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# West Berkshire Council's Carers Strategy

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## Document Control

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## Change History

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0.1	260615	First draft for submission to the Carers Strategy Action Group for approval	MB
0.2	130815	Amended to reflect views of Carers Strategy Action Group	MH
0.3	Feb 19	Amended to incorporate service user feedback. Approved by ASCMM	MB

*This Strategy is for publication externally*

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## 1. **Scope**

- 1.1 This strategy covers all unpaid carers (including young carers and carers of all people with care and support needs) living in the West Berkshire Council area.

## 2. **Introduction**

### 2.1 ***Approach***

- 2.1.1 This overarching strategy identifies a set of key priorities and will be supported by a dynamic action plan which will be owned, monitored and reviewed (quarterly) by the Carers Strategy Action Group.

- 2.1.2 The strategy has been developed based on feedback from carers and in partnership with organisations listed below.

### 2.2 ***Partners to this strategy***

- 2.2.1 West Berkshire Council  
Newbury and District CCG  
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust  
Berkshire Carers Service  
Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Crossroads Care

### 2.3 ***Vision***

- 2.3.1 For West Berkshire to be a community which responds to the needs of carers and young carers based on their experience of caring.

## 3. **Background**

- 3.1 Carers and young carers make a vital contribution to their community by supporting those with care and support needs. This group will include family members and friends of people who need care and support. Supporting carers in their caring role significantly benefits the community so there is a clear value in maintaining them in the role.

## 4. **Priorities**

The priorities of the partner organisations are:

- 4.1 **PRIORITY 1:** To support the early identification and self-identification of carers and young carers. This priority is intended to enable unknown carers to access help and support.

- 4.1.1 Why is it important?

Until a carer or young carer has been identified, they cannot access support either emotionally, physically or financially. They are therefore missing out on help and support that could help them in their caring role and access to information such as Carers groups and benefits advice. As the population ages, there is an expectation that more people will become a carer at some point in their lives. The earlier a carer or young carer can be identified, the sooner support can be provided which will help

to ease the impact of caring on the health and wellbeing of the carer. It is also important as it is a key step in a carer receiving an assessment.

#### 4.1.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

It is estimated that around 14,000 (9.3% of the West Berkshire population) people in West Berkshire provide unpaid care. Currently there are around 1,000 carers known to services across West Berkshire which means there is a huge number of people in West Berkshire providing unpaid care who have not yet been identified.

#### 4.1.3 This will be achieved by:

- Raising awareness of caring and what it means to be a carer
- Helping people to understand if they are a carer
- Recognising carers' contributions as experts in their own right and as 'partners in care'
- Helping people to understand if they are a carer
- Making it easy for people to tell the partner organisations about themselves or about carers that they know.
- Promotion of the West Berkshire Directory across partner services to ensure there is awareness ok

4.2 **PRIORITY 2:** To provide Information and Advice to carers and young carers. This ensures that carers can make informed decisions and access support in an appropriate way.

#### 4.2.1 Why is it important?

Getting access to the right information and advice for carers and young carers is essential as this enables them to determine which support services are available to them individually what benefits they may be entitled to and how they may access this support.

#### 4.2.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Although many support services exist in West Berkshire, the West Berkshire Carers Health Needs Assessment identified that carers can find it difficult to find the right information.

4.2.3 This will be achieved by each partner organisation making sure that their information and advice to carers is:

- Is clear
- Is relevant and appropriate
- Is proportionate
- Is available to people who have particular communication difficulties
- Covers areas relevant to carers, eg carers' rights, welfare benefits, available services, assessment process, etc.
- The provision of training/skills to equip carers for their caring role.

- Working with GP's and primary health care to ensure they are able to identify and potentially signpost young carers to available support

#### 4.3 **PRIORITY 3:** To give carers and young carers access to types of support online.

4.3.1 This is highly valued by some carers although it is acknowledged not all carers have easy access to online facilities.

##### 4.3.2 Why is it important?

Accessing information online is a growing resource for carers, with Carers UK stating that 60% of adults go online every day or almost every day. The internet provides an alternative way for carers to access information and advice but also peer support whenever it is needed. This can be particularly important for carers who find themselves restricted to the home because of their caring role. Young carers in particular can find support provided online to be useful.

##### 4.3.3 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Internet provision is not consistent across West Berkshire. Some carers do not have easy access to online facilities and may require further assistance.

##### 4.3.4 This will be achieved by:

- Partner organisations providing or publicising online resources, e.g.
  - West Berkshire Directory
  - BCS website and Chill
  - SHaRON
  - E-Learning
  - Libraries
  - Explore the growing potential of social media via the use of Twitter/Facebook to increase connectivity and highlight available support

#### 4.4 **PRIORITY 4:** Enable access to Peer-Support Groups for carers and young carers

##### 4.4.1 Why is it important?

Peer support groups for carers and young carers provide valuable emotional support. They provide an opportunity for carers and young carers to have a break from caring and can show them they are not alone in their caring role. In addition carers and young carers can provide each other practical advice having been in the same situation and through attending a group, it can help a carer to escape social isolation. Groups can also support people to develop wider social relationships.

##### 4.4.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

A large number of peer support groups currently exist for carers and young carers in West Berkshire. These have been identified as being valuable to the carers and young carers they support. However the West Berkshire Health Needs Assessment identified that these groups are most likely to be successful if they are provided by an external service provider rather than managed by the carers themselves.

#### 4.4.3 This will be achieved by:

Supporting Carers Groups to be

- Set up/ maintained
- Accessible/community focused/local
- Sustainable
- Publicised

#### 4.5 **PRIORITY 5:** Carers needing help should receive appropriate support from West Berkshire Council (seeing carers as being as important as the people they care for).

##### 4.5.1 Why is it important?

Carers and young carers play a vital role in our society. The Care Act 2014 has strengthened the rights and recognition of carers, giving them the equivalence in law to the people they care for. Carers are entitled to a thorough assessment of their needs with a duty placed on West Berkshire Council to provide help and support to promote the wellbeing of carers. The Children and Families Act (2014) provides young carers with a similar right to assessment.

##### 4.5.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

In 2013/14, 720 carers were assessed or reviewed by West Berkshire's Adult Social Care Service. This equated to 60.5 per 10,000 people (18 years and over) and is lower than the overall number of people supported in the South East region (76.5 per 10, 000). The National Carer Survey 2012/13 found that 46% of Carers in West Berkshire were either extremely or very satisfied with the support they received from Social Services.

##### 4.5.3 This will be achieved by:

The response from WBC (ASC and CS) to requests:

- Being flexible (including the offer of combined or separate assessments)
- Giving carers sufficient time to explore their needs
- Being followed up in writing with a clear outcome
- Being monitored and reviewed
- Aspiring to high quality commissioned care
- Asking carers what is missing when we conduct our carers survey. This is currently covered by question 30 of the national carers survey. Feedback from our Quality Assurance Manager will be provided on this point

#### 4.6 **PRIORITY 6:** Support carers and young carers to take breaks from caring.

##### 4.6.1 Why is it important?

Being a carer or young carer can be challenging, both physically and emotionally. Taking a break from this role is important to allow carers and young carers to focus on their own health and wellbeing. A break from caring can take a number of different forms – it may be an hour each week, a day here or there or a longer holiday away.

#### 4.6.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Access to respite services for carers in West Berkshire is provided by Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Crossroads Care. In addition carer and young carer support groups can also provide a break from caring.

#### 4.6.3 This will be achieved by:

- Working with carers to think about the importance of breaks
- Supporting access to replacement care when necessary
- Working with community resources who can support this priority
- Planning for ways to manage in an emergency
- Identifying sustainable arrangements

### 4.7 **PRIORITY 7:** Support carers and young carers to have good health and wellbeing

#### 4.7.1 Why is it important?

Caring can have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of the person providing unpaid care. It is important that a carer and young carer are able to stay healthy, both for themselves but also to enable them to continue to provide their caring role. It is known that carers often neglect their own health, missing routine health checks and immunisations. In addition, carers often report feeling stressed, anxious and suffering from depression.

#### 4.7.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Carers in West Berkshire are more likely to report their health as “bad or very bad” compared to people who do not provide unpaid care. The likelihood of reporting poor health rises with number of hours of unpaid care provided.

#### 4.7.3 This will be achieved by:

- Raising awareness of the health impacts of caring
- Carers being identified as carers by Health Services and supported accordingly
- Supporting carers to develop resilient care plans
- Promoting health checks, flu vaccinations, etc
- Promoting access to Talking Therapies (and other sources of counselling)
- Look into the possibility of providing Gym Access

### 4.8 **PRIORITY 8:** Support a life outside caring to enable carers and young carers to achieve their potential.

#### 4.8.1 Why is it important?

It is essential for both carers and young carers to be supported to develop a life outside of caring. This may take the form of employment, volunteering, education or training, or in creating opportunities for socialising and leisure opportunities. This will help carers establish a life for themselves when they are no longer providing a caring role. Young carers in particular are known to have significantly lower

educational attainment at GCSE level than their peers and therefore need support to bridge this gap and ensure that they fulfil their potential for achievement.

#### 4.8.2 What is the picture in West Berkshire?

Increased access to adult education was highlighted as a recommendation within the West Berkshire Health Needs Assessment. In addition, the Young Carers Health Needs Assessment identified that many schools in West Berkshire do not have specific policies or procedures in place to support young carers with only limited provision of training for teachers.

#### 4.8.3 This will be achieved by:

- Social Care professionals to recognise carers' right to life outside caring
- Recognise transition points – becoming a carer, stopping a caring role, moving from being a young carer to an adult carer
- Influence and promote the availability of training, employment and leisure opportunities
- Link up with Job Centre Plus.

### 5. **Monitoring Arrangements**

#### 5.1 The Carers Strategy Action Group will define:

- monitoring arrangements
- actions to support priorities
- measures of success

#### 5.2 The Carers Strategy Action Group will use:

- National Carers Survey
- Periodic WBC survey
- Commissioned Services – Contract monitoring



# Appendices

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Appendix 1 – Action Plan

## Other relevant documentation

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[West Berkshire Carers Health Needs Assessment 2014/15 \(Author: Susan Mahal\)](#)

[Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[NHS England's Commitment to Carers](#)

[Care Act 2014](#)

[Carers Strategy/ Second National Action Plan 2014 to 2016](#)

[Carers UK Report: Alone and Caring](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

[Economic Case for Local Investment in Carer Support \(DoH/LGA/ADASS/Carers UK\)](#)

[Royal College General Practitioners - Guidance on supporting Carers](#)