encourage carers who want to share their stories to do so. Stories can be recorded in audio, or video or translated into different languages.</p> <p>These stories will bring to light the significant contribution carers make and seeing them as experts and working in partnership with them.</p> <p>Identification of Carers Training package for both internal and external professionals and partners to enable them to recognize and identify unpaid carers and where to signpost them.</p> <p>Organize workshops to deliver the training. Provide information about how to access the training and course content.</p> <p>Identify and support carers from minority communities, travellers, refugees, asylum seekers. Liaise with Berkshire Volunteer Centre, Citizens Advice, Community Centre to reach out to 'hidden' carers.</p>	<p>Promotion of the West Berkshire Directory to residents and professionals. There are plans to use the Accelerating Reform Funding grant to create a self-assessment service for unpaid carers by Summer 2024. Guidance will be provided to unpaid carers about completing the self-assessment service.</p> <p>To be able to access the carers self-assessment service carers must be digital literate.</p> <p>Promote and provide information about the Young Carers Card and Young Carers Newsletter for young carers in West Berkshire. The Newsletter is published quarterly. Presently the Young Carers Cards are not produced due to funding. We are currently reviewing this to see how we can support young carers.</p> <p>For young carers social media, Facebook, Instagram pages are updated weekly. The Young Carers Newsletter is circulated widely (all schools in West Berkshire, Youth Centres and Library) so that young Carers know where to get support and what the support entails. It is important for young carers to know the benefits of having the young carers card.</p> <p>Partner organizations providing publicizing online resources, e.g. •Joy - Joy Social Prescribing Software (thejoyapp.com) •SHARON. •E-Learning. •Libraries. •Explore the growing potential of social media via the use of Twitter/Facebook to increase connectivity and highlight available support. Carers have access to good quality information in the carer journey when they need it.</p> <p>Adequate information for carers will continue to be provided through the Carers Partnership contact, and through Crossroads Care Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.</p> <p>Work with Communities to disseminate information about carers, offer advice and to ensure access from diverse communities. We are currently reviewing our translation and interpreting services.</p>	<p>Young Carers Service to continue providing support, advice to young carers.</p> <p>Opportunities for peer network and connections.</p> <p>Young carers are provided with the support they need to learn, develop and enjoying being a young person. Encouraging and Promoting Schools in West Berkshire to be active to take responsibility for young carers in their settings.</p> <p>Recruiting Young Carer Champions within schools.</p> <p>Signposting adult carers to peer support groups.</p> <p>Adult Social Care and the Carers Partnership can signpost carers to appropriate charities, voluntary and private organizations.</p>	<p>Raising awareness of the health impacts of caring.</p> <p>The Carers Partnership, General Practitioner Surgeries, Adult Social Care will help reinforce the importance of carers mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Carers will be followed up in writing after a Carers assessment with a clear outcome. The assessment should include consideration of the impact on the caring role on the carer's mental, physical emotional and overall wellbeing.</p> <p>Improve support options for carers so that they can have time for their own appointments to get their own health checks done. Providing a sitting service to allow them time to get these done (this is subject to an individual Carers Assessment).</p>	<p>Working with Commissioners in Adult Social Care to look at the current offer around respite provision and direct payments for carers to enable them to access flexible short breaks and respite'.</p> <p>All school holiday activities for young carers.</p> <p>Honeyport Charity provides overnight respite breaks for young carers up to the age of 13 years.</p> <p>To safeguard against young carers providing inappropriate levels of care. Carers Assessments to be offered. No Wrong Doors procedures in place.</p> <p>Work with the Disabled Children's team to look at the current offer around respite provision and direct payments for parent Carers.</p> <p>An assessment is offered to the parents/families for a parent carer needs assessment by the Children with Disabilities Team. This is dependent on whether the parent meets the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Supporting access to replacement care when necessary.</p> <p>To inform Adult Social Care as early as possible when this is necessary.</p> <p>Identifying sustainable arrangements.</p>	<p>Social care professionals to recognize carers' right to life outside caring.</p> <p>Recognize transition points – becoming a carer, stopping a caring role, moving from being a young carer to an adult carer.</p> <p>Training opportunities through West Berkshire Consortium for young carers</p>

1. Introduction

West Berkshire Council Carers Strategy 2024-2027 explains how the council, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and partner organizations plan to work together to identify, improve support and enable unpaid carers who live in West Berkshire or are providing care to someone who lives in West Berkshire to balance their caring responsibilities with a life outside of caring.

2. Purpose

This strategy covers unpaid carers of all ages (including children, and adults living in the West Berkshire Council area. Carers and young carers make a vital contribution to their community by supporting those with care and support needs. The caring role is unique, but carers can be grouped into different categories to ensure we provide the right help and support to match their needs. Some examples include young carers (aged under 18 years), carers aged 18-25 years, working carers, parent carers (providing care to a child with additional needs under the age of 18 years), and carers providing support to someone aged 18 or over as well as unidentified and unknown Carers.

According to NHS England ([NHS - Who is considered a Carer](#)) a carer has been defined as “anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid”.

Throughout this strategy term ‘Carers’ covers all carers including young carers.

The council wants all carers to have the support that they need and when they need it most (in a timely manner) without unnecessary delays. This involves providing the right information available to them at the right time and in a format that is appropriate and accessible to them.

We recognize caring for someone can be a tough job so we want to make sure carers have timely support to ensure they can continue in their caring role and have a life outside of caring.



3. National and Local Policies

This strategy is based on the following legislation and relevant National Policies and guidance that support carers:

- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Carers action plan 2018 to 2020](#)
- [National Health Service Act 2006](#)
- [NHS England » Commitment to carers](#)
- [Carers UK - State of caring 2022](#)

Local Strategies, Policies and Guidance include:

- [West Berkshire Council - Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2030](#)
- [Council Strategy 2023-2027](#)
- [Public Health for Berkshire - Berkshire West 0-19s Health Needs Assessment 2020](#)
- [West Berkshire Council - Adult Autism Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022 \(currently being revised\)](#)
- [West Berkshire Council - Adult Social Care Strategy 2022 - 2026](#)
- [No Wrong Doors](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework \(Dec 2023\)](#)

Other relevant documents that the West Berkshire Carers Strategy is linked to are:

- [Berkshire Policies & Procedures for Safeguarding Adults](#)
- [West Berkshire Council Equality Policy \(Jan 2018\)](#)
- [West Berkshire SEND Strategy - Draft \(2023-2028\)](#)



4. Approach

This overarching strategy identifies a set of key priorities and will be supported by a **Carers Strategy Action Plan** which will be owned, monitored and reviewed (quarterly) by the Carers Strategy Group. The Group is made up of:

- Principal Social Worker for Adults – Chair of the group meetings.
- Advocates from the Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Carers Partnership, Reading and West Berkshire
- Carers Lead at Berkshire Healthcare (NHS)
- Outreach Team, The Watermill Theatre
- Unpaid carer with lived experience
- Public Health Team, WBC
- Representative from NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West (BOB ICB)
- Information Coordinator Adult Social Care (WBC)
- Early Help & Prevention Lead for the Children Contact Advice & Assessment Service
- Health Watch, West Berkshire

The strategy has been developed based on feedback from carers and in partnership with organizations listed below.

5. Partner Organizations

- Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
- Unpaid carer representative
- Healthwatch West Berkshire
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Carers Partnership for Reading and West Berkshire
- The Advocacy People, LD Partnership Board
- Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Crossroads Care
- Friends of Young Carers

As of 1st November 2022, West Berkshire Council entered a partnership with Reading Borough Council and formed the Carers Partnership for Reading and West Berkshire. The partnership members are made up of four charities; Age UK Berkshire, Age UK Reading, CommuniCare and Reading Mencap.



The Carers Partnership

- Provides support for carers in their caring role.
- Finds local services and sources of help.
- Looks after your health and wellbeing.
- Connects with other carers.
- Helps you understand your rights.
- Provides Carers Assessments for Reading based carers.

How to contact the Carers Partnership:

CommuniCare provides information, advice and support to carers in need in Reading and West Berkshire.

CommuniCare, 233 Kings Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4LS

Telephone: 0118 926 3941

Email: [Email address for CommuniCare](#)

Website: [Website address for CommuniCare](#)

Age UK Berkshire provides support for the carers of older people age 50 plus in West Berkshire.

Age UK Berkshire, Unit 119 Broad Street Mall, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7QE

Telephone: 0118 959 4242

Email: [Email address for Age UK Berkshire](#)

Website: [Website address for Age UK Berkshire](#)

Reading Mencap offers support for carers of children and adults with a learning disability and/or autism.

Reading Mencap, 21 Alexandra Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5PE

Telephone: 0118 966 2518

Email: [Email address for Reading Mencap](#)

Website: [Website address for Reading Mencap](#)

Age UK Reading offers support to carers of older people over the age of 50 in Reading.

Age UK Reading, Walford Hill, Carey Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7JS

Telephone: 0118 950 2480

Email: [Email address for Age UK Reading](#)

Website: [Website address for Age UK Reading](#)

6. Our Vision

We want West Berkshire to be a community where:

- Carers of all ages are identified, recognized and valued.
- Carers have access to relevant information and can access the support they need (either practical or emotional) to meet their ongoing needs.
- We want to ensure that intervention and support make a positive difference in our unpaid carers' lives
- Can achieve the desired outcomes that matter to them.

7. Equality and Diversity

Carers come from diverse backgrounds: race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, disability (mental or physical). The West Berkshire Equality Policy aims to promote fairness and demonstrate equality of opportunity in the provision of services to all its residents. The needs of carers from these groups may be different. Our Carers Strategy Plan seeks to ensure that carers from ethnic minority backgrounds receive access to relevant information to address any barriers that may have been identified. It will seek to ensure there is fair access to services for carers of all ages irrespective of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The Council values the work that carers do and wants to make sure they have the support they need for themselves and in their caring role. This includes providing information about promoting their general health and wellbeing, employment, involving in activities outside of their caring role, training opportunities, having regular breaks and keeping in contact with friends and other family members (networks).

8. Overview of the 6 Priorities

In order to achieve our vision, we have identified the following 6 key priority areas:

- 1. Raise awareness and increase the identification of carers (including hidden carers) to enable them to access help and support.**
- 2. Provide information and advice to carers and young carers.**
- 3. Enable access to peer support groups for carers and young carers.**
- 4. Support carers to improve their physical, mental, emotional and overall wellbeing.**
- 5. Support carers and young carers to take breaks from caring.**
- 6. Support a life outside caring to enable carers and young carers to achieve their potential.**

“For West Berkshire to be a community where carers of all ages are identified, recognized and valued.”

Overview of West Berkshire Council Carers Strategy 2024-2027



Priorities identified by carers

Carer Key Priorities

Access to respite care –unsure how to access this support?

Emotional and mental health support

Efficient communication from Local authority and other agencies

Impact of caring and quality of life

Information and Advice – not knowing what is available for carers

Help with practical tasks at home (household tasks)

9. Priority 1

Raise awareness and increase the identification of carers (including hidden carers) to enable them to access help and support.

Why is this important?

Until a carer or young carer has been identified, they cannot access support either emotionally, physically or financially. Most people do not see themselves as a carer.

As stated in the State of Caring 2022 report '71% of carers stated that seeing themselves primarily as a family member or friend was a barrier to identifying themselves as a carer. Half of all carers (51%) took over a year to recognize their caring role, with over a third (36%) taking over three years to recognize themselves as a carer'.

These carers are therefore missing out on help and support that could help them in their caring role and access to information such as carers' groups and benefits advice. They could also be missing out on legal rights, practical help, or rights in the workplace or Technology Enabled Care. Early identification is a key barrier in getting the required support as a carer at the right time. Therefore one of the key actions this strategy will do is to raise the profile of residents in West Berkshire who are involved in a caring role to recognize themselves as a carer at the onset of their caring role. Understanding their rights is crucial which in turn helps them to access support as a carer.

To achieve this we will need support from our health partners, schools and colleges, voluntary sector services, community groups and private organizations.

What is the picture in West Berkshire?

According to the 2021 Census data for unpaid carers in England and Wales published by the Office for National Statistics on the 19th January 2023 indicates an under reporting of carer status. The explanation given for this is linked to the question asked in the 2021 census which differed to the question and wording in the 2011 census. In the 2021 census 4.4% of West Berkshire residents (aged five years and over)



reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week. This figure decreased from 7.2% in 2011. These are age-standardized proportions. Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census and 2021 Census.

The overview of support to carers registered with Adult Social Care in West Berkshire is 1273 for 2022/23. This has been noted as a 6% decrease in volume reported in 2021/22 (ASC Statutory Returns 2022/23).

Priority 1

Raise awareness and increase the identification of carers (including hidden carers) to enable them to access help and support. How will this be achieved?

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Raise Awareness Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership will continue to organize campaign events. The campaigns are to raise awareness of caring and the role of unpaid carers. Various events are organized during the year: National Carers Week (annual event in June) and Carers' Rights Day (annual event in November).</p> <p>Link up with Volunteer Centre, Community Centre, Newbury Library and Citizens Advice to make them aware of these events to promote among unpaid carers.</p>	<p>Monitor the number of carers who attend these events regularly or on a one-off basis.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Increase in number of carers who attend these events and check whether new carers were identified.</p> <p>According to the latest Office for National Statistics survey results which were published in January 2023 Unpaid care, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) the number of households in West Berkshire increased in 2021 to 66,700. 92.2% of people aged 5 years and over provide unpaid care in West Berkshire.</p>
	<p>Encourage carers who want to share their stories to do so. Stories can be recorded in audio, or video or translated into different languages.</p> <p>These stories will bring to light the significant contribution carers make and seeing them as experts and working in partnership with them.</p>	<p>Stories can be shared at carer events (with the consent of the carer).</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>More people will be able to identify themselves as carers.</p>

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Identification of Carers Training package for both internal and external professionals and partners to enable them to recognize and identify unpaid carers and where to signpost them.</p> <p>Organize workshops to deliver the training.</p> <p>Provide information about how to access the training and course content.</p>	<p>Evaluation Forms from staff who attend the training to see whether their knowledge and understanding of carers has increased and how to support carers and where to signpost them.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>An increase in the number of people attending the training workshops / sessions. This will also result in the number of carers being identified.</p>
	<p>Identify and support carers from minority communities, travellers, refugees, asylum seekers. Liaise with Berkshire Volunteer Centre, Citizens Advice, Community Centre to reach out to 'hidden' carers.</p>	<p>To use the Office of National Statistics data to inform us about minority communities and languages represented in West Berkshire.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>A fair representation of carers from all backgrounds across West Berkshire.</p>

10. Priority 2

To provide information and advice to carers and young carers.

This will ensure that carers can make informed decisions and access support in an appropriate way.

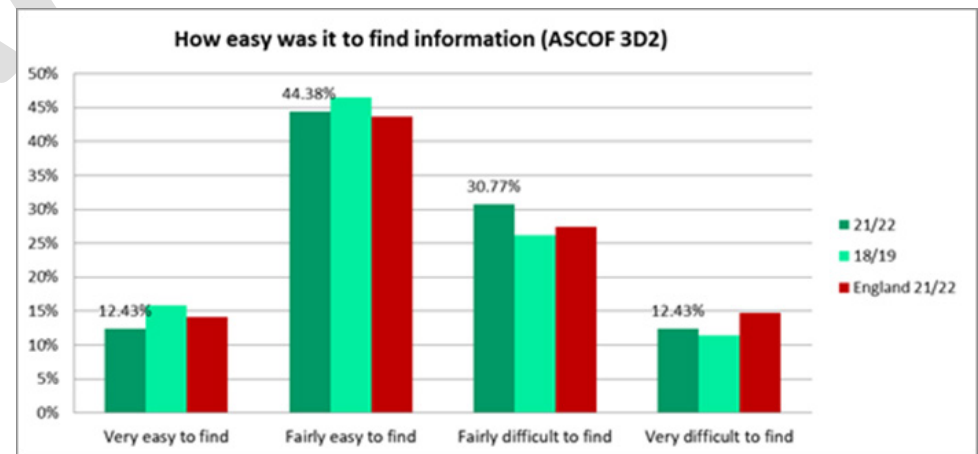
Why is this important?

To provide personalized support to carers and make sure that the right information provided is accurate and easily accessible and in a variety of formats to enable carers and young carers make informed decisions. Formats to include large prints, PDF formats and translated into various languages on request. Providing information to ensure we are responsive, proactive and offer holistic support in a timely manner.

The Adult Social Care Strategy states clearly the Council’s duty to provide information and advice to all service users which carers should also have access to.

According to the West Berkshire Adult Social Care Caring for Others Survey 2021/22 conducted by Adult Social Care West Berkshire with regards to information and advice quality, 85.4% of carers found information and advice received ‘very’ or ‘quite’ helpful compared with (ASCOF 3D2) where 56.8% of carers found it ‘very easy’ or ‘fairly easy’ to find. The Survey Summary report noted a drop in performance compared to 2018/19.

Adult Social Care Caring for Others survey 2021/22



We also looked at the findings from the Survey of Adult Carers in England 2021/22 in relation to what carers said about information and advice they received. The percentage of carers that used information and advice to help them as a carer dropped from 51.4 % (150,220) in 2018/19 to 49.9% (160,760) in 2021/22. 47.4% (294,750) of carers in 2021/22 did not use information and advice.

Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England - NHS Digital

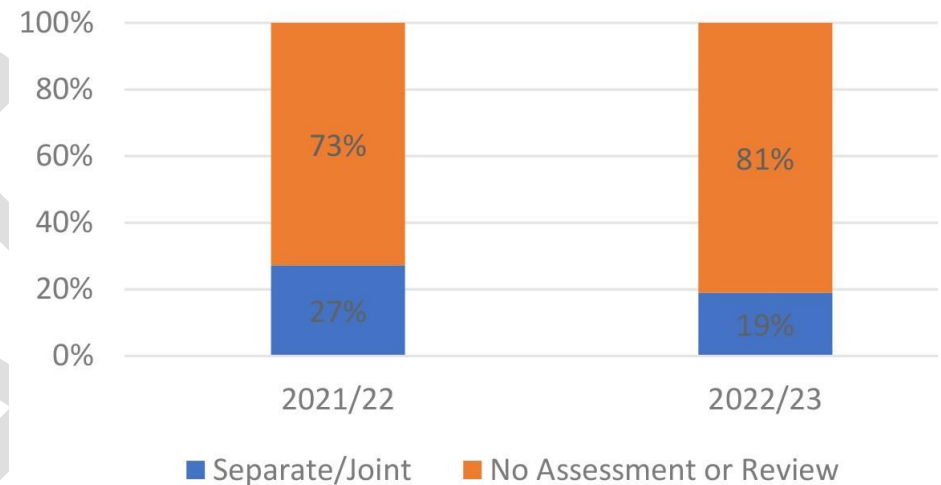
Information and advice is key to ensuring people recognize themselves as carers so that they can access ongoing support. Carers and young carers should have access to various types of support online. Online support is highly valued by some carers although not all carers have easy access to online facilities. The internet provides an alternative way for carers to access information and advice but also peer support whenever it is needed. This can be particularly important for carers who find themselves restricted to the home because of their caring role. Young carers can find support provided online to be useful.

What is the picture in West Berkshire for Carer’s assessments?

A Carers assessment is ‘a chance to let your local council or trust know how your caring responsibilities affect you physically and emotionally. They will use the assessment to find out what support you need, whether you’re willing or able to carry on caring, what you want to achieve in your daily life and whether you qualify for help [Carers UK; Having a carer’s assessment](#)).

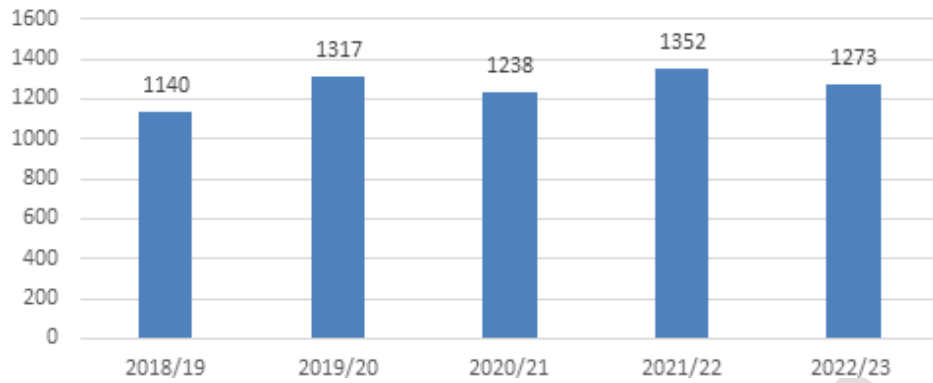
The graph below shows the percentage of Carers Assessment or Reviews completed by ASC from 2021 to 2022/23.

Carers Assessed or Reviewed during the Year



Carers assessed/reviewed has decreased (241 compared to 368 last year). Proportion of carers assessed has decreased to 19% compared to 27% last year’ (SALT ASC Statutory Reporting 2022/23).

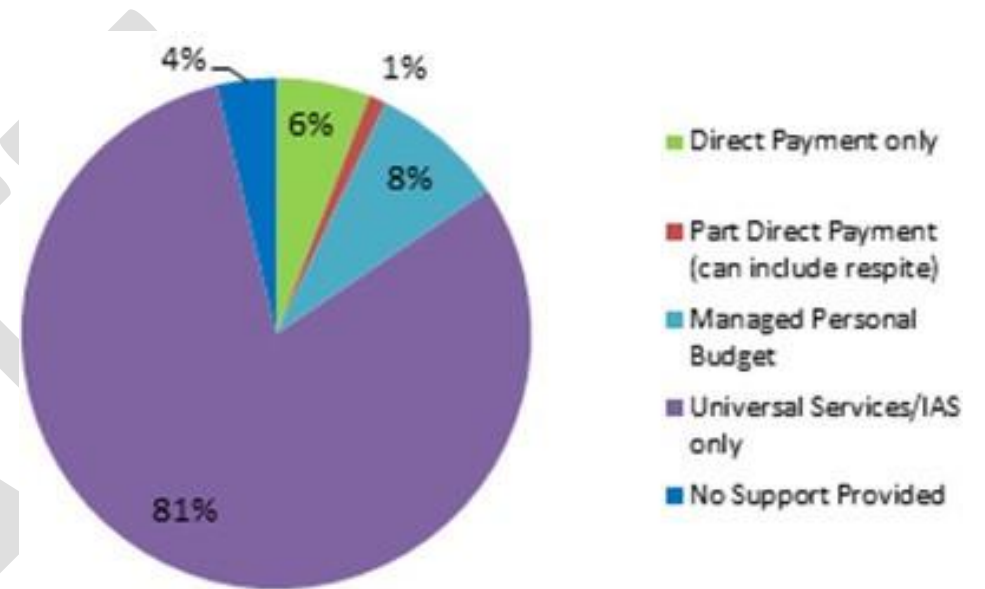
Distinct Carers supported in the year



LTS003: Carers Supported in the Year

- 1273 carers reported, a 6% decrease.
- 81% received Information/Advice/Signposting. The majority of carers are identified as part of the 'cared for' assessment.
- Carers independently assessed/reviewed has decreased (241 compared to 368 last year), more are jointly assessed as part of cared-for assessment.

2022/23 Carers support provided in Adult Social Care West Berkshire



Datasource: LTS003 Carers statutory reports

Young Carers Assessments completed by Children and Family Service

Young Carers Storyboard 1

What were the concerns?

Referral received from The Castle School highlighting family struggling with the challenging behaviors of older brother H due to dual diagnosis. Parents felt they were at crisis point and some physical altercations between father and H. S17 assessment led to MFF support with referral to Young Carers for F.

Where we were and what was likely outcome?

It was noted that F was a clear source of support for H when he was highly dysregulated and was at times the only one who could calm him down. Parents were struggling with him physically and F was witness to them attempting to manage him physically and F was witness to them attempting to mane him physically with some risk of physical harm. Without intervention both H and F were at risk of further emotional and physical harm.

What difference have we made?

F is due to attend weekly groups and be offered holiday activities which will give her some respite from her role in supporting her brother at home as well as allow her to connect with other young carers her own age. She can also attend the Theatre group described as "A weekly drama group for young people who have complications in their life to take time out, connect and play. If you would like some time each week to clear your head, use your imagination, and explore your world, interval could be for you. Each session will be playful, creative, and different, using all the fun of drama with none of the pressure."

What have we done differently with Early Response Hub within CAAS Front Door?

MFF referred F for a Young Carers assessment to consider her active role in supporting her brother. It was clear that F does not get to attend any activities outside of school due to the support she offers her brother and how busy her parents are managing his needs. F meets the criteria of being a Young Carer and was offered the weekly youth club and holiday activities. She was also referred to The Water Mills theatre interval weekly group.

Young Carers Storyboard 2

What were the concerns?

Some family history and a current referral from the LA's ASD specialist who noted the impact of siblings additional needs on J.

Where we were and what was likely outcome?

The family present as protective and acting appropriately to manage the needs all children in the home however, J may have struggled with expression emotions or feeling rather burdened by his caring role without support.

How will this be achieved?

There is a responsibility on each partner organisation making sure that their information and advice to Carers is:

- Clear
- Relevant and appropriate
- Proportionate

Cover areas relevant to Carers e.g. Carers' Rights, welfare benefits, available services and assessment process.

What difference have we made?

The family have access to community services and support including young carers through the service. This has allowed them to ensure Jake has a break and enjoy activities they could not otherwise access.

What have we done differently with Early Response Hub within CAAS Front Door?

Young carers assessment noted that J met criteria for services. Whilst he does not attend a weekly youth club he does enjoy holiday activities including a recent sailing trip and any further water based activities will ensure hr is prioritised.

Priority 2

To provide information and advice to carers and young carers.

How will this be achieved?

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Promotion of the West Berkshire Directory to residents and professionals. There are plans to use the Accelerating Reform Funding grant to create a self-assessment service for unpaid carers by Summer 2024. Guidance will be provided to unpaid carers about completing the self-assessment service.</p>	<p>There are plans to upgrade the West Berkshire Directory in 2024.</p> <p>A marketing campaign will commence when the upgrade is complete which should be in the Autumn of 2024. The campaign will focus on residents (including carers), partners and professionals. Face to face focus support can be given to groups how to find information.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Carers can use the directory more easily to find the information they need at the right time.</p>
	<p>To be able to access the Carers Self-assessment Service carers must be digital literate.</p>	<p>Record of how many carers complete the online assessment and how many unable to do so. Alternative options to be provided to carers who are not able to complete the online self-assessments.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Carers will be more digital literate and be able to access online services and support much quicker.</p>

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Promote and provide information about the Young Carers Card and Young Carers Newsletter for young carers in West Berkshire. The Newsletter is published quarterly. Presently the Young Carers Cards are not produced due to funding. We are currently reviewing this to see how we can support young carers.</p> <p>For young carers social media, Facebook, Instagram pages are updated weekly.</p> <p>The Young Carers Newsletter is circulated widely (all schools in West Berkshire, Youth Centre's and Library) so that young carers know where to get support and what the support entails. It is important for young carers to know the benefits of having the young carers card.</p>	<p>The Young Carers Card is important as it enables access to social activities where the young carer is in a supporting role and may need to identify themselves as a carer. Other instances it may be beneficial to have the card is when a young carer may be collecting medication for the cared for person and identification as a carer is required.</p> <p>To be eligible for a young carers card priority will be given to young carers who provide significant amount of care or may be a sole carer for their parents or relatives.</p>	2024-2027	<p>Increase in requests for Young Carers Card.</p> <p>Increase in number of young carers who participate in the activities /good uptake to the activities organized for young carers.</p> <p>Increase number of followers on social media and interaction from young carers and families.</p>
	<p>Partner organisations providing or publicising online resources, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joy - Joy Social Prescribing Software (thejoyapp.com) • SHaRON. • E-Learning. • Libraries. • Explore the growing potential of social media via the use of Twitter/ Facebook to increase connectivity and highlight available support. 	<p>Increase in online resources for Carers information so it is easy for Carers when they are looking for any information.</p>	2024-2027	<p>Carers have a wider choice of online services and information they can access.</p>

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Carers have access to good quality information in the carer journey when they need it.</p> <p>Adequate information for carers will continue to be provided through the Carers Partnership contact, and through Crossroads Care Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.</p> <p>Work with Communities to disseminate information about carers, offer advice and to ensure access from diverse communities.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing our translation and interpreting services.</p>	<p>Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership submit a quarterly Contract Monitoring Report which outlines the number of carers that have been provided with information and advice.</p> <p>The NHS England-Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS) takes place every two years. The survey has questions related to Carers being provided with information and advice.</p> <p>Our website, including our support for Carers information Support for Carers - West Berkshire Council can be translated into other languages using Google Translate. Use the 'Websites' tab in Google Translate and paste the url, then choose the language.</p> <p>The Carers Information Booklet can be translated into different languages or formats such as large print on request and can be supplied Digital form or hard copy and posted out. Contact details for requests for different formats are on the back page of the booklet.</p>	2024-2027	Carers can access the information and support that enables them to continue in their caring role.

11. Priority 3

Enable Access to Peer Support Groups for Carers and Young Carers.

Why is this important?

Peer support groups for carers and young carers provide valuable emotional support. They provide an opportunity for carers and young carers to have a break from caring and can show them they are not alone in their caring role. In addition, carers and young carers can provide each other practical advice having been in the same situation and through attending a group, it can help a carer to escape social isolation. Groups can also support people to develop wider social relationships.

What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Many peer support groups currently exist for carers and young carers in West Berkshire. These have been identified as being valuable to the carers and young carers they support.



Priority 3

Enable Access to Peer Support Groups for Carers and young Carers.

How will this be achieved?

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Young Carers Service to continue providing support, advice to young carers.</p> <p>Opportunities for peer network and connections.</p> <p>Young carers are provided with the support they need to learn, develop and enjoying being a young person.</p>	<p>Attendance to weekly groups.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Carers and young carers can build peer network and connections.</p>
	<p>Encouraging and Promoting Schools in West Berkshire to be active to take responsibility for young carers in their settings.</p> <p>Recruiting Young Carer champions within schools.</p>	<p>Monitor to get regular updates among schools that are committed to recognizing and supporting young carers.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Increase in numbers of schools that have taken up this role.</p> <p>Currently two schools are actively running weekly groups and there is a key contact person within the school.</p>
	<p>Signposting Adult Carers to Peer support groups.</p> <p>Adult Social Care and the Carers Partnership can signpost carers to appropriate charities, voluntary and private organizations.</p>	<p>We will set a baseline for number of carers attending group sessions.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Benefit from services in the community and expand networks</p>

12. Priority 4

Ensure Carers are supported to improve their Physical, Mental, Emotional and Overall Wellbeing.

Why is this important?

Caring can have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of the person providing unpaid care. It is important that a carer and young carer can stay healthy, both for themselves but also to enable them to continue to provide their caring role. It is known that carers often neglect their own health, missing routine health checks and immunizations. In addition, carers often report feeling stressed, anxious and suffering from depression.

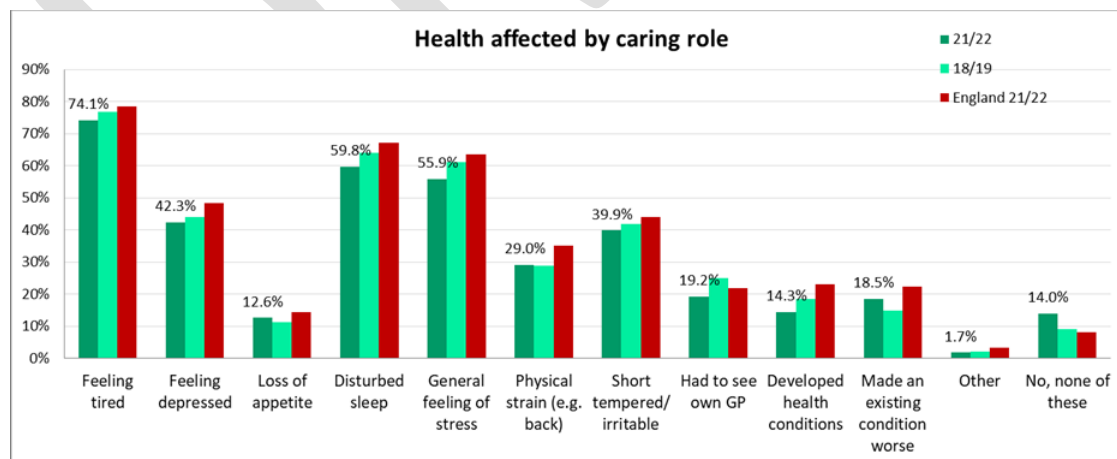
Carers and young carers play a vital role in our society. The Care Act 2014 has strengthened the rights and recognition of carers, giving them the equivalence in law to the people they care for. Carers are entitled to a thorough assessment of their needs with a duty placed on West Berkshire Council to provide help and support to promote the wellbeing of carers.

The Children and Families Act (2014) provides young carers with a similar right to assessment. It is important to acknowledge that although caring can be rewarding and fulfilling it can also have a negative impact on the carer on the physical health, emotional and mental wellbeing. It can lead to carer burn out and the caring role will be put at risk.

What is the picture in West Berkshire?

The Caring for Others Survey carried out by Adult Social Care West Berkshire Council 2021/22 findings in relation to what carers said about caring affecting their health.

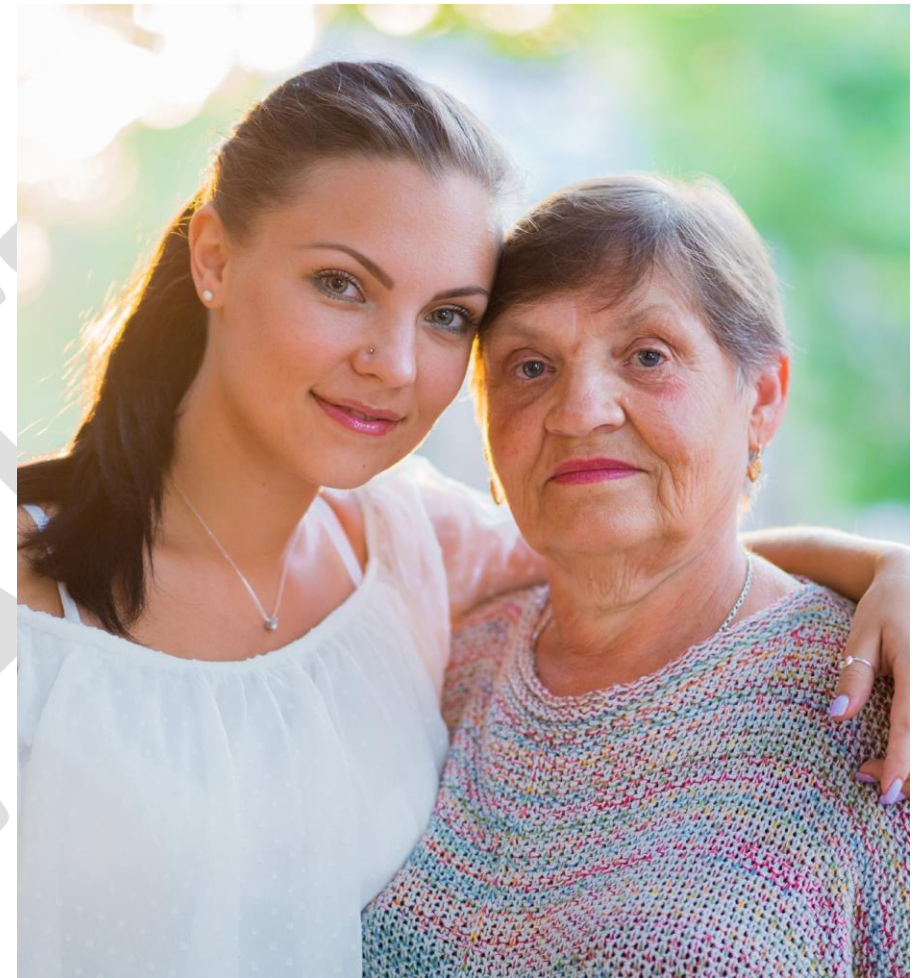
‘Many carers report that their Caring role is impacting on their health, with feeling tired and disturbed sleep the most common impacts (see graph below)’.



Similarly the survey of Adult Carers in England 2021/22 findings showed that the caring role had impacted on Carer's general health, with an increase in proportion of carers reporting general feelings of stress and feeling depressed. However, the survey summary stated that 'the proportion of carers that had to see their own GP had decreased from 29.0 per cent (84,900) in 2018-19 to 21.8 per cent (70,190) in 2021-22. The summary report also stated that the impact of COVID-19 should be considered.

The State of Caring 2022 Survey Report mentions that 'there is increasing evidence that caring should be considered a social determinant of health'. One of the key findings from this survey was that 'over a fifth of carers (21%) said their physical health was 'bad' or 'very bad'. Carers rated their mental health as worse than their physical health, with 30% saying their mental health was 'bad' or very bad' (no change from 2021)'.
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'there is increasing evidence that caring should be considered a social determinant of health'.



Priority 4

Carers are supported to improve their Physical, Mental, Emotional and Overall Wellbeing.

How will this be achieved?

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Raising awareness of the health impacts of caring.</p> <p>The Carers Partnership, General Practitioner Surgeries, Adult Social Care will help reinforce the importance of carers mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>We will use census data from the National Carers Survey and Adult Social Care Survey to inform us.</p>	2024-2027	Improvement in carers mental and physical health and overall, wellbeing.
	<p>Carers will be followed up in writing after a Carers Assessment with a clear outcome. The assessment should include consideration of the impact on the caring role on the carer's mental, physical emotional and overall wellbeing.</p>	<p>Carers Assessments to focus on the outcomes for the carers in relation to their health and overall wellbeing.</p>	2024-2027	Carers will be better equipped to continue their caring role should they wish to do so.
	<p>Improve support options for carers so that they can have time for their own appointments to get their own health checks done. Providing a sitting service to allow them time to get this done (this is subject to an individual Carers Assessment).</p>	<p>Carers to be provided with information so they can decide as early as possible and be referred to Crossroads care in advance of the appointments. They will need to be assessed by Crossroads Care who complete Risk assessments and draw up Care plans.</p> <p>Feedback from Crossroads Care for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.</p>	2024-2027	Improvement in carers health and wellbeing (physical and mental health).

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	Ensuring that carers have easier access to local services that can support and contribute to their overall wellbeing. For example, Eight Bells for Mental Health support offer counselling service. West Berkshire directory for more details on support services for carers.	To work closely with primary health care/GP practices and Social Prescribers service to support them to recognize the wider needs of carers which can affect their physical and mental health so that they are referred and signposted to appropriate services for support. For example, Talking Therapies through the health service.	2024-2027	Improvement in carers mental health.
	To explore how carers can be provided with affordable and flexible opportunities which will enable them to participate in activities which promotes and contributes to their health and wellbeing. Working closely with partners such as local Leisure Centre's, community groups (West Berkshire Directory).	West Berkshire directory for more details on support services for carers.	2024-2027	Improvement in carers overall wellbeing Results from the Surveys (National and the Caring for others Survey) will inform us.
	Employers to consider and include support for carers who are in employment as part of their wellbeing strategy. Carers Leave Act 2023 came into force on the 6th April 2024 Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 came into force in April 2024.	Dementia Friendly West Berkshire focus on raising awareness and understanding about dementia with employers and encourage local businesses and employers to consider support for carers.	2024-2027	Prevent carers from giving up work and can continue in employment.
	The effect of the cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on carers' particularly those who care for those with a disability. Carers should therefore be supported to access grant funding and capital funding to help them improve their finances.	Additional information is available from West Berkshire Council Cost of Living : Health and Wellbeing West Berkshire Council; Cost of Living: Health and wellbeing	2024-2027	Getting the right information is crucial for carers with regards to their financial circumstances as this can help if they are finding things difficult financially.

13. Priority 5

Support carers and young carers to take breaks from caring.

Why is this important?

Being a carer or young carer can be challenging, both physically and emotionally. Taking a break from this role is important to allow carers and young carers to focus on their own health and wellbeing. A break from caring can take a number of different forms, it may be an hour each week, a day here or there or a longer holiday away.

What is the picture in West Berkshire?

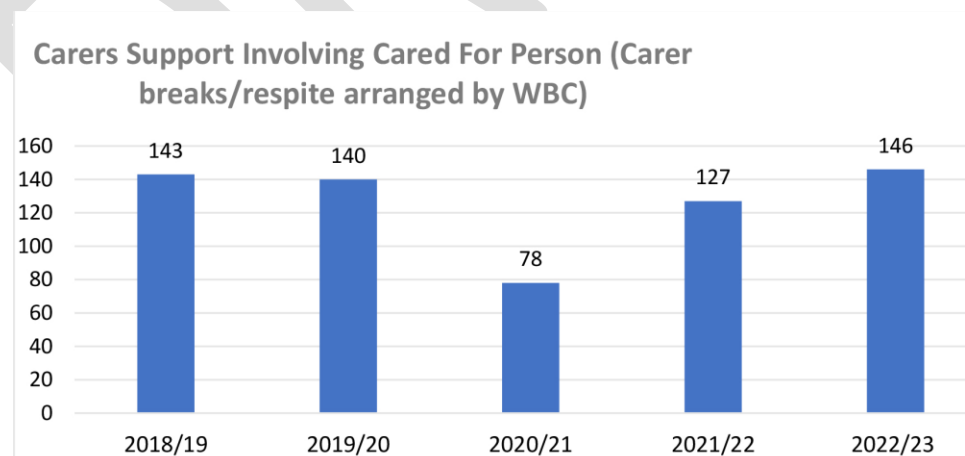
‘Carer Respite/Replacement care:

Respite arranged by LA has increased by 15%’ (SALT ASC statutory Reporting 2022/23). ‘Carers are given the opportunity to discuss with practitioners and support staff the value of having a break from caring and

the options available’. This cannot always be planned. Getting the support early without having to reach a crisis point is paramount.

Access to respite services for carers in West Berkshire is provided by Crossroads Care, covering Oxfordshire and West Berkshire areas. Crossroads Care provides emergency services for carers. Referrals can only be made within office hours to help with carers hospital appointments, carers breakdowns or emergency situation where a carer end up in hospital.

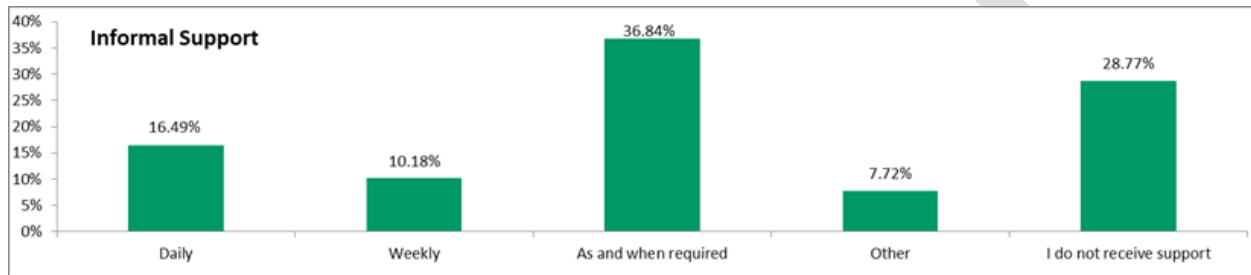
Findings from the Caring for others survey 2021/22 indicated respite care still remains an issue. ‘Respite- many indicated that they could use more respite in order to take long or short breaks from their caring role. Some indicated that they have requested this respite but unable to have it due to availability of carers’.



Informal Support

27% of respondents indicated that they have daily or weekly informal support to their caring role'.

Comparing this to the wider picture in the State of Caring 2022 report '41% of carers haven't taken a break in the last year. A quarter of carers (26%) haven't tried to take a break because they felt it was too difficult'.



Priority 5

Support carers and young carers to take breaks from caring.

How will this be achieved?

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	Working with Commissioners in Adult social care to look at the current offer around respite provision and direct payments for carers to enable them to access flexible short breaks and respite'.	Carers Strategy Group quarterly meetings to get data from ASC on respite provision and direct payments being offered to carers.	2024-2027	Easier access to breaks will affect the quality of care- prevent carer burnt out / carer breakdown
	All school holiday activities for young carers. Honeyport Charity provides overnight respite breaks for young carers up to the age of 13 years.	Attendance at activities.	2024-2027	Be able to continue in their caring role, this will help to improve their health and wellbeing, having time away from their caring role. Increase in the number of young carers attending allowing them respite from their caring role. Peer support from other young carers who are in similar situations. Positive impact on their mental and emotional health.
	To safeguard against young carers providing inappropriate levels of care. Carers Assessments to be offered. No Wrong Doors procedures in place.	Children and Family Service to be made aware and follow up on any potential cases.	2024-2027	Reduce possibility of carer feeling burnt out and exhausted

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	<p>Work with the Disabled Children’s team to look at the current offer around respite provision and direct payments for parent carers.</p> <p>An assessment is offered to the parents / families for a Parent Carer needs assessment by the Children with Disabilities Team. This is dependent on whether the parent meets the eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>Request data from Disabled Children’s Team on respite provision and identify barriers in the process.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Prevent parent carer stress and breakdown.</p>
	<p>Supporting access to replacement care when necessary.</p> <p>To inform Adult Social Care as early as possible when this is necessary.</p> <p>Identifying sustainable arrangements.</p>	<p>Encourage carers to be involved in the procurement process when arrangements are being made for respite breaks.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	<p>Reduce crisis and emergency situations but rather plan in advance where this is possible.</p>

14. Priority 6

Support a life outside caring to enable carers and young carers to achieve their potential.

Why is this important?

It is essential for both carers and young carers to be supported to develop a life outside of caring. This may take the form of employment, volunteering, education or training, or in creating opportunities for socializing and leisure opportunities. This will help carers establish a life for themselves when they are no longer providing a caring role. Young carers in particular are known to have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level than their peers and therefore need support to bridge this gap and ensure that they fulfil their potential for achievement.

What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Increased access to adult education was highlighted as a recommendation within the West Berkshire Health Needs Assessment previous years. In addition, the young carers Health Needs Assessment identified that many schools in West Berkshire do not have specific policies or procedures in place to support young carers with only limited provision of training for teachers.



Priority 6

Support a life outside caring to enable carers and young carers to achieve their potential.

How will this be achieved?

Link to other priorities	What will we do	How we will measure or monitor progress	When we will do it	The impact we are expecting
	Social Care professionals to recognize carers' right to life outside caring.	Encourage applications for carers support linked to engaging in activities outside of the caring role. For example, Gym membership etc.	2024-2027	Improvement in carer overall wellbeing and can continue in their caring role.
	Recognise transition points – becoming a carer, stopping a caring role, moving from being a young Carer to an adult Carer.	Adult Social Care to encourage a smooth transition within the organization. No Wrong Doors Procedures in place.	2024-2027	Smooth transition from children services to adult services.
	Training opportunities through West Berkshire Consortium for young carers	Work closely to identify young carers not in education, employment and training.	2024-2027	Improved outcomes and opportunities for the young person.

15. Monitoring Arrangements

The Carers Strategy Group will lead on delivering the strategy and define: the monitoring arrangements in place. The group reports to the Senior Management Team in Adult Social Care.

An Action plan will be developed which will run alongside the strategy. The Action Plan will reflect the 6 priorities that we have identified and how each of these will be achieved.

- The Carers Strategy Group will continue to meet quarterly. The Action plan will be reviewed at these meetings and identify any barriers or gaps. Regular updates on the Action Plan will be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The Carers Strategy Group will find solutions and work together with partner organizations and carers.
- Carers will be able to contribute and participate in the delivery of the strategy through the following channels:
 - unpaid carer representative who is a member of the Carers Strategy Group.
 - the Early Help and Prevention Lead in Children and Family Service who is a member of the Carers Strategy Group.
 - Partner agencies or organizations (voluntary or private).
- The Carers Strategy will be revised every three years (in 2027).

16. References

1. ASC Data Zone 2023/23
2. ASC Statutory Report 2022/23
3. Caring for Others Survey WBC ASC 2021/22
4. ONS 2021 Census data for unpaid carers
5. Survey of Adult Carers in England 2021/22
6. State of Caring 2022 report p55

17. Appendix 1 - Action Plan (Delivery Plan)

Priority 1: Raise awareness and increase the identification of Carers (including hidden Carers) to enable them to access help and support.							
	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)	Comments
1.1	West Berkshire and Reading Carers Partnership will continue to organise campaign events. The campaigns are to raise awareness of caring and the role of unpaid Carers. Various events are organized during the National Carers Week (usually takes place in June annually) and Carers' Rights Day (takes place annually in November).	1,273 carers registered with ASC (2022/23)	Work towards 5% increase	Work towards 5% increase	Work towards 5% increase	West Berkshire and Reading Carers Partnership Adult Social Care	Aim to reduce variance between Carers registered with Adult Social Care and Carers on census data. i.e. identify new Carers
1.2	Encourage Carers who want to share their stories to do so. Stories can be shared in Carer related events (with the consent of the Carer).		New 2024/25 – target of 5 stories	June/Nov	June/Nov Increase	West Berkshire and Reading Carers Partnership Adult Social Care	Campaigns to align to Carers Week/Carer Rights Day.
1.3	Training package for both internal and external professionals (partners) to enable them to recognise and identify unpaid Carers and where to signpost them. Organise workshops to deliver the training.		New 2024/25 – host at least one workshop New 2024/25	Increase delivery to up to 3 workshops per year	delivery to up to 3 workshops per year	Adult Social Care	Based on resources & capacity, increase workshop delivery incrementally.
1.4	Identify and support Carers from minority communities, travellers, refugees, asylum seekers. Liaise with Berkshire Volunteer Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Centre to reach out to 'hidden' Carers.		– set baseline data	Aim for 2% increase	Aim for 2% increase	Adult Social Care Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership	To use the Office of National Statistics data to inform us about minority communities and languages represented in West Berkshire.

Priority 2: To provide information and advice to Carers and young Carers.

	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)	Comments
1.1	Promotion of the West Berkshire Directory to residents and professionals	7600 Directory users in 2023 Establish baseline when the current system is upgraded	Increase by 500	Increase by 500	Increase by 500	Adult Social Care	
1.2	There are plans to use the Accelerating Reform Funding grant to create a self-assessment service for unpaid Carers by Summer 2024.	To clear the current backlog of unpaid Carers waiting to be assessed.	New for 2024/25 – c. 35	Aim for 2% increase	Aim for 2% increase	Adult Social Care	Accelerating Reform Funding ceases in March 2025 Cascading training to substantive staff.
1.3	To provide information to young Carers through the newsletter that is published quarterly. For Young Carers social media, Facebook, Instagram pages are updated weekly	207 Young Carers currently on the mailing list	Target increase of 50 per year	Target increase of 50 per year	Target increase of 50 per year	Children and Family Service	
1.4	Good quality information, advice and signposting will continue to be provided by Adult Social Care, Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership and Crossroads Care Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.	ASC statutory reporting data for 2022/23 81% unpaid Carers received Information/ Advice/ Signposting.	Target 85%	Target 85%	Target 85%	-West Berkshire and Reading Carers Partnership, -Crossroads Care Oxfordshire and West Berkshire -Adult Social Care	
1.5	Work with Communities to disseminate information about Carers, offer advice and to ensure access from diverse communities.	Increase number of events during Carers Week aimed at providing information about Carers.	Target 2 events	Target 3 events	Target 3 events	Adult Social Care	

Priority 3: Enable access to Peer Support Groups for Carers and young Carers.

	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)	Comments
1.1	<p>Young Carers Service to continue providing support, advice to young carers.</p> <p>Carers attending weekly groups.</p>	<p>Number of attendees weekly - 40 for both sessions.</p> <p>2 schools offer weekly carer support groups.</p>	<p>Yearly increase of 2%.</p> <p>Increase from 2 to 5 schools across West Berkshire.</p>	<p>Yearly increase of 2%.</p> <p>Increase by 2 schools per year.</p>	<p>Yearly increase of 2%.</p> <p>Increase by 2 schools per year.</p>	Children and Family Service.	

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Priority 4: Carers are supported to improve their physical, mental, emotional and overall wellbeing.							
	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)	Comments
1.1	Raising awareness of the health impacts of caring. West Berkshire and Reading Partnership, General Practices in West Berkshire, Berkshire Healthcare, Adult Social Care will help reinforce the importance of Carers mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.		✓	✓	✓	Adult Social Care Reading and West Berkshire Partnership.	Aligns to priority 1 – increases in number of people identifying as carers and accessing help & support.
1.2	Carers will be followed up in writing after a Carers assessment with a clear outcome. The assessment should include consideration of the impact on the caring role on the Carers’ mental, physical emotional and overall wellbeing.	To clear the current backlog awaiting a Carers Assessment.	New for 2024/25 – c. 35	Aim for 5% increase	Aim for 5% increase	Adult Social Care	Funding ceases in March 2025 Cascading training to substantive staff.
1.3	Improve support options for Carers so that they can have time for their own appointments to get their own health checks done. Providing a sitting service to allow them time to get these done (this is subject to an individual Carers assessment).		✓	✓	✓	Crossroads for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Adult Social Care	
1.4	Ensuring that Carers have easier access to local services that can support and contribute to their overall wellbeing. For example, Eight Bells for Mental Health support offer counselling service. West Berkshire directory for more details on support services for Carers.		✓	✓	✓	Adult Social Care Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership Primary Care -GP Practices	Outcomes linked to Carers Assessments. Link to priority 2 – West Berkshire Directory.

Priority 4: Carers are supported to improve their physical, mental, emotional and overall wellbeing.							
	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)	Comments
1.5	To explore how Carers can be provided with affordable and flexible opportunities which will enable them to participate in activities which promotes and contributes to the health and wellbeing.		✓	✓	✓		Link to priority 2 – West Berkshire Directory
1.6	Employers to consider and include support for Carers who are in employment as part of their wellbeing strategy.		✓	✓	✓		Link to priority 1 – encourage employer to raise awareness and identify working carers e.g. link to carer stories
1.7	The effect of the cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on Carers particularly those who care for those with a disability. Carers should therefore be supported to access grant funding and capital funding to help them improve their finances.		Working towards improving data collection on number of Carers who contact the hub.	Set baseline of data	TBC	TBC	

Priority 5: Support Carers and young Carers to take breaks from caring.

	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)
	Working with Commissioners in Adult Social Care to look at the current offer around respite provision for Carers to enable them to access flexible short breaks and respite'	ASC Statutory reporting -an increase by 15% of Carers who benefited after respite provision	Target 20%	Target 20%	Target 25%	Adult Social Care
	Developing age-appropriate short breaks for young carers.		Number of holiday activities may vary for example 4 activities organised during easter holidays providing 80 spaces	Target between 3-4 activities	Target between 3-4 activities	Children and Family Service
	Work with the disabled children's team to look at the current offer around respite provision and direct payments for parent Carers.		Working towards data collection on number of Carers offered respite provision and direct payments for Carers	Set baseline for data	TBC	Children and Family Service

Priority 6: Support a life outside caring to enable Carers and young Carers to achieve their potential.

	Activity	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Lead Organisation (s)
1.1	Social Care professionals to recognise Carers' right to life outside caring.		✓	✓	✓	Adult Social Care
1.2	Recognise transition points – becoming a Carer, stopping a caring role, moving from being a young Carer to an adult Carer.		Target 5 Carers per year	Target 10 Carers per year	Target 55 Carers per year	Children and Family Service Adult Social Care
1.3	Training opportunities through West Berkshire Consortium for Young Carers		2 Training sessions per year	3 Training sessions per year	3 Training sessions per year	Children and Family Service

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