

Draft Carers Strategy for Herefordshire Outline/executive summary

Vision

Our vision is that Herefordshire is a county where people who carry out the role of unpaid carer are known and valued within our health and care community.

We will make this vision a reality by

Making it easy for carers to find good information and support for themselves and the person they care for.

Recognising when someone is a carer and proactively offering information and support.

Using the knowledge carers have gained to continuously improve the design, delivery and access to services.

Providing support to enable carers to keep well and access social, educational and employment opportunities.

Developing the strategy

The strategy is being written in collaboration with carers in Herefordshire.

The value of unpaid carers to those whom they care for and to the community of Herefordshire, is far greater than monetary value. It is clear that demand for services within the county will continue to grow and that national funding will not be increased to meet this. Services and providers need to join their thinking and work smarter in terms of delivering services which address the priorities and key issues facing carers.

Numbers of carers are increasing nationally and locally to support the growing population of people with care and support needs. The 2011 Census showed that **20,627** adults in Herefordshire see themselves as carers whilst a survey in the same year estimated there to be **34,200** carers.

Carers' experiences and outlook vary: many choose to identify as partner, family member or friend rather than carer and their priority is that the needs of the cared for person are met.

What carers say about being a carer – common themes:

- Carers try to cope despite the frailty of their situation, often neglecting their own wellbeing and may only be identified at the point of crisis.
- Responsiveness to carers is often poor across universal services including health services.
- Carers often feel professionals do not respect or listen to them.
- Caring has a big impact on people's work, career and income.
- Social isolation is very common, with people losing contact with social networks and having little time for themselves. This is supported by national research.
- Caring has a significant impact on health, with full time carers being at heightened risk of long term conditions, mental ill health, self-neglect and undiagnosed health needs. Services seldom address the needs of carer and cared for holistically.
- There is worry about reduction to existing services.
- Carers are keen to contribute to the design and review of services

In addition to the common themes above, more specific themes have emerged which are dependent on the type of caring role a carer has.

Young carers

- specific issues around school
- inconsistent support services
- concern about being labelled

Parent carers

- may provide care for longer and take longer to identify as carers
- have to negotiate multiple services and professional cultures and are most likely to provide mutual support

Working carers

- face daunting challenges in balancing employment and caring
- can experience significant loss of income and long term impact on their skills, confidence and career prospects

Older carers

- many have health needs or are disabled
- are the most likely group to be caring for someone with dementia
- are especially vulnerable to isolation, services not being joined up or being unresponsive

Former carers

- many experience a loss of sense of identity after the death of a loved one
- often feel isolated, forgotten and lacking in purpose

Strategic Priorities

(please tick)

Priority 1 - Identifying carers, registration and aligning to information and support	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Promote early identification among carers, professionals and universal services.			
2. Re-launch a carers' register which is integrated with NHS and council systems to promote seamless services.			
3. Provide an opt-out for carers who do not wish for their data to be shared.			
4. Link identification to information and advice on schemes which support carers to plan for emergencies, including access to urgent care.			
Comments			

Priority 2 – Information, advice and signposting	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Provide carers with credible, flexible and consistent sources of information and advice.			
2. The same sources of information are also to be used by professionals to ensure they are consistent and maintained.			
3. Recognise that other carers are often the best source of information and advice.			
4. WISH will be the main vehicle for providing information and signposting in Herefordshire.			
5. WISH will be upgraded and improved with more effective search functions. All services will be encouraged to use WISH and show carers how to use it.			
6. WISH will become more interactive with areas for social networking and discussion forums. Carers will be able to share ideas and information as well as challenge services.			
Comments			

Priority 3 - Valuing carers knowledge and experience	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Recognise the skills and knowledge many carers have before they become carers, plus the expertise that they gain through their caring role.			
2. Commissioners and providers of services will engage this knowledge and experience when designing and improving services.			
3. Carers will be directly involved in monitoring and reviewing the performance of contracted services.			
Comments			

Priority 4 – Networking and mutual support	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Social media and technology offer great potential for carers to provide mutual support and exchange information.			
2. Resources will be directed towards beginning and enabling networks and mutual support to develop and be sustained independently.			
3. Online platforms for interactive exchange and support via social media will be provided by WISH and encouraged elsewhere.			
Comments			

Priority 5 - Access to universal services <i>(Universal services are services which people have regular access to, such as pharmacies, GPs, schools and libraries).</i>	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Universal service providers will be encouraged to adapt their services to take into account the needs of carers.			
2. Consideration will be given to how carers can be involved in challenging and advising service providers.			
3. All services and providers should identify carers, signpost and provide support from first contact.			
4. Training and awareness-raising will be undertaken among providers and professionals.			
Comments			

Priority 6 – Assessments and carers	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. The purpose of carers' assessments will be made clearer.			
2. The role and function of other assessments involving carers will be clarified amongst carers and professionals through a programme of awareness raising.			
3. Assessments for carers and the cared for person will be interdependent.			
4. Assessments will be based upon the strengths of the cared for person, the carer, their family and community wherever possible			
5. Where appropriate, carers will participate in any assessment of the cared for person. Their contribution will be valued and recorded consistently across sectors and services.			
6. Young carers' needs will be assessed in line with best practice including when transitioning to adulthood. and			
7. Ways for carers to be involved in hospital discharge planning will be explored.			
Comments			

Any other comments

Thank you very much for helping us with this important piece of work.
Please either email your comments to:

awbcommissioning@herefordshire.gov.uk

or post this document to:

Herefordshire Council Research Team
Freepost SWC4816
PO Box 4
Hereford HR4 0BR

by Friday 26 May 2017

Next steps

Once we have incorporated your comments and thoughts into the above, we will develop the full strategy and take it to the council's Cabinet for approval in July 2017. Once approved, we will begin to plan how we deliver the strategy..... we will keep you involved.