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NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE



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North Wales Carers and Young Carers Operational Group Action Plan

Carers have a key role in the health and social care environment in Wales and therefore need to be recognised and valued for the support they provide. They themselves also need support in this vital role, and local authorities and health boards should therefore help ensure that carers are able to live their own lives as independently as possible. This is also in line with the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWbA) which legislates for enhanced rights for carers and simplifies and consolidates the law, giving them for the first time equivalent rights to the person they care for.

Welsh Government defines young carers as carers who are under the age of 18. The Code of Practice for Part 3 SSWbA (2014) defines young adult carers as being ages 16 to 25. This action plan is inclusive of the needs of all young and young adult carers up to age 25 years.

This action plan is based on:

- i) Welsh Government's national priorities for carers:
 - Identifying and valuing unpaid carers - all unpaid carers must be valued and supported to make an informed choice about the care they provide and to access the support they need whilst caring and when the caring role comes to an end.
 - Providing information, advice and assistance - it is vital that all unpaid carers have access to the right information and advice at the right time and in an appropriate format.
 - Supporting life alongside caring - all unpaid carers must have the opportunity to take breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their own health and well-being and have a life alongside caring.
 - Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace – employers and educational / training settings should be encouraged to adapt their policies and practices, enabling unpaid carers to work and learn alongside their caring role.

- ii) [Welsh Government's Strategy for Unpaid Carers 2021](#)
- iii) [North Wales Population Needs Assessment 2022](#)

Guiding Principles of the NW(Y)COG Action Plan:

- That the action plan is based on what matters for carers of all ages
- That we involve unpaid carers of all ages in service design
- That we develop robust, sustainable and flexible services in partnership to support carers

North Wales Carers Operational Group (NWCOG) and North Wales Young Carers Operational Group (NWYCOG) have now merged to form NW(Y)COG. This group will continue to meet quarterly and work in collaboration to deliver services for carers of all ages which meet the offer for carers and identifying opportunities to work better together.

North Wales' Offer for Unpaid Carers

Priority 1: Identifying and valuing unpaid carers

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress Red/Amber /Green
<p>All unpaid carers must be valued and supported to make an informed choice about the care they provide and to access the support they need whilst caring and when the caring role comes to an end.</p> <p>Unpaid carers must be recognised and valued for their contributions to society, treated as equal partners to health and social care professionals and supported to have their voices heard in the language of their choice.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Third Sector / Commissioned Providers</p>	<p>Unpaid carers are recognised, identified and supported by all 6 local authorities, BCUHB and third/voluntary sector Providers, but there is still an under anticipated number of carers identified or registered across the region.</p> <p>Carer Needs Assessment / What Matters conversation are undertaken by LA teams as well as the local commissioned Providers, third sector organisations supporting unpaid carers.</p> <p>Specific local authority teams are in place across the region to identify and support carers of all ages, including SPoA, Family Information Services, Community Well-being</p>	<p>Further work needs to be undertaken across the region to identify and reach out to hidden carers.</p> <p>Unpaid carers need to be identified and valued across all departments within LAs (e.g. leisure/sports centre).</p> <p>Young carers support services are looking at other ways to share information and support so that they are identified earlier and offered the support they are entitled to.</p> <p>Commissioners to ensure support is in place in particular for very young carers, those under the age of eight who are at particular risk and have been excluded from some young carers' assessments and services in the past on the grounds that a child under eight should not have any caring responsibilities whether through young carers' services or other services for vulnerable children.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress Red/Amber /Green
<p>Carers' needs assessments can offer a gateway to a person centred support plan, but without timely information about their rights and how and where to get support, both the health and well-being of the carer, and those they care for, could suffer.</p>		<p>Teams, Carers Teams and Dementia Support Teams. Third sector partners work collaboratively across the region to identify and support carers of all ages, including but not limited to Carers Outreach, NEWCIS, Alzheimer's Society, Crossroads, Hafal, TIDE, Age Cymru, Carers Wales, Action for Children, WCD Young Carers and DEWIS CIL Advocacy Services.</p> <p>Young carers work with Action for Children, WCD Young Carers and NEWCIS across the region to create a bespoke support plan following completion of a Carer Needs Assessment / What Matters conversation. Part of the support plan is identifying the outcomes that the young carer and their family want to work towards.</p> <p>BCUHB's Patient Experience Team is</p>	<p>We will continue to engage with young and adult carers moving forward in a range of ways to gather feedback, views and concerns etc. and feedback via the appropriate channels on issues being brought forward.</p> <p>Carers of all ages will be encouraged and supported to become involved in forums and opportunities where their voices can be heard and fed back, including local/regional/national carers' forums.</p> <p>Link to carer surveys to identify what carers are telling us about the sustainability of their caring role. Following Carers Outreach's successful regional bid alongside NEWCIS in securing the BCUHB contract funded by the WG Annual Carers Grant, we will now be working closely with all GP surgeries and hospitals including community hospitals, in order to raise the profile of unpaid carers in North Wales.</p> <p>The Investors in Carers accredited scheme has been developed to award GP surgeries with a recognised certificate on achieving the award</p>	

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		<p>currently developing a Carers Strategy which will mirror the Regional Carers Strategy. Carer awareness is raised amongst Hospital Discharge Teams to encourage the inclusion of social care on discharge planning, to help identify carers and refer on to support services.</p>	<p>levels on the scheme which includes carer awareness and identification.</p> <p>Our GP and Hospital facilitators will aim to educate all primary and secondary care staff across North Wales in how to identify carers and how to refer them on to local commissioned carer support services.</p> <p>Parents of children with suspected/undiagnosed autism. Family Centres are supporting families but processes could be streamlined.</p> <p>WCD Young Carers have started looking at developing a “Friends of Young Carers” course with NEWCIS and Action for Children to be run across North Wales. This would be offered to agencies, charities, education, youth groups, community groups, anyone who might come into contact with a young carer. The idea is they are able to offer the support when a young carer asks for help, but also might be able to help a family/young person recognise the role they have. This is being developed with young carers and has been requested by them on the back of their experiences.</p>	

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			BCUHB are looking to take forward Triangle of Care (ToC), designing a BCU specific model based on Carers Trust's ToC.	

Priority 2: Providing information, advice and assistance

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress RAG
<p>It is vital that all unpaid carers have access to the right information and advice at the right time and in an appropriate format. Provision of appropriate information, advice and assistance (IAA) provides the vital first steps of a preventative approach.</p> <p>Many unpaid carers do not need to access formal statutory or specific social services or health provision but simply require the right information, in the right format, at the right time, in order to manage their caring role. Knowing where and how to access different forms of information, advice and assistance such as welfare benefits or</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Third Sector / Commissioned Providers</p>	<p>Well-established 3rd sector SPoA and IAA points are available in Community Resource Teams within Adults & Childrens Social Care across the region.</p> <p>A range of independent professional advocacy as well as informal advocacy services are available across the region.</p> <p>School counselling services exist across the region as well as young carers and school based services offering peer support.</p> <p>North Wales Young Carers ID scheme launched across the region earlier this year. Promotion of scheme is currently underway which includes the possibility of an identified “sticker” displayed in organisations/retail etc. windows once Young Carer Friendly awareness sessions have been completed.</p>	<p>It is imperative to build on the current information resources and ensure that a wide range of support services are advertised alongside each other.</p> <p>Social media campaigns that draw people’s attention to websites, social media and useful links need to be co-ordinated and developed together involving all relevant partners, to raise awareness of unpaid carers and ensure that information about support services is made available.</p> <p>However, we also need to consider what help can be offered to unpaid carers who are currently without access to the internet. Equally need to recognise that many carers prefer information provision face to face/over the phone, or as hard copy.</p> <p>Local partnerships to work together to ensure that support services are commissioned in response to what matters to carers.</p> <p>Working in partnership with health, particularly GP surgeries, is crucial to ensure that unpaid carers (particularly</p>	<p>Amber</p>

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress RAG
<p>more general rights, can also be preventative.</p> <p>IAA provided should be proportionate to the needs of the individual. IAA is intended to support prevention and early intervention and deliver a wider range of community-based services through partnerships and multi-agency working. Delivered well, and at the right time, IAA can enable unpaid carers, and those they care for, to live healthy and fulfilled lives for as long as possible.</p> <p>In order to avoid geographical variants in available services across Wales (a 'postcode lottery'), it is critical that all IAA services in Wales are</p>			<p>hidden ones) access the information that they need i.e. timely and relevant.</p> <p>Regional review of dementia support services, including contribution to Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Connect Service.</p> <p>Implement the resources from the Unpaid Carers Charter when available, across the social care workforce.</p> <p>Work is under way to deliver carer aware sessions to ensure the workforce in Wrexham becomes more aware of carers and able to support and to direct to appropriate services as required.</p> <p>Strengthen links with CAMHS and ACEs leads.</p> <p>Link in with MH Primary Care and Well-Being pathway.</p> <p>Links with LA Housing, contingency planning young carer services, access to benefits advice, welfare rights etc. Research the need and uptake for tenancy/housing related support for young carers.</p>	

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<p>high quality and easily accessible to all.</p> <p>Need for advocacy, especially when dealing with professionals in order to have carers' voices heard.</p> <p>Young carers may feel insecure about their housing as they are unable to receive benefits or take on responsibility for paying household bills themselves.</p>				

Priority 3: Supporting life alongside caring

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress RAG
<p>All unpaid carers must have the opportunity to take breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their own health and well-being and have a life alongside caring.</p> <p>Unpaid carers provide a valuable service to the people they look after and society in general but can neglect their own needs. Unpaid carers should have equal access to different and innovative forms of short breaks and / or respite taken with or without the person they care for.</p> <p>Respite can include sport, leisure or cultural activities, as well as more traditional forms such as replacement care</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Third Sector / Commissioned Providers</p> <p>Education services</p>	<p>The pandemic has had a major impact on the way services are delivered. We have had to adapt and respond to the changing situation. Services have continued providing tailored support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ telephone/video/ online contact ✓ keeping in touch calls ✓ responsive emergency grants ✓ specific information and advice to include financial concerns ✓ low level advocacy ✓ referral and signposting to community based support to include food banks, virtual groups, travel letters, protective masks for carers, specific newsletter and sharing of concerns to appropriate bodies ✓ support to carers upon new discharge procedures and 	<p>We must continue to support carers' access to opportunities to maintain their well-being whilst also identifying further support that may be relative to specific caring needs that are not currently utilised.</p> <p>Continue to identify opportunities for carers through social prescribing/community navigators' support.</p> <p>Young carers services are looking at how groups are run as the pandemic has provided them with the opportunity to review their function and talk to the young carers about how they would like them to be run.</p> <p>Young carer day trips and residential breaks will also be reviewed, in particular due to COVID-19 restrictions. These are being planned by listening to young carers and their families and looking at what is available locally. Carers Outreach are in the process of purchasing a second caravan at Hafan Y Môr to allow more carers a break.</p> <p>Carers Outreach are now also aiming to support the rising demand for counselling and CBT for unpaid carers.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

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<p>or an overnight sitting service for the person being cared for.</p> <p>Linking to priority 4, having a life alongside caring could also involve being able to work or undertake training.</p> <p>Preventative measures to prevent the social support systems of young carers becoming at risk.</p> <p>Need for support with education and learning for young carers.</p> <p>Young adult carers miss or cut short on average 48 days of school each year (nearly 5 weeks). This among other factors, in particular during COVID-19 can have a negative impact on</p>		<p>support to carers of individuals living with mental health.</p> <p>Carers Outreach and NEWCIS provide short term breaks for carers at local caravans, cottages and apartments across North Wales. They are also able to provide respite opportunities such as days out, memberships to different venues such as gyms, golf memberships as well as electrical items such as iPads and garden furniture or outdoor equipment.</p> <p>Joint carer needs assessments are offered, however rarely taken up. The assessment to ensure the person cared for has their needs met ensures a carer is able to meet their own well-being needs and life plans whilst providing a level of care they wish to do so.</p>	<p>They are now able to provide up to 8 counselling session for carers from counsellors that are outsourced.</p> <p>Carers Outreach will pilot Respitality next year once/if the hospitality sector is fully up and running again. The aim is to provide a short vital break for unpaid carers when they need it most. This is achieved by connecting carers' organisations with hospitality, tourism and leisure businesses who are willing to donate a break free of charge. Gwynedd's newly appointed Carers Project Worker will be working alongside the adult teams until the end of March 2022 to see how they can better support unpaid carers in Gwynedd. Consultations will be carried out with carers and colleagues/teams working directly with carer to determine what services and support carers want and need.</p> <p>Conwy's pilot of 'Push To Talk' befriending service will support up to 50 carers across Conwy and Denbighshire, with the potential to open up to more carers across the region (tbc).</p>	

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achievement and future attainment.		<p>Young carers services and school based counselling. Discounted leisure centre access for carers of all ages.</p>	<p>Team Around the Family (TAF)/Team around Child (TAC); Family Group meetings; and YC services to address any social support issues, focusing on community support and inclusion.</p> <p>Update mapping of discounted leisure services/opportunities available for carers across North Wales.</p> <p>Identify online training accessible for carers re. mental health and well-being information and resilience and any other relevant training.</p> <p>Work with Pupil Referral Service and Careers Service to capture young carers in transition.</p> <p>Establish links with Directors of Education and Cluster Leads.</p>	

Priority 4: Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress RAG
<p>Employers and educational / training settings should be encouraged to adapt their policies and practices, enabling unpaid carers to work and learn alongside their caring role.</p> <p>Having the opportunity to work and learn is an important part of life. It can provide financial stability and bring the wider benefits of a fulfilling career, positive mental health and social interaction.</p> <p>Unpaid carers not in employment, education or training should be able to access the right information, advice and support to develop the skills to gain suitable employment, whether re-entering the</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Third Sector / Commissioned Providers</p>	<p>Carers have access to SCWDP training.</p> <p>Commissioned carers support services support unpaid carers to work, be in education or attend training alongside their caring roles.</p> <p>Carers are supported to identify if they would like to access opportunities for training, volunteering and work etc. and signpost to the appropriate support services to assist with this. Online and group sessions are delivered on a range of training and issues relevant to carers' needs to help inform and educate.</p> <p>Carers Wales Employer for Carers Hub promote carer friendly workplaces across the region.</p> <p>Young carers continue to be supported at school through a drop-in service.</p>	<p>Training needs of carers to be further fed into the Social Care Workforce Development Plan (SCWDP). Currently there is a rollout of Carers E-learning programme and carers assessment training programme. There is also reference to Carers as a regional priority.</p> <p>Gwynedd Council is looking to improve their support for staff who are carers through the implementation of a new carer policy for employees. Carers Outreach hope to be able to provide free training opportunities for carers in the near future, such as manual handling and first aid that is provided to all other paid carers. By giving unpaid carers this training opportunity it would benefit local authorities as unpaid carers would be safer with the knowledge that they have to carry out their caring role. They have also connected with Adult Learning Wales to work together to provide free training and education to carers.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

Need	Lead/ Key partner	Where are we now?	Future progress	Progress RAG
<p>workforce, or getting a job for the first time.</p> <p>It is also important to recognise that an unpaid carer may also be self-employed, managing their own business or organisation, and therefore may face a different set of challenges.</p>		<p>The North Wales Young Carers ID card will also provide support for young carers in school and with health professionals. Young carers in secondary school are supported by Action for Children, WCD Young Carers and NEWCIS to apply for part time jobs alongside their education.</p> <p>Education and work commitments of parent carers are taken into consideration as part of Carer Needs Assessments / What Matters conversations.</p> <p>Bangor University Widening Access Department promotes the support available to carers, especially young adult carers from the university. They also provide information about free online courses through the Open University/Future Learn. Local authorities have adopted Special leave policies and flexible working</p>		

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		<p>policies to allow provision for carers leave and flexible working practices.</p> <p>Carers Champions in each local authority.</p> <p>Dementia Friendly organisations across North Wales.</p> <p>Local Authority Carer Strategy groups continue to meet across the region.</p>		