

Carers Action Plan 2024-26 – Update Summary – September 2024

Ref:	We Will	Year One Actions (January -December 2024)	Progress to Date
PRIORITY 1 – Empower carers with flexible breaks options, ensuring they care take breaks			
1.1	Commission a range of respite and break provision, develop a 'community alternative' support model to empower carers with flexible respite options, co-designed with carers, ensuring they can take breaks, increase social contact and reduce the risk of isolation.	Work with third sector organisations and community groups to explore the potential for 'community alternative' support models or community delivered carers breaks.	<p>Work has commenced with the recommissioning of carers support services that includes short break provision for carers. We have designed our model of short breaks using carer feedback ensuring that different scenarios and situations are catered for. The new model of support will commence following the recommissioning process.</p> <p>In partnership with the Carers Trust Heart of England we have developed a more flexible model of delivery of short breaks in the here and now, ensuring that those most in need are able to take a break. This has involved utilising the "Urgent Care Fund" more flexibly so that carers who are awaiting an assessment can access breaks for an interim period avoiding carer breakdown in the interim.</p>
1.2		Investigate alternative offers or routes to accessing breaks, e.g. charities, grants and alternative holidays.	Using funding from the Accelerated Reform Fund from the Department of Health and Social Care, we have just awarded a grant to the provider Local Solutions who will deliver a project called "My Time" for carers within Coventry. This will be rolled out to Warwickshire in the second year. "My Time" is an innovative project that works with local businesses, retail, leisure, recreational and hotels to broker free opportunities for carers, such

			<p>as a night at a hotel, an afternoon tea, an experience. The project will recruit locally and will work in partnership with the Carers Trust Heart of England to promote awareness. The project is due to commence in November following the recruitment of a co-ordinator.</p>
1.3		<p>Increase awareness of informal networks and social contact opportunities for carers.</p>	<p>We are exploring the use of community alternatives for carers within Voluntary Sector organisations. We held several meetings individually with organisations and held a number of workshops. Through the meetings we were able to understand more about how organisations could support carers through group-based activities, where groups allow the carer to take a break for the duration of an activity and where groups enable carer peer support. We have also used our bulletin to promote awareness of groups and ensure they are on our community directory.</p> <p>A range of bitesize learning sessions have commenced (September 2024) internally to support practitioners to think of community-based options to support carers and the person they are caring for.</p>

1.4	Improve information on respite and promote carers breaks to support carer wellbeing and prevent carer breakdown.	Refresh Coventry City Council website on respite and break information, including information on costs, entitlement, options, purpose and how to access.	Information on the Council website has been refreshed recently and will be updated as further progress is made.
1.5		Develop respite / carer break FAQ's document, including information on the use of direct payments to access respite and replacement care.	A leaflet is currently being drafted – “When it’s time to take a break” and following this we will do some promotional activity. This will be launched in November 2024.
1.6		Promotion of respite / break information with under served communities (e.g. pop ups / information circulated in temples, community centres etc.) working with community leaders to improve awareness.	<p>Over the course of the year a number of different engagement activities and events have taken place including meeting with neighbourhood partnership forums and working with the migration team to speak to newly established communities such as the BNO Hong Kong.</p> <p>The Carers Trust Heart of England have produced videos of local carers speaking in their own language, including Gujarati, Arabic and Romanian to promote awareness of caring and support locally. The Carers Trust have delivered numerous pop-up events across the city to ensure there is a reach of services. In the past couple of months, engagement has happened with all 60 GP surgeries to held aid in the identification of carers. A new regular carers drop in will be held at Broad Street Hall in Foleshill from September 2024.</p>

			<p>We have just concluded the procurement of a digital support tool for carers that can be easily translated into almost all languages that will aid with seeking out support in the local community.</p> <p>A number of events are coming up based within the local communities, such as Hillfields and Foleshill where we hope to raise further awareness of break options for carers. We have worked with local community groups to raise awareness of the events.</p>
1.7		<p>Review process for administering carers direct payments and literature to support positive conversations around direct payments by practitioners.</p>	<p>A new Carers Direct Payment leaflet has been produced and is in circulation.</p> <p>Refresher training was held for all Adult Social Care practitioners.</p> <p>Refresher training has been conducted with the Carers Trust Heart of England to explore eligibility and support planning and completing Carers Assessments. A regular peer support meeting has been established.</p> <p>Further work is being completed to review the process of administering Direct Payments.</p>
1.8	<p>Review options for assistive technology to enable carers to have time away from caring role and increase opportunities for socialising.</p>	<p>Utilise existing technology and resources to support carers.</p>	<p>We have worked with Telecare Services to promote their offer at Engagement Events.</p> <p>Using peer support groups with the Carers Trust Heart of England we have explored the use of Direct Payments for carers for technology.</p> <p>The Carers Trust Heart of England have worked closely with the Coventry Connects project – having</p>

			<p>administered approximately 40 laptops to date to carers who are experiencing digital exclusion, this work continues to be on-going.</p> <p>A new project within Adult Social Care has commenced with two new Digital Navigators starting in September 2024. The digital navigators will explore technology enabled care solutions. We expect carers will benefit alongside the person they are caring for and shared learning will help explore continued use of technology moving forwards.</p>
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Priority 2: Deliver the right support at the right time and in the right place.

2.1	<p>Improve information and resources available to carers to help them make informed decisions to support them in their caring role and their own wellbeing.</p>	<p>Coventry City Council to work in conjunction with Carers Trust and third sector organisations to update Council website to centralise information and identify support options available for carers - information to be easy to navigate, clear, and specific to audience (e.g. adapted for young carers, translated and culturally sensitive).</p>	<p>At the beginning of the year we reviewed our website content to make sure it was simple and straightforward and key information was readily available. We continue to review the content on a 3 monthly basis. We have seen a small improvement in feedback around information and advice.</p> <p>Using funds from the ARF we are about to implement a digital self-help tool for carers (Bridgit) that will use help carers navigate support and connect with local resources. It is an added tool which will channel different approaches to identifying carers and then connecting them with the appropriate local support. We are currently reviewing content before going live in October.</p>
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			We have revised our general Carers Support leaflet which is now available online and has been distributed amongst teams.
2.2		Coventry City Council and Carers Trust to work with communities, specifically under served communities, and community leaders to promote information and advice services into communities and everyday messaging to reach hidden carers and reduce barriers to identifying as a carer or accessing support.	See 1.6
2.3		Work with GP's, pharmacists and health professionals to raise awareness of how to identify and support carers, knowledge of carers support services and referral mechanisms to Carers Trust and other support services.	<p>In April 2024 a new GP liaison Advisor at the Carers Trust Heart of England started. Between April and May all 60 GP surgeries in Coventry received a visit from the Carers Trust and received information to display and take away leaflets. All of the surgeries were visited again to see if they were displaying information, around 50% now display Carers information. The remaining 50% will receive follow up visits to encourage participation.</p> <p>Work has commenced with UHCW to explore carers experience of hospital admission, discharge and outpatient experiences. A working group has been formed which is exploring:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online carers information resource • Establishing a carers forum within the hospital (which is now running) both for staff and people caring for someone within the hospital – now in operation. • Looking at experience of people with caring responsibilities on hospital wards, such as access to food, parking etc. • Training support for staff around carer awareness • Exploring the visibility of the Carers Information around the hospital, including ward visits to see if information and leaflets are in place. <p>We are in the beginning stages of working with colleagues at the CWPT to explore and embed the Triangle of Care initiative within mental health settings such as the Caludon Centre and mental health community teams.</p>
2.4		<p>Work with schools and colleges to identify young carers and promote young carers support options, advice and assessments.</p>	<p>On-going work and activity is taking place with the Carers Trust Heart of England taking the lead. A Young Carers Strategy has been produced and outlines the following areas of work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) School based program (in school award) 2) Peer support groups 3) Identification of Hidden young Carers (which includes an extensive communications plan)

			<p>4) Technology integration</p> <p>5) Transport solutions</p> <p>6) Carers and skills development programs (partnership with Coventry University).</p> <p>7) Outreach program</p> <p>8) Transition pathway</p> <p>9) Assessment and 1:1 Development</p> <p>A Young Carers working group has been established. We are pleased to now have a Young Carers Lead within Early Help services and a new strategic lead supporting Young Carers. Internal work has focused on improving pathways for young carers within the system.</p>
2.5		<p>Increased visibility and presence of Carers Trust and carers support / information services in communities e.g. GP's, pharmacy, food hubs, library's, community centres, gyms, supermarkets, ASC open days etc.</p>	<p>A range of outreach sessions have been undertaken with the Carers Trust Heart of England across the city, through including GP surgeries, food hubs, employers, places of faith, libraries, family hubs, Caludon Centre, UHCW. The outreach sessions continue to be delivered regularly within the city and are advertised within our monthly bulletin. The sessions are also advertised on the Carers Trust Heart of England – Facebook Page.</p> <p>We intend to use the Bridgit online tool to promote events and drop in options. A light version of Bridgit is now live with the full version expected in October 2024 and the Carers Online Self-Assessment to be available from January 2025.</p>

2.6		<p>Work with the Integrated Care Board on Compassionate Communities project to improve carers experience across the health and social care system.</p>	<p>The Compassion Communities Coventry & Rugby Group is a local initiative which aims to facilitate support for the dying and bereaved, people living with long term health conditions and people who are socially isolated from within their community. The project was being delivered as part of the Coventry and Warwickshire Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy 2024-2029. The Experience of Care project explored people's experiences (predominately carers) in under-served communities, of end of life care and access to palliative care. As a result of the engagement an approach called "No Barriers Here" has been rolled out to providers. Training which supports providers and charitable organisations in facilitating discussions with people about end of life, using arts and crafts.</p> <p>The Carers Trust Heart of England are amongst those now trained to undertake "No Barriers Here" training and will now be able to deliver sessions to carers about advance planning and end of life discussions.</p> <p>The Carers Trust Heart of England have developed connections with Myton Hospice, supporting their carer support group at the hospice. We have used our channels to promote the group.</p> <p>Myton Hospice will be facilitating a session for Adult Social Care in October 2024 to raise awareness of their support offer.</p> <p>We have worked the CWICB to present to the Enhanced Care home forum around carers support following an</p>
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			admission to a care home and to raise awareness of continued support available to carers.
2.7	Ensure carers have access to practical support by way of peer support groups, telephone or face to face support and community networks to increase opportunities for socialising and reduce the risk of isolation.	Promote training and understand gaps in training needs through consultation with young and adult carers e.g. condition specific training such as dementia, autism, mental health, resilience, bereavement	<p>Promotion of training has been done through the Carers Bulletin and within our website.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing our training offer for Carers in partnership with the Carers Trust Heart of England to understand where gaps might exist. We will use data from Carers Assessments to understand this alongside engagement activity.</p> <p>Where there are gaps or more bespoke training required we will promote the use of Direct Payments to enable carers to purchase their own training.</p>
2.8		Develop a range of meaningful support groups available to carers, including activity based sessions, informal sessions and friendship building.	<p>A number of new groups have been established, including a walking group for carers and group for carers who are looking after someone with a learning disability. Both are in the initial stages and growing a cohort. We have linked in with the Community Learning Disabilities Team to promote the carers group.</p> <p>A range of carers activities and groups continue to be scheduled to support carers across the city and are advertised within our Carers Bulletin / Carers Trust Heart of England – Facebook page.</p> <p>Recommissioning of carers services will focus on the diversification of groups and a small funding allocation to enable smaller groups (such as peer led groups to develop).</p>

2.9	Provide additional support in respect of the cost of living, benefits advice and getting back into work or education, to support carers with managing finances.	Coventry City Council to engage with all unpaid carers identified via the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to inform of available support services, carers assessments, benefits entitlement, respite and break options and support available via the Carers Trust.	<p>We have started to scope out the use of LIFT to help us identify households within Coventry provide an indication that they may be entitled to carers allowance but are not receiving it. We are in the initial stages of scoping this and this would involve a campaign, writing to those identified and notifying them of potential entitlement alongside information about carers services.</p> <p>A new project called “Carer Money Matters” funded by Carers Trust National has commenced and Carers Trust Heart of England have been awarded funding for 2 years. A Carers Financial Wellbeing Advisor is now in post working across Coventry and Warwickshire, they are trained to offer energy saving advice, information about the priority register and income maximisation. They are already supporting several drop-in sessions and completing home visits.</p>
2.10		Ensuring carers are aware of their legal rights through clear communications, a strong community presence and working with local businesses and employers.	<p>Working Carers Employment Support – Working carer support continues to be offered through the Carers Trust Heart of England. This year engagement with the introduction of the Carers Leave Act 2023 which came into force in April 2024 engagement with employers has made more employers engage with the project. A number of big employers across the city have become very proactive in improving their offer for carers.</p> <p>My Time Initiative – As part of the Accelerated Reform Fund we have provided a grant to the organisation My Time who will work with local businesses to raise</p>

			<p>awareness of carer support services. We expect the project to commence in November 2024.</p> <p>Thrive at Work – In partnership with the Carers Trust Heart of England we led a workshop for employers to discuss supporting carers in the workplace. The session was part of the Thrive at Work initiative provided through WMCA. The session included the provision of a toolkit developed by CCC, for employers wishing to develop their carers support offer.</p> <p>Coventry City Council – Unpaid Working Carers Network – 104 people are now members of the working carers support network. The group has held various different sessions from planning for the future, understanding welfare benefits and working with human resources to refresh carers guidance.</p>
2.11	Ensure a range of support is available to promote carers overall wellbeing and safety.	Re-commission a range of carers support services co-designed with carers	Initial planning, specification writing and engagement has taken place for the recommissioning of Carers Support Services with the aim for new services to be in place for Autumn 2025.
2.12		Work towards a Go CV+ discount for carers (including young carers) to allow a flexible membership to be utilised when time is available.	<p>The GO CV+ is in place for all Carers registered with the Carers Trust Heart of England.</p> <p>We have recently started to work in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority on an initiative to support carers to utilise public transport as part of the Excluded Access Programme. As from October carers will be able to receive a code from the Carers Trust Heart of England to receive a 9-month free bus pass</p>

			with a concessionary rate if continued past the 9 months.
2.13		Engage with carers, carers support organisations, housing, community safety team and the police to understand reasons why carers do not feel 'safe' and potential actions we can take to address and improve this.	We have completed some initial scoping of the idea of safety with carers and through wider engagement. We have established the predominant theme of safety concerns for carers, is concerns over managing aggression and challenging behaviour within a home environment. We intend to work with our partners to explore bespoke training and support that can support over the next few months, as part of the review into carers training provision.

Priority 3: Maximise the reach of carers assessments to benefit more carers

3.1	<p>Improve carers awareness of carers assessments, the benefits of an assessment, and its intended outcomes to ensure carers have access to all support options available.</p>	<p>Review and refresh Coventry City Council information on carers assessments available on both the Council and Carers Trust website to include what this is, the benefit of having an assessment and how to access (e.g. online assessment, Carers Trust, joint assessment etc.).</p>	<p>Information on the website has been refreshed in January 2024.</p> <p>Carers Online Self-Assessment - we are in the process of developing a new online carers self-assessment using the ARF project Bridgit, this will be live in the next few months.</p> <p>A new Carers Wellbeing Assessment went live in July 2024 which enables practitioners to evidence reviewing and reassessment activity more easily and makes the form more adaptable for different processes.</p> <p>Improving Lives programme - we have incorporated a practitioner checklist into paperwork to ensure that carers are included in the assessment process and that referrals are made for contingency planning and carers assessments. Meeting Carers Needs Training has also been provided to the Local Integrated Teams. We are noticing high carer related performance activity through the Local Integrated Teams.</p>
3.2		<p>Commence re-commissioning activity for delegated carers assessments.</p>	<p>A contract extension was awarded to Carers Trust Heart of England from April 2024, for the duration of the year. Further recommissioning activity is planned to incorporate the delegated activity of Carers Assessment. (See 2.11)</p>
3.3		<p>Increase the number of carers assessments completed.</p>	<p>So far in 24/25 we are on course to complete more separate Carers Assessments / Reviews than previous years. We have had 200 separate carers assessments completed in the first 2 quarters. This is partly due to</p>

			<p>the new Carers Wellbeing Form being able to be used more flexibly to capture reviews and reassessments.</p> <p>We continue to focus on improving the experience of carers receiving a “joint” carers assessment and will be completing an internal thematic review in Autumn to explore themes and trends.</p>
3.4		<p>Complete carers assessment refresher training for practitioners.</p>	<p>A number of refresher training sessions (Meeting Carers Needs) were held between February – May 2024 including team specific sessions and were undertaken by approximately 90 practitioners.</p> <p>Induction training is now held every 2 months and is a rolling programme.</p> <p>A session for Mental Health practitioners was held in September with 16 people in attendance.</p> <p>Regular peer support sessions are now in place for practitioners at the Carers Trust Heart of England who are completing assessments.</p>
3.5		<p>Promotion of carers assessments via Carers Bulletin, Carers Trust, partner organisations, Adult Social Care Open Days and in particular with underserved communities.</p>	<p>Promotion of Carers Assessments has been done through the Carers Bulletin and Adult Social Care Bulletin and various events and engagement meetings. ASC Engagement Events have been used to talk to people about the benefits of having carers assessments.</p> <p>We aim to develop a one-minute guide to Carers Assessments.</p>

3.6		Carers Trust to have a visible presence, promoting carers support and assessments in areas of high carer population in the city (GP's, pharmacies, food banks, library's, community assets).	See 2.5.
3.7		Work with Integrated Care Board / health professionals and Adult Social Care practitioners to ensure carers are involved in decisions and kept informed through hospital admissions and discharge	<p>We have provided training to OCIT based teams and developed a carer checklist which is now part of the pathway for people receiving services via a pathway.</p> <p>The Carers Trust Heart of England have worked with the hospital discharge team to understand the role of the hospital liaison carer worker.</p>
3.8		Ensure practitioners are equipped and aware of support options for carers.	<p>Please see 3.4 – Exploring Carers Needs Training which has been undertaken by approximately 90 practitioners between February-May 2024. Rolling induction sessions are scheduled for the rest of the year. The course establishes support options for carers.</p> <p>Practitioner bitesize sessions throughout the year will support practitioners to explore eligible needs in more detail and how this might align to community alternative provision, the first session has been held on Managing and maintaining nutrition.</p>

3.9		Quarterly dip sampling of carers assessments for quality assurance purposes.	<p>Dip sampling is on-going. We have used peer support groups to focus on particular areas, such as applying eligibility and writing good support plans. We continue to see an improvement in the quality of carers assessments.</p> <p>We have also shadowed a number of assessments taken out by the Carers Trust Heart of England.</p>
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