

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	14 April 2026
Report of:	Sara Storey, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Integration
Portfolio of:	Councillor Lucy Steels Walshaw, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

Decision Report: York Carers Strategy 2026–2032

Subject of Report

1. This report seeks Executive approval of the York Carers Strategy 2026–2032.
2. The Strategy sets out the Council’s and its partners’ approach to improving how unpaid carers are identified, supported and involved over the next six years. It provides a framework for improvement, monitoring and accountability.
3. Approval is required to enable publication and implementation of the Strategy and to support the Council’s improvement activity following the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment.

Benefits and Challenges

4. Benefits

The Strategy provides:

- i. A clear, co-produced framework for improving carers’ support
- ii. Improved oversight and accountability through measurable indicators
- iii. Alignment with the Adult Social Care Strategy and CQC improvement work

- IV. A stronger focus on carers' wellbeing, including reducing loneliness
- V. Continued involvement of carers in shaping and monitoring support.

This will strengthen the Council's ability to evidence improvement and improve carers' experience over time.

5. Challenges

Challenges include:

- I. Variability in data quality and recording
- II. Ensuring consistent implementation across services
- III. Managing expectations within existing resources

These challenges will be addressed through governance arrangements and ongoing monitoring.

Policy Basis for Decision

6. The Strategy supports:

- I. The Council Plan priority to improve health and wellbeing
- II. The Adult Social Care Strategy
- III. The Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014

7. It contributes to the Council's manifesto priorities by:

4. Supporting equalities and human rights through recognition of carers
5. Addressing health inequalities
6. Supporting affordability through access to advice and support
7. Strengthening community resilience

Financial Strategy Implications

8. The Strategy will be delivered within existing commissioned services and resources, including York Carers Centre.
9. The Strategy provides a framework for improving coordination and monitoring rather than introducing new unfunded service commitments.

10. Supporting carers is a key part of a preventative approach, helping to sustain care arrangements and reduce reliance on more intensive services.
11. The Strategy will be delivered within existing commissioned services and resources, including York Carers Centre and partner organisations.
12. The Strategy supports a preventative approach by strengthening earlier identification of carers, improving access to support, and promoting carers' wellbeing. This can help reduce escalation of need, delay or prevent more intensive Adult Social Care interventions, and support the Council's wider work to manage demand and reduce cost pressures within Adult Social Care.
13. Work is also underway, supported by improvement funding, to explore the impact of interventions such as carers' breaks, Shared Lives and earlier identification of carers. This will help strengthen the evidence base for how supporting carers can contribute to improved outcomes and more sustainable use of resources over time.
14. Future commissioning decisions will be considered with procurement, legal and finance in line with current practice.

Recommendation and Reasons

15. Executive is asked to approve the York Carers Strategy 2026–2032.

Reason:

To provide a clear, co-produced framework for improving support to carers, aligned with statutory duties, corporate priorities and the Council's improvement work following the CQC assessment.

Background

17. Unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting family members and friends across York.

18. The Council has statutory duties to identify, assess and support carers.
19. The Council's recent CQC assessment identified the need to strengthen how carers are identified, supported and monitored.
20. The Strategy provides the framework for addressing those areas of improvement in a coordinated and sustainable way

Consultation Analysis

21. The Strategy has been developed through extensive engagement and involvement, including:
 - Citywide carers consultation
 - Carers Action Group
 - Carers Strategy Group
 - Partner organisations and commissioned services

Carers helped shape the priorities and direction of the Strategy and remained involved throughout its development.

- Feedback highlighted the need for:
- Earlier identification
- Improved access to support
- Reduced loneliness and isolation
- Improved joined-up services

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

22. **Option 1 – Approve the Strategy (Recommended)**
Provides a clear framework for improvement and supports the Council's statutory duties and CQC improvement work.

Option 2 – Do not approve the Strategy

Further work could be undertaken to improve or add to the Strategy; however it is important for the reasons outlined that there is a clear Strategy in place and approved; and supported through a whole Council commitment.

Organisational Impact and Implications

23. This report demonstrates that all relevant implications of the proposals have been considered

- **Financial**

The Strategy will be delivered within existing resources and commissioned services, including York Carers Centre and partner organisations.

- **Human Resources**

There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report.

- **Legal**

The Strategy supports the Council's duties under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014 to identify, assess and meet the eligible needs of carers, as well as the duty to prevent carers from developing needs for support themselves. These are distinct duties under the Care Act 2014, and it is important to bear in mind that local authorities cannot fulfil their universal prevention duty in relation to carers simply by meeting eligible needs, and nor would universal preventative services always be an appropriate way of meeting carers' eligible needs (Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2.17).

- **Procurement**

There are no direct procurement implications, however where there are services delivered within existing commissioned services and resources, which includes York Carers Centre, that were previously procured and contracts/agreements awarded these would be subject to the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 and council's Contract Procedure Rules and invite competitive tenders prior to those commissioned services contracts/agreements ending.

- **Health and Wellbeing**

Supports carers' health and wellbeing and reduces isolation.

- **Environment and Climate**

No direct implications.

- **Affordability**
 This strategy supports carers through access to advice and support, given that unpaid carers can face significant disadvantages that impact their health, finances, and overall quality of life as they may have to reduce working hours or leave their jobs, with reduce income and pension contributions.
- **Equalities and Human Rights**
 Carers are a protected group under the Equality Act 2010. The Strategy supports the Council’s duties to recognise and support carers and reduce inequalities experienced by carers. A Human Rights and Equity Analysis Tool (HREAT) has been considered as part of the Strategy development and is attached at the end of this document.
- **Data Protection**
 No additional risks identified.
- **Communications**
 A clear and coordinated partners approach is needed to support the publication and rollout of the Strategy. Messaging will focus on raising awareness of the strategy among carers, partners and the wider public, highlighting the Council’s commitment to improving the identification, support and involvement of unpaid carers. Communications activity will also play a key role in managing expectations, ensuring that carers understand both the improvements being introduced and the ongoing constraints on resources. Consistent, accessible messaging—developed with partners and informed by carers’ feedback—will help build trust, strengthen engagement and support the delivery of the Strategy’s aims over time
- **Economy**
 Supports carers to remain in employment where possible.

Risks and Mitigations

24. The Strategy provides a framework for improving support to carers and strengthening oversight and monitoring.
25. There is a risk that improvement may be limited if progress is not effectively monitored. This risk is mitigated through governance arrangements, including oversight by the Carers Strategy Group

and ongoing involvement of carers through the Carers Action Group.

26. The Strategy includes measurable indicators which will be reviewed and refined over time to support continuous improvement.

Wards Impacted

All wards

Contact details

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Report approved:	Yes
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Background papers

CQC Inspection Report and action plan

Annexes

- Annex A: York Carers Strategy 2026–2032
- Annex B: York Unpaid Carers Consultation Report
- Annex C: Human Rights and Equity Analysis Tool (HREAT)