

Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council
and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

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Cardiff and Vale Unpaid Carers Charter

Companion Document



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CARDIFF & VALE
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
BOARD



Our vision

"To identify and recognise unpaid carers for the vital contribution they make to the community and the people they care for, and in doing so enable unpaid carers to have a life alongside caring."

Our vision for Young Unpaid carers

"Young unpaid carers are really important to us, to the communities where they live and to the people they care for. We want to know if you care for someone, so that we can help you and the person you care for, and make sure you have time to do things for yourself"

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Thank you also to Glamorgan Voluntary Service, Cardiff Third Sector Council, Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board, Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan County Council the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board and the Regional Unpaid Carers Board.

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council and, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board's Unpaid Carers Charter.

We recognise the vital contribution that unpaid carers make to our communities and the people they care for. We are committed to ensuring that unpaid carers are recognised and that every step is taken to ensure the region is an environment that supports the highest quality of life possible for unpaid carers and the people they care for.

We firmly believe that a regional approach to unpaid carers is a positive step for the area. By working together with a wide range of organisations who come into contact with unpaid carers, we can support the region to become a beneficial environment within which unpaid carers, and those who benefit from their assistance, can thrive.

This Charter demonstrates our commitment to deliver the best outcomes for unpaid carers and the people they care for and will give us a clear strategic direction for the next five years. The Charter will introduce eight clear commitments, which we have developed from a review of national strategy and by listening to what unpaid carers have told us matters most to them.

The Charter further shows our dedication to work together, in partnership, to develop and deliver the best support available to unpaid carers, and make the best use of shared resources. We would like to thank everyone who has given their time to attend consultation events and for giving us their expert opinions and commitment to improving the lives of unpaid carers' in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

To be signed off by Councillor Cardiff, Councillor Vale and Chair UHB

Introduction

Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board work together jointly to oversee the development and delivery of integrated health and social care services in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, to ensure they support local people and their needs.

Our regional partnership has worked with unpaid carers and the people they care for, to understand their experiences and what matters to them. We have taken into account what unpaid carers have told us, legislation, and local context and looked at our resources. Together we have produced a set of commitments that sets out clear direction for the planning and development of support to all unpaid carers across the region over the next five years.

The Unpaid Carers Charter outlines our vision and eight commitments which we believe are fundamental to supporting unpaid carers now and, in the future, and gives direction for the development of support to unpaid carers across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

What is an Unpaid Carer?

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support

Across Wales there are an estimated 370,000 carers and approximately 50,580 in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The economic value of the contribution made by unpaid carer in Wales is estimated at £8.1 billion a year (census 2011).

Carers make a huge contribution to the local and national health and social care economy through the provision of care and support to relatives, families and friends. Providing this care improves the quality of life of the people they care for and can often go unrecognised, even by carers themselves who may not recognise or see themselves as "a carer". Looking after carers' well-being is vital to delivering sustainable social services to the people in our communities.

Purpose – why have an Unpaid Carers Charter?

The purpose of our Charter is to improve outcomes for unpaid carers across the region. This Charter and companion document will outline and support our ambition to make the region a supportive and beneficial environment for unpaid carers, and ensure that those who benefit from their work, can thrive.

Our vision

"To identify and recognise unpaid carers for the vital contribution they make to the community and the people they care for, and in doing so enable carers to have a life alongside caring."

"Young carers are really important to us, to the communities where they live and to the people they care for. We want to know if you care for someone, so that we can help you and the person you care for, and make sure you have time to do things for yourself"

Aim

The Charter will enable us to:

- improve support for unpaid carers
- explore and identify new ways of working
- increase accessibility to information, advice, and assistance for unpaid carers

National Context

National Priorities

The Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers has four National Priorities.

Our regional commitments have taken account the National Strategy for Unpaid Carers and provide the framework for improving the delivery of carer support services across our region. The National Priorities state:

Priority One

Identifying and valuing unpaid carers – all unpaid carers to be valued and supported to make an informed choice about the care they provide and to access the support they need whilst caring and when the caring role comes to an end.

Priority two

Providing information, advice and assistance – it is vital all unpaid carers have access to the right information and advice at the right time and in an appropriate format.

Priority three

Supporting life alongside caring – all unpaid carers must have the opportunity to take breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their own health and well-being and have a life alongside caring.

Priority four

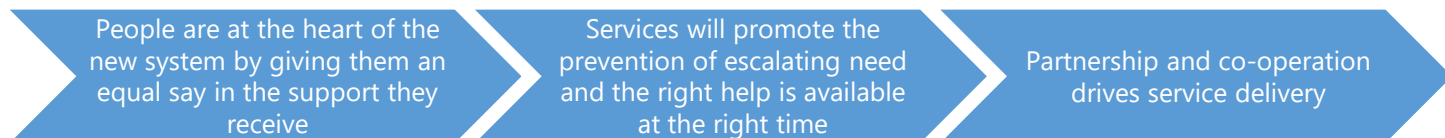
Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace – employers and educational / training settings should be encouraged to adapt their policies and practices, enabling unpaid carers to work and learn alongside their caring role.

The Law

The two main pieces of legislation reflected in our commitments are the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The Act represents a unifying set of legislation across all of health and social care in Wales. It has imposed duties on local authorities, health boards and the Welsh Assembly to work to promote the well-being of those who need care and support and unpaid carers who need support. The principles of the Act:



The Act outlines key duties, to ensure:

- People have control over what support they need, making decisions about their care and support as an equal partner
- New proportionate assessment focuses on the individual
- Unpaid carers have an equal right to assessment for support to those who they care for
- Easy access to information and advice is available to all
- Powers to safeguard people are stronger
- A preventative approach to meeting care and support needs is practised
- Local authorities and health boards come together in new statutory partnerships to drive integration, innovation and service change

For the first time, the Act gave carers the same rights as those they care for and brought in a broader definition of a carer:

“A person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child”

Stronger duties are placed on local authorities to identify, assess and support carers.

- More carers are entitled to a carers’ assessment and support plans
- Local authorities must offer assessments where they believe a carer has a need for support
- Staff must promote the well-being of carers who need support
- Local authorities and partners must assess the needs of carers in their area and submit a plan to Ministers on how they will meet these needs
- If a local authority determine that a carer’s needs meet the edibility criteria then they must consider what can be done to meet those needs
- There is a greater focus on the role of third sector organisations in providing services and support

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Act places a duty on Public bodies (including health and social services) to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. The Act requires them to: • work together better • involve people reflecting the diversity of our communities • look to the long term as well as focusing on now • take action to try and stop problems getting worse - or even stop them happening in the first place.

How have we developed our commitments?

To understand the most detailed possible picture of the situation for unpaid carers in the region, we collected information from the following sources:

- Consultation across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan
- Online survey for adult carers, young carers and professionals
- Outreach through social media and the third sector
- Engagement events and workshops for adult, young carers and professionals
- Research and analysis from key institutions such as the Care Inspectorate Wales and Social Care Wales
- Existing public consultation activity for example. Cardiff Debate, UK Census, Population Needs Assessment
- Local authority and health board practitioners, performance teams and analysts
- Third sector organisations
- Local, national and international examples of best practice
- Additional local, regional and national strategies and policies
- Disability Futures – Parental Engagement Sessions
- Supporting Carers - UHB Staff Survey (Carers Wales/Pollen Shop)
- Cardiff & The Vale Carer Engagement Project (The Care Collective)
- Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales (January 2018)

A number of consultations and reviews have taken place working with and targeted at the health and social care sector. The results have helped to inform the direction of our Charter:

- A State of Caring in Wales (Carers UK, 2021)
- Preventative Support for Adult Carers in Wales: Rapid Review (Social Care Wales, 2018)
- Let's Talk (Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment 2022)
- Young Carers Speak Out (Cardiff University, 2016)
- Track the Act Briefing 4 (Carers Wales, 2019)
- Provision for young carers in secondary schools, further education colleges and pupil referral units across Wales (Estyn, May 2019)
- The 'Front Door' to Adult Social Care (Wales Audit Office, 2019)

The findings of the consultation events and online surveys provided us with positive feedback on the priorities identified. Based on this information and what unpaid carers had already told us about what would help them, we finalised these as the eight commitments that our Charter should focus on.

Our commitments

Our regional commitments which set out our priority areas of work for the next five years are based on what unpaid carers have told us matter to them.



We will ensure unpaid carers are identified and recognised in our communities

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Not all unpaid carers identify themselves as being a carer, often they do not recognise their caring role and see themselves as a relative or a friend.
- Young people may be reluctant to identify as young unpaid carers for a number of reasons, including fear of being stigmatised or bullied, a sense of loyalty to their family, or simply not recognising their caring role.
- Unpaid carers from black, Asian and ethnic minority groups can face additional challenges in recognising themselves as a carer and can struggle with language barriers, stereotypes and accessing culturally appropriate services.
- Unpaid carers can struggle with demands on their time, they may be unable to recognise their own needs and seek support.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Work with our partners in health, social care, housing, education, and the third sector (for example. charities and voluntary groups) to promote awareness of early identification of unpaid carers through information and training.
- Work with schools to help make the identification and support for young unpaid carers in primary and secondary schools as easy as possible.
- Work with GP practices to support the identification and recognition of all unpaid carers.

What does good look like?

- Unpaid carers will be recognised, and able to identify themselves as an unpaid carer.
- People will understand what being an unpaid carer means.
- Those working with children are able to identify young carers.
- Specific needs and issues will be identified for different carer populations, and support will be culturally and socially appropriate and accessible.

Dan's story

Dan is 15 years old and cares for his younger sibling who has epilepsy and also for his mum, who isn't very well. He is in Year 10 at school and his school life is really busy as he starts to prepare for his GCSEs.

He didn't like speaking about being a young carer because he felt different from his friends, so he just kept it to himself. He was very proud to be helping his mum and brother, but sometimes wished he could do some things on his own or with his friends and not have to worry about his family.

Dan didn't realise that school could help him. He spoke to his form teacher and said that he thinks he is a young carer. The school told Dan about a young unpaid carers youth club, which he now attends, when he can, and because his teachers are aware of his situation, he feels he can ask them for help with planning his school work.



We will ensure the right information and advice is given to unpaid carers at the right time

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Easy to access, reliable and consistent information are key to unpaid carers knowing where to go to access appropriate support services.
- Unpaid carers want to be able to access information and advice in a variety of ways. For example, young unpaid carers may prefer to use social media or the internet to access the information they need.
- Unpaid carers are more likely to access support if it is local and provided in their communities.
- Early intervention is crucial to helping unpaid carers maintain their health and well-being. Lack of local, support services can potentially contribute to a rise in A&E visits and hospital admissions as families say they often have nowhere else to turn.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Promote early intervention and preventative services to help unpaid carers and the person they care for.
- Make information available to unpaid carers in the most appropriate format (easy-read/braille/ in different languages).
- Use social media and the internet to make it easier for unpaid carers to find the right information when they need it.
- Inform unpaid carers of their right to support and that their rights are equal to those they care for.

What does good look like?

- Unpaid carers will know where to go to find information and advice to help them when they need it.
- Making unpaid carers aware of their rights will enable them to make informed decisions and have choice and control.
- Through early intervention unpaid carers will know where to go for help and support, before things reach crisis.
- Young carers will know who they can ask for help and will be included in age appropriate conversations about their caring role.

Isobel's story

Around twelve years ago Isobel's mum's suffered quite a major stroke. Unfortunately this left her with long term health problems and mobility issues which began to impact on her day to day life. Her mum could no longer live on her own and went to live with Isobel and her two sons. Initially Isobel received a lot of support from hospital staff. She appreciated having somebody to talk to who was aware of her situation. However, over time, Isobel began to feel she was her own; that life was passing her by. She didn't know where to turn to, so she eventually contacted a local charity who were able to put her in touch with a carers support group in the community. She now attends, every fortnight, and takes her mum, which they both enjoy. She has made a few friends and they are able to support each other



We will work to improve the quality of support provided to unpaid carers

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Unpaid carers would prefer to provide complex and detailed information about them, once and not have to repeat themselves.
- Unpaid carers acknowledge the sharing of information between organisations and may seek different kinds of support from different people or organisations.
- Young unpaid carers often face individual challenges which may not be linked to their caring role. These challenges need to be considered when undertaking assessments or planning support for them.
- Useful information to help unpaid carers with practical things, such as where to go to for legal help, how technology can help them to become more efficient and take some of the worry out of caring.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Facilitate and promote carer support networks to provide an opportunity for unpaid carers to share experiences and learning from each other.
- Develop training for young unpaid carers to recognise their skills and experience and help young unpaid carers to look after themselves.
- Continue to work with schools so they understand and are able to support young unpaid carers.
- Ensure the needs of unpaid carers are identified and they receive the appropriate support whether through a carer's assessment or in other ways.

What does good look like?

- Unpaid carers will get the support and help they need to do the things that are important to them.
- Access to learn new skills and to help unpaid carers feel confident in their caring role to help build resilience.
- Unpaid carers will receive appropriate support, whether through a carer's assessment or other ways.
- Young unpaid carers will get the support and help they need to do the things that are important to them.

Mahalia's Story

Mahalia has been caring for her neighbour for five years. Mr Wilson is 90 years old, and although he has family, they live abroad and are not able to visit often. Mahalia says she became a carer quite by accident.

At first Mahalia didn't think she was a carer, it was just something that she did. When she saw a carer's information board at her local GP surgery, she began to think maybe she was a carer.

Mahalia contacted the council and explained her situation. They offered her a carer's assessment.

As part of the assessment the Carer's Officer was able to give her important advice and guidance on how to manage her caring role. It was a chance for Mahalia to talk about her needs with somebody who understood. In recognising herself as a carer, she now feels she has someone to turn to and feels supported to continue her caring role.



We will develop and improve the skills of our workforce to help carers achieve what matters to them

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Often unpaid carers are too busy caring to be able to ask for help and sometimes need a person to be there to recognise this.
- Unpaid carers want people working with them to hear what they say and to show they understand. Working in partnership with unpaid carers is fundamental to achieving this.
- Making unpaid carers aware of their rights can empower them to have a voice in the support they receive.
- Unpaid carers want contact with professionals more regularly rather than just to offer an assessment.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Make links with our partners to identify and promote training and development opportunities for unpaid carers, and identify any training and development needs that are not currently being met.
- Train people who work with young unpaid carers, to make sure they find out about what is important to young unpaid carers and their families to find out how they can help.
- Where appropriate, share information with partner organisations involved in supporting unpaid carers.
- Work in a person-centred approach focussing on individual need to ensure unpaid carers' health and well-being outcomes are co-produced by individuals and members of the workforce.

What does good look like?

- Organisations will work in partnership and will talk to each other to share information to make things as good as they can be for unpaid carers.'
- The people who work for us will be able to help unpaid carers in the best way and they will understand what it is really like to be a carer.
- Unpaid carers and the people who work with them will understand how modern technology solutions will help manage their caring role and can take some of the worry out of caring.

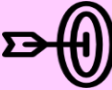
Arthurs' Story

Arthur is 77 years old and has been caring for his wife Mary who has dementia. Mary also has an underlying health condition which requires a daily visit from a District Nurse.

In recent months Mary has not wanted to go out and gets very agitated when people visit the family home. Arthur and his wife used to have a very active social life.

The District Nurse suggested that Arthur should think about having some support for himself and said that she would speak to Mary's social worker about it. A visit was arranged and following a carers assessment it was agreed that a local volunteer befriending service might be able to help. The social worker got in touch with the local group for Arthur and together with the District Nurse they arranged for the visits to take place at the same time until Mary got used to the volunteer.

Arthur has re-joined his local bowls club and says that it has made him feel so much better. He now has some time to enjoy himself without worrying about leaving Mary.

 **We will make best use of the resources available to contribute to caring for people in our communities and make sure unpaid carers have time to do the things they enjoy**

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Unpaid carers understand that resources are limited and it is essential they are used in the most efficient and effective way.
- Each carer has different, individual needs, wishes and outcomes. Support needs to be wide ranging and meet the needs of different groups of unpaid carers, including young, older and parent unpaid carers and inclusive of LGBTQ+, minority ethnic and disabled carers.
- Unpaid carers appreciate honesty about what resources are available to them.
- Unpaid carers want to be involved in the developing and creating new and flexible opportunities for support.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Recognise whilst there are many things unpaid carers have in common, the support available to unpaid carers need to be individual and consider the unique nature of their caring role.
- When support is provided, unpaid carers will be asked what difference it has made, to make sure we are supporting them in the best and most cost-effective way.
- Set up carer support groups at community location for example. GP surgeries, libraries, with information about keeping healthy and connected.
- Develop support for unpaid carers using digital solutions for example, use online carer forums and social media to help access information and support.

What does good look like?

- Money and resources will be spent in the best way to help unpaid carers.
- People who can support unpaid carers will understand how to do things differently to make things better for unpaid carers.
- Working in partnership with people who provide support to ensure carer's preferences, needs and values guide decisions and are respectful and responsive to unpaid carers.
- Unpaid carers will have access to a range innovative support including technology.

Anna's story (Parent Carer)

Anna became a carer on the day her daughter was born. Her daughter Sophie has cerebral palsy and requires constant care and support. Anna didn't recognise herself as a carer, she just saw herself as a mum and thought that giving up her job to look after her was something that any mum would do. Anna had become increasingly isolated since her daughter was born and sometimes felt lonely when her husband was at work.

As part of their outreach program, the local council had a carers information stand in the local garden centre. Anna had a chat with a carers' officer who told her about some local community support groups that she could get in touch with and suggested that having a carers assessment might help.



We will work together to ensure unpaid carers are supported in education and work

What we know about unpaid carers:

- There is a growing need for employers to support people who juggle work and their caring responsibilities. Supporting working unpaid carers can help to reduce stress, improve morale and reduce absences.
- Often unpaid carers are too busy caring to be able to ask for help and sometimes need a person to be there to recognise this.
- Unpaid carers will face a unique set of challenges based on their circumstances, whether in education, unemployed, employed, self-employed or retired; therefore, services and information should be sensitive to this.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Support unpaid carers to return or remain within the workforce, either alongside or instead of the caring role if they want to.
- Work with schools to help make the identification and support for young unpaid carers in primary and secondary schools as easy as possible.
- Working with employers and their representative bodies to promote unpaid carer friendly workplaces.

What good looks like:

- Unpaid carers will be supported to achieve their personal outcomes, including continuing to work where possible.
- Young carers will know who they can ask for help and will be included in age appropriate conversations about their caring role.
- The people who work for us will be able to help unpaid carers in the best way and they will understand what it is really like to be a carer.
- Unpaid carers not in employment, education or training should be able to access the right information, advice and support to develop the skills to gain suitable employment, whether re-entering the workforce, or getting a job for the first time.

Case study

Melanie is a full-time mum who cares for her son who has autism; but she was struggling to find a job which worked alongside her busy home life. She was referred to the Carer's Gateway through their Social Worker to have a discussion about some of the wider support available in the region. Through having a 'What Matters?' conversation the Carer's Gateway found out she had an interest in floristry and so were able to support Melanie to apply for a grant to undertake an online floristry course to receive an accredited qualification.

Melanie is now able to run her own business from home, which provides additional income, whilst still being able to fulfil her caring role.



We will ask you to tell us what you think

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Unpaid carers want to be given the opportunity to tell organisations what they think about the services and support they use.
- Engagement should be pro-active and inclusive, taking into account specific, targeted engagement with diverse carer groups.
- Consistent and meaningful carer engagement should be at the heart of all good health and social care policies and planning.
- Unpaid carers by nature have limited time. Ways in which people are asked to contribute need to consider timeframes and allow for planning and timely responses.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Make sure consultation and engagement activities are accessible and unpaid carers are supported to be able to contribute their views and opinions effectively.
- Evaluate and review the current ways we engage with unpaid carers and how effectively different carer groups are represented and develop ways to reach any groups which may be under represented.
- Provide different opportunities for unpaid carers to have their say and ask unpaid carers to tell us the best way to involve them, for example, via social media, on their own or with a group of unpaid carers.
- Engage with young unpaid carers in evaluating support and work with them in designing support options that best suit their individual caring situations.

What does good look like?

- Feedback on what unpaid carers have told us will be used and shared more effectively in the planning of and delivery of support to unpaid carers.
- Unpaid carers will feel their voice is heard and build better relationships between unpaid carers and people who work with unpaid carers.
- Open and honest engagement with unpaid carers to evaluate the support available to them and what is working well and not so well.
- Working in partnership with unpaid carers and people who work with unpaid carers to improve the support available in the region.

Bob's story

Bob's wife Martha was diagnosed with a brain tumour shortly after they were married. Due to the location of the tumour, surgery was difficult and Martha was left with behavioural problems ever since. It changed both of their lives.

Through a local charity he found some training courses which helped him to develop his skills in caring for his wife. Most beneficial was the contact with other carers.

Through his contact with the local charity they asked Bob if he would like to be part of a panel of carers who meet to discuss the support available to them, in their local area. The carers' panel is a group of volunteers who work with local organisations to help develop, evaluate and review services for carers.



We will listen to the voice of unpaid carers to inform the development of services and support

What we know about unpaid carers:

- Unpaid carers want people to understand their role, who listen to them and are not judgemental.
- Young unpaid carers want to be heard and recognised and be included in decisions that affect their lives.
- When the cared for person is in hospital, unpaid carers want to be informed of important decisions which may impact on their role as a carer.
- Unpaid carers want to be involved in the decisions that impact on them and value honest and open dialogue with professionals.

These are some of the things we are going to do:

- Ensure unpaid carers have a choice over how to conduct an assessment that best supports their lifestyle.
- Include unpaid carers when a decision is made about them, and if it is required, ask someone to help decide what is best.
- If the person being cared for is admitted into hospital, let unpaid carers know what is happening and include them in the discussions when they are able to come home.
- Continue to engage with young unpaid carers through the Young Carers Forum and use it to create support better for young carers.

What does good look like?

- Unpaid carers will be given the opportunity to be listened to and involved in the decisions about the support they receive and the care of their family.
- Unpaid carers will be included within the hospital admission and discharge planning process.
- Young unpaid carers will be given the opportunity to be involved in the decisions about the support they receive.
- Advocacy will be proactively offered, explained and independent from the advocacy for the person they care for.

Aazad's Story

Aazad's parents came to Wales in the late 1950s. They had no older relatives in the country, they had no experience of the issues people may face as they get older.

Around seven years ago, Aazad's mum, Hayat's health started to deteriorate. Her husband didn't realise the seriousness of her condition and found it difficult to express himself to health professionals so Aazad stepped in to help his mum and dad. Shortly after, Hayat was diagnosed with vascular dementia.

Aazad said that at the time he felt stuck and very alone. He was unsure about any rights he had to be involved in the decisions around his mum's care.

How will we deliver on our commitments?

Implementation and next steps

To achieve our shared vision and deliver our eight commitments we will work together with all of our stakeholders to jointly develop and implement detailed action plans.

We will involve the right people at the right time and utilise the Unpaid Carers Board as an expert reference group to develop and implement the plans. We will work closely with unpaid carers and staff in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and third sector organisations to make sure we support unpaid carers the best way we can. We will continue to recognise the invaluable difference unpaid carers make to the lives of those who they care for and the vital contribution they make to our communities.

Our next steps

Our next task is to produce detailed action plans for the future. This will be based on the areas highlighted for development within this document which have been brought together in Appendix A. Our action plans will include what we are going to do to and how we will support unpaid carers in their caring role and enable them have a life alongside caring. We will make sure our plans are:

- kept within the parameters of the priorities and consistent with our vision for unpaid carers
- monitored regularly through the Unpaid Carers Board
- regularly reviewed and where necessary adjustments made to account for any changes that impact the ability to achieve the actions

How will we know when we have achieved our priorities?

We will regularly report the activity of the action plans to the Unpaid Carers Board so they can monitor and evaluate progress. We will continue to speak with unpaid carers and ask them if we have achieved our aims; this feedback will ultimately tell us if we have improved unpaid carers' well-being and the quality of support they receive.

Quality and Performance Monitoring

It is important we strive to provide high quality and sustainable support for unpaid carers. Over the next five years, we will work with unpaid carers and our partners to determine how and what support would be most beneficial to enable unpaid carers to maintain and improve their well-being whilst continuing to meet the demands of their caring role.

The Welsh Government code of practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales requires us to report specific metrics to help understand how our work facilitates improvement in social care, specifically when contributing to the well-being outcomes of unpaid carers who need support.

Quality assurance measures will be put in place in line with Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and link to each of the priorities to help us evaluate their effectiveness in supporting unpaid carers to achieve their outcomes.

Needs and Demand

We have collected a wide range of information from and about unpaid carers, including local and national information. This has helped us to understand what is like to be a carer in Cardiff and the Vale or Glamorgan and what we can do to make things better.

This analysis gave us useful insight and understanding of some of the key areas we need consider when both developing our strategy and during its implementation.

Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment¹

The Population Needs Assessment for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan undertaken in 2021/22 gave valuable information about the main areas of concern for unpaid carers.

Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan has approximately 50,580 unpaid carers of all ages, based on the 2011 Census. The figures for unpaid carers (below) are likely to be an underestimate of the true number, as data collection was over 10 years ago, and the overall population has grown in numbers since then. Additionally, Carers Wales have reported that in the first few weeks of the pandemic, in Wales alone, around 196,000 people became unpaid carers. Tables below show that the proportion of the population who are unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan is the same as the national average (12%); however, in Cardiff it is less at 10%.

The number of carers in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan (census 2001, 2011)

Increase in number of unpaid carers across the region as reported in the 2011 census compared to the previous census in 2001.

Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan	2001	2011
Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	29,527	31,610
Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	5,066	6,779
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	10,428	12,191
Total	45,021	50,580

Current number of carers by age range in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan (census)

	Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan
Age 0 to 15	996
Age 16 to 24	3,454
Age 25 to 34	4,928
Age 35 to 49	12,888
Age 50 to 64	17,746
Age 65 and over	10,568
Total	50,580

¹ <https://cvihsc.co.uk/about/what-we-do/population-needs-assessment/>

State of Caring 2021²

Each year, Carers UK carries out a survey of carers to understand the current state of caring in the UK. This report contains a snapshot of what caring in Wales is like in 2021, capturing the impact that caring has on carers' lives and evidencing the policy recommendations that would improve this.

Financial:

Caring often brings with it additional costs, from equipment and care costs to increased expenditure on fuel and transportation. When asked to describe their current financial situation, 36% of carers in Wales said they were struggling to make ends meet. A further 23% are or have been in debt as a result of caring and 8% cannot afford utility bills such as electricity, gas, water or telephone bills. When asked about how their financial situation had changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 36% of carers said that their financial situation had got worse since the start of the pandemic. Caring can be expensive and 65% of carers are spending their own money on care, support services or products for the person they care for. The average monthly spend for carers in Wales is £109.75 and with high rates of inflation and a rising cost of living, this extra spend is likely to further disadvantage carers financially.

Support and Services:

Carers often need practical and emotional support to enable them to care safely for people with complex needs, and too often they struggle to get the support they need. When asked about barriers to accessing support, the largest issue for Welsh carers was that they did not know what services were available in their area with 40% of carers reporting this as a barrier. In addition, 30% of carers were concerned about the risk of catching COVID-19 and 32% say that the care and support services did not meet their needs. Considering the future of services, 51% of carers were uncertain about what practical support they may be able to access in the next twelve months and 66% were worried that services will be reduced.

Health:

Caring can have a detrimental impact on someone's physical and mental health. 26% of carers described their physical health as bad or very bad. 34% of carers rated their mental health as bad or very bad. Looking at wider indicators of wellbeing, 36% of carers reported that they are often or always lonely, otherwise known as being 'chronically lonely'. Carers also rated their overall satisfaction with life at an average of 4 out of 10 and their level of anxiety at 6 out of 10.

Carer's Assessments:

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 gives Welsh carers the right to a carer's needs assessment. Despite carers' rights to assessments only 21% of Welsh carers reported having an assessment in the last 12 months. Of those, 28% waited more than six months for their assessment. Of those who hadn't requested a carer's assessment, 37% stated that this was because they didn't

² <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/state-of-caring-2021-report>

know what it was and 20% stated it was because they didn't think it would be beneficial. 10% of carers said their assessment had been postponed or they were still waiting.

Technology:

When asked about their current use of digital technology, remote healthcare such as online GP appointments was the most popular technology listed with 37% of carers stating that this made their caring role easier. Looking to the future, 31% of Welsh carers would like to continue accessing support services digitally in the future and 44% stating they would like to continue accessing health and social care services digitally.

Work

Working carers represent a significant proportion of the working population and 196 respondents were in paid work. The pandemic is continuing to have an impact on working experiences, with 51% of working carers are working from home part or full time. The limited return of services continues to have an impact. 30% of working carers in Wales stated that if care services did not return, they would either need to reduce their working hours or give up work entirely.

Finance & Resources

We will make sure that all funding streams identified for carers are co-ordinated and provide support in the way they need it most and when they need it most. We will consider all resources to help deliver against our seven priorities; this includes making best use of the following funding streams:



As the populations in our communities change we need to change how we provide care and support. We will see an increasingly older population who need support to manage as well as seeing increases in the number of people with complex needs and people who look to us to help them. We need to acknowledge the budget pressures we are likely to face in the future.

We will continue to work together with our partners in new and innovative ways to deliver the most efficient, effective and sustainable support to unpaid carers. Through greater collaboration and integration of services we will maximise the use of all available resources to help deliver support to all unpaid carers in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Appendix A

The below table, pulls out all of the key actions within the commitment document, these will be taken forward and monitored by the regional Unpaid Carers Board:

Commitment	What will we do?
We will ensure unpaid carers are identified and recognised in our communities	Work with our partners in health, social care, housing, education, and the third sector (for example. charities and voluntary groups) to promote awareness of early identification of unpaid carers through information and training.
	Work with schools to help make the identification and support for young unpaid carers in primary and secondary schools as easy as possible.
	Work with GP practices to support the identification and recognition of all unpaid carers.
We will ensure the right information and advice is given to unpaid carers at the right time	Promote early intervention and preventative services to help unpaid carers and the person they care for.
	Make information available to unpaid carers in the most appropriate format (easy-read/braille/ in different languages).
	Use social media and the internet to make it easier for unpaid carers to find the right information when they need it.
	Inform unpaid carers of their right to support and that their rights are equal to those they care for.
We will work to improve the quality of support provided to unpaid carers	Facilitate and promote carer support networks to provide an opportunity for unpaid carers to share experiences and learning from each other.
	Develop training for young unpaid carers to recognise their skills and experience and help young unpaid carers to look after themselves.
	Continue to work with schools so they understand and are able to support young unpaid carers.
	Ensure the needs of unpaid carers are identified and they receive the appropriate support whether through a carer's assessment or in other ways.
We will develop and improve the skills of our workforce to help carers achieve what matters to them	Make links with our partners to identify and promote training and development opportunities for unpaid carers, and identify any training and development needs that are not currently being met.
	Train people who work with young unpaid carers, to make sure they find out about what is important to young unpaid carers and their families to find out how they can help.
	Where appropriate, share information with partner organisations involved in supporting unpaid carers.
	Work in a person-centred approach focussing on individual need to ensure unpaid carers' health and well-being outcomes are co-produced by individuals and members of the workforce.
We will make best use of the resources available to contribute to caring for people in our communities and make sure unpaid carers have time to do the things they enjoy	Recognise whilst there are many things unpaid carers have in common, the support available to unpaid carers need to be individual and consider the unique nature of their caring role.
	When support is provided, unpaid carers will be asked what difference it has made, to make sure we are supporting them in the best and most cost-effective way.

	Set up carer support groups at community location for example. GP surgeries, libraries, with information about keeping healthy and connected.
	Develop support for unpaid carers using digital solutions for example. use online carer forums and social media to help access information and support.
We will work together to ensure unpaid carers are supported in education and work	Support unpaid carers to return or remain within the workforce, either alongside or instead of the caring role if they want to.
	Work with schools to help make the identification and support for young unpaid carers in primary and secondary schools as easy as possible.
	Working with employers and their representative bodies to promote unpaid carer friendly workplaces.
We will ask you to tell us what you think	Make sure consultation and engagement activities are accessible and unpaid carers are supported to be able to contribute their views and opinions effectively.
	Evaluate and review the current ways we engage with unpaid carers and how effectively different carer groups are represented and develop ways to reach any groups which may be under represented.
	Provide different opportunities for unpaid carers to have their say and ask unpaid carers to tell us the best way to involve them, for example. via social media, on their own or with a group of unpaid carers.
	Engage with young unpaid carers in evaluating support and work with them in designing support options that best suit their individual caring situations.
We will listen to the voice of unpaid carers to inform the development of services and support	Ensure unpaid carers have a choice over how to conduct an assessment that best supports their lifestyle.
	Include unpaid carers when a decision is made about them, and if it is required, ask someone to help decide what is best.
	If the person being cared for is admitted into hospital, let unpaid carers know what is happening and include them in the discussions when they are able to come home.
	Continue to engage with young unpaid carers through the Young Carers Forum and use it to create support better for young carers.

