

Health and Wellbeing Board

10 January 2024

Update on All Age Carers

Recommendation

That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the national and local context, the support available for carers and progress on the development of the Warwickshire All Age Carers Action Plan.

1. Executive Summary

National Context

- 1.1. According to the 2021 census, 8.7% of the England population are unpaid carers which represents an overall drop in carer numbers. However, the intensity of caring has significantly increased with 250,000 more carers caring for 20 to 50 hours per week. There are a number of requirements around support for carers and these are summarised below.
- 1.2. The government announced in 2018 that it would not produce a National Carers Strategy and instead produced a National Carers Action Plan covering the years 2018 – 2020, with 5 main priorities:
 - Services and systems that improve support for carers.
 - Supporting the financial wellbeing of carers.
 - Raising awareness and supporting carers in the community.
 - Support for young carers.
 - Improve outcomes for carers with evidence-based research.
- 1.3. The Care Act 2014 made it a requirement for Local Authorities to support carers via an assessment of need. Therefore, all carers have the right to request a carers assessment and appropriate support plan coproduced with carers. However, the legislation outlines that respite and replacement care should be via the cared for assessment and not the carer. Carers can however have access to a direct payment as part of the support planning.
- 1.4. The NHS Long Term Plan has also put forward some recommendations for supporting carers. The Plan recommends:
 - That carers should be supported in emergencies, with contingency plans in place and recorded in Summary Care records.

- Use of carers passports within hospital settings to help support carers.
 - Care Quality Commission primary care quality markers in place to support carers.
 - Raise awareness of Young Carers in primary care and support with prevention and social prescribing.
- 1.5. The Health and Care Act 2022 requires that Integrated Care Boards ensure that carers are equal partners in support, service development and any changes or decisions regarding the person they care for. Hospitals are required to coproduce discharge plans with carers.

Local Context

- 1.6. For Warwickshire, the number of unpaid carers is estimated from census 2021 data to be 52,725, which is a drop from the previous estimate of 65,000. The proportion of unpaid carers (8.8%) is similar to the England figure (8.7%) but less than the figure for the West Midlands region (9.3%). The intensity of caring has seen an increase, with 4.1% of the Warwickshire population caring for someone more than 20 hours a week. The true picture of caring could be a significant under-representation as many carers remain ‘hidden’ from services and support.
- 1.7. The previous Warwickshire Joint Adult Carers Strategy 2017 –2020 was not all age and required a refresh. It was agreed that this would be done jointly with Coventry City Council as the lead organisation. The decision was taken that, in line with the national position, an action plan rather than a strategy would be produced.
- 1.8. Key Strategic Interdependencies (not exhaustive):
- Coventry and Warwickshire ICS Health Inequalities Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027
 - Coventry and Warwickshire Living Well with Dementia Strategy 2022-2027
 - Joint Strategy for Autistic People (Coventry and Warwickshire) 2021-2026
 - Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 - 2025
 - Warwickshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019 –2023 & SEND Working Together Charter

Current Support for All Age Carers in Warwickshire

- 1.9. [Caring Together Warwickshire](#) is the all-age carers support service that also carries out statutory carers assessments for adult carers on behalf of the Council. The service is provided by Carers Trust Heart of England and was launched 1st October 2022. There are currently over 6,600 adult carers and 700 young carers known to our local carer support service [Caring Together Warwickshire](#). A summary of the local support for carers can be found on the [Carer Information on Support Leaflet](#).
- 1.10. The outcomes for carers are based on engagement with carers as well as local and national recommendations such as “Think Local Act Personal”.

There are 8 main outcomes identified that all carers should have on receiving support:

- *I am actively supported to maintain my own health and wellbeing and others understanding my caring role. (Raising carer awareness with public and professionals, communications)*
- *I am supported to balance my caring responsibilities with having a life of my own and do things I enjoy (managing responsibilities, breaks from caring)*
- *I can access and know where to get information and advice to make informed choices about my life (confident, empowered, resilient)*
- *I am supported to be economically active and minimise the impact of caring on education, training, or work. (Financial, independence)*
- *I am actively supported to access activities and services in my community of my choice and can contribute to my community. (Participate in family and community life, peer support and groups, reduced loneliness, and isolation)*
- *I can make informed decisions about my support, and I am recognised as an equal partner by services and professionals (carers voice, seen as experts and equal partners in their support planning and service development, quality assessment of need)*
- *I can plan ahead and have systems in place to avoid crisis or keep control in emergencies (contingency planning, strengths-based)*
- *I have a positive experience of support at all times, and receive service from friendly, supportive, and experienced people who talk to each other (high quality and proactive services, carer satisfaction, shared and safe records, transition)*

Warwickshire Action Plan Update

- 1.11. The Caring Together Warwickshire conference with carers and partners took place in March 2023 to identify the key areas and actions to support carers. A [report](#) on the key outcomes of the Conference discussions was shared with delegates and partners.
- 1.12. Actions were identified based on the key areas identified as part of the engagement work carried out pre-tender of the All-Age Carers Support service, Caring Together Warwickshire. The themes were as follows:
 - **Whole system recognition of carers** – carers often do not feel seen or heard and remain hidden usually until a crisis arises. Therefore, it's essential for health, community and social care partners to work together and be proactive in its recognition of carers even if they do not realise they are entitled to support or see themselves as carers.
 - **Better Access to information and advice** – carers have cited that they do not know about the support that is available to them and their rights to support. If carers are armed with information and can access universal support they can remain resilient in their new or changing caring role and

better equipped to manage their caring responsibilities with the right level of support.

- **Carer Breaks** – ensuring carers have access to breaks from their caring role. Carers felt there were not enough opportunities to do things they enjoy, maintain work, or engage with friends and family. This can often lead to feelings of loneliness and carer breakdown.

1.13. The themes were aligned to the outcomes for carers as part of the Caring Together Warwickshire service and 5-year objectives and deliverables for the next 1 to 2 years were identified and will be reviewed and updated annually.

1.14. A summary overview of the Warwickshire All Age Carer Action Plan is shown in Table 1 below.

1.15. Update on Progress to date:

- A coproduction plan has been outlined to include support with dementia carers.
- Carers Week campaign completed. Evaluation showed increased engagement with carers over the week on social media, the service website and increased referrals.
- Warwickshire carers were nominated for awards as part of the Carers Award ceremony including Young carer award, Carer of the year award. Employer of the year went to NFU Mutual.
- The improved Better Care Fund has supported 19 groups including support for young carers, adult carers and parent carers activities, equipment, training and peer support.
- We are working with the Carers Trust to improve the digital offer and carers assessments.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 None. Proposed actions to be funded from existing budgets.

3. Environmental Implications

3.1 None

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

4.1. Next steps are:

- It is recommended that an All-Age Carers Warwickshire Place Steering/Delivery group is formed to oversee the progress against the action plan and to support any governance for the plan going forward. This

could be with representatives from each of the Place Partnerships to oversee progress. Carers should also be a part of this group.

- Year 1 performance review of the all Age carer service Caring Together Warwickshire provided by Carers Trust Heart of England.
- Review of the Urgent and Planned breaks (aka CRESS) and options for breaks offer for carers.
- A continuation of schemes using Joint Commissioning Board approved 2023/24 iBCF funding allocation.
- To support carer recognition the Carer Aware and Young Carer Aware training is being reviewed with a view to be updated by December 2023.
- There may be scope for working on a digital offer across the West Midlands region.

4.2. Timeline for All Age Carers Action Plan:

Timeline for All Age Carers Action Plan	
Dec 2023	Internal Governance Sign off SCLT and DLT
Dec 2023 – Jan 2023	Identify Integrated Care Board Executive sign off joint with Coventry City Council
Oct2023 - Jan 2024	Place Partnerships consideration against priorities and allocation of iBCF.
Jan 2024	Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting
Mar 2024	All Age Carers Action Plan Workshops/Conference 2024 Review and update delivery to date and next steps with carers, partners and stakeholders

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None as this is a County Wide report

Other members: Councillors Bell, Barker, Holland, Drew and Rolfe.