

County Durham Carers Plan on a Page

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Format

- Background to why a Carers Plan on a Page has been developed.
- Detail how this has been co-produced with carers and key partners.
- Outline how the plan relates to the Council's duties to carers under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014.
- Explain how the Carers Plan on a Page links to the Council's assurance preparation for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment.
- Provide an overview of key areas covered in the plan.
- Summary

Background

- ‘A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is **unpaid**’ (NHS England).
- In County Durham, the 2021 census reported that 52,676 people provide care and support. Whilst this is a reduction from just over 60,000 carers in 2021, we have seen a shift in carers providing increased levels of support with over 18,000 people caring for 50+ hours per week.
- The number of carers providing more than 50+ hours per week in County Durham is proportionally higher than both the national and regional average.
- The census also tells us we have almost 2,800 young adult carers – aged between 16-24 years caring for a parent, sibling, grandparent or other family member.



Rights for Carers

- The Care Act 2014 and Children's and Family Act 2014 places responsibilities on LAs to ensure **all** unpaid carers are given access to support and information as well as affording carers the same protection as the 'cared for' person.
- Assessing how local authorities meet their Care Act duties is a new responsibility for the CQC and it is clear they will review what LAs know and share publicly about the needs of unpaid carers and how LAs meet their statutory responsibilities in relation to carers.
- The CQC reported their findings from the LA assessment pilots and identified that not all LAs had published a carer's strategy. In response to this, a draft Carers Plan on a Page has been developed for County Durham, documenting the strategic work for carers to be undertaken locally.
- It should be noted that a separate plan on a page already exists for young carers aged 5-17 therefore are out of scope for this work.

How the Carers Plan on a Page was developed

- Feedback received directly from carers during the Carers Strategic Review - conducted late 2022/early 2023. (Gaps in YAC provision and Hospital Discharge support for carers)
- Results and findings highlighted through regional and national surveys for carers in County Durham.
- Focus groups were held with key Health and Social Care partners involved in delivering support to carers, including our Commissioned Providers.
- DCC duties under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014.
- The State of Caring Report 2022, (Carers UK) sets out the challenges currently facing unpaid carers.
- DCC's staff network for Carers shared their experiences of being a working carer.
- County Durham Adult Carer Strategic Group helped to shape the plan based on their local knowledge and experience of working with unpaid carers.

Feedback from Carers on the **draft** plan

- Include a reference to reaching Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Carers.
- Carers said they would like a stronger emphasis on identifying hidden carers including campaigns that use language that might help a carer 'see themselves'. They wanted the plan to address barriers to people identifying as a carer.
- Carers wanted a clear definition of an unpaid carer and to include this in any communications, marketing and publications. This will be added to the Carers Plan on a Page landing page on the Durham Carers Infopoint and will include definitions for young carers, young adult carers, parent carers and adult carers.
- In the 'Be Well and Be Healthy' section, some carers felt this was aspirational and not a reality for carers.
- Carers wanted 'working carers' to be emphasised in the plan and an acknowledgement of the pressures facing carers in employment due to their caring role outside of work.
- Multiple comments were made in relation to the availability of respite care and/or taking a break from their caring role.
- Refer to support for carers who have sensory support issues.
- To strengthen the objective around advocacy and available



Carers Plan on a Page – Key Areas

- **Be Seen** – a focus on identification of carers including hard to reach carers e.g. male carers and working carers. Work will include marketing campaigns / targeted comms and programs of support delivered by the commissioned carer providers.
- **Be Well and Healthy** – a focus on improving physical and mental health and how to take a break from the caring role.
- **Be Connected** – a focus on providing support to enable carers to remain active in their community, reduce social isolation and help to remain in employment. Digital resources, products and support are currently offered to carers in County Durham across multiple web and social media platforms and further development of the use of technology to support carers will be reviewed with carer input.
- **Be Heard** – a focus on advocacy and capturing the ‘carer voice’ to ensure are involved in shaping services and care planning.



Summary

- A Carers Plan on a Page has been written **together** with carers and those providing support to carers.
- The Carers Plan on a Page will assist with evidence gathering for the CQC assessment and demonstrate that engagement and consultation has been undertaken with people with lived experience as carers. It also provides a framework for targeting and developing support to carers in County Durham.
- The Carers Plan on a Page addresses areas highlighted in the recent strategic review of carer support as needing focused support or attention, such as young adult carers, male carers, working age carers and support for carers following the 'cared for' person being discharged from hospital.
- The Carers Plan on a Page will be published on the existing '**Durham Carers Infopoint**' website which provides a wide range of information, advice and guidance to carers. This webpage is currently being reviewed and updated.

