

Bath & North East Somerset Council			
MEETING	Children's and Adults Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel		
MEETING DATE:	16th June 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
TITLE:	Carers Strategy Update		
WARD:	All		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report: N/A			

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Carers (also referred to as unpaid carers) are defined as those who have caring responsibilities for another person, often a family member or friend. In this instance we are specifically addressing adults who provide care to other adults.
- 1.2 In 2024 B&NES Council embarked on an innovative project to co-produce a Carers Strategy with carers in B&NES. During this process carers outlined what they felt worked and didn't work for them regarding being a carer in B&NES. They also set out their key priority areas for change. This culminated in a Carers Strategy, launched in September 2024. The completed Carers Strategy was well received by carers and received a favourable mention in the B&NES Care Quality Commission Local Authority Assessment Report. The report also noted that carers are keen to see 'what happens next' with this work.
- 1.3 This report outlines progress towards the carers strategy activity plan, which has developed since the last update to scrutiny. It is prescient that this report is being delivered the week after National Carers Week, where the theme 'caring about equality' is central to our work.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 Consider content of the report and provide comments.

3 THE REPORT

Co-produced Activity Plan

- 3.1 During development of the Carers Strategy it was agreed by carers that an activity plan was required, to turn the objectives of the strategy into tangible actions. This document was drafted by the Carer Working Group, and taken to social care senior managers for comment in January 2025. Elements of the activity plan, including a focus on ensuring ease of access to information and a clear process for statutory carers assessments, were subsequently included in the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan.
- 3.2 The remaining elements of the activity plan, particularly improving carer awareness, connecting carer related services, and ensuring an effective crisis response, require systemwide response and therefore are being considered and aligned with local and regional activities. We expect to publish the activity plan as an addition to the Carers Strategy in Summer 2025.

Progress on Delivery

- 3.3 Assessments and reviews – The Adult Social Care operations team are conducting significant activity to reduce waiting lists for assessments, including carers assessments. 30 Carers assessments have been conducted between January and May 2025, a 20% increase on the same period in 2024. There are currently 1295 Carers supported by B&NES, an increase of 445 since May 2024.
- 3.4 Carers Support Service Procurement – Carers have been directly engaged in the process of recommissioning the Carers Support Service. In Spring 2025 carers met to discuss what they thought key elements of the service should be. This content was then included in the service specification. Carers will be an integral part of the tendering process. Carers have met to consider and amend quality questions required for the tender and will take part in evaluation as part of the tendering team.
- 3.5 Carers Online Portal – As part of improvements to information and advice, referrals and assessments, B&NES has been developing online portals, which bring these elements together in one online space for residents to access. B&NES worked with the Carers Centre to develop the carers portal, including information available and use of terminology. Carers have been invited to provide feedback on this work, and support development of some elements. The first meeting of the group will be in July 2025, with a second meeting scheduled for August.
- 3.6 Transitions to Adult Social Care - The Parent Carer Forum has been engaged as part of the development and launch of the transitions portal for young people potentially moving from children's to adult social care. The transitions portal was launched in November 2025. Any young carer approaching the age of 18 can be referred/self-refer to the transitions team for an Adults Carer Assessment.

3.7 Community Wellbeing Hub – During 2024 and 2025 Riviam, the digital partner for the Community Wellbeing Hub, has been delivering carer related improvement work funded through the Accelerating Reform Fund. Through better data capture it is now easier to track the number of carers engaging with the hub. This data will help to build a clearer picture of carers in B&NES and help to better refer carers to third sector and statutory support. Additionally, in person engagement with residents at the Royal United Hospitals is supporting B&NES ability to engage carers at an earlier stage.

3.8 National and Regional Links – The Assistant Director for Operations has taken on the role of chair for the carer subgroup of South West ADASS. As this group reforms, it will provide opportunities to learn from other local authorities and shape regional activity. The Programme Manager for Transformation is engaged with partners in B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire to scope opportunities for joint activity and shared learning.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 According to the Care Act 2014, local authorities, and by extension, social care teams must fulfil the following duties that directly impact carers:

- To focus on promoting wellbeing
- To prevent, reduce and delay need for support, including the needs of carers
- A right to a carer's assessment based on the appearance of need
- A right for carers eligible needs to be met
- To provide information and advice to carers in relation to their caring role and their own needs

4.2 The act also places a duty on NHS bodies (NHS England, ICB's, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts) to co-operate with local authorities in delivering the Care Act functions.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 All co-production activity related to carers is funded through an allocation of Better Care Funding assigned for the purpose.

5.2 The Project and Programme Manager (Transformation) is allocated to deliver carer related co-production activity. Additional staff resource has been allocated from the IT team for the development of the carers portal.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted for each element of the activity outlined in the activity plan.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 There are no climate implications for the outlined activity.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 Previously, the Carers Strategy has been delivered without consultation with carers. This option was considered and disregarded, with the expectation that co-production will lead to better outcomes.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The carers strategy and activity plan have been developed as co-produced activity with carers. Subsequent activity, resulting from the strategy and plan ranges from engagement through to co-production.

Contact person	Callum Graham Robertson, Commissioning Project and Programme Manager
Background papers	Carers Strategy - https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/BNES%20Carers%20Strategy%202024.pdf
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	