

BRIEFING

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| TO: | The Health and Wellbeing Board |
| DATE: | 24 January 2024 |
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| TITLE: | Carers Strategy – Status Update January 2024 |

Background

1.1 This is one of a series of reports prepared for the Health and Wellbeing Board and serves to update on the progress made in association with The Borough That Cares – Strategic Framework 2022-2025 Creating a carer friendly Rotherham.

A previous report presented September 2022 provided an update on the; finalisation and publication of the strategy, the outcomes of an engagement exercise and the progress made against Aim 3 milestones detailed in the Health and Wellbeing Board Action Plan 2022 to 2025.

This report serves to provide a further update on progress made against the strategic aims in the first two areas of focus in the strategy. The Council and partners have worked to deliver the actions with unpaid carers being placed at the heart of this process through their direct involvement in The Borough That Cares - Strategic Group.

1.2 Strategic Context:

The Borough That Cares – Strategic Framework 2022-2025 Creating a carer friendly Rotherham was developed in partnership with colleagues across the Council, Health and the Voluntary and Community Sector and most critically, people with lived experience. The Strategic Framework set out a vision for working with and supporting carers and provided a road map for how change will be facilitated directly with carers.

The Borough That Cares Strategic Framework has three areas of focus:

| Area of Focus | Focus | Key Objective |
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| Area of Focus 1 | Carer Cornerstones | Consolidating a community offer for carers – ensuring 3rd sector organisations are stabilised |
| Area of Focus 2 | Creating Communities of Support | Ensure organisations work together to provide services that are flexible and accessible throughout the borough. |
| Area of Focus 3 | Carer Friendly Borough | Carers feel their role is understood and valued by their community. |

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| 1.3 | <p><u>Local Context</u></p> <p>It is estimated that more than 31,000 carers are providing unpaid care in Rotherham, often alongside work or education, for someone who otherwise couldn't manage without their help due to illness, disability, addiction, or mental ill health. This care is often invisible.</p> <p>Unpaid carers form the backbone of the social care system, which would not be able to function without their support. Caring for a loved one can be a positive and rewarding experience, but carers need support to continue their vital role. Devoting significant time to unpaid care can not only lead to a downturn in carers' health, but it can also make it difficult for them to maintain social relationships and to keep working or learning, which can affect their financial security. More people are caring for a loved one than ever before, and organisations within Rotherham remain committed to helping carers.</p> |
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Key Issues

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| 2.1 | <p>Publishing of the Borough that Cares Strategic Framework</p> <p>The Framework was formally launched on 24th November 2022 and published on the Council's website at: The Borough that Cares Strategic Framework – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</p> |
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| 2.2 | <p>Engagement with Carers and other stakeholders</p> <p>A permanent post of Carers Strategy Manager was appointed to in July 2023. The post holder will take responsibility to deliver the objectives of The Borough that Cares – Strategic Framework 2022-2025 and develop unpaid carers strategies for future implementation. Having a key role in co-production to design support options, the Carers Strategy Manager will involve people with lived experience of being an unpaid carer and engage key stakeholders across the health and social care system and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Over a four month period (August to November 2023), the Carers Strategy Manager completed a review of existing carer support services and the advice and information offer to carers.</p> <p>Over Quarter 4 of 2023/24 the information gathered will be evaluated to inform next steps.</p> |
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| 2.3 | <p>Progress against the milestones in Aim 3 of the Health and Wellbeing Board Action Plan 2022 - 2025</p> <p>Bi-monthly updates against Aim 3 actions have been received by the Health and Wellbeing Board and the current position is:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="4" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Aim 3 - Priority: Ensure support is in place for carers.</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;">No.</th> <th style="width: 45%;">Milestone</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Timescale</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Outcome</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3.1</td> <td>Refresh the information, advice, and guidance available to carers, including the launch of the carer's newsletter.</td> <td>April 2022 – March 2023</td> <td style="background-color: #add8e6;">Completed</td> </tr> </table> | Aim 3 - Priority: Ensure support is in place for carers. | | | | No. | Milestone | Timescale | Outcome | 3.1 | Refresh the information, advice, and guidance available to carers, including the launch of the carer's newsletter. | April 2022 – March 2023 | Completed |
|--|---|--|-----------|--|--|-----|-----------|-----------|---------|-----|--|-------------------------|-----------|
| Aim 3 - Priority: Ensure support is in place for carers. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No. | Milestone | Timescale | Outcome | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Refresh the information, advice, and guidance available to carers, including the launch of the carer's newsletter. | April 2022 – March 2023 | Completed | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | 3.2 | Take an integrated approach to identifying and supporting carer health and wellbeing through working with partners to develop a carers health and wellbeing action plan. | April 2023 – March 2024 | Completed |
| | 3.3 | Establish locality specific carer partnership / network groups. | April 2023 – March 2024 | Not progressed due to the outcome of the engagement activity |
| | 3.4 | Introduce co-production programme with communities to build our carer friendly Borough. | April 2023 – March 2024 | Completed |
| | 3.5 | Introduce an assurance process for all published Information, Advice and Guidance to ensure the relevance, accuracy, and accessibility. | April 2023 – March 2024 | Completed |
| | 3.6 | Ensure carers feel their role is understood and valued by their community. | April 2024 – March 2025 | To be reviewed and new milestones agreed for the final year of the strategy |
| | 3.7 | Delivery of Carers emergency services. | Sept 2023 | Completed |

2.4 Accelerating Reform Fund

On 24th October 2023 the government announced the new Accelerating Reform Fund. In order to participate, local authorities are asked to form consortia with other local authorities in their integrated care system (ICS) geography. Then, working together with the NHS and other partners, the consortia are required to outline innovation projects to be taken forward. At least one project must be focused on unpaid carers and priorities have been defined by DHSC.

Priority 4: ways to support unpaid carers to have breaks

Priority 7 : ways to conduct effective carer's assessments / outcomes and collaboration

Priority 8 : services that reach out to, and involve, unpaid carers through the discharge process

Priority 11: ways to better identify unpaid carers in local areas

Priority 12 : ways to encourage people to recognise themselves as carers and promote access to carer services.

Rotherham is leading the consortia with Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster to prepare and Expression of Interest with Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster for submission before the deadline of 12 January 2024 with a 9th February confirmation of funding. The total potential funding to be allocated to Rotherham is a minimum of £168,000 to support project delivery across February 2023 to March 2025. The outcome of the submission and details of the approved projects will be reported in future iterations of this report.

The findings of co-production activity with Rotherham Unpaid Carers has informed the project proposals. Similar co-production activity has been undertaken by consortia partners.

Key Actions

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| 3.1 | <p>In order to complete the actions identified at 2.3 a programme of engagement with 11 carers groups that support carers of people with a variety of issues, such as mental ill health, dementia, physical disabilities and parent carers. Young carers also contributed their views. The main themes identified in the engagement were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The requirement to have some form of flexible respite option from their caring role.• A local offer of health and wellbeing activity to enable them to maximise any time away from their caring role.• Recognition that carers have individual needs and ‘one size services’ do not fit all.• An easy to use resource to find the support and guidance they need.• Recognition of their role and joined up services to reduce the requirement to explain their needs repeatedly. <p>In addition to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An update of the Carers’ pages on the RMBC website in co-production with key stakeholders has been undertaken. This work is ongoing in conjunction with the corporate refresh of the Council’s website.• The Borough That Cares Strategic Group has agreed new Terms of Reference and has become the Borough That Cares Network Group. The Group is developing an action plan aligned to the focus of the strategic framework.• An evaluation of the Emergency Care Scheme completed and options for the renewal of the contract, which is due to expire on 31st March 2024, have been identified and agreed. This will secure the provision of the service to 2027. |
| 3.2 | <p>Better Care Fund</p> <p>A Better Care Fund allocation for unpaid carers has been utilised in the provision of 19 small grants issued to community groups for projects focusing on improving Carers’ health and wellbeing.</p> <p>These projects are funded until 31st March 2024, the outcomes of which will inform next steps.</p> |
| 3.3 | <p>Agree new milestones for 2024/25 to report to the Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <p>A work programme for the Carers Strategy Manager and decisions on next steps will be made, in quarter 4, 2023/24. New actions aligned to the final year priorities identified in the Borough that Cares Strategic Framework to be proposed to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2024 for the year 2024/25.</p> |
| 3.4 | <p>Update of the Strategic Framework</p> <p>Co-production on the refresh <i>The Borough That Cares – Strategic Framework 2022-2025 Creating a carer friendly Rotherham</i> will be programmed in Q1 of 2024/25.</p> |

Implications for Health Inequalities

4.1 An equality analysis of the support for unpaid Carers in Rotherham is in progress and an action plan will be developed where required. Any future service development will include completion of individual equality screening assessment.

The Small Grants for Carers Wellbeing Programme provided intelligence of community assets previously unidentified. In addition to this, of the 19 grant recipients, 4 benefitted people with protected characteristics that historically have been under-represented in service provision, these being LGBT; carers from the Chinese community and female BAME carers.

In a report published March 2021, Public Health England identified that Carers are twice as likely to suffer from poor health compared to the general population due to lack of information and support, financial concerns, stress and social isolation and the physical demands of caring.

[Carers UK responds to Public Health England's report on Caring as a Social Determinant of health | Carers UK](#)

Research undertaken by the Carers Trust evidenced that certain groups of unpaid carers (female carers, older carers, LGB+ carers, and carers from ethnic minority communities, and carers from a low socio-economic background) found it harder to access suitable services, and often stated they didn't know about/receive support.

The Local Picture:

Rotherham has a significant population of all minority groups identified in the Carers Trust research as having limited knowledge about, or access to services. The socio-economic profile of the population is characterised by less affluent white British individuals or areas of high ethnic diversity.

21.2% of the LSOA's* in Rotherham are classified as e-withdrawn, having the least engagement. This correlates with more deprived neighbourhoods of urban regions. This presents a further barrier, limiting knowledge and access to services.

**Lower Super Output Area*

Recommendations

5.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the content of this latest update that covers the period from the previous report to December 2023 and agree that new milestones for 2024/25 to be reported to HWB are to be agreed by March 2024.