

Aberdeen City Carers Strategy 2023-2026

"A City for all Carers"



Aberdeen City
Health & Social Care
Partnership

A caring partnership



Our plan for supporting all Carers in Aberdeen City



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Foreword

We are delighted to present our new Carers Strategy for Aberdeen City. Carers can be both Adult and Young Carers. Carers play an incredibly important role in supporting the people of Aberdeen to remain independent, enjoy life, endure ill health and they also provide emotional support to those they care for. This is often in very challenging circumstances.

Whilst presented by the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) this Strategy has been informed by collaboration and involvement of multiple partners across the City and, most importantly, Carers themselves. There are strong links between this strategy and the [ACHSCP Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#), The NHS Grampian Plan for the Future and Community Planning Aberdeen's [Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\)](#).

The Strategy focuses on **4 Strategic Priorities**.

PRIORITY 1

Identifying as a Carer and the first steps to support.

PRIORITY 2

Accessing advice and support.

PRIORITY 3

Future Planning, decision-making and wider Carer involvement.

PRIORITY 4

Community Support and services for Carers.

It is accompanied by a detailed Action Plan which sets out how we aim to improve the experience of Carers in the 4 priority areas. Central to delivering these priorities is creating the conditions for a 'Carer Sensitive' approach within Aberdeen. This means having support for Carers as a central focus and working alongside Carers to develop that support.

This Strategy is an action within the 'Caring Together' aim of the ACHSCP Strategic Plan with the aim to 'deliver better support to unpaid Carers'. This Strategy adopts the same Strategic Enablers as the ACHSCP Strategic Plan. These are the main ways we will support delivery of the Actions identified – **Workforce, Technology, Finance, Relationships and Infrastructure**.

The 2021/22 Scottish Health and Care Experience (HACE) Survey indicated that only 32% of Aberdeen City Carers surveyed said they felt supported in their caring role. We have analysed the challenges that may have contributed to this outcome and believe the delivery of the four priorities set out above will address those challenges and enable us to deliver upon our aim.

The overarching Aim of this Strategy is to improve the experience of all Carers in Aberdeen City making best use of available resources to do so. It takes a focused but flexible approach to doing this over the next 3 years. The Action Plan includes Carer Experience performance measures under each priority which will be monitored annually.

AIM STATEMENT

"We will demonstrate overall improvement in all four priority areas by receiving a minimum of 40% positive responses to our Carer Experience statements (what we want Carers to be able to say about their support) when surveyed in 2026."

Plan on a Page

A CITY FOR ALL CARERS - ABERDEEN CITY CARER STRATEGY 2023 - 2026

Aim: We will demonstrate overall improvement in all four priority areas by receiving a minimum of 40% positive responses to our Carer Experience statements (what we want Carers to be able to say about their support) when surveyed in 2026

Aberdeen City Strategic Plan Priority - 'Caring Together'

Strategic Enablers - **WORKFORCE - TECHNOLOGY - FINANCE - RELATIONSHIPS - INFRASTRUCTURE**

These enablers are the key resources which will support the implementation of the Aberdeen City Carer Strategy 2023 - 2026

PRIORITY 1 - Identifying as a Carer and the first steps to support	PRIORITY 2 - Access to advice and support for Carers	PRIORITY 3 - Supporting future planning, decision making and wider Carer involvement	PRIORITY 4 - Community support and services for Carers
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What we want Carers to be able to say about their Support

"I am supported to identify as a Carer and am able to access information about the support I may need."

"I am supported as a Carer to Manage my Caring Role."

"I am respected, listened to and involved in the planning and development of the services and support which I and the person(s) I care for receive."

"I have a sense of belonging and a life alongside caring, if I choose to."

What will each priority focus on?

▶ This priority focuses on the importance of carer's being recognised by themselves and others and having an easy entry to support.	▶ This priority focuses on support and advice which is universally accessible to anyone who identifies as a Carer in Aberdeen City.	▶ This priority focuses more specifically on support with future planning as a Carer and accessing more intensive support where the caring role requires this both for the Carer and the Cared for person. It also includes how carers can be involved in the wider development of support for carers.	▶ This priority is focussed on the practical supports available to Carers to support them to be well connected to their communities and have a life alongside their caring role including hobbies and employment. There will be a strong emphasis on Carer choice here and that no one size fits all.
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What actions will we take to achieve these priorities?

<p>1.1 Proactively create opportunities for more people across Aberdeen City to identify as a Carer.</p> <p>1.2 Improve the knowledge of Carer's Rights and Carers support services with the Education, Health and Social Care Workforce.</p> <p>1.3 Improve the Knowledge of the wider Community of Aberdeen City of Carers Rights and Carers Support Services</p>	<p>2.1 Ensure Young Carers have access to a Young Carer Support Service who can provide individual advice and support.</p> <p>2.2 Ensure Adult Carers have access to an Adult Carer Support Service who can provide individual advice and support.</p>	<p>3.1 Young Carers have the opportunity to be leaders in planning their own support (Future Planning).</p> <p>3.2 Young People with Carer responsibilities experiencing transition from Child to Adult Services have access to individual advice and support to enable future planning.</p> <p>3.3 Ensure Adult Carers have the opportunity to be leaders in planning their own Support (Future planning).</p> <p>3.4 Carers have the opportunity to be involved in planning the support of the person they care for.</p> <p>3.5 There are opportunities to access independent sources of support for both the Carer and the Cared for Person.</p> <p>3.6 All Carers have opportunities to be involved in decision making about Carer Support Services, the Carer Strategy and the wider work of the ACHSCP (Participation and Engagement).</p>	<p>4.1 Promote a culture of Creativity to encourage innovative approaches to Carer Support.</p> <p>4.2 Support the ongoing development of a range of mainstream supports and services to enable Carers to receive a break from Caring in line with the proposed 'right to a break' within the National Care Service Bill.</p> <p>4.3 Continue to develop a range of support options for Carers, where the cared for person has high level needs, which allow choice and control in line with the proposed 'right to a break' within the National Care Service Bill.</p>
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Carers (Scotland) Act (2016)

The Act represented a shift from previous reactive approaches to Carers support to one with Prevention at the centre introducing new rights for Carers and duties for Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

The Act brought in new duties and powers in relation to:

- **Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements**
- **Eligibility Criteria**
- **Carer Involvement**
- **Local Carer Strategies**
- **Information and Advice**
- **Short Breaks Statement**

The Act is accompanied by [statutory guidance](#) and the [Carers Charter](#) which outlines the key rights Carers have in relation to;

- **Am I a Carer?**
- **Adult Carer Support Plans**
- **Young Carer Statements**
- **Support as a Carer**
- **Carer involvement in services**
- **Hospital Discharge**

Introduction – 2022 and beyond

Progress

This Strategy is the second one for the ACHSCP. Our first Strategy ran from 2018 to 2021 and was extended into 2022 in response to wider operational demands brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our strategy is for all Carers who provide support in Aberdeen whether they be Young Carers caring for siblings or parents, Parent Carers caring for children of all ages or Adult Carers caring for family, friends or neighbours. Our first Strategy demonstrated our commitment to embedding the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and for that reason a key focus was implementing many of the new duties and powers of the Act within Aberdeen City including, significantly, the introduction of Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements.

We have also commissioned new support services from Barnardos (Young Carers) and Quarriers (Adult Carers) to ensure information, advice and support is available. Developing this Strategy has been a process of reflection and planning ahead. There have been many achievements in developing support in Aberdeen and these are highlighted in spotlight on sections throughout our strategy. We also include **lived experience case study** sections throughout. These are anonymised but based on the experiences of Carers living in Aberdeen.

Challenges

Whilst progress has been made through our first strategy there continue to be significant challenges in meeting the needs of Carers in Aberdeen. Each of our priorities is aimed at addressing these challenges. The current financial climate also poses challenges, and we will be required to ensure that we work within our available resources to meet demand. This requires flexibility and creativity ensuring that resources are targeted to where they will achieve the most benefit for Carers. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Carers, and this cannot be underestimated. It is important to recognise the important role they played in keeping their loved ones safe and well cared for and the emotional toll this has taken on many Carers.

Priority 1 focuses on identifying Carers and supporting them to access support because we know there are more people in caring roles than are known to us. We recognise that a change of Adult Support Service provider during the pandemic has led to a knowledge gap amongst our workforce and the wider public in Aberdeen City and this requires targeted action to ensure people are kept informed.

Priority 2 focuses on developing our support services with those who access them. We know that those who currently use the services find them supportive however, as with Priority 1, we know that many Carers do not access them therefore

we need to be informed by new Carers as they become known to us and adapt our offer of support, as needed, to meet the needs identified.

Priority 3 focuses on ensuring Carers have involvement in decision-making processes both personally and strategically (by being involved in decisions made by the ACHSCP which affect Carers). Carers continue to feedback that they are not always involved in decisions which impact them and this needs to improve. A Carers' reference group was an aspiration of our first Strategy, and this was stalled due to the pandemic. In order to ensure all Carers voices are heard this is a key action.

Priority 4 focuses on continuing to develop a variety of support options for Carers in Aberdeen City. Feedback tells us that there are many situations where Carers find that they are unable to take a break from their caring role. We recognise that there is not a 'one size fits all' solution to this and that creativity is required to develop options which are both sustainable, flexible and able to meet the needs of both Carer and Cared for person within our available financial resources.

Now is the time for our approach to Carer's support to move beyond initial implementation and we have identified areas for ongoing improvement or innovation to ensure Aberdeen is a truly supportive place for Carers, and those they care for, to live.

The National Approach to Carer's Support

The Carers (Scotland) Act (2016) outlines the Scottish Government's expectations of how Carers Support is provided in each Local Authority Area. In December 2022 the Scottish Government published a **National Carer Strategy** this highlights five themes for developing Carers support which have been incorporated within this Strategy. These are;

- Living with COVID
- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers
- Health and social care support
- Social and Financial inclusion
- Young Carers

"We need Organisations to listen when we ask for help."
Aberdeen Carer

In addition we also expect legislative change as a result of the **National Care Service (Scotland) Bill**.

We have taken relevant recommendations into account and, where possible, incorporated these into our Action Plan. For example, the Actions included within Priority 4 will focus on ensuring we have a range of options available for Carers to support the 'right to a break from caring'. The ACHSCP will be an active participant in the national debate regarding Carers Support and the National Care Service as the **National Care Service (Scotland) Bill** progresses whilst actively preparing for any changes required from new and emerging legislation. ACHSCP has recently been one of five Health and Social Care Partnerships to participate in the **Care Inspectorate's Inquiry into Adult Carer Services in Scotland**. We welcome this external scrutiny and the feedback from the Care Inspectorate has informed the direction of this Strategy and Action Plan.

The Aberdeen City approach to Carer's support

Responsibility for developing a Carer Strategy for Aberdeen City sits with the ACHSCP however this strategy represents a combined approach to support for Carers which connects across various partners including those within Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and the third sector. Carers come from all walks of life and will come into contact with a range of health, social care and education organisations. For example, Young Carers and Parent Carers are in frequent contact with Education and Children's services provided by Aberdeen City Council. Support to Carers is also an important element of the **Aberdeen City Local Improvement Plan (LOIP)** which includes an improvement project aimed at improving the experience of Adult Carers. This is also incorporated within our Action Plan.

A Carer Strategy would be nothing without the perspective of Carers themselves. There have been many challenges to engaging with Carers during a pandemic and we are grateful to those Carers who have taken the time to contribute to this Strategy through various engagement sessions, surveys and in more formal roles, including our Integration Joint Board (IJB) Carer Representatives.

We recognise how challenging this can be whilst juggling the responsibilities of caring for a loved one. There is much more to do to ensure Carers are fully involved. We need to create the conditions for carer involvement in terms of opportunity to participate, be involved, for them to codesign with us, and also co-evaluate. A key component will be consideration of how we can do this in a way that suits the lifestyle of Carers and is representative of the population of Aberdeen.

Commissioned Carer Support Services in Aberdeen

Under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 each local authority must establish and maintain an information and advice service, covering a range of mandatory areas for carers either resident in that local authority area, or caring for someone in that local authority area. There are currently two support services in Aberdeen City which are contracted to provide a dedicated to support service for Carers ¹.

Barnardos Young Carer's service

Barnardo's Aberdeen Young Carers Service supports young carers in Aberdeen City to live a happy and fulfilled life alongside caring. Our aim is to develop the service to support young carers with individual identified needs, reduce the impact of caring, allow them to receive a short break from caring, help to reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing and increase their resilience.

Barnardos have a range of support opportunities on offer for Young Carers including.

- One-to-one support.
- Advocacy on behalf of the Young Carers or their families to support them in having their voice heard and needs recognised with other professionals, schools etc.
- Volunteer Befriender's.
- A range of support groups for children of all ages, including monthly LGBT+ groups for 11-14 and 15+ age groups.
- Access to music, sports and arts therapy and groups including during school holidays.
- Developing partnerships with the community and third sector to support Young Carers Financial support opportunities through the Aberdeen City Council Young Carers Grant, Social Security Scotland, Young Scot and other funding platforms for both Young Carers and their Families.
- Signposting to other organisations and professionals within Aberdeen City and Nationally to gain tailored support for Young Carers and their Families.
- SVQ in Health and Social Care for Young Carers over 16 or Adult Carers in partnership with Bon Accord Care.
- Weekly Adult Support Group for Adult Carers, Cared For and other adult family members involved with the Young Carer to receive peer support and information.
- Volunteering opportunities for Young Carers over 16 and adults involved with the service.
- Provide training to partners and schools on identifying and how to support young carers, introducing staff to the 'Think young carers' toolkit.

¹ These contracts are regularly reviewed based on expected levels of performance. Contracts are subject to change based on local service demand.

Quarriers Aberdeen Carers Support Service

Aberdeen Carers Support Service, based at 37 Albert Street, Aberdeen, is a co-produced service working in partnership with carers. They offer all carers who register with the service an Adult Carer Support Plan which can give an accurate reflection of the care role provided and record any negative impacts it might be having on the carer's health and wellbeing. Together, Family Wellbeing Workers, Carer Advisors and carers can then record the outcomes they would like to achieve and work together to meet them.

The service produces a **quarterly newsletter** with input from carers and information for carers. Online training is offered as well as support groups for parent carers, a men's group, a women's mental health group, a health and wellbeing book group and dementia support group. The service now has a new Respite Bureau that carers can call on 01224 914035 or visit in person during office hours where the staff will be able to look at carers' break funding such as Time to Live grants or Respite breaks.

Quarriers also offer an Enhanced Service for Adult Carers. The main aim of the enhanced service is.

- To work innovatively to co design services which enable the early identification of carers and ensure accessibility to services and information to a wide range of people.
- In a situation where there is an added complexity. This could be the complexity of the cared for person, carer or where there is a co-dependency within a relationship between carer and cared for person, and more intensive and specialist support is required.
- Support carers who could present with complex roles which will vary but could include Complexity due to substance or alcohol misuse or Complexity due to mental health condition which may include dementia.
- Connect and provide support to harder to reach, caring situations.
- Connect with and provide the necessary support to carers to achieve individual outcomes through a carer support plan where appropriate.

For carers who are online they have a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/aberdeencarerssupportservice and you can access useful information through the Virtual Carers Centre at www.carers.quarriers.org.uk/.

If you would like to register, please call on 01224 914036.



Who are Carers?

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines who is considered as a Carer in Scotland. The [Scottish Government's Carers Charter](#) further describes the caring role as follows.

Meaning of carer

You are a 'Carer' if you provide (or intend to provide) care for another person – but not: -

- if this is only because of that person's age (where they are under 18); or
- if you are caring because you have a contract or as voluntary work.

The previous definition for being identified as a 'carer' does not apply. You can be caring for someone for any number of hours. You do not need to be providing a substantial amount of care for someone on a regular basis.

Meaning of young carer

You are a 'young carer' if you are a carer (as above) and are also:

- under the age of 18; or
- 18 or over, but still attending school.

Meaning of adult carer

You are an 'adult carer' if you meet the criteria for a carer above and are aged 18 or over, and not attending school.

Kinship carers

A kinship carer (usually a relative or close friend looking after a child in place of their parents) can be a carer under the Act, even where they have a kinship carer agreement with the local authority. This is only for kinship carers who meet the other requirements of the meaning of 'carer' above, so not where the care is simply because of the child's age.

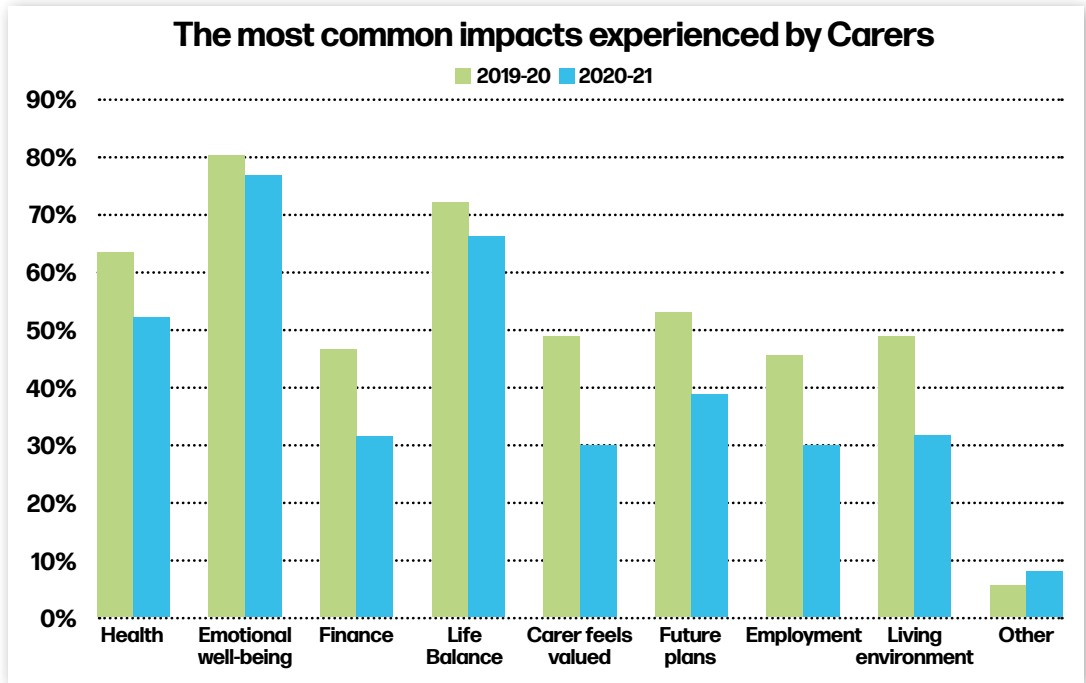
Sometimes Carers are referred to as 'Unpaid Carers' to show a difference between those the [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) refers to and a paid carer role. For clarity, this strategy refers to 'Carers' as those who meet the definition as above. We also refer to the person being cared for as the 'Cared For person' for clarity of role. In other documents the Cared For person may be listed as the Supported Person, Patient, Service User, Adult or Child. Many people who meet this definition are not aware that they do and may not see themselves as Carers. Often, they consider their role as simply part of being a spouse, parent, child or friend. Supporting those who are eligible for support to identify as Carers is highlighted in **Priority 1**.

Being a Carer can have multiple impacts both positive and negative. The [National Carer Census](#) identified the following main impacts of the role on Carers; Caring relationships are varied and span all ages, communities and socio-economic groups. Some examples include but are not limited to:

- Caring for a partner or spouse living with dementia
- Caring for a child with profound and multiple disabilities
- Caring for a parent living with mental health issues
- Caring for a sibling living with disabilities
- Caring for a friend living with substance misuse issues
- Caring for your older parent or spouse when you yourself are older and have your own need for care and support

Many of our Carers may have their own needs beyond their caring role. This includes older Carers and Young Carers. We have included some **Lived Experience case studies** throughout this strategy to highlight the range of caring roles across Aberdeen City.

Source: Carers Census, Scotland, 2019-20 and 2020-21



The experience of Young Carers can vary from Adult Carers. The Carers Census Scotland outlined that nationally, “in 2020-21, adult carers were more likely than young carers to experience impacts on their health (56% compared to 27%), finance (34% compared to 20%) and future plans (43% compared to 19%). These differences were slightly more pronounced in 2019-20.

Young carers were more likely to experience an impact on their emotional well-being due to their caring role than adult carers in both years. In 2020-21, data suggested that 89% of young carers experienced an impact on their emotional well-being, compared to 74% of adult carers”.

² Information based on most recent monitoring reports August & September 2022. It is not possible to determine if a Carer may be included in more than one of these figures as they are from separate data sources.
³ Recently the management system for Social Work records has been replaced. The previous system was not able to always provide the level of detail we would like on the circumstances of Carers in Aberdeen City. We will work to improve the information which can be pulled from the new system to support a better understanding of carers needs.

How many Carers are supporting people in Aberdeen?

It is difficult to come to an accurate figure for how many carers there are in Aberdeen. Our available estimates are based on figures gathered before the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also important to note that many Carers travel into Aberdeen to care for a friend or loved one. The responsibility to support them lies with us as the home of the cared for person.

The 2011 Census estimated that there were **222,793** people living in Aberdeen and that **15,571** are Carers. With **6,229** stating that they provide more than 20 hours of unpaid care per week. The Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) presents that 11% of Aberdeen’s population identify as a Carer.

This is lower than the national average of 15%. This would take us to a figure of **24,507**. Of these numbers there are estimated to be approximately **2000** Young Carers. There is a significant gap between these estimates and those Carers known to services in Aberdeen.²

Adult Carers open to Quarriers Adult Carer Support Service (including enhanced support service)	803
Adult Carers known to Social Work services (with an adult Carer Support Plan in Place) ³	620
Young Carers open to Barnardos Young Carer Support Service	135
Young Carers known to Children's services (education)	51

National statistics indicate that women are more likely than men to report providing regular unpaid care. This is reflected in our local data with 58% of supported Young Carers identifying as female and 77% of supported Adult Carers identifying as female.

“Ensure that everyone can access health and social care services equally, regardless of age and disability, and ensure that families who have caring responsibilities are involved in the discussions and decisions for the person that requires care.”

Respondent Grampian Regional Equality Council, Equality Outcomes Survey December 2020

Aberdeen City has a diverse population. In 2021 Community Planning Aberdeen published, **‘Aberdeen City: Population Needs Assessment’**, which outlines the diverse make up of our population.

“Recent figures (year ending June 2020) from National Records of Scotland estimate that 24.7% of the City’s population was born outside the UK (compared to 9.8% for Scotland). Of those, it is estimated that 41.1% are from EU countries and 58.9% from non-EU countries (compared to 50% for both groups in the year to end Dec 2019). The estimated proportion of those born outside the UK has fluctuated in the last few years, from 24% in the year ending June 2017, down to 19% in year ending June in both 2018 and 2019, before rising again to 24.7% in the year to end June 2020. At the time of the 2011 Census, Aberdeen City had the third highest proportion of non-white ethnic minority people in Scotland at 15.6%. This was more than double the Scotland rate at 7.6%.”

The majority of identified Carers in Aberdeen are white with 89.5% of supported Young Carers identifying as white and 76% of Adult Carers. Our engagement on this strategy has highlighted that we do not know enough about the needs of Carers from some of our communities, including minority ethnic communities and the LGBTQ+ community.

The principles of equality, diversity and human rights are the basic rights for all carers. Carers reflect the diversity of Scotland's population. We will work to ensure that carers are aware of their rights under this legislation and that no carer is disadvantaged due to age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity, race; religion or belief; or sex or sexual orientation, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Making stronger links to communities is identified in our action plan and will be taken forward with partners from our commissioned support services and the ACHSCP’s Equality and Human Rights sub-group.⁴

⁴ Carers (Scotland) Act 2016: statutory guidance - updated July 2021 – Annex B

Carers face additional challenges related to inequalities including disability and illness, unemployment, young and lone parenting meaning there is a greater risk of being impacted by poverty. The cost of living crisis will mean carers and families could be pushed further into the poverty line.

The limiting factors faced by people living in poverty means hard decisions have to be made by families. The wider risk to declining health is a real prospect with poverty. Young Carers will also feel the burden of Child poverty and worrying for their parents. This strategy will contribute to the joined-up working needed to reduce the impact of poverty and inequality for our Carers and Young carers. A newly developed Poverty and Inequalities committee within Aberdeen City Council will play a key role dealing with the issues that our communities including carers are facing.

Whilst our statutory responsibility lies with supporting Carers who care for people in Aberdeen, we also recognise that many of our own workforce are also Carers, and this can have a significant impact on their wellbeing. This is considered within the ACHSCP Workforce Plan ([Link to be included when published](#)).

“As a Carer, I have found it very difficult to access support.”
Respondent to Carer Workforce Survey



Carers and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on all Carers. The stopping of many face-to-face support services during lockdown removed the ability of Carers to access support and breaks from caring which they relied upon to maintain their caring role. Subsequent lockdowns and understandable concerns for the potential of catching COVID-19 also made it less likely that Carers re-engaged in face-to-face services when they were available. Where possible alternative options were offered, for example, online support and some face-to-face support for those with significant levels of need. Many Carers, however, remained without support during pandemic restrictions. For Young Carers the closure of Schools had a big impact on their education and emotional wellbeing leading to them missing out on opportunities to socialise, learn and have a break from their caring role.

A Carers Trust survey published in July 2020 on the impact of Coronavirus on Young Carers showed a steep decline in the mental health and wellbeing of the hundreds of thousands of young people across Scotland who provide unpaid care at home for family members or loved ones. 45% of young carers in Scotland stated that their mental health was worse since the pandemic and 71% of Young Carers were feeling more stressed, 74% of Young Carers were feeling less connected to others, 11% of young carers reported an increase of 30 hours or more in the amount of time they spend caring per week, and 64% of young carers were spending over 90 hours a week caring for a family member or friend.

This impact was similarly felt by adult carers particularly where the cared for person had substantial support needs. As part of **Stay Well, Stay Connected** work on dementia support during the pandemic a targeted survey was carried out to measure the impact of the pandemic on those with cognitive impairments and their Carers. Many staff felt a dereliction of care and increased risk to the cared for person, which impacted on their resilience and mental wellbeing.

Staff spoke of the barriers to supporting people with cognitive or hearing impairments, or lack of knowledge or access to technology. Staff and Carers described witnessing increased low mood, anxiety, and earlier decline of people living with Dementia. This resulted in families' loss of precious time with loved ones and their premature need for increased or long-term care. The restrictions also negatively impacted on Carers making them feel depressed, alone and isolated.

The legacy of the pandemic may also result in a new group of Carers who are supporting someone with the symptoms of Long Covid. The longer-term impacts of this and impact on Carers is not yet fully understood but we will be required to consider how to best support this group.

For those Carers and cared for people with health conditions the pandemic has led to longer waiting times for treatment and in some circumstances poorer health as a result.

An unexpected impact of the COVID-19 restrictions, reported by both staff and Carers included an increased understanding and use of technology.

"Many people have deteriorated seriously during the pandemic and are less able to partake in activities."
Aberdeen City Carer

This facilitated communication, information sharing and supporting and connecting with others. Staff described how the pandemic had raised awareness around the specialist care required for people with dementia, however, carers identified that in the event of future pandemics, vulnerable people and those who care for them should be protected and not isolated.

What do Carers think of Carer Support in Aberdeen?

We have engaged with Carers in a variety of ways to inform this Strategy including face to face, online, via surveys, through partners and in 1:1 discussion. Feedback included.

“I feel you never get enough support from the professionals. It is with luck that I have a family support network. But parents are getting older and won't always be there to give the support. Also, my health isn't the best, but I don't have time for myself as all my time is consumed by making sure my child is safe and secure which is my main priority.”
Aberdeen City Carer

The Care Inspectorate Inquiry into Adult Social Care Support indicated that those who access support services in Aberdeen are reasonably satisfied but many do not know what is available or don't believe there is a suitable available service and as a result are struggling.

The Scottish Health and Care Experience Survey indicated a reduction in satisfaction of Carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role in Aberdeen City from 34% in 2019/20 to 32% in 2021/22. Whilst higher than the national percentage of 30% in 2021/22. This still indicates that 66% of Carers do not feel supported in their caring role.

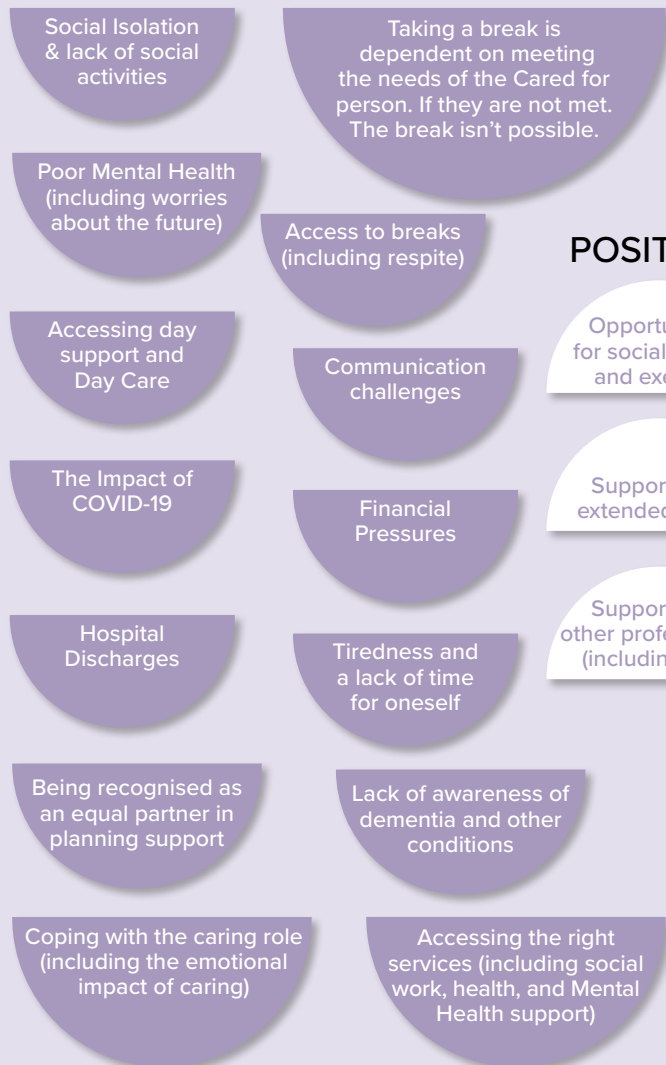


“Quarriers have been a huge help to me.”
Aberdeen City Carer

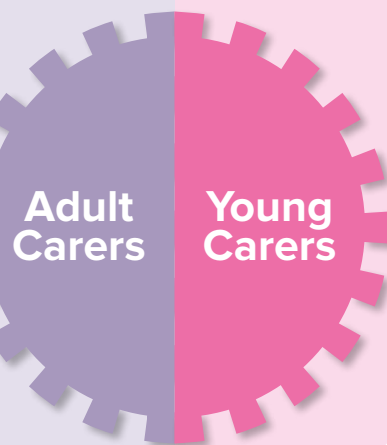
“At present [support], it is advice and guidance, which is always forthcoming. I am so very grateful for this.”
Aberdeen City Carer

The main themes identified by Carers were.

CHALLENGES



POSITIVES



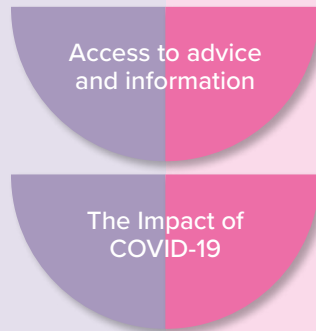
POSITIVES



POSITIVES



CHALLENGES



CHALLENGES



Lived Experience Case Study - Sam's story

Sam is a 16-year-old young carer who provides a substantial caring role to their parent who has a diagnosed physical condition which impacts on their ability to manage day to day tasks, for example shopping, personal care, and household tasks. As well as going into their 6th year of secondary education, this young carer has taken on many responsibilities within their caring role and has struggled with their own mental health throughout their childhood. Initially, fortnightly one-to-one sessions were provided by the young carer support service, either face-to-face or virtually during the pandemic to understand the impact of their caring role and to support them to access a break from caring. As the one-to-one sessions progressed, the focus of support changed to allowing the young carer a space to explore healthy coping strategies, to develop a higher level of self-esteem/confidence, developing peer relationships and to enable them to access additional supports to manage their poor mental health.

Alongside a significant package of 1-1 support, this young carer was offered social opportunities through the variety of young carers groups and other young carer activities. They accessed the Young Carers Grant and other financial opportunities to allow them to have a life alongside caring which enabled them to purchase activities during lockdown and fund trips to museums, parks and different cities with their family. The young carer feedback of the services provided are as follows,

“As a young carer who hasn't had support in the past, the services offered to me have been supportive both physically and mentally. It's been great having one on one support as well as the group sessions where I can meet others who are going through the similar things as I am. I find it to be a safe environment so I can express how I feel about what's going on at home and in other areas my life”.

They are currently using their experience of being a young carer within the group opportunities to develop an in-school young carers group. The goal is to raise awareness of young carers within their school, create regular informal group sessions to allow young carers in their school to have a break from caring, and will enable other pupils that are young carers access supports through the school or Barnardo's by use of a 'buddy' like approach.

Priority 1 – Identifying as a Carer and the first steps to support

What we want Carers to be able to say –

"I am supported to identify as a Carer and am able to access information about the support I may need."

This priority focuses on the importance of carer's being recognised by themselves and others and having an easy entry point to support.

On page 13 we presented that there are many Carers across the City that are not being identified and therefore not able to access the support available. People need to know that they are a Carer before appropriate support can be made available. Respondents to our workforce survey highlighted that there are interlinked challenges in taking the first steps to support.

"I'm not sure that I agree that a person needs to define themselves as a Carer in order to access support."

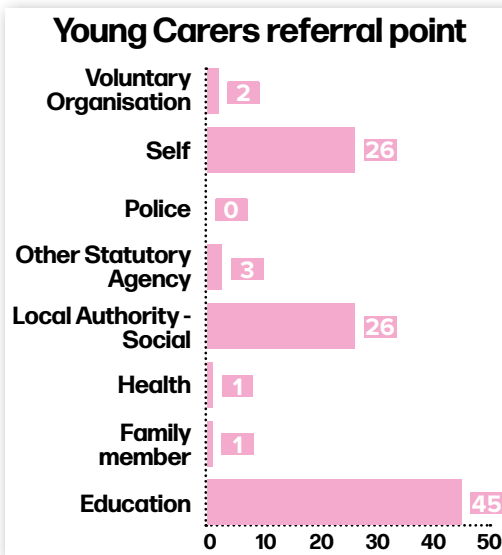
"I would agree that it is a priority to workers to support carers and the importance of carers being recognised by themselves and others and having an easy entry point of support. However sometimes family members/loved ones do not see themselves as a carer and they wish to keep it that way therefore we have to respect their decisions."

"Most unpaid carers do not realise they are a Carer, particularly older people caring for their partner. This group also have difficulty accessing and applying for information online, and we have found this to be one of the biggest issues as most information is not accessed digitally."

This shows that merely encouraging people to state they are a Carer is not enough. Everyone needs to understand what their rights are and what support could be available so they can make an informed decision about whether they want to access it and how they wish to define themselves. Those working with Carers also need to be proactive in identifying Carers and bridging the gap to support.

We also recognise that Carers will inevitably reach out for support at times of crisis or emergency.

Priority 3 highlights the importance of emergency planning on an individual basis however having a workforce who are responsive to unexpected Carer crises and emergencies is also central to our wider approach to awareness raising on support for Carers.



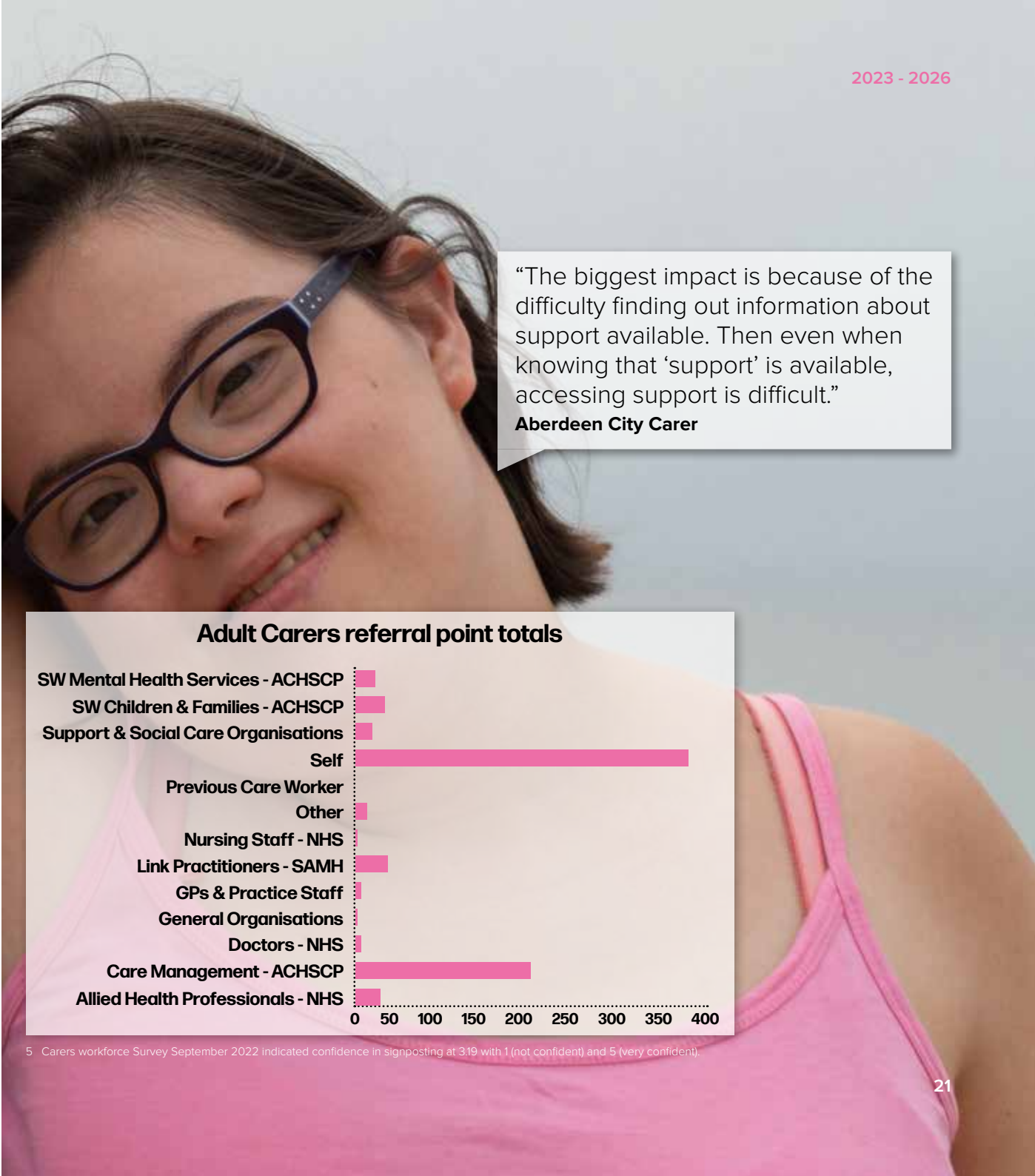
Current routes to identifying as a Carer

Information suggests that Young Carers are most likely to be identified by Education. Adult Carers are most likely to self-refer. The most common reason for Young Carers to seek support is due to the physical health of the cared for person.

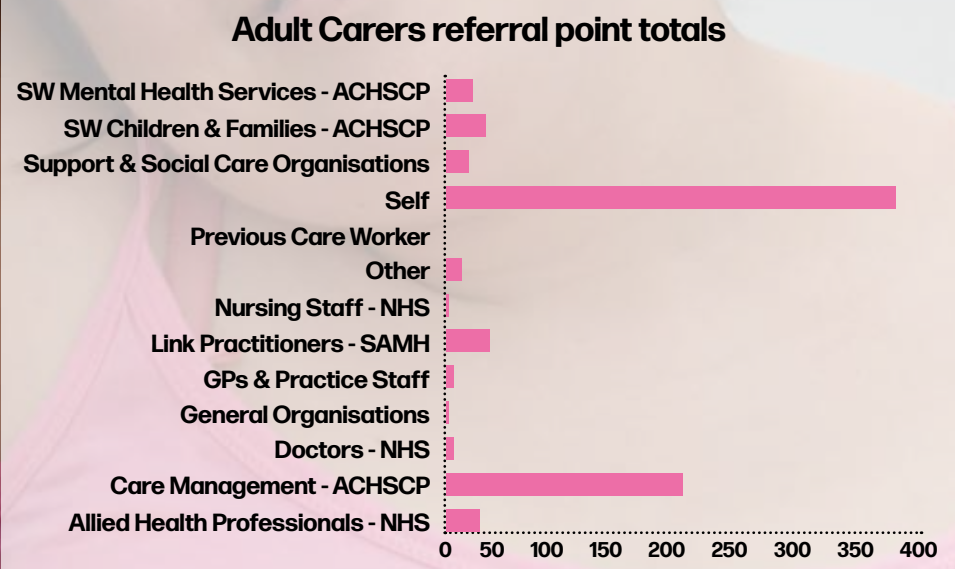
Within Adult services it is also physical health with Dementia in the cared for person being particularly prominent. This information, combined with the gap between those Carers we know about and those Carers we expect to be supporting people within Aberdeen indicates more needs to be done to support Carers to identify themselves and access support, if they choose to.

Our Workforce is a key entry point to support for all Carers. Information from engagement with our workforce indicates that awareness of the support services available is not consistent across our workforce.⁵

Carers told us that it was often difficult to navigate the system and understand how to get support. Many people were not aware of the change of adult support provider, to Quarriers Carer Support, and more awareness of this change and how this support is accessed is required. In order to ensure Young Carers are identified and supported Aberdeen City Council have developed a [range of additional resources](#) to support Young Carers including a [‘Think Young Carer’: A multi-agency Toolkit to support Young Carers](#).



“The biggest impact is because of the difficulty finding out information about support available. Then even when knowing that ‘support’ is available, accessing support is difficult.”
Aberdeen City Carer



⁵ Carers workforce Survey September 2022 indicated confidence in signposting at 3.19 with 1 (not confident) and 5 (very confident).

Lived Experience Case Study – Gary’s Story

This video developed by Young Carers in Aberdeen highlights the many struggles faced by Gary when trying to juggle his caring responsibilities and school.

Gary’s Story Video

It can be used to prompt thinking and discussions with professionals and members of the community on how they would recognise and better support Young Carers.

Recent work carried out by [Glasgow HSCP](#) highlighted the importance of family members being given information about Carers Support Services at the point where a family member receives a diagnosis of any kind. Whilst support may not be needed at that point ensuring that the option of support is available as early as possible is important. We want to encourage all those who come into contact with carers, essentially everyone, to take a Carer sensitive approach and have an awareness of the many challenges Carers can face. With this in mind Carers Support Services are promoted within the wider work of the [ACVO Hospital Homecoming project](#) which aims to facilitate speedier hospital discharge for those who may be isolated utilising third sector resources to support this.

The [Care Inspectorate Inquiry into Adult Carers Support Services](#) indicated that within Aberdeen City the numbers of people accessing Carers Support Services is low however those that do are generally satisfied with the support they receive. Therefore, a key action is to increase awareness of support if we are to improve the overall experience of Carers in Aberdeen City.

Spotlight on developing our approach to supporting Carers from all communities

As part of our work to develop this strategy we have taken a different approach to seeking the views of minority ethnic communities within Aberdeen City. We posed a short series of targeted questions and provided these to Grampian Regional Equality Council’s (GREC) network of health champions via their Community Connectors to support discussions on their views as well as an exchange of information on support currently available. Participants included members of Muslim, African and Polish communities. This identified that those who responded were not familiar with the support which could be available and felt Carers within their communities may not recognise themselves in this role.

We aim to develop a more meaningful approach to learning about all Carers in Aberdeen and how they would like to interact with developing Carers support services. Quarriers Adult Carer Support service had already recognised the need to better understand communities across Aberdeen. They are recruiting to a Diversity Officer role, and we look forward to working together on this approach going forward. During the pandemic work took place to develop information resources for Carers and the wider community. The [AGILE booklet](#) and [web page](#) provides a range of important information on what is available locally for Adult Carers and is translated into a range of languages. Ensuring suitable information is available for all Carers is essential and we will work to improve our range of accessible information.

ACTIONS (linked to Action Plan)

- 1.1 Proactively create opportunities for more people across Aberdeen City to identify as a Carer.**
- 1.2 Improve the knowledge of Carer’s Rights and Carers support services with the Education, Health and Social Care Workforce**
- 1.3 Improve the Knowledge of the wider Community of Aberdeen City of Carers Rights and Carers Support Services**

Lived Experience Case Study – Ellen’s story

“I am a parent carer for my son who is diagnosed with Autism and ADHD. I was really struggling with his behaviour and did not know where to turn for help when a friend advised me to contact Quarriers carers service. I contacted Quarriers who came and visited me at home, and we completed an adult carer support plan together detailing where I felt I needed support. The carer adviser contacted my son’s school and requested that we have a GIRFEC meeting and invite social work along to gain some respite for us as a family.

The adviser also contacted Barnardo’s young carers project and got them to come to our home and discuss support for our daughter who is affected by her brother’s diagnosis and behaviour. The adviser also advised that we get the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) involved to support us to manage our sons’ behaviours. I contacted the school, and they completed the referral and invited them to attend the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) meeting. The adviser came to the GIRFEC meeting with us and I felt this was the first time since my son was born that someone listened to us and could empathise how caring was having an impact on all the family’s wellbeing. After a few months we were provided with support through social work by giving us regular respite breaks and CAMHS have been instrumental in supporting us with strategies we use to manage our son’s behaviour at home.

My daughter is fully enjoying meeting with other children who have siblings like her brother and loves the activities that Barnardo’s provide. My adviser has also got us some funding to have a break away as a family for the very first time which we really enjoyed. Most of all I have someone I can call who gets me and where I am coming from and can advise me with practical solutions. I have also had regular sessions with a counsellor through Quarriers carers service that has allowed me space and time to think on what I need as a Carer.”



Priority 2 – Accessing Advice and Support

This priority is about Carer specific support and advice which is universally accessible to anyone who identifies as a Carer in Aberdeen City.

Once Carers have been identified we are required to ensure that Carers have access to appropriate advice and support to enable them to be supported in their caring role. The support required will vary significantly depending on the needs of the Carer, their age, community, family circumstances and stage of life. An introduction to the support available from our current support service providers – Barnardos Young Carers Service and Quarriers Carers Support service is included on page 9.

The Quarriers Adult Carer Service took a co-production approach to developing their service alongside Carers to scope what it would look like. These support services do not operate in isolation and support for Carers comes in many forms including from those working in Health and Social Care, Education, the third sector and the wider community is demonstrated in Ellen's Story (Page 23). Important information on a range of support options is available from the [Scotland's Service Directory](#) and [Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations \(ACVO\)](#) who are our third sector interface.

The range of areas where Carers, including Young Carers, may require support include.

- Information on their rights, including those set out in the Carer's Charter
- Income maximisation and links to employment advice (For example Council Tax discount)
- Education and training
- Advocacy/Brokerage
- Peer support
- Support with LGBTQ+ issues
- Health and wellbeing advice, including specific support with Mental health
- Bereavement, grief, and loss support
- Emergency care planning
- Information on Future care planning, including the development of Adult Carer Support Plans (ACSPs) and Young Carer Statements (YCS).
- Signposting to a specialist support service, e.g., Legal advice, Domestic Abuse support
- Substance use support

Spotlight on Quarriers base at Cornhill

The Quarriers Enhanced service predominantly supports Carers where support is required with Mental health issues both for the Carer themselves and the Cared for person. In June 2022 Quarriers launched a base within Cornhill Hospital to provide a space for Carers to meet with Family Wellbeing workers and receive advice and support.

ACTIONS (linked to Action Plan)

- 2.1 Ensure Young Carers have access to a Young Carer Support Service who can provide individual advice and support**
- 2.2 Ensure Adult Carers have access to an Adult Carer Support Service who can provide individual advice and support**

Lived Experience Case Study – Alex’s Story

Alex is a 7-year-old young carer who supports and cares for his older sibling, James, who has disabilities. Due to James’ complex needs, the family are unable to leave the family home and go out socially due to their sibling being described as very high risk in relation to his safety when outside.

His parents want Alex to have the same opportunities as his peers to have fun, enjoy positive experiences, and be able to experience activities that they, as a family were unable to do due to James’ needs. Alex was offered to be involved in the service on a group only basis. He positively engaged in all the supports offered in a variety of ways; including accessing the Aberdeen City Council Young Carers funding to purchase items that helped with his health and wellbeing such as Lego, a new bike and games. He attended the school holiday programme and thoroughly enjoyed making new friends, meeting other young carers, and having fun. The family attended a joint family activity to Innoflate whereby all the family members joined in. Alex was also identified as someone who would benefit from attending the weekly Music Therapy group to increase his self-confidence and self-esteem. He thoroughly enjoys these therapeutic sessions and always looks forward to the next one. Further support has been offered to the family including signposting to other services and relevant support groups. Alex said of his support, “I enjoy the group, meeting friends there, taking part in the activities and play, I don’t want to miss a single day. Everyone there is kind and I have lots of fun.”

Alex’s Mum said, “Before joining Barnardo’s young carers groups, he was very timid at school. This is because his exposure to activities was very limited due to our difficulties as a family with a special needs child needing a very high level of care. His timidness had an adverse effect on his performance in school because he was so quiet and hesitant to express himself or answer questions even if he knew the answers. He is now visibly a different confident child thanks to his experience in the young carer’s groups. This has directly reflected on his school assessments where he is now on target and above target right across the curriculum”.

What we want Carers to be able to say -

“I am supported as a Carer to Manage my Caring Role.”

Priority 3 – Supporting future planning, decision making and wider Carer involvement

This section is specifically on support with future planning as a Carer both for the Carer and the Cared for person. It also includes how carers can be involved in the wider development of support for carers.

We have split this priority into three key areas.

- Planning Support for the Carer
- Planning Support for the cared for person
- Carer involvement in developing and informing Carers Services and the work of the wider ACHSCP

What we want Carers to be able to say -

“I am respected, listened to and involved in the planning and development of the services and support which I and the person(s) I care for receive.”

Planning Support for the Carer

All Carers must be offered an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) or a Young Carer Statement (YCS) in accordance with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. The expectations of ACSPs and YCSs are included within the [statutory guidance](#) on the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. Carers will be offered support to complete a support plan (ACSP or YCS) and an **emergency plan**. An emergency plan can be part of an ACSP or sit separately. The completion of an emergency plan allows for an anticipatory focus and allows the Carer to consider the support, they and the Cared for person may need in the advent of an emergency which impacts on their ability to provide care.

What is an Adult Carer Support plan (ACSP)?

An Adult Carer Support Plan provides a tool to support Carers to identify their own personal outcomes (goals they want to achieve) and identify their needs as a Carer. They enable Carers to focus in on what is important to them and what support, if any, they need to continue in their caring role. They may also support Emergency planning. We have a duty to offer an ACSP, Carers are not required to complete one however they are encouraged to do so to support them in identifying what is important to them.

What is a Young Carer Statement (YCS)?

The Young Carer Statement provides an opportunity for the young person to consider their personal outcomes (goals they want to achieve) and identify their needs as a Carer. An important distinction is to ensure that young carers are seen as children and young people first and foremost and are protected from undertaking caring responsibilities and tasks which are inappropriate having regard to their age and maturity.

In Aberdeen our ACSPs are carried out by the Carer with either a member of the Quarriers Carer Support service or a Social Worker / Care Manager within one of our Adult Social Work teams. YCSs are carried out by the young person supported by the Barnardos Young Carer Service. Whilst the timescale for completion will vary in each circumstance, they should be completed within 6 weeks.

The support required is varied. For some people, the support already provided by the Carer Support Service, outlined in **priority 2**, will support the Carer to achieve their Outcomes. In other circumstances signposting to further services, including those within the third sector, or a package of support will also be needed.

Parent Carers expressed challenges in meeting their own support needs in circumstances where the cared for person is their child. We will work with the support services and third sector organisations to explore all opportunities to support families and find creative approaches to breaks from caring.

Many Carers do so whilst also being in employment. Some Carers are unable to work due to their caring role. It can be difficult to balance the responsibilities of caring and working. We will work with partners to ensure support is available for Carers of working age who require employment support.

Under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, each local authority must set the local eligibility criteria which it is to apply in its area for Carers. Local eligibility criteria are the criteria by which the local authority must determine whether it is required to provide support to carers to meet carers' identified needs. The duty to set local eligibility criteria for carers has been delegated to the IJB. This includes support provided to Carers as part of a self-directed support package.

The Eligibility Criteria framework for Young Carers is outlined in the **'Think Young Carer' : Multiagency Toolkit to support Young Carers.**

The Aberdeen City Eligibility Criteria for Adult Carers was published in 2018. There are 7 indicators in Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership's Eligibility

Criteria: -

- 1. Health and Wellbeing
- 2. Relationships
- 3. Living Environment
- 4. Employment and Training
- 5. Finance
- 6. Life Balance
- 7. Future Planning (including planning for emergencies) Carers can access

Carers are eligible for formal funded support to be provided if an impact or risk on the Carer from any of the eligibility indicators is deemed to be substantial or critical. Using the discretionary power available under the Act, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, in certain circumstances, will consider an approach to interventions where the impact/risk is not critical or substantial but where intervention would be a means to prevent these impacts and risks becoming substantial or critical.



Spotlight on – The Carer SVQ

Many Carers do so on a fulltime basis, often reducing their work hours or giving up work, to care for someone. The ACHSCP has recently introduced the Carer SVQ. This supports Carers to achieve their SVQ 2 Health and Social Care whilst they are caring with their role as Carer providing the evidence base for this qualification. This then enables the Carer to develop their knowledge and skills and potentially seek employment in health and social care in future.

There is a dependency between Adult Carer Support Plans and Eligibility Criteria. The plan needs to be completed in order that the carer's needs and outcomes are identified and that the impact on their lives and the risks to them being able to continue their caring role assessed. Once the level of impact and risk are known they can be assessed against the Eligibility Criteria and a decision made on eligibility to access funded support.

Our Young Carers will often continue to provide support to their loved one as they grow into adulthood. This transition from child to adult is already a sensitive time. Carers, families and our workforce fed back that there can be a support gap between what is provided to children in our Young Carer service and what is provided for adults in our Adult Support Service. Ensuring there is a continuation of support and the right support for young people in this situation is essential. The Young Carer support service currently supports young people in this situation by providing after care support for a period to support transition. The Young Carer service and Adult Carer Service will work together to continue to develop this approach.

Spotlight on – Volunteer Mentoring in the Young Carer service

The Young carer service provides the opportunity for young adult carers to volunteer or become volunteer or become volunteer mentors for the younger generation of Young Carers – either within group opportunities or as a Befriender. Initially they will have the opportunity to informally volunteer by becoming a 'helper' before going through the formal process of registering as a volunteer and receiving relevant training. This provides opportunities for them to use lived experience to support others and develop skills in volunteering.

ACTIONS (Linked to Action Plan)

- 3.1 Young Carers have the opportunity to be leaders in planning their own support (Future Planning)**
- 3.2 Young People with Carer responsibilities experiencing transition from Child to Adult Services have access to individual advice and support to enable future planning**
- 3.3 Ensure Adult Carers have the opportunity to be leaders in planning their own Support (Future planning)**



“Half an hours’ notice to discharge a patient is not good enough.”
Aberdeen City Carer

Planning Support for the Cared for Person

The Cared for person should always be the lead in the support they receive and this is outlined in the [Social Work \(Scotland\) Act 1968](#) and the [Social Care \(Self-directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#).

Carers play an important role in supporting the person they care for including in decision making about the support the cared for person requires. Every caring relationship is unique however it is important that there is a distinction between the needs of both and that there are supportive mechanisms in place to support this relationship. Where the cared for person chooses to have their Carer involved in planning their support this should be facilitated as much as possible. This includes within the context of hospital discharges where there is a specific requirement within the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, to identify unpaid Carers and consider their needs in discharge planning. We will continue to work with colleagues across NHS Grampian, including Aberdeenshire HSCP and Moray HSCP to further develop and improve our approach.

At times there can be differences of opinion between the Carer and the cared for person. In this circumstance it is important that both have access to the independent support they need and that those working with them are trauma-informed in their practice and have knowledge of domestic abuse including coercive control. Examples of this would include Advocacy advice for both where an Adult Support and Protection Concern has been raised and routes to independent advice and support for those experiencing domestic abuse.

ACTIONS (Linked to Action Plan)

- 3.4 Carers have the opportunity to be involved in planning the support of the person they care for.**
- 3.5 There are opportunities to access independent sources of support for both the Carer and the Cared for Person**

Carer Involvement in developing and informing Carers Services and the work of the wider ACHSCP

We are committed to ensuring that Carers voices are heard when developing support and services. One way in which Carers can have an important role in representing other Carers in their community and be involved in the wider work of the ACHSCP is as a Carers Representative on the IJB. This is a required role within the IJB and is formally appointed. The Representative sits on the Integration Joint Board and, potentially, other sub-groups including the Carers Strategy Implementation Group (who will monitor delivery of this strategy). The role of the representative is generally taken on over a 3-year period and there are two members who sit on the IJB.

Developing a Carers reference group was identified as an intention within our last Strategy. Progress with this was stalled during the pandemic however we have continued to benefit from the input of our IJB Carers Reps and aim to widen the scope of involvement of Carers in taking forward the Actions outlined in this Strategy using the Coalition of Carers, **'Equal, Expert & Valued' approach** as a benchmark for this. We need to ensure we have a range of Carer's voices representative of the wider community who can provide a Carers perspective on all aspects of delivery of support in Aberdeen.

We also aim to continue to embed this into our approach to the contracts for Carer Support services. This has been the approach to both the Quarriers and Barnardos support services where Carers have had a central role in co-producing what support service and groups are provided based on the needs of those they support.

ACTIONS (Linked to Action Plan)

3.6 All Carers have opportunities to be involved in decision making about Carer Support Services, the Carer Strategy and the wider work of the ACHSCP (Participation and Engagement)



Lived Experience Case Study – Raymond’s Story

Raymond aged 91, cares for his 90-year-old wife, Anne, who has dementia. They have been married for 65 years and have 2 children. Anne first received her dementia diagnosis in 2013. Raymond is fit and healthy for his age, but he says that his caring role is not easy. Raymond does all the shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry, and medication. He receives Attendance Allowance benefit for Anne, but says it barely covers the costs relating to his caring role. He has tried to make the home as comfortable as possible for his wife as all he wants is for her to be happy, and he is determined to keep her at home as long as he can. He really wants to do the best for his wife.

Raymond says Anne has become very clingy and wants to be with him all the time. When she feels alone, she gets up to look for him. She gets depressed when she sees how much he does for her. Anne is prone to falls and Raymond has to be on guard all the time. Raymond once told a doctor that he felt life was like a stuck gramophone needle at times as Anne is always asking the same questions. “You want to scream, but you can’t”

He finds it difficult to think for two people and wonders what will happen if he’s ill or not there. He goes to bed exhausted and get up tired. He also says he spends a lot of time looking for lost items, hearing aids, teeth, glasses, earrings, etc! He doesn’t like to complain but admits its hard work.

The couple have carers who come twice a week and will take his wife out for 3 hours in the afternoon to allow him some respite, however Raymond states that there is not much you can do in 3 hours. There is carer support in the evening for a night-time settle, and Anne also attends a day centre once a week. A lot of the care and support has been instigated and followed up by their daughter through their local Care Management (Social Work) Team. Raymond says he sees and hears from a lot of people, so it’s difficult to keep track of who’s who and who does what.





What we want Carers to be able to say -

“I have a sense of belonging and a life alongside caring, if I choose to.”

Priority 4 – Community support and services for Carers

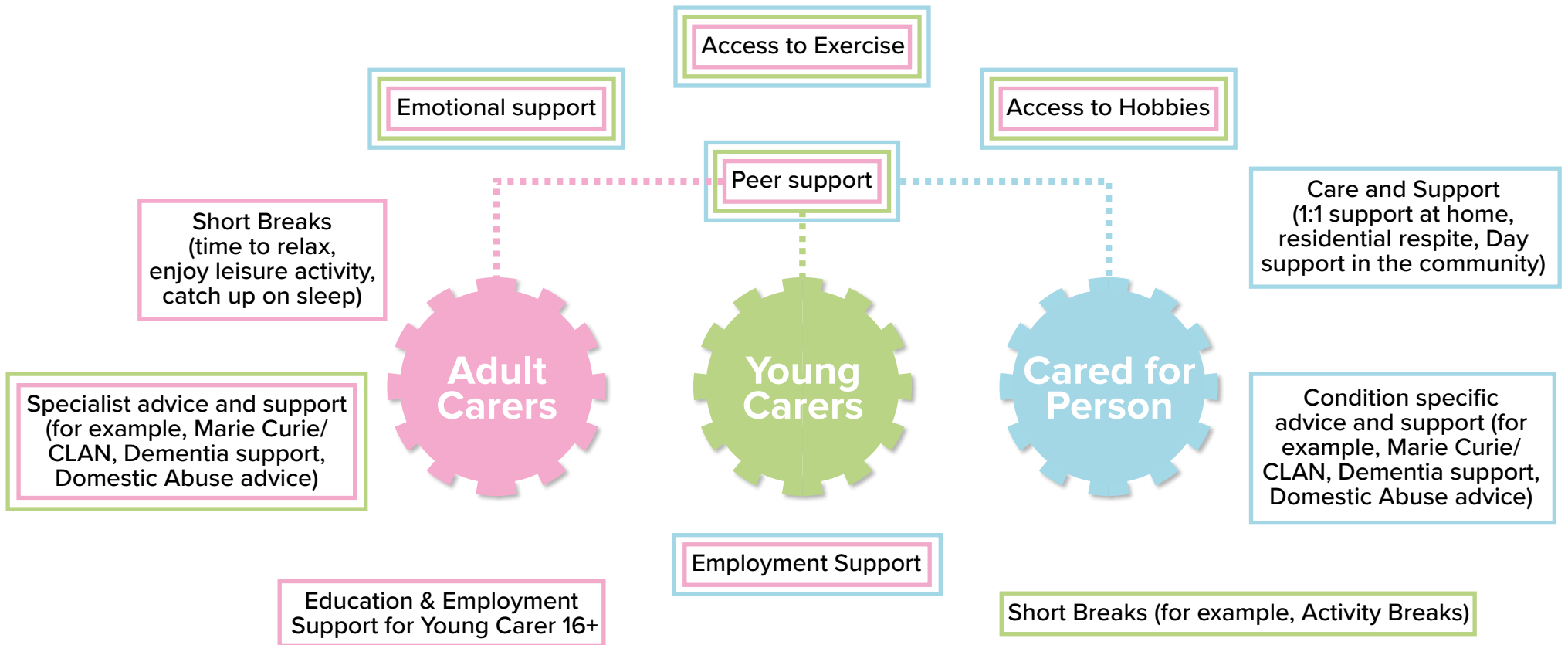
This section is focussed on the practical supports available to Carers to support them to be well connected to their communities and have a life alongside their caring role including hobbies and employment as well as more intensive supports for the Carer and Cared for person when these are needed. There is a strong emphasis on Carer choice here and that no one size fits all.

We have outlined within **Priority 2** our approach to delivering our Carer specific support services and outlined the support we will provide with planning in **Priority 3**. In order for Carers to feel well supported they also require access to breaks from caring and, where required, suitable care for the cared for person. What constitutes the right support will be personal to the Carer and the cared for person. Considerable work has taken place over recent years to take a more holistic approach to support in line with the **principles of self-directed support**, the recommendations of the **Independent review of Adult Social Care** and the Carers Act. These focus on ensuring that Carers have choice and control in relation to the support they can access.

“Access to respite came up repeatedly as a priority. Carers need to be able to take a break and respite should be viewed as integral to carer support. However, a greater range and more imaginative options should be developed for both the supported person and Carers to better meet needs and preferences.”

Independent Review of Adult Social Care

The below outlines a range of supports that may be needed so that Carers and the cared for Person can feel well supported and have a life beyond the caring role.



We have split this priority into three key areas.

- Developing a culture of Creativity to encourage innovative approaches to Carers Support
- Supporting the development of a range of mainstream supports and services to enable Carers to receive a break from caring
- Continue to develop a range of support options for Carers where the Cared For person has high level needs

Develop a culture of Creativity to encourage innovative approaches to Carers Support

One of the unforeseen impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic was a need to quickly rethink how support could still be provided in very different ways. Whilst many services were closed providers worked to develop alternative methods of supporting people. This approach to creativity sets a good foundation for more creative approaches going forward beyond the pandemic.

Spotlight on Creativity within Learning Disabilities services during the Pandemic leading to ongoing change

Archway @ Home (a commissioned respite service for people living with Learning Disabilities)

During the Pandemic while respite services were closed, Archway began providing online activities to provide opportunities for people to keep in touch and have things to do during lockdown. These have proved to be really popular and because of this they are continuing to provide a range of activities and social opportunities for all their service users and families. They have been successful in securing grant funding to cover the costs of employing an Activity Co-ordinator and this role is going from strength to strength with the addition of having somewhere that people can go to meet up together.

Len Ironside Day Centre

During the pandemic, The Len Ironside Centre changed their registration with the Care Inspectorate to provide support at home for the service users who had attended the day centre. They also provided on-line activities and some family and staff were able to overcome their fear of computers. This took time but was a lifeline at the time and allowed staff and families to build on relationships, particularly as some staff worked from home due to shielding. The Centre provided wellbeing packs, summer packs and regular welfare calls to all the families and on special events. At Christmas staff dressed up and did doorstep calls.

The day centre continues to provide some support at home along with support at the day centre with some families preferring to have the support at home as it best meets the needs of their loved one. As a service they are also now able to provide as required care at home support in unexpected or emergency circumstances. This supports the whole system in meeting the needs of service users and is a major change to how this support could be delivered prior to the pandemic.

Within Aberdeen City we have been considering the recommendations of the [Promoting Variety guide](#) published by Shared Care Scotland.

This outlines approaches to Market Shaping for Short Breaks for Carers based on developing an outcome focused collaborative approach to Short Breaks where Carers, Service Users and providers work together to be innovative in meeting the needs of Carers. The ACHSCP will aim to work with the Promoting Variety Programme for 2022-2023 to learn from and collaborate with other Partnerships to develop a range of short break supports for people in Aberdeen City, including creative breaks, respite and day support services.

ACTIONS (linked to Action Plan)

4.1 Promote a culture of Creativity to develop innovative approaches to Carers Support

Support the development of a range of mainstream supports and services to enable Carers to receive a break from Caring

Having “a sense of belonging and a life alongside caring” is not always easy for Carers. Often, they can find themselves so focussed on the needs of the cared for person they can be blind to their own needs. The delivery of this strategy depends on the community working together to support Carers. This includes third sector, Community groups and businesses working together to consider Carers in the way mainstream activities are provided.

For Young Carers it is particularly important that they have opportunities to participate in activities and education that other children are able to and that their individual needs are recognised and supported by those who support them including schools. There are lots of isolating factors being a young carer. They experience different challenges from their peers for example lack of sleep and feeling tired etc. Young Carers described that bullying is prevalent and friendships are even more difficult to navigate. They indicated a need for more opportunities to develop group work to support socialising opportunities and meaning full friendships in a safe environment.

“If young carers are going to build resilience alongside their young caring role, then they need to know that opportunities and activities are available for them to help them lead a full and sustained life, alongside caring. It is important that they can access groups and services which accommodate their schedule and offer a sufficient array of opportunities that can help them succeed in the future”

Workforce Survey respondent

Stay Well - StayConnected

Established as a response to Covid 19, we continue to work with those who are currently well and managing their conditions, to stay well and make better health and wellbeing choices and work with our communities to ensure that opportunities are available to all.



Spotlight on - Stay Well, Stay Connected

Providing the right support to meet the needs of all Carers is very challenging. The Stay Well Stay Connected (SWSC) programme was launched during the pandemic with a focus on community-based activity run in conjunction with other partnerships, health, third sector organisations, community groups, and volunteers.

The SWSC programme applies an intersectional approach which incorporates consideration of adult carers needs. SWSC acknowledges the value that carers bring to the provision of early intervention and prevention of ill health that promotes independence at home. SWSC has four main themes namely Social Isolation, Physical Activity, Mental Wellbeing and Digital Divide.

While all activities are themed, they provide one or more benefits for example, a **relaxed match day experience** at Aberdeen Football Club will have a benefit to a carer attending a mass participation event. These events are inclusive, dementia friendly and both the carer and the person they care for will be able to share the experience together. During the relaxed match day event there are several other benefits such as increased social connections, improved mental wellbeing, engaging in meaningful conversations, sharing food and inclusion in a mainstream activity.

As outlined breaks from caring are an essential support and it is likely that a ‘right to a break’ will be introduced in the near future. In December 2018 the ACHSCP issued our **Short breaks statement** for Carers which committed to the development of outcome-focused Short breaks. The outcomes of a break will be personal to each carer and cared-for person, but may include:

- Having more opportunities to enjoy a life outside/alongside the caring role
- Feeling better supported
- Improved confidence (for example, more confident as a carer)
- Increased ability to cope
- Reduced social isolation and loneliness, for example increasing social circles, connections and activities
- Increased ability to maintain the caring relationship - and sustain the caring role
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved quality of life
- Reduced likelihood of breakdown and crisis
- Improved educational attainment
- Reaching positive destinations post school leaving age

Spotlight on Respitality

Quarriers Carer Support Service have recently opened a Respitality bureau which is dedicated to supporting Carers to access Short Breaks funding through various sources. This includes accessing voucher schemes for hotel breaks and leisure breaks. The Bureau supports Carers to complete any necessary paperwork which aims to lessen the administrative burden Carers often experience and which can put them off applying for additional sources of support.

ACTIONS (linked to Action Plan)

4.2 Support the ongoing development of a range of mainstream supports and services to enable Carers to receive a break from Caring in line with the proposed ‘right to a break’ within the National Care Service Bill

Continue to develop a range of support options for Carers where the Cared For person has high level needs

"[I need] me time. To know our loved ones are being well looked after entertained and happy to let us relax and enjoy a well-earned break" **Aberdeen Carer**

Unpaid Carer's expressed to us that they can only really enjoy a break if the Cared for person is also experiencing a good break. Where the cared for person, adult or child, has a high level of need which requires ongoing supervision and support there is an added difficulty in ensuring they have access to meaningful and enjoyable replacement care or support to facilitate the break for the Carer. This may include the support of a personal assistant at home, Respite care in a Care Home or supported living environment and Day support at home or in the community.

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 brought in options for support for eligible Carers and cared for people which emphasise having a choice over whether you want to organise that support yourself, SDS option 1 (direct payment), direct someone else in how to organise it (SDS Option 2), access support which has been commissioned on your behalf (SDS Option 3) or a mixed approach (SDS Option 4). The amount of control Carers wish to have over their support varies. This is why we need a range of options which are developed based on the requirements of Carers in Aberdeen including packages at home, in the community, and where required, residential settings.

"I would like Respite, i.e. Daycentre for person I care for so I know she's safe and in with other people with Dementia. I can then have the break from my role without worrying."

Aberdeen City Carer

Spotlight on Developments in Older Adult Respite provision

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic planned respite was available within dedicated respite rooms within Rosewell House Care Home. During the pandemic these rooms were repurposed to support the redesign of the frailty pathway from Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Changing their focus to step-down from hospital or step-up from the community where there is an acute medical need. This change has had a positive impact on ensuring patients can move quickly through hospital and minimise any lengthy delays which may lead to poorer recovery for the patient.

Whilst the re-purposing of the Rosewell rooms was necessary it also meant the provision of planned respite for older people had to be reviewed and a different model developed. Those Carers and Cared for who had accessed Rosewell previously also had to adapt to a different respite environment. As part of 'Stay well, Stay Connected' a survey of carers was undertaken in July 2021. The key findings were that Carers wanted respite based in their local area (Locality) in order that they could maintain their community connections, be close to family and their ordinary health services.

Working with providers we commissioned planned respite contracts in various Care Homes across the City, ensuring residential and nursing home beds were available for advance respite bookings. This has enabled Carers, and the Cared for person, to plan ahead and be able build positive relationships with their local Care Home. This activity has provided a foundation and ongoing engagement with Carers accessing this respite has highlighted areas for further development. This strategy will continue this work to develop a sustainable long-term model for Locality Based respite, increasing capacity.

Additionally in order to enhance the experience for the Cared for person providers, Carers and the ACHSCP are actively involved in co-designing the enhancement of respite stays through the introduction of Technology enabled care (TEC) in order that breaks can be personalised further. The above work was focused on Older Adults requiring respite and therefore exploring and addressing gaps in services for younger adults and Young Carers will also be a focus. We recognise that Respite options are important to Carers. Within Adult Social Work they are in the early stages of developing a short breaks bureau which will allow Carers to consider a range of opportunities available in the City and beyond.

Being a Carer is a challenging role and often this involves supporting a loved one who's health is poor and, in some circumstances, where they require end of life care. Carers and staff from our Support Services highlighted the need to ensure that Carers have support beyond their Caring role in circumstances where the cared for person has died or where they have moved into a different environment, for example, a longer-term Care Home Placement. In both these circumstances the Carer Support Service would continue to work with them and signpost on to additional support services, for example grief counselling.

ACTIONS (linked to Action Plan)

4.3 Continue to develop a range of support options for Carers, where the cared for person has high level needs, which allow choice and control in line with the proposed 'right to a break' within the National Care Service Bill

“Haven't had respite for 2 and a half years and now it seems there is no facilities especially for age group of 54 very physically debilitated but mentally aware.”
Aberdeen City Carer



How we will monitor performance of this Strategy

Monitoring performance is how we will know if what we are trying is working. The Carer Strategy Implementation Group are made up of Partners across the ACSCP, Children's services, the third sector and Carers. They will monitor performance and delivery of the Strategy over the next 3 years. There will be 6 monthly reporting into the Strategic Planning Group and an Annual report to the Integration Joint Board.

The Action Plan published alongside this strategy outlines the specific actions being taken forward as we embark on this strategy however it is a working document and will evolve based on evidence of performance and feedback from Carers on their local needs. This is important as we continue to develop a better understanding of caring Communities we have not yet engaged with.

The Action Plan incorporates actions as follows.

- Those that are ongoing from our previous Strategy, particularly where we have a statutory duty to continue.
- New ideas identified through development of this Strategy and supported by local and national data.
- Actions identified through development of the [ACHSCP Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#).
- Actions identified through the NHS Grampian Plan for our Future
- Actions identified through Community Planning Aberdeen's [Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\)](#) and [Resilient, Included Supported Outcome Improvement Group](#) which aims to improve the experience of Carers by 10% by 2023.
- Actions identified through Aberdeen City's [Locality Plans](#)
- Actions identified through the ACHSCP Workforce Plan

Overleaf are four additional steps we will take to monitor this strategy.

What will we do?	When will we have done it by?	How will we know it is working?	Who will be responsible?
Demonstrate an increase in Carers feeling supported. 2021/22 baseline of 32% with 2025/26 target of 42%.	Annual Health and Care Experience survey.	Increase in percentage indicating they feel supported.	Senior Project Manager (Strategy).
Monitor the implementation of the Carers Strategy and report regularly on progress.	Ongoing, Annual reporting to IJB, Children's Board and ACC.	Monitoring of delivery of action plan through CSIG meeting minutes. Annual reports delivered to IJB, Children's Board and ACC.	Carer's Strategy Implementation Group.
Review strategy after 3 years.	November 2025.	Strategy revised, approved, published and implemented.	Carer's Strategy Implementation Group.
Ensure Carers views are surveyed regularly, and the feedback informs future support planning.	Annually, baseline data October 2022.	Survey results and revised plans.	Carer's Strategy Implementation Group.
Yearly review of all systems in place for complaints/feedback, such as Care Opinion, the NHS ombudsman etc, to make sure that any carer issue is identified, resolved, and has provided insights into the carer strategy for future improvement.	Annually.	Feedback incorporated into annual reporting on strategy.	Organisations that could be actively involved in providing feedback would be Quarriers, Barnardo's, Advocacy Aberdeen, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Care Homes, LGBTQ+ Communities, ethnic minority communities, any others?
Develop performance information on the new D365 records system which will improve our understanding of Carers in Aberdeen. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Known Carers Carers with ACSPs and YCSs Carers holding SDS Budgets and chosen SDS Options 	Year 1.	Annual reports delivered to IJB, Children's Board and ACC	Carer Strategy Implementation group



Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership

A caring partnership

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