Carers Strategy 2025-2028

Year 1 Impact Summary (2025–2026)













West Berkshire Council

Carers Strategy 2025–2028: Year 1 Impact Summary (2025–2026)

During the first year of the Carers Strategy 2025–2028, West Berkshire Council and its partners have made significant progress in improving the identification, recognition and support of unpaid carers across the district. This progress has been achieved through strong partnership working with carers, voluntary sector organisations, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Thames Valley ICB, and colleagues across West Berkshire Council.

Key Achievements and Impact
Increased Identification of Carers

Targeted awareness campaigns, including Carers Week and Carers Rights Day, have helped raise the profile of unpaid carers and encouraged more people to seek support. Carers Rights Day attracted 56 attendees, including 25 newly identified carers. Young carers have also become more visible, with 69 new referrals received since 2025.

Working collaboratively with four neighbouring local authorities through the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF), West Berkshire developed multilingual carer identification leaflets to help carers recognise their role and access support. The materials are available in several languages and continue to be distributed widely across community venues and partner networks.

Improved Access to Assessments and Support

A major milestone was the launch of the online Carer's Self-Assessment in August 2025, co-produced with carers and funded through the ARF programme. The introduction of a dedicated practitioner and improved digital access has significantly increased the number of completed assessments.

- **139 assessments completed** between August 2024 and May 2025
- **290 assessments completed** between August 2025 and May 2026

This represents more than a 100% increase in completed assessments. The historic backlog has been cleared, ensuring carers are now receiving timely assessments, support and signposting

New Digital Resources for Carers

West Berkshire subscribed to Carers UK Digital Resources and the Jointly app, providing carers with access to online learning, information and planning tools. Early uptake has been encouraging, and further promotion is planned to maximise benefits for carers, particularly those supporting people with complex needs.

Strong Peer Support Networks

Carers continue to benefit from a range of peer support opportunities delivered through the Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership. Four monthly support groups across the district attracted 259 attendances during the year, providing carers with opportunities to share experiences, reduce isolation and access emotional support.

Feedback from carers highlights the value of these groups:

"It's good to meet others in a similar position."

"Sometimes the only respite I get."

"I've got a new family that understands me."

Additional quarterly events at Fair Close have helped carers who are unable to leave the person they support to access peer support and social opportunities.

Enhanced Support for Young Carers

Despite challenges around funding for some services, young carers continue to access peer support groups, respite activities and specialist interventions. Public Health funding secured in 2026 will provide investment over the next three years to expand support, including after-school activities and holiday respite opportunities.

Greater Awareness of Carers' Rights and Wellbeing

Awareness of carers' rights has increased through campaigns, workshops and presentations. Carers are becoming more informed about their entitlements and the support available to them. Assessments are also identifying a broader range of wellbeing needs, resulting in access to activities such as exercise programmes, swimming, yoga and community-based support.

Overall Assessment

The first year of the strategy has delivered tangible improvements in carer identification, access to assessments, digital support, peer support and respite opportunities. Most notably, the significant increase in completed assessments and the elimination of the assessment backlog demonstrate meaningful progress in ensuring carers receive the support they are entitled to.

While further work remains over the next two years of the strategy, particularly in sustaining services, increasing engagement with hidden carers and expanding support networks, the foundations for long-term success are now firmly established. The achievements to date reflect the strength of partnership working across West Berkshire and the shared commitment to improving outcomes for unpaid carers of all ages.

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