

Council Full meeting 17 September 2026

Motion on Action

Building a Care System That Works: York's Role in the National Conversation on Care

York Carers Centre apologises for not being here in person to deliver this statement.

We wholeheartedly support this motion and York's commitment to playing a full part in the Big Conversation on social care.

Research commissioned by Carers Trust forecasts that by 2035 the UK could need almost one million more unpaid carers than it does today. The pressures facing carers and families are already here, and action is needed now.

The growing need for care is one of the greatest challenges facing us as a nation. Meeting that challenge will require coordinated action across health, social care, employment, education, housing and poverty reduction. It cannot be solved by any one service in isolation.

For many years, carers were described as "unsung heroes", saving the economy billions of pounds and providing support that would otherwise fall on already stretched public services. That remains true. However, what we are increasingly seeing is something much more troubling.

We are seeing carers with no life of their own. People who have given up employment, social connections, opportunities and, in many cases, their own health and wellbeing in order to care for those they love. We hear from carers who are experiencing suicidal thoughts. We hear from carers who are exhausted, isolated and at breaking point.

This is not sustainable. It is not what a compassionate society should expect of its citizens. We must recognise a simple truth: there can be no care without support. Carers cannot do this alone. Families need robust, reliable and accessible services alongside them, not after they have reached crisis point.

That is why the Casey Commission is so important. It has been needed for many years. It presents a vital opportunity to move beyond damaging narratives about people "taking from the system" and instead shine a light on the reality of caring,

disability and family life in Britain today. It is an opportunity to listen to those with lived experience and to create a system that works for the people who rely on it every day.

The Council has a crucial role to play in ensuring that those voices are heard. In particular, it must help reach those who are often absent from consultations because they are exhausted, overwhelmed or simply do not have the time and energy to engage. The people most affected by decisions about social care must be at the heart of shaping its future.

We fully support this motion and, at York Carers Centre, we will do everything we can to ensure carers have the opportunity to share their experiences and help shape a care system that is fair, sustainable and fit for the future.

"Every day, carers hold together families, communities and services that would otherwise struggle to cope. The least we can do is ensure that their voices help shape the future of care."

Sharron Smith

York Carers Centre CEO