

Carer Friendly Worcestershire - All Age Carers' strategy summary

2021 – 2026



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The Vision:

“All Carers, including adult, young adult, young carers and parent Carers, will be recognised and valued by the wider community and statutory agencies in Worcestershire, for the support and care they provide to vulnerable adults, children and young people”.

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support and care to a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental ill-health or substance misuse problems. They may provide emotional support, medical care, personal care, physical care and/or domestic tasks.

The Mission:

To research, evidence, share and implement best practice to shape the All-Age Carers Strategy, the priorities, and outcomes. Everything key partners do is informed by Carers and people with lived experience of care and support.



Key points from the strategy:

- Carers advised the 3 key outcomes for them are: to feel recognised and valued, enabled to have a life of their own, and supported with their physical and mental health, and wellbeing. The pandemic has made these key outcomes even more important. There are also other key issues that Carers shared, such as financial concerns, loneliness and isolation and lack of breaks. Other ‘hot topics’ were, maintaining employment, understanding the cared for’s condition, and coming to terms with it, maximising income, contingency and future planning, a whole family approach to assessments for the cared for, and assessments specifically for the carer. This feedback gained from the carers’ engagement focus groups, will inform the action plan to implement this strategy, and to make a ‘real’ difference to Carers lives. Please refer to appendix 4 Stakeholder and Carers Feedback and Engagement Findings.
- There is a legal responsibility to support Carers of all ages (i.e., Care Act 2014, NHS Long Term Plan 2019, Health, and Social Care Act 2012, Children Act 2004, and the Children and Families Act 2014). Each partner will be responsible for monitoring their implementation of legislation. Carers can feedback by raising a comment, compliment, and complaint to the respective organisation, and take part in carer surveys or focus groups. Complaints can be made to the organisation the person wishes to complain about and can be escalated to the LGO or equivalent if necessary.
- Guidance on supporting adult carers has been issued by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE). This is known as Supporting Adult Carers, NG150; (2020)¹. This guidance includes recommendations on identifying carers, assessing carers’ needs, helping carers stay in, enter, or return to work and education. Recommendations are also made about social and community support for carers, training to provide care and support, psychological and emotional support for carers, support during changes to the caring role and support for carers during end-of-life care, and after the person dies.
- This strategy sets out what it is like for Carers in Worcestershire, what needs to happen to enable Carers to feel recognised, valued and supported. And how key partners can make this happen.
- There are interdependencies with other strategies, as supporting Carers is a cross cutting issue.
- To deliver these key points requires a change in how Carers are viewed and treated across all partners and stakeholders. This change will be delivered through the annual action plans which will be agreed and signed off through the governance process (see appendix 5)

1 www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng150

National and local numbers:

- Pre-COVID-19 there were up to 8.8 million unpaid carers across the UK.
- The UK's unpaid Carers save the economy an estimated £132bn each year according to [this report²](#) (this equates to approx. £19,336 per carer).
- Census figures show that there were **63,685** carers in Worcestershire in 2011. Of this figure 60,195 are adult carers and 3,490 are young carers and young adult carers
- The pandemic has resulted in millions of new carers – 4.5 million new to caring since the start of the pandemic, 2.8 million of whom are juggling work commitments.
- The number of people over the age of 70 are projected to increase from 106,621 people (2022) to 114,473 people (2026). This is a 7% increase. This will lead to more unpaid carers.
- Other pressures including the closure of some care and nursing homes and the increased use of care at home will impact on the number of carers and their role.



2 <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-releases/facts-and-figures>



Where is Worcestershire now - A summary of the carer outcomes and what has been achieved

The four key outcomes for Carers are shown below:

Outcome	What partners have done
Recognised and valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Worcestershire County Council contracted out Worcestershire’s Carers Hub. This included delegating the duty to carry out Carer Assessments to the contracted carer support provider. ■ A strength-based approach is used focusing on the skills and assets of the carer. This was a new approach at the time, which has proved successful with carers, and so will continue. ■ Worcestershire County Council contracted for a carers support service for young carers and young adult carers. ■ Carers have been involved through the Carers Partnership, consultations on specific projects, participation in Health and Wellbeing and Scrutiny Committee meetings, and have co-produced reports and useful information for carers. ■ Carer Awareness training has taken place in person and via e-learning modules for professionals. The e-learning has been updated in line with emerging needs and has been publicised.
A life of my own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wide range of support is available to carers through the Carers Hub and the support service for young carers and young adult carers. ■ Training and information sessions run through Carers Hub, including financial matters. ■ Carer Awareness training made available to professionals via e-learning. ■ Carers Hub also ran training sessions for a wide range of professionals and organisations.

Outcome	What partners have done
Supported to be mentally and physically well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised support provided to carers through the Carers Hub. Carers Hub provided a wide range of training specifically on physical and mental health and wellbeing. This included, managing stress, caring with confidence, managing specific conditions, etc. Local carer support groups are in place across the county (they have been virtual during the COVID 19 pandemic). Carers Hub provider worked with NHS through the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (and subsequently Integrated Care System) to promote the needs of carers. This resulted in a system wide 'Commitment to Carers' being agreed. Contract in place for delivery of an advocacy service for Carers, as part of the Care Act advocacy service.
Staying Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers are represented on Worcestershire's Safeguarding Adults Board Carers Safeguarding Reference Group in place

Understanding Carers' priorities

The needs and aspirations of carers have been sought through engagement work. Carers have therefore informed the priorities of the strategy through their feedback. A detailed description of the feedback from the engagement groups and the Carer survey is provided in Appendix 4 of the strategy.

The outcomes Carers state are important:

Outcome	What Carers have said...
Recognised and valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am recognised and respected in my role as a carer I feel confident that there is support available I feel able to care safely The caring I do is appropriate to my age and capabilities I understand how to access support I am involved and can influence the assessment of my needs and aspirations Any services I receive meet my needs and aspirations I can have a say in how services are designed and delivered

Outcome	What Carers have said...
A life of my own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I feel able to achieve balance between my caring role and my personal life ■ I feel connected to others in my community ■ I know how to maximise my income to meet my basic needs and am not forced into financial hardship because of my caring role ■ I feel able to fully participate in education or training and enter or re-enter the employment market when I wish ■ I can remain in (suitable) employment if I wish to
Supported to be mentally and physically well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I can maintain my physical health and emotional wellbeing ■ I can manage stress ■ I feel confident to fulfil my role as a carer ■ I can maintain a dignified relationship with the person I care for ■ I can maintain relationships that are important to me
Staying Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I can care safely and maintain the safety of the person I care for and receive support for myself if required



A strengths-based approach

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) contracts with the Carers Hub to carry out Carer Assessments on behalf of the council. An approach is used called the 'Three Conversations Model' which uses a 'strength-based approach'. This means carers are put at the centre of the process, identifying a carers' own skills and strengths and what support is available to them in their community. This helps to inform the plan of how to meet the needs of both the carer and the cared for.

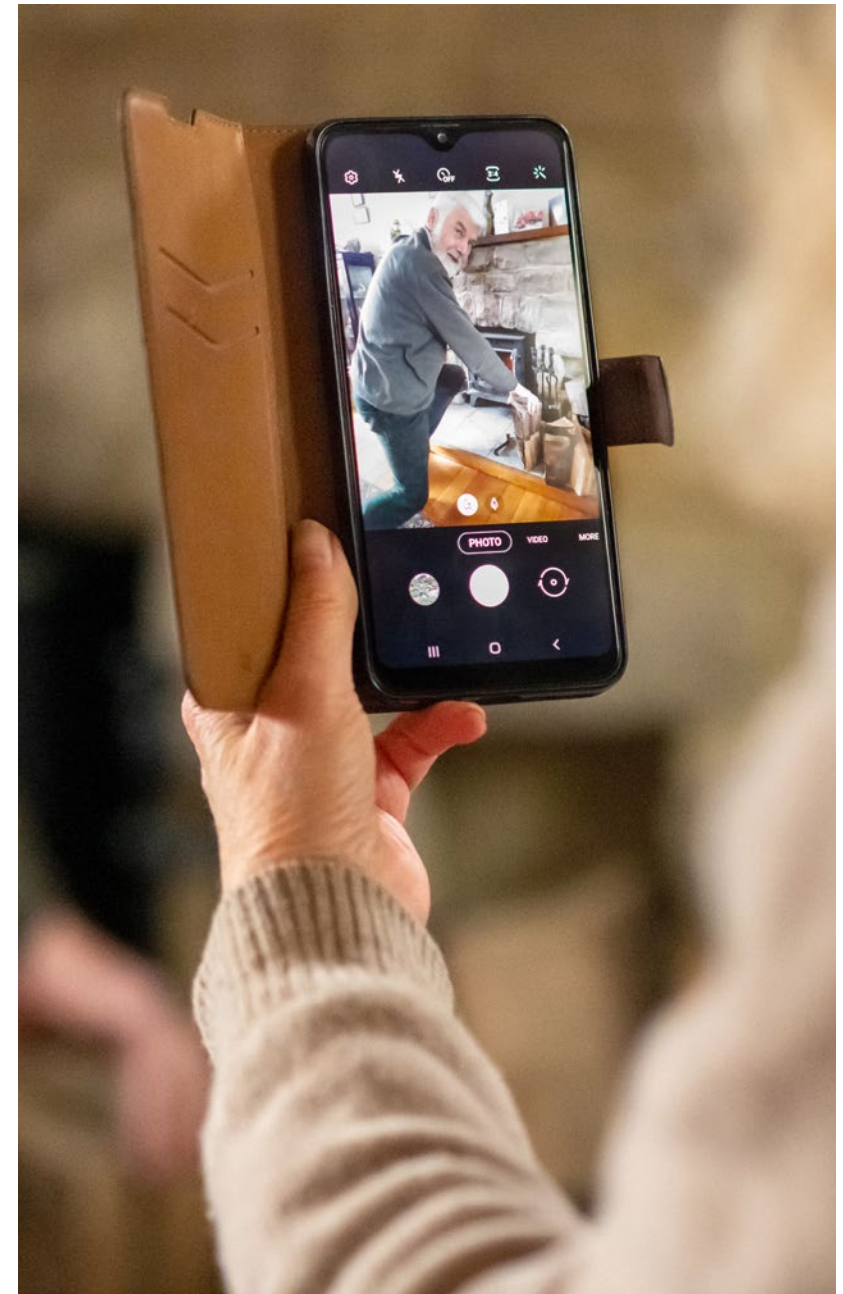
WCC and Worcestershire Children First (WCF) have contracted with community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver information and support, this includes:

1. One support provider for the Carer's Hub, and
2. One support provider for young carer and young adult carer support.

For young carers and young adult Carers, it is about reducing the caring role and ensuring these carers can be children and young people. The aim is that caring does not impinge on reaching their potential.

Early Support, Prevention of Issues and Carer Breakdown

Prevention means intervening early to support carers. This means increased independence, self-care, reduced social isolation and loneliness, reduced carer breakdown and delayed and/or reduced needs for the cared for. Prevention needs to be a joined-up approach across health and social care and the wider community. All key partners need to 'make every contact count'. This means that professionals are responsible for identifying when someone is a carer, providing information about support available and signposting the carer to the Carers Hub. For the Carer, this will ensure that they know that they are a carer; they are not on their own and that there is support available.



Priorities and Commitments to Carers – where Worcestershire needs to be...

The needs and aspirations of carers have been sought through engagement work (via focus groups and a survey) which was completed with carers and stakeholders. The priorities will be delivered by **Worcestershire's key partners** (e.g. Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Children First, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and contracted service providers). Accountability will be through the monitoring of the annual action plan for this strategy and commitment to carers action plans. The information gathered from carers and stakeholders is summarised below (further detail can be found in appendix 4):

- 1. Carer Awareness for the whole community (including harder to reach groups). The aim is to increase carer identification**
– everybody needs to 'make every contact count' to use the opportunity to identify carers. Being identified as a carer means, being advised what a carer is, advised about the carer hub and what it has to offer and that carers are not on their own as there is support available when needed
- 2. Recognition and value of Carers is everyone's responsibility.**
Time needs to be taken to understand the carers' role and involve the carer as an expert and valued person in the cared for's life. Carers need to be automatically included in discussions about the Cared For, unless the Cared For does not want them to be or it is not considered to be appropriate or safe to do so. This enables everyone to work together as a team for the cared for and utilise everyone's knowledge and expertise.
- 3. A diverse range of personalised support for Carers is needed:**
for example, taking a break, peer support, training, greater use of technology to manage risk and to support the cared for to be as independent as possible, as well as providing peace of mind for carers. Carers need a break from time to time to enable them to recharge, this has been a real issue to achieve during lock down and covid. It is important to take a break and to care safely, so carers don't put themselves at risk in any way.
- 4. Registering as a Carer. What does this mean and what difference will it make to carers?** Carers advised they only want to tell their story once. This can be achieved by the continued roll out of Carer Passports across Worcestershire. A 'Carers Offer' would be useful, so carers are informed of what to expect from a particular organisation.
- 5. Having a life of their own. This can be achieved by utilising and growing the carers support network** (such as friends, family, neighbours, and community facilities). Having the chance to see friends and family, do things they enjoy as well as be able to go shopping, visit their GP and dentist etc. It is key to physical and mental health and wellbeing to be able to have a life of our own.
- 6. Support with physical and mental health and wellbeing. A key element of this is to build or rebuild emotional resilience.** (This includes how we respond to stress), self-care and wellbeing (such as getting enough sleep, looking after ourselves and having time to relax and do things we enjoy), looking after our physical and mental health (e.g., managing any long-standing health conditions and addressing any need for counselling etc.). Carers are encouraged and supported to look after themselves. This enables carers to carry on their caring role if they are willing and able. The outcome of this may also reduce unplanned hospital admissions for carers and the people for whom they care for. Covid has impacted greatly on the support for physical and mental health and wellbeing, because of the need for social distancing, shielding and lock downs. Some carers advised they need support to learn to 'live with covid' in ways that they are comfortable with.

- 7. Maximising life chances: ability to work, be in education or volunteer.** Carers need the opportunity to reach their potential, have a sense of purpose, and maximise their income and earning potential.
- 8. Contingency and future planning** including the Carers emergency card (peace of mind in an emergency). This will reduce the worry of what will happen in an emergency when a carer is ill, in hospital or needs a break and what will happen when the carer is no longer able to care. This was a real concern for carers.
- 9. Making the vision and aspirational outcomes a reality** – which will happen if there is strong leadership and governance. Key partners need to be held to account for doing what they say they will do.
- 10. To ensure meaningful engagement and co-production** by involving Carers in the design of services, policies, and procedures.
- 11. Carer awareness training** - to be committed to ensuring key organisations have access to Carer Awareness e-learning or similar training. This will enable carers to be identified at any point in the organisation from front desk to senior management. Staff will be able to identify carers and let carers know they are not on their own and what support is available.

12. To be signed up to 'Working for Carers' (or similar scheme) to ensure organisations and workplaces are 'carer friendly'. This may be via staff and management being carer aware as well as carer friendly, flexible working policies to support carers, enabling them to remain in work if they wish.

13. To signpost Carers to organisations and/or information to help Carers understand the cared for person's condition. Carers advised they need time and a chance to ask questions about the cared for's condition. Carers can also provide information that will help inform the care plan for the cared for. Carers are the 'eyes and the ears' of professionals, as they spot changes and early warning signs of potential issues for the cared for.

The following priorities have been identified as **Herefordshire and Worcestershire's 'Commitment to Carers'** (2022). Various organisations have signed up to these Commitment to Carers. Each organisation is evaluating how the commitments are being met (if they are being met). Organisations will also devise an action plan (with key partners including carers), which will state what other things will need to happen to fulfil the Commitments to Carers. These commitments will be implemented through the life of this strategy. The action plan is therefore the key document, as this gives tangible actions that will make a difference to carers lives and meet the commitments stated below.



As an organisation:

1. We proactively identify, register, support and inform Carers
2. We co-produce our policies with carers to ensure our services meet their needs
3. We are flexible to ensure Carers can continue to deliver their caring role
4. We actively involve Carers in decisions that may affect their own and/or their cared for's health and wellbeing
5. We have a Carer lead in our organisation who promotes a 'Carer Aware' culture

As a Carer:

1. My experience is valued when developing care plans for the person that I care for
2. My own physical and mental health needs are recognised and met
3. I can access relevant information in a format that suits me
4. I can access support that meets my individual needs
5. I am supported to maintain a life of my own, outside of my caring role



As key partners, in our work, we will:

- Consider the potential opportunities for contact with those who may benefit from preventative support and carer identification, and where that first contact might be. This may come from an initial contact through the adult contact team, Social Care (in an assessment of the cared for), GP (medical consultations), community nurse visits, housing officer discussions, school, or welfare and benefits advisor meetings etc.
- Ensure we proactively share information about support including preventative services as well as good marketing by the Carers Hub and the information and advice services.
- Ensure a consistent focus on prevention and carer identification, particularly at trigger points such as bereavement, hospital admission and discharge, benefits applications, contact with/engagement in local support groups, contact with/use of private care and support, and a change in housing.
- Provide domiciliary care (e.g., personal care) which focuses on enhancing someone's independence. Telecare (e.g., alarms, door sensors, falls detectors etc) and technology (such as Apps, Alexa etc) are also offered to support and provide peace of mind for Carers needs and concerns
- Practitioners will, at every contact, consider which needs can be prevented; which could be reduced; which might be delayed; and support needed now, by asking, 'What does a good life look like for you and how can we work together to achieve it?'

How progress on implementing the strategy will be monitored and success measured

The strategy is approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board. This is a high-level board with members involvement. The board will receive an annual report on the progress made on delivery of the Carer Strategy and its action plan by all key partners. Feedback from carers and stakeholders will indicate whether delivery is achieved and as a measure of the difference this action has made to carers. Each director is responsible for ensuring implementation in their respective organisation and departments.

A multi-agency working group will lead on the implementation of this strategy. This will include the development of an annual action plan and the completion of tasks to deliver the actions and priorities. The contracts with the Carers Hub and young carer and young adult carers support service, will have a key role to play in the delivery of the strategy, as statutory duties are delegated to them. The full governance arrangements are illustrated in Appendix 5 as well as Carer engagement opportunities.



Successful implementation

Carers and partners will know the strategy has been implemented when:

- Carers say they feel 'recognised and valued', 'have a life of their own', and they 'feel supported to maintain their physical and mental health and wellbeing' - 'always' or 'most of the time'.
- The Carers Hub is said to be the 'go to' place for all things carer related and that carers would recommend the Carers Hub and young and young adult carer support services to other Carers. That carers state they are 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with these support services.
- There is an increase in the numbers of carers on the carers register, which leads to an increase in the number of carers self-helping online, or an increase in numbers contacting the carers hub and having a conversation or assessment.
- Carers feel Worcestershire is more 'carer friendly'.
- There is an increase in the number of professionals completing the e-learning Carer Awareness training and the number of organisations striving to be carer friendly
- The annual action plan has been completed (as agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board)
- Organisations have used the All-Age Carers Strategy for Worcestershire to inform their policy and procedures and the way they work with carers or potential carers to improve carers lives.
- When people know what a carer is, the positives and negatives of being a carer, and know the support services that are available
- These will be measured via carers and stakeholder survey(s).



Thank you to partners for their
engagement and continued support to carers

