

# Carers Strategy update for ASSH Scrutiny Panel 06 July 2023

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# Priorities co-produced with carers

Carers' views sought by:

- Online carers survey
- Carers Inquiry Day (ASSH Scrutiny Panel)
- Healthwatch report on carer focus groups and phone interviews  
Healthwatch report on interviews with unheard carers from minority groups eg Syrian refugees, Asian community, disabled carers, Gypsy/Roma/Traveller community
- North Somerset Carers Support (Alliance Homes) - carer focus groups
- Alzheimer's Society – carer focus group

# Carers Strategy priorities

- 1 - Identify, recognise and value carers
- 2 - Involve carers in decisions, including care-planning and developing services
- 3 - Systems that are a) joined up and b) that identify, recognise and value carers and see carers in the context of whole family
- 4 - Services that are reliable and deliver best outcomes for all
- 5 - Information and advice
- 6 - Staying well and having a life of my own

# Other research sources used

- Carers UK
- Carers Trust
- Alzheimer's Society
- Other LAs
- NHS England Long-Term Plan
- ADASS

# Priority 1 - Identify, recognise and value carers

## **Carers told us:**

- Carers often do not identify themselves as such. They felt unacknowledged by GPs and other frontline health & social care services.
- Carers want to be recognised for the knowledge they have and for people to listen to them when making changes
- Carers want support to register at a GP surgery to give benefits such as electronic flagging on notes for the cared-for and Carer

## **Our actions to improve:**

- NSC, NHS and other partners to ensure staff are 'carer aware' eg through training and publicity materials
- NSC and ICB to consider within every strategy, plan, and decision, e.g. transport, planning, not just Adult Care, whether it can be developed to benefit carers in some way and to do so where feasible
- NSC to appoint a councillor as Carers Champion to oversee the above within the council
- NSC to work with the Integrated Care Board to encourage GP surgeries to adopt the Framework of Quality Markers developed by NHS England. This aims to improve the identification of carers of all ages at general practices. ICB to monitor how this framework is adopted by each GP surgery.

# Priority 2 - Involve carers in decisions, including care-planning and developing services

## Carers told us:

*“I do not feel listened to and my knowledge of care and illness for my partner is not taken into consideration”.*

*“We need to be listened to and taken seriously. We want to be recognised for the knowledge we have and for people to work with us and listen to us when making changes.”*

## Our actions to improve:

- Listening to carers – establish quarterly Carers’ Forums for carers to have their say and feed into strategy, policy, service development, quality assurance, etc
- Develop Strategy for Community Engagement to enable council to take consistent approach to engage with local communities when seeking their views
- Council to undertake specific engagement with carers from minority groups to better understand key cultural issues and how to improve their uptake of services

## Priority 3 - Systems that are a) joined up and b) that identify, recognise and value carers and see carers in the context of whole family

### **Carers told us:**

- Carers find themselves having to repeat their stories over and over to different professionals including care workers

*“We have different Carers every time, it’s exhausting having to explain about my husband’s illness and what his needs are.”*

- Carers would like more joint working between professionals to help with the difficulties of being a carer
- Carers pointed out that many services are not joined up and duplicated information.
- Carers expressed the need for a holistic approach that takes their mental health, physical health and whole family situation into consideration, including their financial support.
- Carers want help to navigate the system

### **Our actions to improve:**

- Council and ICB to work on data-sharing to improve support to carers
- Encourage care providers to offer continuity of with care workers, especially for people living with dementia and their carers
- Promote ‘whole family’ approach to see carers in context of their wider family situation

# Priority 4 - Services that are reliable and deliver best outcomes for all

## Carers told us:

- Carers want easy access to support services
- Carers are concerned about availability and cost of replacement care without which they cannot take a break for themselves
- Carers want more easily accessible information on respite availability
- Carers from refugee communities in particular would like training so that they can better support the cared-for person, and emotional support for themselves.
- Carers want a Carers Passport that helps to support them in an emergency

## Our actions to improve:

- council to a) develop wider range of respite options for carers and b) improve accessible info on respite availability
- council to investigate with Parish & Town Councils, North Somerset Together, and other partners, how services that are based at a very local level, i.e, in towns and villages, could be developed to identify and support carers and to implement this if it offers significant improvements to carers' lives
- Council's Carers Emergency Response Scheme (CERS) to provide improved range of responses to carers' emergencies so that carers have increased peace of mind
- Explore whether CERS could be extended to a Carers Passport
- Specific engagement with carers from minority groups to better understand their needs
- Health and Social Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to have specific chapter on carers from minority groups, aiming to tackle the health inequality among these communities.



# Priority 5 - information and advice

## **Carers told us:**

- The lack of information or communication from health and social care services directed at carers from minority groups is the main barrier to these carers accessing the support they need.
- All Carers pointed out that many services are not joined up and duplicated information.
- When people are first diagnosed there was either too much information or Carers did not know who to go to for further information and support.
- Carers would like help to navigate the system

## **Our actions to improve:**

- Development of key messages and a Communications strategy by council with partner organisations, including social prescribers at GP practices
- Review and update information on the council website pages for carers
- develop sufficient and appropriate information packs about support and carers' rights that are easy to understand, in different formats and languages.

# Priority 6 - Staying well and having a life of my own

## **Carers told us:**

- Pandemic has left carers exhausted, often with little or no time to themselves, and has impacted mental health of many
- Keeping in touch with carers by telephone would have helped carers feel less isolated and more supported during lockdowns
- There are gaps in support available for carers' wellbeing
- Carers feel they sometimes need advocates to speak up for them
- Carers are given ongoing support in the form of a co-ordinator for their Health and Social care needs
- Carers from minority groups wanted peer support groups with other carers who face similar barriers or provide a similar type of care
- Working carers are worried about juggling employment with looking after someone

## **Our actions to improve:**

- To proactively offer carers universal services and a Carers Assessment
- Improve support available for carers to look after their own physical and mental health
- Explore options for improving emotional support available for carers
- Explore options for improving access to emotional support for carers from minority groups
- Ensure carers are included in the NSC Digital Strategy to improve their digital access and support options
- Bid for available funds to develop further support for carers' wellbeing

# Next steps

- Draft strategy is out for comment with carers and other stakeholders
- Finalise when comments received
- Sign-off
- New Carers Partnership Board to oversee implementation
- Sub-groups to develop and ensure delivery of actions under priority headings
- Timescale – aim to begin implementation by October 2023
  
- And...do we have a councillor here willing to be NSC Carers Champion?