
Carers Strategy 2025-2028

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	22 May 2025
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Patrick Clark
Report Author:	Hannah Cole
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4617

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek agreement to publish the Carers Strategy, which is a key document in setting out how the council will support carers in the district.
- 1.2 Carers make an invaluable contribution to the lives of people with care needs, often with significant impact on their own wellbeing and quality of life. In doing so, they reduce the burden on statutory services. Consequently, it is imperative that they receive appropriate support from the council.

2 Recommendation

That the attached Strategy is adopted.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are costs associated with the provision of services to carers. The adoption of this Strategy may lead to some increased costs (through encouraging carers to come forward and seek help); it is likely to lead to some reduced costs (by providing timely and preventative interventions to avoid carer breakdown). The net financial impacts are therefore complex and unpredictable.

	ASC	59213	Adult Respite in the Community	32,330	29,940
	CSC	70407	Short Breaks for Disabled Children	68,430	68,430
	CSC	70410	Castlegate	634,450	720,260
				1,814,850	1,898,140
<p>To note - Approx £530k of the ASC expenditure is funded through the Better Care Fund.</p> <p>The Accelerating Reform Fund grant, received from the Department of Health and Social Care, is being used to set up the online self-assessment service for carers. A breakdown of the grant funding is also attached in Appendix B. Although there is a risk that the self-assessment service might increase the cost for carers there are potential benefits of having this. The carers self-assessment service will ensure that requests for carers' assessments are completed in a timely manner which is a requirement of the Care Act 2014. By completing carers' assessments on time can also result in preventing, reducing and delaying the development of longer-term care and support needs for the cared for person and the carer.</p>					
Human Resource:	Officer time will be required to take forward implementation.				
Legal:	<p>The Local Authority's duties to carers are set out in the Care Act 2014. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide and maintain an information and advice service about what can be done to help them (and those they care for), prevent, reduce, or delay the development of longer-term needs for care and support and help them look after their own wellbeing. b) A statutory entitlement for an assessment and support. c) Arranging an independent advocate for any carer who would find it difficult to participate in their assessment and support planning when there is no one else to help. <p>The adoption of the strategy will support compliance with those Care Act duties.</p> <p>It is important to note that the Care Quality Commission will expect that we have a dedicated carers' strategy which will support the delivery of the local authority's duties towards carers.</p>				
Risk Management:	N/A				

Property:	N/A			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			The strategy should deliver improved support to unpaid carers including those with protected characteristics, e.g. disabilities.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			The Strategy should deliver improved support to unpaid Carers including those with protected characteristics, e.g. disabilities.
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:	X			Social Care needs are closely related to Health needs; the strategy refers to continued joint working with our health partners
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			The Carers Strategy supports the priorities outlined in the Council's Strategy.

Core Business:	X			The Carers Strategy supports the priorities outlined in the Council's Strategy.
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders and organisations during the development of the draft strategy. The partner organisations include representatives from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board 2. Unpaid representative (with lived experience) 3. Healthwatch West Berkshire 4. Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust 5. Carers Partnership for Reading and West Berkshire 6. The Advocacy People, Learning Disability Partnership Board 7. Crossroads Care for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire 8. Friends of Young Carers <p>Public Consultation took place from 7th October to 17th November 2024. All consultation activities are now completed.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

4.1 There are important benefits to be derived from the publication of a Carers Strategy for adults and children. It provides the following:

- Clarity on how the council will work together with partner organisations to identify and improve support for unpaid carers.
- Clarity on how the council and partner organisations will support unpaid carers to improve their physical, mental, emotional, and overall wellbeing.
- Clarity on the council's commitment to providing information and advice to unpaid carers when they need it and at the right time.
- Greater awareness about the role of unpaid carers and the valuable contribution they make and enabling them to access help and support.

4.2 A draft strategy has been developed and taken through the following steps:

- a) Draft Strategy considered at Corporate Board and Operations Board prior to public consultation.
- b) Public consultation, with a good level of responses from unpaid carers and providers. Those responses have now been incorporated into the latest draft. Please see Appendix D for survey responses.
- c) The Carers Strategy Sub-Group members met to go through the survey responses from the public consultation to ensure that feedback was captured appropriately.
- d) The sub-group made changes to the draft Carers strategy following the public consultation.

4.3 The Strategy is now ready for adoption, subject to relevant approvals.

5. Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The Carers Strategy 2019-2021 has now been reviewed using a co-production model.

Background

5.2 The Carers Strategy has been developed through:

- (a) Formation of a sub-group of the Carers Strategy Group which has reviewed the existing Carers Strategy and developed a new iteration.
- (b) Development of an Action Plan which will be monitored by the Carers Strategy Group in the quarterly meetings. The Carers Strategy Group reports to the Senior Management Teams in Adult Social Care and Children and Family Service. The Group also reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board and provides regular updates in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan.

Proposals

5.3 The statutory foundation of the carer's strategy underscores its significance, making its adoption essential for ensuring comprehensive support and recognition for carers. The proposal is that the Carers Strategy 2025-2028 is now published.

6 Other options considered

6.1 To not publish a Carers Strategy. This is not advised as it will undermine the support to this important group.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The publication of the Carers' Strategy is an important step in ensuring that carers are appropriately supported by the council and partner agencies.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equity Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Accelerating Reform Fund Grant from the Department of Health and Social Care
- 8.3 Appendix C -Carers Strategy 2025-2028 (Draft)
- 8.4 Appendix D- Survey Responses

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval ☐
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council ☐
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position ☐
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months ☐
- Item is Urgent Key Decision ☐
- Report is to note only ☐

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Appendix A

**West Berkshire Council
Equity Impact Assessment**

March 2025

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	People, Adult Social Care.
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	<p>The Carers Strategy 2025-28 (draft)</p> <p>Local Authority duties to carers are set out in the Care Act 2014. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide and maintain an information and advice service about what can be done to help them (and those they care for) preventing, reducing, or delaying the development of longer-term needs for care and support and helping them look after their own wellbeing. b) Statutory entitlement for an assessment and support. c) Arranging an independent advocate for any carer who would find it difficult to participate in their assessment and support planning when there is no one else to help. <p>The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to promote the individual wellbeing of adults with care and support needs and carers in their area. In line with this it is the expectation that the existing carers strategy is revised.</p>
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	The existing strategy has been reviewed and updated.
<p>Summary of assessment</p> <p>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).</p>	<p>The Carers Strategy will provide clarity on how the council intends to support unpaid carers, how it intends to work with partner agencies and staff.</p> <p>A strategy that is of benefit to unpaid carers providing them with opportunities for better outcomes. This will ensure carers feel more supported in their caring role, are able to improve their wellbeing and have a life outside of caring.</p> <p>The strategy does not create any bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individual or groups within the community.</p>

Completed By	Hannah Cole
Authorised By	Paul Coe
Date of Assessment	26 th March 2025

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The existing strategy is out of date and needed to be reviewed. The Carers Strategy Group has worked with the following partner organisations to review the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>A sub-group of the Carers Strategy Group was formed to work on reviewing the existing strategy. The unpaid carer representative is part of the sub-group.</p> <p>Unpaid carers and young carers make a vital contribution to their communities by supporting those with care and support needs. This includes caring for relatives and friends sometimes at the expense at their own health. Therefore, it is important that the council supports carers in their caring roles as they do not only bring significant benefits to their communities but reduce the financial impact to the council. There is clear evidence and value in maintaining them in their role.</p> <p>The proposed strategy has identified six key priority areas. The proposed strategy focuses on carers' wellbeing (emotional, physical and mental) so they can carry out their caring roles. Regular breaks for carers have been flagged as important to prevent carer burnout and the effect this will have on the cared for person (impact on the quality of care they provide). Another key area identified in the proposed strategy is encouraging carers to see that there is a life outside of caring and for young carers to achieve their full potential.</p>
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<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>Data information/research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data has been used from the Caring for Others Survey. 2. Consultation on the Draft Carers Strategy took place for six weeks. A survey was carried out on the draft strategy to capture the views of unpaid carers in West Berkshire. Please see Appendix D for survey results/responses. 3. The Carers Strategy Sub-group met following the survey results to incorporate the views of unpaid carers in the draft strategy. 4. Care Act 2014 5. Children and Families Act 2014 4. The strategy has been co-produced with partner organisations for their views and feedback.
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>The strategy was out for public consultation for six weeks</p> <p>See survey results - Appendix D</p>

<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact	<p>The draft Carers Strategy 2025-2028 Consultation Survey results, carer profile data highlighted that 29.31% of carers who participated in the survey were between the ages of 65 - 74 yrs making it the highest age group of carers.</p> <p>Therefore, the strategy will provide support to this group in various ways:</p>	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028

					general wellbeing and early signposting on financial issues, Providing support short and long-term respite to enable carers to attend health appointments , consideration of incorporating technology assisted care and offering carers assessments in a timely manner.		
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact	Providing support for unpaid carers will have a positive impact on the people receiving care and support from a relative or friend resulting in improved wellbeing.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social	2025-2028

						Worker for Adults	
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact	The revision or development of the Carers Strategy is to identify barriers and provide support for carers from diverse communities. The Delivery Plan or Action Plan will address the identified barriers. The Carers Strategy will support the right to early identification of carers and offered an assessment of their needs	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028

					under the Care Act 2014.		
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact	<p>The draft Carers Strategy 2025-2028 Consultation Survey results highlighted 63.79% of carers who participated in the survey were females. This is a high proportion.</p> <p>This strategy will support this group of carers as some of them may have a double caring role.</p>	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social	2025-2028

						Worker for Adults	
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale And monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact	The strategy will build on offering digital access to carers (on line support services). West Berkshire Directory has comprehensive information and advice for carers. The Carers Self-assessment service is in development. It is the intention that with the implementation of this service, carers assessments will be completed in a timely manner.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028

Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
Care experienced people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact	People recognise the benefits of care provision.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact	No negative or differential impact currently identified.	Hannah Cole Service Manager and Principal Social Worker for Adults	2025-2028

9 Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	March 2026
Person Responsible for Review	Hannah Cole
Authorised By	Paul Coe

Appendix B

Accelerating Reform Fund Grant from the Department of Health and Social Care

	March 2023 - 2024			Sept 2024 - 2025	
Place	RNF 23/24 funding	Consortium floor funding split as agreed by LAs	Total	RNF 24/25 funding	Total
Oxfordshire	£ 71,612	£ 75,000	£ 146,612	£ 218,707	£ 365,319
Buckinghamshire	£ 52,229	£ 75,000	£ 127,229	£ 159,511	£ 286,740
Reading	£ 17,798	£ 50,000	£ 67,798	£ 54,355	£ 122,152
West Berkshire	£ 15,653	£ 50,000	£ 65,653	£ 47,805	£ 113,458
Wokingham	£ 12,550	£ 50,000	£ 62,550	£ 38,327	£ 100,876
Total	£ 169,841	£ 300,000	£ 469,841	£ 518,704	£ 988,545

Appendix C

Carers Strategy 2025-2028 (Draft)