

## **York Carers Strategy 2019 – 2024**

### **Summary**

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to comment on the York Carers Strategy 2019 – 2024 and to formally approve the Strategy on behalf of all HWB partner organisations. The strategy is attached at Annex A to this report and an action plan at Annex B.

### **Strategic Context - The added value provided by carers**

- 2.1 Carers make a critical and often under-appreciated contribution not only to the people they care for but to the sustainability of the entire health and social care system. There are over 7 million carers in the UK and this figure is rapidly increasing. The economic value of the contribution made by carers is estimated to be £132bn per year – almost the equivalent of spend on the entire health and social care budget for the country.<sup>1</sup> Almost everyone will become a carer at some stage in their lives.
- 2.2 There are 18,224 carers recorded in the 2011 census in York, comprising 9.2% of the population, although the true figure is now likely to be much higher.<sup>2</sup> City of York Council and its partners are aware of nearly 4,000 of these carers (or 16% of the total number of carers registered through the census). This demonstrates the importance of reaching out to the many isolated, hidden carers in the city and connecting them to sources of support. Increased CYC investment into the York Carers Centre has yielded some very positive results, with a significant increase in the number of

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<sup>1</sup> Carers UK: Facts about Carers 2018

<sup>2</sup> York Census Data 2011

isolated, marginalised carers actively supported - although findings from the National Carers Survey point to the extent of the challenge still facing the city.

- 2.3 By 2025 it is estimated that the number of York residents aged over 65 will have increased by 16% and the 85+ population will have increased by 32%.<sup>3</sup> As York's population ages so will the prevalence of dementia and other long term health conditions. As a result it is envisaged that the demand for partners and adult children to provide unpaid care will more than double over the forthcoming two decades.
- 2.4 The previous carers' strategy was produced in 2012. Since then national legislative changes have introduced new statutory responsibilities in relation to carers which partners in York must respond to in co-ordinated manner. Feedback from the recent Survey of Adult Carers in England also requires a co-ordinated local response – findings from York are set out in detail below.

### **Survey of Adult Carers in England Findings from the 2018-19 Survey – York**

- 2.5 The Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) asks carers, on a biennial basis, their opinion about the services and care they receive from local authorities. During 2018-19 around 1,200 carers who were actively known to City of York Council (CYC) were eligible to be surveyed by the SACE, of whom just over 1,000 were sampled for their views.
- 2.6 Responses were received from 445 carers, giving an overall response rate of 44%. This is more than the recommended minimum number of responses for the Survey, and is significantly higher than the corresponding response rate for the 2016-17 survey (31%).
- 2.7 The questions included topics such as carers' physical and mental wellbeing, the health of those they cared for, whether they worked, their satisfaction with the support they (or the cared for) received from the local authority and how easy they found it to access information and advice.

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<sup>3</sup> York's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 - 2022

- 2.8 In comparison to two years ago the proportion of positive responses to most of the questions in the survey has significantly reduced. Carers in York are spending increasing longer amounts of time engaged in caring. At least one in four carers in York provides care on a constant basis, a far higher proportion than two years ago. Carers in York are largely supporting people with multiple health issues, whilst not experiencing particularly good health themselves.
- 2.9 Carers in York report being far less able to spend their free time as they wish than they did two years ago, with many feeling more socially isolated and increasingly likely to suffer from sleep deprivation, tiredness and stress.
- 2.10 Carers also reported being less likely to be involved in discussions about the cared for and less likely to be in receipt of services or support than they were two years ago. An increased percentage of carers stated that their caring responsibilities prevented them from taking up employment.
- 2.11 A positive to emerge from the survey was that where carers did receive services or support they were more likely to be satisfied with that support.
- 2.12 The results of the National Carers Survey are concerning, suggesting as they do that the overall quality of life of carers in York has significantly reduced over the last two years. This trend is not unique to York, and appears to have been replicated regionally and nationally. The results must also be balanced against some of the very positive feedback received from the increasing numbers of carers engaging with York Carers Centre.
- 2.13 In light of the above findings it is clear York needs to take action to prevent quality of life of its carers from diminishing further. The strategy presents an ideal opportunity for public, private and voluntary sector partners to genuinely work together to produce a strategy and action plan which delivers meaningful, purposeful change.

### **3. Main / Key Issues to be considered**

- 3.1 The York Carers Strategy 2019 - 2024 responds to local and national developments and sets out York's vision for promoting carers' health and wellbeing in the city over the next five years.
- 3.2 It is an all-age strategy aimed at identifying carers, supporting them and enabling them to have a life of their own outside their caring role. The strategy will focus on improving the physical and mental wellbeing of carers alongside the needs of the people they care for. It has been produced in plain English, with its primary audience being carers and families themselves.
- 3.3 The strategy has been developed by the York Carers Strategy Group. The group feels strongly that as an overarching, umbrella body (which draws together all agencies collectively involved in supporting carers) it is fitting for final ownership to rest with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 A high profile engagement event was held in December 2018, allowing an opportunity for all stakeholders to inform and influence the development of the strategy. The engagement event was attended by carers from all ages and backgrounds alongside key representatives from the public and voluntary sectors.
- 4.2 The event formed one element of a wider consultation process. Over the last 6 months focus groups have been conducted with a cross section of carers through the York Carers Centre Community Outreach Hubs, York Carers Forum and the York Carers Action Group. Specific engagement has also taken place with carers of substance misusers, young carers and the York Mental Health Carers Group.
- 4.3 Feedback from these conversations has provided a valuable picture of what matters most to carers in York. It was clear from the focus groups that carers do not see themselves as carers but as lifelong partners, sons, daughters, siblings, neighbours and friends. People do not resent being carers, but the commitment and social isolation can be overwhelming at times. It was clear that carers valued being able to talk to people in a similar position through friendship groups and informal networks of support.

- 4.4 Identifying as a carer can be a difficult process, especially for young carers, those caring for substance misusers and people with mental health issues. Even after this many found it hard to get the information they need at the right time for them.
- 4.5 Some carers do not think that they are valued by professionals as experts in care and feel excluded from important decisions about the cared for.
- 4.6 Customer and stakeholder feedback has been translated into a series of 'I' / 'My' statements that will form the basis of the four core themes within the new strategy.
1. I recognise myself as a carer, as do others, and I know who to turn to when I need help.
  2. I am supported in my caring role, and am able to live a life of my own.
  3. My voice is heard, and my feedback makes a genuine difference.
- 4.7 A detailed action plan has been developed with partners (including Vale of York CCG, TEWV, York Hospital Trust and the voluntary sector) which will identify measurable actions and outcomes within each of the above themes, accompanied by clear timescales for completion.

## **Options**

5. This is not an options report. The recommendation, as indicated in Section 1 above, is for the Health and Wellbeing Board to review the content of the York Carers Strategy 2019 – 2024, and formally approve the finalised strategy and action plan documents.

## **Analysis**

- 6.1 The new Carers strategy will reflect what carers have told us in York, along with other local and national evidence about the effects of being a carer. The strategy will set out the ways in which carers in York will be supported and how we can protect the health and wellbeing of carers alongside the needs of the people they care for.

- 6.2 Findings from the National Carers Survey have delivered a clear message that, although there is a range of support services already available, there is much more that can be done to support them in their caring role.
- 6.3 It is vitally important that health and social care organisations now work together with carers over forthcoming years under the umbrella of the Health and Wellbeing Board to make sure that support is accessible, affordable and readily available - creating a city that is truly carer friendly.

## **7. Strategic / Operational Plans**

- 7.1 The Carers Strategy builds on the commitments to supporting carers that are set out in York's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 – 2022.
- 7.2 One of the Health and Wellbeing Board's key principles is to recognise and promote the vital role of unpaid carers who contribute so much to health and wellbeing in York, with a commitment to ensuring that the needs of carers feature prominently in all policy making and service delivery.
- 7.3 Outcomes relating to carers are referenced across all of the key HWB work streams - mental health and wellbeing, starting and growing well, living and working well and ageing well.
- 7.4 Other strategies also recognise the role and importance of carers in York, including the All Age Autism Strategy 2018-23 and the Mental Health Strategy 2018 -23.
- 7.5 The Carers Strategy now draws together all the key messages about what matters most to carers. This strategy will now help to shape and develop the specific 'carers offer', as well as enabling the delivery of the other strategies identified above. It also builds on recent developments such as CYC's commitment to championing the new national Employer's for Carers scheme, which the adults commissioning team is actively leading on in terms of roll-out across the city.

## Implications

8. The report must demonstrate that all relevant implications of the proposals have been considered. **All** the following sub-headings should be included. Where a sub-heading is not relevant, this should be indicated by a brief sentence under the title; e.g. “There are no legal implications”. Report authors are advised to contact the relevant Head of Department at an early stage if their report is likely to have significant implications under any of these sub-headings.
  - **Financial** (Contact – Director of Resources)
  - **Human Resources (HR)** There are no human resources implications.
  - **Equalities** There are no equalities implications.
  - **Legal** There are no legal implications.
  - **Crime and Disorder** There are no crime and disorder implications.
  - **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications.
  - **Property** There are no property implications.
  - **Other** There are no other implications.

## Risk Management

9. There are no risk implications, other than the reputational risk to the Council of not having an up-to-date Carers Strategy if the proposal is not approved.

## Recommendations

10. As indicated in 7.5 above the Carers Strategy now draws together all the key messages about what matters most to carers. This strategy will now help to shape and develop the specific ‘carers offer’, as well as enabling the delivery of the other strategies identified above. It is for this reason that the York Carers Strategy Group seeks sign-off of the finalised strategy and action plan from the Health and Wellbeing Board.

11. That the Health and Wellbeing Board considers whether it wishes to receive an annual update in respect of progress towards achieving the outcomes set out in the Action Plan.

Reason: To ensure the needs of carers are met.

### Contact Details

**Author:**

Adam Gray  
Commissioning Manager  
Health, Housing and Adult  
Social Care  
01904 551053

**Chief Officer**

Sharon Houlden  
Director of Adult Social Care

**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 21.08.2019

Gary Brittain  
Head of Commissioning  
Health, Housing and Adult  
Social Care  
01904 554099

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Annexes:**

**Annexes A & B:** York Carers Strategy and Action Plan 2019 - 2024