

Our Commitment to All Age Carers

Update on Progress

Scrutiny Panel 20 November 2023

Sandra Ashton Jones

Carers - The Context

- A Carer is someone who cares unpaid for family or friend who due to illness, disability, poor mental health or an addiction, needs support
- Carers UK estimate that nationally carers save the economy £132 billion per year, an average of £19,336 per carer
- 2021 Census, 24,000 people in Wolverhampton identified themselves as a carer
- Currently working with between 5000-7000 carers in the city including carers under 18 years and parent carers
- The Local Authority has statutory duty to assess and provide support to carers

Our Commitment to All Age Carers

Extensive engagement with carers and professionals to 5 priorities closely aligned to Our City : Our Plan

Under pinned by Core values:

- Co-production
- Continuous improvement
- Connecting with communities
- Equality and Fairness for all
- Safeguarding

Launched in December 2022



The Five Priorities

- Priority One – Employment and Financial Wellbeing
- Priority Two – Services and Systems that Work for Carers
- Priority Three - Support Young Carers
- Priority Four - Using Research and Evidence to improve outcomes for Carers
- Priority Five - Recognising and supporting Carers in the wider community

Priority One – Employment and Financial Wellbeing

To achieve this the Council with partners will:

- Align support for carers with the Wolverhampton Pound approach, building and retaining local wealth in Wolverhampton to improve outcomes for local people including carers.
- Ensure carers have access to information about benefits, grants and financial management and financial support and advice.
- Identify and raise awareness of pathways into adult education and training for carers.
- Amongst employers, increase the awareness of carers legislation, how to identify carers and actions that can be taken to enable carers to balance their caring and employment responsibilities.

Priority One – Employment and Financial Wellbeing continued

- Encourage employers to increase employee awareness of the carer role and promote peer support
- Work with the Wolves Anchor Network to explore how they can support carers in the city
- Engage with Wolves at Work to explore how carers can achieve their employment goals
- Engage with Wolverhampton Cares to explore opportunities for carers who may wish to pursue a career in the care sector

Priority One – Employment and Financial Wellbeing Progress to date

- Linked with Wolves at Work, supporting carers in employment, including training to increase carer career options when caring role ends.
- Carers Welfare Rights Day November 2023 – Benefits advice surgery arranged
- Offer to all carers of a one - off payment in 2023/24 to support with increase in cost of living. So far 250 carers have received £100 each.
- Within City of Wolverhampton Council development of Carers Wellbeing passport to support carers with work life caring role balance
- Working with Wolverhampton University to support learners who have a caring role, enabling access to education to improve employment options.

Priority Two – Services and Systems that work for carers

To achieve this the Council with partners will:

- Ensure carers and stakeholders understand carers rights to and benefits of an assessment, known in Wolverhampton as a Carer Conversation, and routinely offer assessments.
- Enable access to clear, concise, accurate and relevant information and communicate changes to it.
- Ensure services are responsive to telephone contact and provide timely call back.
- Require services, including universal and preventative services, to make reasonable adjustments to enable carers to access services that meet their equality needs and at times that fits with their caring role.
- Develop the use of technology and use social networks to empower and enable collaboration within communities.

Priority Two – Services and Systems that work for carers. Progress to date

- Work started with GP surgeries to promote role of family carers
- Working with Social Prescribers, Voices for Parents, Dementia Connect, Admiral Nurses to promote role of carers and working together to offer joined up support
- Working with schools, attending open evenings and transition events to promote carer offer to parent carers of children and young people with disabilities
- Continual development of Carer Bulletin including specific parent carer section

Priority Two – Services and Systems that work for carers. Progress to date

- Developed specific training packages with Compton Care, with areas identified by carers
- Working with 100% Wolves Online to ensure carers able to access IT equipment and WIFI
- Carers Support Team attending Social work Team Huddles to promote referral pathway for Young Carers

Priority Three - Support young carers

To achieve this the Council with partners will;

- Improve the identification of hidden young carers in schools and by services which work with children, young people and their families.
- Increase schools' awareness and understanding of the impact of being a young carer on education and emotional wellbeing and increase schools' awareness of the services available to young carers.
- Ensure young carers know their rights regarding assessments and are always offered a young carers assessment.

Priority Three - Support young carers (continued)

To achieve this, the Council and partners will:

- Ensure the voice of young carers are included in delivery of the SEND strategy and local carer offer
- Review the commissioned support service with a focus on the transition from young carer to adult carer
- Review the opportunities available to young carers to talk to other young carers including young carer clubs
- Support young carers to access educational and out of school opportunities that help them develop and maintain friendships with their peers
- Help young carers to have the same opportunities to access education, work, experience and training as any other young person

Priority Three - Support young carers Progress

- Young Carer Service has become part of the Council's All Age Carer offer
- Working on Pathfinder Project to enable closer working with Children's Services
- Developing training for Children Services workers to identify young carers
- Communication with all Primary Schools sharing new referral process, Early Help assessment and development of new carer offer
- New monthly support groups for young carers, working with The Way and library services, with activities such as robotic/coding, comic book creation

Priority Three - Support young carers Progress

- Gym and cooking sessions at Bob Jones Centre
- WhatsApp Young Carers/Parent chat set up to promote activities
- Working with Bentley Bridge and WV Active to offer young carer membership concessions
- Working with Community Transport to offer safe reliable transport to and from events
- Carer Support Team Involved in SEND Local Offer web development

Priority Four - Using research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers

To achieve this, we will:

- Maintain up to date knowledge of the technology that is available to support carers and promote the use of it.
- Maintain up to date knowledge about the research undertaken by other local and national organisations and use this to influence changes to services and systems
- Set up an implementation group with carer representatives and partner agencies to enable co-design and co-production
- Collect information on and analyse the carer profile, including equality information, and use this to plan services accordingly

Priority Four - Using research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers. Progress to date

- Continually ask for carer feedback, using feedback to identify gaps and improvements to our All Age Carer offer
- Working with other organisations to collate carers experience to use to improve outcomes for families
- Working with RWT to share carer offer and share learning to help develop our own CWC Carer Passport
- Working with other West Midlands Carer organisations to improve regional offer and share good practice
- Review and Learn from the national Carer Survey

Priority Five - Recognising and Supporting carers in the wider community

To achieve this, the Council and partners will:

- Identify hidden carers who are not engaged with services to ensure they know how to engage, what support is available and how to access it
- Maximise opportunities to raise the profile of caring, to help people to self-identify, such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day
- Work with voluntary and community organisations to reduce social isolation, increase the use of carer peer support and improve mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Encourage carers to inform their Primary Care Surgery about their caring role so that appropriate support, for both physical and mental health and wellbeing, can be offered in a timely way
- Ensure carers are offered appropriate support to safeguard them

Priority Five - Recognising and Supporting carers in the wider community

- Offer carers safeguarding advice and support when appropriate
- Promote and increase take-up of the emergency card
- Ensure the carer voice can influence the delivery of the City Housing Strategy and access to the Disabled Facilities Grant
- Ensure the carer voice influences the Council's All Age Travel Assistance Policy
- Consider the opportunities available for carers to access leisure and social offers in the city
- Explore the introduction of the carer passport scheme

Priority 5 - Recognising and Supporting carers in the wider community- Progress to date

- Promoting role of carers at key events including Dementia Action week, Carers Welfare Rights Day, Young Carers action day, Mental Health week
- Carers Bulletin and WIN promote carers events
- Work taking place with New Cross and West Park Hospitals, Gem Centre and Pond Lane promoting carers offer including pop up carers information stands in all hospital departments
- Developing material in different formats and languages, also working with Refugee and Migrant Centre to promote carer offer
- Sessions held to discuss end of life planning and increase understanding of the Respect document

Next Steps

- Programme of events planned for Carers including Christmas meals, coffee mornings, links with Wolverhampton university, WV Active, promote Emergency carers card and concessions, after school events for young carers, Football Box at Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club
- Work starting Jan 2024 with young carers to co-produce Young Carer offer
- Work with Voices 4 Parents to co-produce communication on activities for parent carers
- Safeguarding Awareness sessions being planned for carers in New Year
- Developing Joint Carer Conversation record and Transitions Pathway for Young Carers for implementation 2024

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