
To: Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board

Date: 21 January 2026

Subject: Carers Strategy – Engagement and Planning Overview

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board with an overview of Coventry's development of a five-year Carers Strategy (2026–2031) and Carers Action Plan progress, which aims to improve support for over 27,000 local carers by focusing on co-production with carers and stakeholders, broad engagement—especially with underrepresented groups—and sustainable services, building on recent achievements and ensuring statutory duties are met as some funding ends in 2026, with the overall goal of improving outcomes for carers and those they support.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- A. Endorse the engagement and delivery plan to inform a new Carers Strategy 2026-2031
 - B. Provide any feedback as part of the development of the new Carers Strategy that is currently being developed.

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 In the 2021 Census, 27,391 people in Coventry identified themselves as having caring responsibilities. We know this is likely to be an underrepresentation of our caring population, as many people do not recognise caring roles. Of those 27,391 – 8,391 carers reported to be providing over 50 hours of care, indicating an intense caring role (30.6%).
- 3.2 Through our commissioned services and activity within Adult Social Care the local authority support approximately 8,000 adult carers a year with a range of different services, from respite provision, emergency support services to information and advice.
- 3.3 In January 2024 – The Carers Action Plan was published to provide a clear framework to drive improvements for carers in Coventry. A two-year plan set out a

range of actions with the aim of improving the experience of unpaid carers, the delivery of the plan was overseen by the Carers Action Plan Steering Group. The plan was also regularly brought to Adult Social Care Stakeholders Group for on-going contribution and oversight. Three key priorities drove the action plan:

- Empower carers with flexible respite options, ensuring they can take breaks
- Deliver the right support, at the right time, and in the right place
- Maximise the reach of carers assessments to benefit more carers

3.4 The Action Plan has galvanised multi-agency support for carers bringing together cross system support for developing approaches. This has also been aided with a number of new projects being delivered under the Accelerated Reform Fund. Key achievements included:

- Implementation Accelerated Reform Fund projects:
 - My Time – Breaks for Carers
 - Bridgit – Digital Support Tool for Carers
 - Hospital Liaison Support at UHCW
- Joint recommissioning of Carers Support Services
- Developing carers support at UHCW
- CWPT – Triangle of Care – Star 1 – Accreditation
- Carers Money Matters Project
- Carers Counselling Pathway

3.5 The council's real time experience Adult Social Care survey has shown an improvement in carer related experience of Adult Social Care between 2024 and 2025, although it is hard to benchmark these findings with previous years. The results of the Survey of Adult Carers in England will be available in 2026 and will provide important performance indicators, that help understand the experience of carers in the city. Wider benchmarking information will be available late December 2026, allowing us to compare our performance with other local authorities.

4 Proposed Carers Strategy 2026-2031

4.1 To continue the momentum of the plan and to develop a long-term vision, we intend to produce a 5-year multi-agency Carers Strategy, co-producing this with carers and key stakeholders. The strategy will also be accompanied with a live action plan which will be reviewed and added to throughout the strategy lifespan.

5 National Context

5.1 There is no current National Carers Strategy, although there have been previous national strategies and action plans, most recently in 2019. There is no statutory requirement to have a local Carers Strategy in situ, however the Care Quality Commission, as part of their assurance activity specifically require local authorities to share carers strategies and localised plans.

5.2 There are no current envisaged national policy changes to carers support.

5.3 Best practice in relation to supporting carers is available through the National Institute of Care Excellence (NICE), Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE), the National

Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and Adult Directors of Social Services (ADASS).

- 5.4 Carers UK and the Carers Trust National lead on carer related research and good practice and have several helpful frameworks to bring around developments in carer support, including the Triangle of Care and the No Wrong Doors Memorandum of Understanding.
- 5.5 Local authorities have significant responsibilities for supporting unpaid carers, as set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014. The Health and Care Act 2022 further strengthen these duties by requiring local authorities and Integrated Care Boards to involve carers in commissioning, market shaping, and strategic planning. Developing a locally co-produced carers strategy is an effective way to meet these obligations.

6 Local Context

- 6.1 Supporting carers is at the heart of everything we do in Adult Social Care. It is well known that carers are the most significant layer of prevention between health and social care.
- 6.2 In the 2021 Census, 27,391 people in Coventry identified themselves as having caring responsibilities. We know this is likely to be an underrepresentation of our caring population. Of those 27,391 - 8,391 carers reported to be providing over 50 hours of care.
- 6.3 Carers are often the unsung heroes when it comes to ill-health prevention, preventing hospital admissions and ensuring that our citizens are living their best lives at home. Care provided informally cannot be replicated in the same way as paid for services. A recent research study into the value of unpaid care within the city estimates that carers save the NHS Social Care system £970million per annum, an enormous contribution to our society.
- 6.4 Identification is key to supporting carers, when people take on a caring role it takes time and proactive support to identify the change in role, that is why much of our activity with unpaid carers is around identification and getting to people early in their journey.
- 6.5 In October 2025 Carers support services were recommissioned bringing together a number of grants and contracts under one framework. The Carers Trust Heart of England were the successful provider and a new contract commenced in October 2025.
- 6.6 This contract now aligns with the Young Carers Needs Assessments provided by Carers Trust Heart of England, creating an opportunity for closer integration between both contracts. This will strengthen collaboration, ensure robust support, and enable safe transitions between the two provisions.
- 6.7 Coventry has a long history of supporting carers within the local community having a mixed model of support that includes regulated services which enable carers to have a break and plan for an emergency and a universal service that supports carers with information and advice, training and peer support.
- 6.8 Carers Support Services in Coventry currently receive total funding of £774,731 of which £134,096 is contributed by Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board

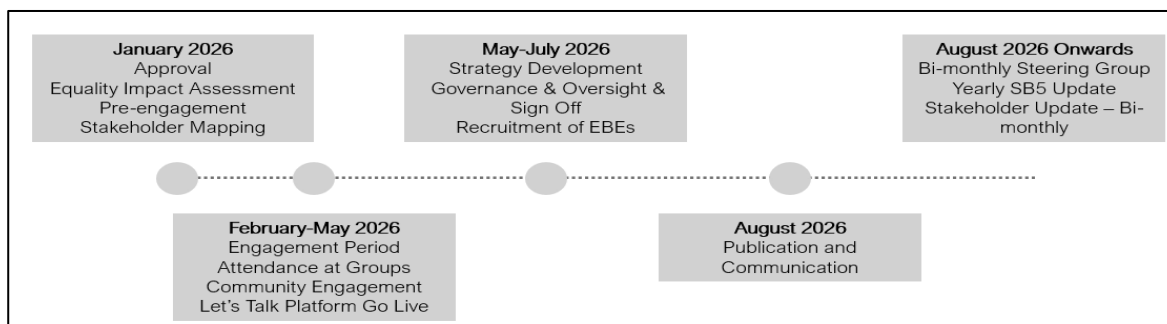
(CWICB). Our current provider of carers services is the Carers Trust Heart of England.

- 6.9 Additional funding in 2024/25 provided through the Accelerated Reform Fund, means a further commitment of funding of £155,500 has been allocated to carer related projects (Bridgit, My Time and Hospital Liaison Project), with funding continuing into 25/26.
- 6.10 Accelerated Reform Funding is short term funding provided by the Department of Health and Social Care. The funding for these projects will start to come to an end in October 2026 so the strategy will need to consider the sustainability and learning from these projects.
- 6.11 Funded carers support is also provided in the form of Adult Social Care individual packages of support, this can come in the form of many different services, such as provision to take breaks, respite provision, day opportunities and home support as the outcome of an assessment of need.

7 Proposed Carers Strategy 2026-2031

- 7.1 To continue the momentum of the plan and to develop a long-term vision, we intend to produce a 5-year multi-agency Carers Strategy, co-producing this with carers and key stakeholders. The strategy will also be accompanied with a live action plan which will be reviewed and added to throughout the strategy lifespan.
- 7.2 Supporting carers is a continuous process, evolving to meet changing needs. We strive to identify carers early and enhance support using best practice and local insight. Every day, new people take on caring roles, roles intensify and change, and others end their caring journey—our work adapts to ensure carers receive the right help at the right time. Supporting carers well, contributes to the One Coventry Plan and health partners approach to tackling inequalities alongside ensuring that Coventry residents are living healthy, fulfilled lives in their communities supported by the people most important to them. As part of our approach to utilising best practice, we are active members of the West Midlands ADASS Regional Carers Leads, sharing best practice across the region.
- 7.3 The Strategy is being developed at a pivotal point, following significant advances in carers' support across the system, and will continue to build on this trajectory and allow time to evaluate the efficacy of actions. The engagement plan will align with our broader Engagement, Involvement and Co-Production Our Approach in Adult Social Care, recognising that we will utilise a range of different ways to engage with Coventry residents to widen participation and ensure that engagement is undertaken in an accessible way.
- 7.4 Key to the strategy development will be detailed and continual engagement with carers and key stakeholders. The strategy will be informed by the voices of Coventry residents with the aim to co-produce the strategy from the outset.

8 Timeline



9 Engagement Plan

- 9.1 Caring roles are highly individualised, impacted by many different factors, such as support networks, cultural expectations, the longevity of caring, the intensity of a caring role, the loss that might be incurred when caring, such as leaving a job, education or envisaged future plans. Many people do not identify as carers, even when they have caring responsibilities. Key to our engagement activity is a desire to engage with a wide range of different people with caring responsibilities, we wish to expand this engagement outside of the traditional routes of carer engagement, recognising that the topic of unpaid care is a whole population topic and speak to local communities, faith groups, newly arrived communities and seldom heard voices.

10 Who we plan to engage with?

- ❖ Adult Carers
- ❖ Parent Carers
- ❖ Young Carers and Young Adult Carers
- ❖ Carers from the global majority
- ❖ Newly established communities
- ❖ Social workers and practitioners
- ❖ Carers who are in employment
- ❖ Coventry City Council Unpaid Carers Staff Network
- ❖ UHCW – Carers Staff Network
- ❖ People supporting someone with substance misuse issues or alcohol dependency – who might not readily identify themselves as having caring responsibilities
- ❖ Key stakeholders, including Carers Trust Heart of England, CWPT, UHCW, ICB, Dementia Services, CGL and Myton Hospice.

11 Methods of Engagement

- ❖ Face to face engagement will take place throughout February-April 2026, this will be a range of attending carers groups and consulting community groups.
- ❖ A Let's Talk Platform will be created to support continual engagement throughout, with survey activity.
- ❖ A Multi- Agency Steering Group which will follow on from the Carers Action Plan Steering Group - with experts by experience as regular participants

- ❖ Feedback to the “Carers Voice” group facilitated by the Carers Trust Heart of England

12 Existing Engagement Activity

- ❖ SACE – Survey of Adult Carers in England – In October-November 2025 we undertook the DHSC Survey of Adult Carers, a survey which seeks feedback from carers who have received support from Adult Social Care; alongside headline performance indicators, the results can provide important insight into carers’ reported quality of life, the impact services have on their quality of life and their general health and wellbeing. We received 304 responses to the survey from carers who had received a service or assessment from Coventry City Council. The results from this survey are expected in March 2026. The results also provide important benchmarking information later in the year (December 2026).
- ❖ Our Adult Social Care Experience Survey – a real time survey provides insight into carer related satisfaction with Adult Social Care. This is a continual process of receiving feedback following an intervention, assessment or review, the results of the survey allow us to see
- ❖ Carers Voice – An established group run through the Carers Trust Heart of England that aims to ensure that the voice of carers is heard and makes a difference in improving support for carers
- ❖ Adult Social Care Stakeholders Group – A group that meet bi-monthly that oversee activity within Adult Social Care, this group is regularly attended by carers who have an interest in the activity of Adult Social Care
- ❖ State of Caring Survey – An annual national survey conducted by Carers UK which provides important insight into caring trends across the UK

13 Engagement Promotion

- ❖ Carers Bulletin – a monthly bulletin that has 4600 recipients
- ❖ Carers Webpages and Events Information
- ❖ Social Media promotion
- ❖ Bridgit – Online Platform
- ❖ Text promotion utilising Gov Notify
- ❖ Carers Trust Heart of England – Social-Media and newsletters
- ❖ Existing Stakeholder Forums
- ❖ Community Events
- ❖ Dementia Hub
- ❖ Internal unpaid working carers network (Coventry City Council, CWPT, UHCW).

14 Delivery of the Strategy

- 14.1 The Strategy delivery will be overseen by a Multi-Agency Steering Group, meeting bi-monthly.
- 14.2 Experts by experience will be recruited to support the on-going co-production of the strategy.
- 14.3 A live action plan will sit alongside the strategy.

15 Health Inequalities Impact

- 15.1 Supporting carers helps address health inequalities by reducing the physical, emotional, and financial strain they face, ensuring equitable access to health and wellbeing resources for both carers and those they support.
- 15.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed incorporating engagement from the strategy development.

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