

Slough Adult Carers Strategy

2023 – 2026

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Executive Summary

This strategy sets out how Slough Borough Council, working with partners, will support and encourage carers to manage their own health and wellbeing and, together with partners build carer resilience and make the right interventions when carers are most in need. Unpaid family and friend carers are often the ones holding families and communities together, and giving the right support at the right time during a person's caring journey can make a huge difference to their lives.

The aim of the strategy is to meet the vision that Slough is a place where carers can balance their caring roles and maintain their desired quality of life. We aim to achieve this through improving the lives of carers and by enabling them to make informed choices as well as exercise choice and control about the care and support they receive. This will be through the provision of accessible information and advice for them and the person they care for, including benefits and employment rights. Carers have told us that information and advice should be accessible through a range of community points (for example libraries and shops) and not just on-line. We are committed to ensuring that carers have access to a range of services that minimise the negative impacts of caring upon their health and well-being, prevent carer breakdown, and help prevent or delay them from developing a need for care and support themselves. The importance of seeing carers as individuals with their own lives, separate from the cared for person is an important part of the approach and is also key to receiving the right support, at the right time.

This Strategy has been informed by engagement with Carers – and some examples of where feedback has shaped the Strategy are highlighted within boxes throughout the document. Further detail concerning engagement and how this has directly influenced the strategy is contained at the appendix to this strategy.

Vision and Priorities for Adult Social Care what outcomes carers want to achieve and how they can be supported to achieve these

In June 2023, Cabinet approved the development of a refreshed Corporate Plan for the town. [Report.pdf \(slough.gov.uk\)](#)

The Corporate Plan describes the purpose of the Council as:

- Closing the healthy life expectancy gap, by focussing on children

With three key strategic objectives, which are:

- Priority 1: A borough for children and young people to thrive.
- Priority 2: A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives.
- Priority 3: A cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough.

The plan is open to public consultation throughout Summer 2023.

People (Adults) directorate supports Priority 2 and adopts a tiered preventative approach towards the delivery of adult social care.

Key elements of the approach are to:

- Enable people to manage their health and wellbeing
- Prevent the need for take up of adult social care
- Provide access to the right level of support at the right time
- Enable people to manage their own care and support needs
- Safeguard our vulnerable population
- Progress integration between health and social care
- Embed Co-production at the heart of care and support

Our priorities for Carers

The Strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes as our refreshed priorities for 2023 – 2026. In response to legislative requirements, local strategy and knowledge and stakeholder engagement we have developed the following six priorities:

1. Enable carers to access information, advice and guidance
2. Identify and recognise carers at an early stage
3. Promote carer awareness – including the valuable role they play and challenges they face
4. Provide person-centred support – to enable carers to manage their own health and wellbeing and access to the right support at the right time
5. Ensure that Carers are viewed and listened to by professionals as experts in care
6. Support effective Integration and partnership work – including co-production and ensuring that carers voice is central to any service development.

Feedback from Engagement

A survey was undertaken in July 2023 to find out what Carers felt about the draft Carers Strategy. The Survey was distributed to all carers on the SCVS registration list, to Carer Groups and to members of the Co-production Network. As a result of the survey, the priorities have been modified to take account of views and responses received.

Further information concerning the survey, the responses and how these have shaped the Strategy can be found at the Appendix to this Strategy.

The strategy will be responsive to any future changing local and national priorities including changing legislation. Carers as expert partners will be involved in having oversight of the strategy.

Feedback from Engagement

Carers' voice is central to any service developments. The implementation of the Carers Strategy will be overseen through a steering group comprising carers, officers from the People (Adults) directorate, the co-production network, and other professional stakeholders including Frimley ICS.

1. Introduction

Slough Borough Council and our health, voluntary and independent sector partners, acknowledge the significant contribution of carers and are committed to supporting them to fulfil their caring role, whilst enabling them to have a life outside of caring, and maintaining and protecting their health and wellbeing.

Each year millions of people take on caring responsibilities as the population ages and the number of people with a limiting long-term illness increases, this means that caring will touch the lives of most people, as we either require care or provide care to loved ones, at some point in our lives. Unpaid carers make an important contribution to the overall supply of care services. As the population grows and ages, an increasing number of people are likely to continue to provide significant levels of care.

'A Carer is considered to be anyone who spends time looking after or helping a family member, friend or neighbour who, because of their health and care needs, would find it difficult to cope without this help regardless of age or whether they identify as a Carer'.¹ The concept of care includes practical or emotional support.

Caring can come about unexpectedly or can develop gradually over time; and whilst it can be rewarding, it can also be challenging. Many carers often put their own lives on hold to provide care and support to someone close to them - impacting on their own health and wellbeing, relationships, employment opportunities, finances, and social and leisure activities.

It is important that new carers are provided with early information and advice so that they understand the financial and other support which might be available to them. Good quality legal advice is also important so that carers understand their rights and legal processes which might be helpful.

Feedback from Engagement

Early information and advice covering employment, benefits and legal advice was flagged as being important in the engagement with carers. This includes information on securing Lasting Power of Attorney in case the person being cared for loses their mental capacity in future years.

¹ Carers Action Plan: Supporting Carers today 2018 - 2020
www.gov.uk/government/publications/carers-action-plan-2018-to-2020

It is critical that carers are seen as individuals, that the diversity of needs is understood, that voices are heard and that a person-centred approach is used to identify and meet needs. One size does not fit all.

According to the 2021 Census, there are now 6.5 million unpaid carers in the UK. This means that 1 in 5 adults in the UK are currently providing care. This could be a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or is affected by mental health or substance misuse. It includes young people under 18 who may be caring at home.

Providing care for another person can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. But there can also be times when people who care find themselves struggling. It is estimated that the number of unpaid carers has risen to 10.6 million given the fact that some carers do not identify themselves as carers.²

Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men. More women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work. 58% of unpaid carers are women.³ Between 2010 – 2020, people aged 46-65 were the largest age group to become unpaid carers. 41% of people who became unpaid carers were in this age group.⁴ One in seven carers in the UK are juggling work and care.⁵

Slough is not unique in that our carer statistics reflect the national picture. According to the 2021 census, there are 12,626 carers in Slough. The 2021 census states that 3.3% of residents (aged five years and over) reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week in 2021. This figure decreased from 6.0% in 2011. These are age-standardised proportions.

Also, in 2021, just under 1 in 50 people (1.9%) in Slough reported providing between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care each week, compared with 1.7% in 2011. The proportion of Slough residents (aged five years and over) that provided at least 50 hours of weekly unpaid care remained at 2.5%. The percentage of people (aged five years and over) providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care in Slough decreased by 2.7 percentage points.

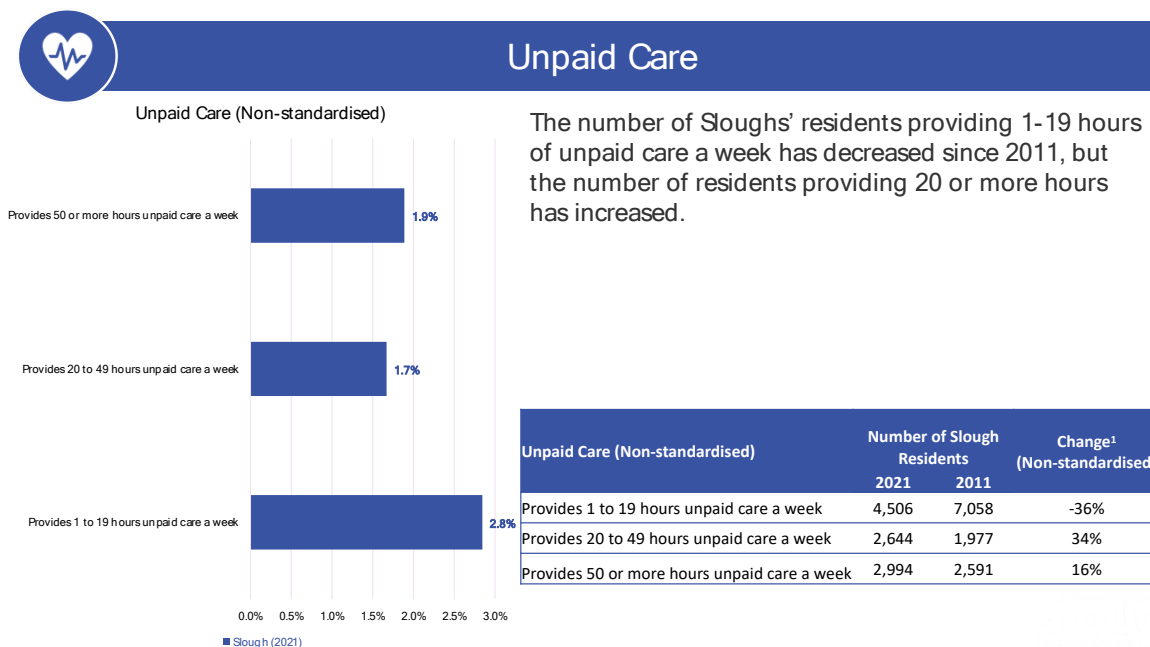
² Making Caring Visible, Valued and Supported, Carers Week 2022 Research Report
https://www.carersweek.org/media/qf0p5u4t/carers-week-2022-make-caring-visible-valued-and-supported-report_final.pdf

³ Unpaid Care, England and Wales: Census 2021
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/unpaidcareenglandandwales/census2021>

⁴ Petrillo, M., Bennett, M.R., and Pryce, G. (2022) Cycles of caring: transitions in and out of unpaid care. London: Carers UK
<https://www.carersuk.org/media/bgolg5u2/cuk-carers-rights-day-research-report-2022-web.pdf>

⁵ Juggling Work and Care 2019. Carers UK.
<https://www.carersuk.org/media/no2lwyl/juggling-work-and-unpaid-care-report-final-web.pdf>

Figure 1: Changes in the provision of unpaid care in Slough (2011 – 2021)



In the southeast region, Slough has the lowest proportion of people (aged five years and over) providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care (3.3%) when compared with Reading (3.7%) and Lewes (5.4%) which is the region's highest proportion.

The value of unpaid care was estimated at £530 million per day and £193 billion per year during the pandemic.⁶ As such, it is important to recognise the potential impact that providing many hours of care each week may have on carers' own quality of life – their physical and mental health, employment opportunities, finances, social relationships, and social and leisure activities.

Three in five people will be carers at some point in their lives and almost everyone will know family members, friends and colleagues who are carers. There is not a 'typical carer' and everyone's caring role is unique. Carers come from a range of backgrounds, situations, and age groups. Some carers move in and out of the role many times and provide various types of care, often to more than one person.

Carers are a socially and demographically diverse group and as the demand for care is projected to grow, people are increasingly likely to become providers of care at some point in their lives.

⁶ Carers UK: Unseen and undervalued. The value of unpaid care provided to date during the COVID-19 pandemic (November 2020) <https://www.carersuk.org/media/gi1b4oup/unseenandundervalued.pdf>

2. Vision

The vision for Slough's Carers Strategy 2023 – 2026 is that Slough is a place where carers can balance their caring roles and maintain their desired quality of life. We will do this by providing a carers support offer that aims to ensure:

- All carers in Slough will be assisted to identify themselves as carers at an early stage and will receive support to promote their wellbeing
- Carers are able to make informed decisions and exercise choice and control about care and support through the provision of accessible information and advice for themselves and the person they care for
- Carers will receive personalised support, both for themselves and the person they care for, enabling them to have a family and community life
- Carers will be supported to remain physically and mentally well
- Carers will be supported to access the right services, at the right time, in the right place.
- Carers will be recognised, valued, and empowered as “experts” in care.
- Carers will be supported in their carers' journey (prevention and crisis intervention).

Feedback from Engagement

The survey with carers undertaken in July 23, showed that the vast majority of respondents agreed with each of the above elements of a carers support offer. Further detail can be found at the Appendix to this Strategy.

We will deliver an outcome- focused carers support offer that will:

- Support early identification of carers
- Act as a single point of entry for Slough carers
- Ensure all carers receive an assessment of their needs (that is proportionate to their presenting needs)
- Take a holistic approach to prevention, which is solution- focused
- Ensure support is tailored to local needs, builds upon local assets
- Incorporate a range of support services that are central to carer needs and requirements – including particular needs such as for male carers.
- Support Carers through an asset-based approach, building on individual and community skills, knowledge, support networks and connections
- Empower Carers to be as independent as possible at an individual and community level
- Assist carers to maintain and/or improve their health and wellbeing
- Assist carers to continue in their caring role
- Be local and accessible to carers
- Support transition of young carers into adult services where appropriate.
- Develop an outcomes framework to align with the Slough Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF).

This strategy has been developed as an approach to supporting carers and commits us to working in partnership with carers, health and social care providers, communities and employers with the aspiration to develop a society that is carer friendly, which values and supports carers to fulfil their caring role and maintain their health and wellbeing.

3. Purpose and scope of our Strategy

The strategy sets out the types of services needed by carers in Slough and how they will be provided in the future. This strategy has been developed to strengthen early intervention and integrated support. It seeks to respond to the issues that have been highlighted locally and outline how everyone across the system can specifically work together to improve the lives of carers.

This strategy is for all unpaid adult carers supporting someone who lives in Slough, regardless of the condition of the person depending on them. It recognises that all carers have a diverse and unique range of needs, priorities, and interests. It is acknowledged that in the longer term it could be beneficial to aspire to an “all age approach to carers” to cover the entire carers pathway from children to adults. This will include particular cases where adult social care is empowered to provide support to a parent carer who is yet to transition to adult social services.

This strategy is concerned with direct support for carers and carers’ services and influencing all health and social care services and the wider community to understand and respond to the needs of carers.

The Council is committed to improving the offer for carers and the strategy sets out how we intend to do that. Further changes in government policy also means that it is necessary to reflect these changes and ensure our vision for supporting carers is fit for the future. Our refreshed priorities will inform the design of future support and developments and set out what we will concentrate our resources on promoting carers’ health and wellbeing.

We will monitor and measure the success of this strategy through the accompanying Action Plan. This makes clear who will be responsible for the work that is needed to implement the strategy and the outcomes will be tracked, monitored and reported through the Council’s performance monitoring data, Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF), Steering Group and the Slough Co-Production Network.

4. Policy Guidance: National and Local Context

National Context

The development of Slough’s Carers Strategy 2023 - 2026 is shaped by the following legislation, statutory guidance and national policy framework:

- The Care Act (2014)
- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care and Support (Children’s carers) Regulations 2015

- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- State of Caring (2019)
- NHS England’s Long Term Plan (2019)
- National Carers Action Plan (2018-2020)
- NHS Commitment to Carers (2014)
- NICE Guidelines
- Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities (DH 2008)
- Recognised, valued, and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy (DH 2010)
- Carers Strategy: Second National Action Plan 2014 -2016 (DH)
- NHS England’s Commitment to Carers (NHS April 2014)
- Commissioning for Carers: Principles and resources to support effective commissioning for adult and young carer (NHS Dec 2014)
- RCGP Supporting Carers in General Practice
- Making it Real for Carers (TLAP May 2013)
- Hidden from view: The experiences of young carers in England (The Children’s Society 2013)

Local Context

This strategy, and its delivery plan, links closely with a number of other programmes of work, and should be considered in parallel with the following:

- Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025 ⁷
- The draft refreshed Slough Borough Council Corporate Plan (open to consultation Summer 2023)
- Carers Policy
- Caring behind closed doors: Forgotten Families in the Coronavirus Outbreak, April 2020 ⁸
- Caring behind closed doors: six months on, October 2020 ⁹
- Healthwatch Slough: Covid-19 Insight Report: March to July 2020.¹⁰

Health and social care partners in Slough have agreed jointly to put strong mechanisms in place to support unpaid carers and work across the health and social care economy to minimise the impact of illness and disability on a carer’s life, and support carers to balance their caring roles and maintain their desired quality of life.

To achieve the vision and the strategic objectives set out in this strategy it is vital that sustainable support solutions are in place for carers that will empower carers to be as independent as possible at an individual and community level.

⁷ Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, 2020 – 2025

<https://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/file/866/slough-wellbeing-board-strategy-2020-2025>

⁸ Caring Behind Closed Doors: Forgotten Families in the Coronavirus Outbreak, April 2020, Carers UK <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/campaigns/caring-behindclosed-doors>

⁹ Caring behind closed doors: six months on, October 2020 <https://www.caringtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Caring-behind-closed-doors-Oct20-Carers-UK-PDF.pdf>

¹⁰ Healthwatch Slough: Covid-19 Insight Report: March to July 2020.

<https://www.healthwatchslough.co.uk/sites/healthwatchslough.co.uk/files/HW%20Slough%20Covid%20Report%20July%202020.pdf>

Therefore, we are looking for new ways of making the best use of the money available and ways of people supporting each other in their local communities. We are looking to develop a carers' support offer that is closer to communities, in order to ensure support is tailored to local needs, builds upon local assets, and is integrated within and works in partnership with the local health and social care system.

5. How this strategy was informed

As part of the engagement with carers and professional stakeholders (see appendix 1), the issues below were identified as the top challenges carers may have (or be likely to) experience in Slough. It aligns closely with national research conclusions.

- The negative impact of caring on physical health and mental health (including loneliness and isolation)
- More carers experiencing financial hardship.
- Identification of carers, young carers, and recognition of carers' expertise by healthcare services being generally seen as haphazard or poor.
- Back-up for carers and suitable respite becoming more critical.
- The increased need for isolated and stressed carers of all ages to come together for peer support and social activities.

Feedback from Engagement

In the survey undertaken in July 23, the majority of respondents agreed that these issues represented challenges. The impact of a caring role upon physical and mental health, financial hardship and access to respite were considered to be challenges by the highest number of respondents (91%). Recognition of carers expertise by healthcare services was considered a challenge by a lower percentage of carers (67%).

We have considered what is important nationally in terms of legislation and guidance as part of our strategy. We have also aligned this strategy with the vision and values described in Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025.

This strategy sets out how we will prioritise and target our resources and activities in order to achieve the vision set out above and drive improvements in support for carers across Slough's health and social care system.

6. Caring costs and funding

Caring costs

In order to support carers, we recognise the importance of providing financial assistance, access to resources and information, and other forms of support that can help to alleviate the costs of caring. This can include access to benefits, respite care, and other forms of financial and practical assistance.

Caring can have a significant impact on economic wellbeing and can cause financial hardship due to:

- Reduced working hours or taking periods of unpaid leave
- Having to leave work or retire early
- Stress levels and its impact on physical health
- Leaving school / education early and not progressing to further and / or higher education

Caring can also incur greater costs, for example:

- Travelling regularly to care for someone where they don't live in the same house
- Having the heating on all day due to someone being elderly or unwell or disabled
- Aids and adaptations and their maintenance and repair
- Specialist childcare for a disabled child

This strategy acknowledges the financial hardship of caring and will look for solutions to reduce and mitigate the impact.

Funding

Funding future adult social care demand is a key issue across the UK. In Slough, we have brought the carers service in-house as we think this will represent better value for money and deliver improved outcomes. Further information concerning this decision can be found here: [AGENDA ITEM \(slough.gov.uk\)](https://www.slough.gov.uk/agenda-item)

The funding is used to act as a single point of entry for all carers and implementing a “triage” approach to carers assessments and provision of support. Where need is identified the in-house service will work with the carers to develop a support plan to ensure identified needs are met through access to their local community and universal and targeted services.

Services include:

- Access to Advice and Information (provided alongside other support)
- Voluntary and Community Sector Services
- Peer support/carers networks

- Access to other preventative services including the Integrated Wellbeing Service (IWS) – providing a single point of access to a range of services including smoking cessation, brief alcohol intervention, falls prevention, health checks etc
- Training: (to enable people to confidently care)
- Access to short breaks from caring and respite care – to minimise carer break down, alongside peer support groups and training
- Care and support packages
- Developing emergency and contingency plans
- Increased use of assistive technology to support carers to take a break from their caring responsibilities
- Direct payments

Further work will on data collection will help us understand the costs and impacts when the carer goes into hospital and quantify savings to acute services through provision of improved support to carers, such as respite services and night sits that prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

Feedback from Engagement

Carers fed back that access to respite, short breaks and sitting services were important to ensure that they get a break from their caring responsibilities as these prevent carer breakdown and can prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

The Carers Strategy Action Plan (section 11 below) includes a commitment to review the existing offer and any opportunities for developing this going forward.

Carers Assessment

Carers assessment focusses on the following:

- The care and support currently provided or intended to be provided in the future
- The sustainability of the care and support currently provided and in the future
- Carer related needs and the support required to help meet these needs
- The impact on carers health and wellbeing as a result of carrying out a caring role

The assessment questions (also completed online) have been designed to help fully identify the impact which carrying out a caring role has on a carer's day to day life and what support they need to continue carrying out this role now and in the future. It also includes a requirement when needed to take a holistic whole family approach to caring. It looks to draw upon carers strengths, capabilities and help carers explore opportunities available in the community and support networks. Ultimately, it will look to detail what is important to carers, what outcomes carers want to achieve and how they can be supported to achieve these.

Direct Payments

Direct payments for carers are designed to support carers in different aspects of their lives, and to help ease some of the extra pressures arising from their caring role. There are opportunities to extend the way they are offered.

In order to qualify for one of these payments, carers will need to have a carer’s assessment or review undertaken by the council that has identified an unmet eligible need.

We will increase the number of carers accessing Direct Payments by raising awareness of the existence of Direct Payments, and by offering training and support for some carers who may lack confidence or feel overwhelmed by the prospect of managing Direct Payments. We will also ensure there is advocacy available for people who need support. Further information is contained within the action plan below.

Table 1: Direct Payment dataset for January 2023

	No of New Direct Payment in Reporting Month (January 2023)	Total number of current ongoing Direct Payments	Total Recoups this Financial Year to date (From 1 April 2022) £
ASC	7	307	£631,165.28
CHC	N/A	N/A	To 30 August 2022 £199,741.37 (SBC £50,097.31 & CHC £149,644.06)
Totals	7	307	£830,906.59

Table 2: Total open at any point during the financial year from 1st April 2022

	Carers one off payments	Service user Direct Payments	Total
ASC	165	377	542
CHC	N/A	48 (42 IAS & 6 other) to 30 August 2022	48

Totals	165	425	590
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Table 3: Direct Payments Applications in progress as at 31st January 2023

	Service User Direct Payment Applications in progress
ASC	7
CHC	N/A
Totals	7

7. The impact of caring amongst underrepresented groups

Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers are more likely to be struggling financially. At the beginning of the pandemic, over half (58%) of unpaid carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups said they were worried about their finances, compared to 37% of White carers.¹¹ LGBT carers are more likely to feel lonely. 48% of bisexual carers and 45% of lesbian and gay carers often or always feel lonely, compared with 33% of heterosexual carers¹² 27% of carers who completed Carers UK State of Caring survey in 2022 said they had a disability.¹³

We will be setting out steps to strengthen the early identification of carers from Slough’s diverse community including the underrepresented groups so that their particular needs can be more fully understood and addressed. This aligns with plans to bring the Carers Service in house so that it is embedded within the wider Adult Social Care Operational Team.

Data concerning unmet need will feed into the annual grant cycle for voluntary and community sector groups where bids can be submitted for funding to address gaps in service provision. Members of the co-production network are and will continue to be engaged in assessing bids for the annual cycle of grant funding of voluntary and community sector services.

¹² Carers UK, The Experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022

¹³ State of Caring report. Carers UK. 2022

<https://www.carersuk.org/reports/state-of-caring-2022-report/>

8. Priorities and Outcomes

In response to legislative requirements, local knowledge and stakeholder engagement we have developed the following five priorities:

Priority 1 – Enabling carers to access information, advice and guidance

Access to clear, concise, accurate and relevant information is a key requirement for carers and will help to avoid, reduce or delay the need for assessment and more intensive support. Carers also want to know when changes are made to services and understand what this means for them and the people they care for. To achieve this, we will:

1. Ensure that carers are aware of the Information and Advice Services which are available in the town.
2. Ensure that sources of information (for example the Directory of Services operated by the Slough Community and Voluntary Sector) are consistent, credible, reliable, accessible and up to date which gives carers the best chance of knowing what is on offer in their communities to support them at any stage in their caring journey.
3. Provide information in a range of formats (not just digital), making sources of information, advice and guidance easy to find and navigate for those who are not confident or do not have access to on-line information.
4. Ensure that carers are able to speak to someone if they need to.
5. Support carers to understand the implications of the cared for person's diagnosis when they are diagnosed and know where to get help and support.
6. Statutory agencies shall understand their respective roles, the types of support available to carers and will keep carers up to date on changes to their operations.
7. Make information available for professionals and any agencies who come into contact with carers, including young carers easy to access and signpost to.

Priority 2 – Identify and recognise carers at an early stage

Many carers provide care within a family network and do not want or need additional support. However, some carers need support in order to prevent the escalation of their own needs, and those of the person they look after. Identifying carers early will help to ensure carers know where to go to when they require support, keeping them well for longer and helping to avoid crisis which necessitates involvement from statutory services. To achieve this, we will:

1. Train professionals including working with social prescribers, social care and other agencies to identify, value and work with carers (particularly vulnerable carers who don't self-identify) in the course of their work and ensure it is underpinned by clear knowledge on where to get information and advice.
2. Embed Community Connectors into Hospital Social Work Teams (as part of the recent recommissioning of the Voluntary and Community Sector). They will provide advice and signposting to carers, including new carers.

3. Help Primary Care GP Surgeries (particularly through social prescribers), often the starting point for a carer's journey, recognise carers and know where to signpost them for support in their communities.
4. Optimise opportunities to raise the profile of caring, to help people to self-identify, such as the Carers Week, which is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

Priority 3 – Promote carer awareness – including the valuable role they play and the challenges that they face.

Promoting carer awareness will help to raise awareness of the valuable role that carers play, as well as the challenges they face. This will help to increase understanding and empathy for carers. To achieve this, we will:

1. Raise awareness of carers amongst professionals who may have contact with them across all sectors and settings.
2. Explore how statutory services can better identify and record information on carers.
3. Ensure services are designed to meet the needs of the individual which includes receiving the right treatment and care.
4. Provide education and training to healthcare professionals, employers, and the wider community can help to raise awareness of carers and their needs. This can include information on the impact of caring on carers' mental and physical health, as well as practical advice on how to support carers.
5. Run public awareness campaigns to raise awareness of carers and their needs. This can include media campaigns, social media outreach, and community events.
6. Partner with carer organisations including collaborating on educational programs, awareness-raising campaigns, and advocacy initiatives.
7. Recognise and support carers through policies and programs including providing financial support, flexible work arrangements, and respite care services.

Priority 4 – Person centred support – to enable carers to manage their own health and wellbeing and access the right support at the right time

Incorporating a person-centred approach as a priority in our strategy for carers will help to ensure that carers are recognised, supported, and empowered to continue providing the essential care that their loved ones need. To achieve this, we will:

1. Embed new carers support and coordinator role within Adult Social Care.
2. Identify the individual's needs, preferences and goals. This information can be used to develop a care plan that reflects their unique circumstances and can be used to guide the support provided to unpaid carers.
3. Provide training and education to help carers provide person-centred care. This could include learning about communication techniques, strategies for

managing challenging behaviours, and ways to support the person's independence and wellbeing.

4. Provide financial support as carers may face financial challenges due to their caring responsibilities. A person-centred approach involves identifying the carer's financial needs and providing appropriate support, such as access to financial advice, benefits, or other financial assistance as detailed in the Slough Carers Policy.
5. Ensure carers receive emotional and psychological support throughout their carers journey (including end of life of the cared for person) as caring for a loved one can be emotionally and psychologically challenging. A person-centred approach involves providing access to counselling, support groups, or other forms of emotional support that can help carers manage their own wellbeing.
6. Signpost to a range of services within the community, including the voluntary and community sector.

Priority 5 – Ensure that Carers are viewed and listened to by professionals as experts in care

Raising awareness among professionals that carers are experts in care will support professionals to have an appropriate understanding of the knowledge and practical support which carers provide to those that they care for. This will ensure that the needs of both carers and those that they care for are fully considered.

1. Work with carers as experts to provide training and briefing sessions for professionals working with carers. Incorporate into this training a clear expectation that the view of carers are listened to and responded to.
2. Ensure that the views of carers as experts in care are listened to and responded to.

Priority 6 – Integration and partnership work - – including co-production and ensuring that carers' voice is central to any service developments.

Emphasising integration and partnership work will help to ensure that carers receive comprehensive and coordinated support. To achieve this, we will:

1. Ensure there is collaboration between health and social care services which can help to ensure that carers receive coordinated support. This could involve sharing information and working together to address the carer's physical and emotional health needs.
2. Integrate our resources to support carers by providing access to information, resources, and support services in a timely manner.
3. Involve the voluntary sector to play a key role in supporting carers to provide a range of services, such as respite care, counselling, and financial support.
4. Engage with the community to raise awareness of the needs of carers and provide support at the local level. This will involve working with community groups, faith-based organisations, and other stakeholders to develop community-based support networks.
5. Ensure that service user voice is integral to service development.

6. Ensure that delivery of the Carers Strategy is overseen by a steering group comprising Carers, Council Staff and other Stakeholders.

By working together across different sectors and with different stakeholders, we will develop a range of support services that meet the diverse needs of carers.

Further information is contained within the Action Plan below.

9. How the strategy will be delivered

The Carers Steering Group (comprising carers, Council officers, members of the Co-production Forum and professional stakeholders) will oversee the implementation of this strategy and monitor progress.

Delivery of this strategy will be monitored through three levels of performance monitoring:

- Strategic level (Health and Wellbeing Board)
- Service level (People Adults DLT)
- Individual level (Strategy and Commissioning Team)

10. What we offer Carers in Slough

Update on Carers remodelling

In November 2022, a decision was made at Cabinet to bring the Carers Service in-house. [AGENDA ITEM \(slough.gov.uk\)](https://www.slough.gov.uk/agenda-item)

This transition was overseen by adult social care commissioners working closely with carers, Slough CVS, ASC and Health carers leads and operational teams to co-design the final in-house model for carers .

The approach which was taken is set out in the table below:

Table 4: Carers remodelling approach

Phase	Activity	Date of Completion
1 Understanding the current support service	Work with SCVS to understand the various ways Carers are supported	Jan 23
2 Testing the understanding	Engage with carers and other stakeholders to identify key strengths and gaps of current approach and any service improvement suggestions	Feb 23
3 Co-developing the 'to be' pathway	Work with operational teams/ reps Sharing the 'as is' approach; Sharing engagement feedback re: what works,	March / April 23

	gaps, ideals; Identifying wins; Identifying problems; Identifying roles and structure	
4 Testing the understanding	Using the combined information develop a draft approach for how the remodelled service would work: Test model with Carers, Carers groups and operational teams to ensure it will work Amend as appropriate- Promote model with wider VCS	April/May 23
5 Promoting the approach	Communication strategy Wider promotion in preparation of change	June 23
6 Implementation, oversight and monitoring	Steering group comprising carers, officers and other stakeholders to be established to monitor implementation and delivery of the Carers Strategy.	1 July 2023

Key Elements of the In-house Service (High Level)

- Key elements of the in-house service will be:
- To maintain the resilience and wellbeing of unpaid Carers, facilitating access to support, advice, and information to empower them to maintain their role whilst continuing to lead a balanced and rewarding life.
- Supporting Carers along their caring journey from early help and registration, through preventative support via the community to crisis interventions.
- Facilitating systems and partnership working.
- Co-developing the carers support offer via the Carers Steering Group and overseeing the Action Plan (below).
- Facilitating support planning and carers assessments
- Work in partnership with other Carers support roles to improve access, and a shared support offer where possible, for example shared Carers awareness and Carer training opportunities.
- Working with the statutory and voluntary sector, religious and business communities to raise the profile of carers to help increase access to support.
- Developing awareness of carers rights and promoting understanding of the caring role, including identifying ‘hidden’ carers.
- To maintain data on gaps in provision and to feed into the Voluntary and Community Sector grants programme.

11. Action Plan

Priority (See page 4)	Actions	What we will work on to achieve these actions	How we will know if we are making progress
<p>Priority 1</p> <p>Enable Carers to Access Information, Advice and Guidance</p>	<p>Information and Advice for Carers</p>	<p>Ensure that all professionals working with carers are aware of the Directory of Services operated by Slough CVS and the Information and Advice which is available locally.</p> <p>Promote information on carers webpage.</p> <p>Agree other forms of information for inclusion within community facilities such as libraries</p> <p>Promotion of the carers role within our community settings.</p>	<p>Bite size training sessions for Council Staff and other Stakeholders by Spring 2024.</p> <p>Development of information for carers.</p>
	<p>Benefit maximisation for carers</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Identify all available benefits: Carers should be made aware of all the benefits they may be eligible for and assisted in making applications for these.</p> <p>Help with the application process: The process of applying for benefits can be complex and time-consuming. Help carers navigate the application process.</p> <p>Advocate for carers: Carers may face challenges when accessing benefits, such</p>	<p>Carers surveys and feedback with a high carer customer satisfaction level beyond 60% from surveys each year.</p> <p>Evidence carers feel they have enough support in accessing welfare benefits</p>

		<p>as eligibility criteria or long waiting times.</p> <p>Regularly review benefits: Carers' circumstances may change over time, which can impact their eligibility for benefits. Regularly reviewing their entitlements can ensure that carers continue to receive the financial support they need</p>	
<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Identify and recognise carers at an early stage.</p>	<p>Maintain the list of carers</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Identify the carers such as through referrals from healthcare providers or community organisations, self-identification through surveys or questionnaires, or through outreach efforts.</p> <p>Collect information: Once carers have been identified, it's important to collect information about them. This can include basic demographic information, such as their age and gender, as well as information about their caregiving responsibilities and the support they may need.</p> <p>Update the list regularly</p> <p>Protect privacy and confidentiality</p>	<p>Updated list by 31st January 2024.</p>
<p>Priority 3</p> <p>Promote Carer Awareness</p>	<p>Gathering more information around equalities information. BAME, LGBT</p>	<p>We will be setting out steps to strengthen the early identification of carers from Slough's diverse community including the underrepresented groups so that their particular needs can be more fully understood and</p>	<p>Data / information</p> <p>Ongoing will report on progress by 31st March 2024.</p>

		addressed. This aligns with plans to bring the Carers Service in house so that it is embedded within the wider Adult Social Care Operational Team.	
	Understand more around safeguarding issues – Independent Domestic Violence Advocates for OP	<p>We will ensure that IDVAs are aware of safeguarding issues to ensure the safety and well-being of the victim and any children involved.</p> <p>IDVAs need to receive regular training on safeguarding issues and have access to appropriate resources and support. We will promote working closely with other professionals, to ensure a coordinated approach to safeguarding.</p>	<p>Feedback from carers and carers leads locally and communication with Slough Safeguarding Partnership to achieve these actions.</p> <p>Improvements to be made as suggested by 31st July 2024.</p>
	Facilitate training / briefing sessions for Adult Social Care Staff and other Professionals on the role of carers, including carers who do not self-identify as such.	Adult Social Care Staff to work with Carers to develop carer-led training / briefings to raise awareness of carers and their responsibilities and to address some of the issues and negative experiences of carers identified through the Strategy engagement,	<p>Carer feedback, staff feedback.</p> <p>Between 2 and 4 Training and Briefing Sessions facilitated by December 23.</p>
<p>Priority 4</p> <p>Provide person-centred support – to enable carers to manage their own health and wellbeing and access to the right support at the right time</p>	Increase the number of carers assessments	<p>We will:</p> <p>Make the process simple</p> <p>Provide different options: Some carers may prefer to complete their assessment online or over the phone, while others may prefer a face-to-face assessment.</p> <p>Prioritise high-risk groups: Some carers may be at higher risk of experiencing stress, mental health</p>	<p>Data monitoring and evidence that there had been an increase up to a minimum of new carers assessments per year bringing the total to 200 this year (from 130). To be reviewed at 31st July 2024.</p>

		<p>issues, or burnout as a result of their caring role</p> <p>Provide regular reminders: Carers' circumstances may change over time, which can impact their eligibility for support.</p> <p>Improving the timeliness of carer assessments and what those outcomes are.</p>	
	<p>Embed community connectors into Hospital Social Work Teams</p>	<p>We will ensure there is collaboration and communication between Hospital Social Work Teams and community connectors.</p>	<p>Feedback from carers and carers leads locally.</p> <p>Hospital Social Work Plans to demonstrate packages of support were fulfilled using the Community Connectors. An audit of this progress to be undertaken by 31st March 2024 with options for improvement.</p>
	<p>Increase the number of carers accessing Direct Payments</p>	<p>We will:</p> <p>Raise awareness: Many carers may not be aware of the existence of Direct Payments or may not know how to access them.</p> <p>Simplify the process: The process of accessing Direct Payments can be complex, which may deter some carers from applying.</p> <p>Offer training and support: Some carers may lack confidence or feel overwhelmed by the</p>	<p>Data / information</p> <p>Raise the awareness and increase the numbers of carers accessing Direct Payments by 10% by 31st July 2024</p>

		responsibility of managing Direct Payments. Ensure there is advocacy available for people who need support.	
	Promote the take up of ASC Portal for carers assessments	We will communicate these benefits to carers and their families. Highlighting the convenience, flexibility, and accuracy of the ASC Portal can help encourage more carers to use it. It may also be useful to provide training or support to carers who are less confident with technology or online portals / platforms.	Feedback from carers Data monitoring Numbers accessing the Portal to increase by 40% in the next year up to 31 st July 2024.
	Develop an operational Carers Pathway to mirror this Strategy and the transition to an in-house service.	To work with operational colleagues to ensure all referral points on the Carers customer journey are reflected in the Carers Pathway and all teams are aware of their responsibilities.	Carer feedback, staff feedback New Carer Pathway developed by February 29th 2024.
	Review current respite and short break utilisation for those who are eligible.	Scope opportunities for further development of the offer within the available budgetary envelope.	Review concluded by Autumn 2024. Any developmental work required to be scoped at the conclusion of the review.
	Ensure that the Annual VCS Grants Programme is informed by data on unmet need for carers.	Ensure that data is gathered through the in-house service to provide an evidence base for the annual VCS grants programme.	Data gathered on an ongoing basis and reported into the Steering Group
Priority 5	Facilitate training / briefing	Adult Social Care Staff to work with Carers to	Carer feedback, staff feedback.

<p>Ensure that carers are viewed as experts in care</p>	<p>sessions for Adult Social Care Staff and other Professionals on the role of carers, including carers who do not self-identify as such and carers as experts in care.</p>	<p>develop carer-led training / briefings to raise awareness of carers and their responsibilities and to address some of the issues and negative experiences of carers identified through the Strategy engagement,</p>	<p>Between 2 and 4 Training and Briefing Sessions facilitated by August 23.</p>
<p>Priority 6</p> <p>Support effective Integration and partnership work – including co-production and ensuring that carers voice is central to any service development</p>	<p>Further develop the in-house carers service.</p>	<p>We will continue with our work plan and we brought this service in house on 1st of July 2023. There will be a continuation of the development of the new in-house model.</p> <p>We need to agree the KPIs with the ICB to report back to the BCF.</p> <p>Looking at increasing the reach into more diverse communities by linking in with faith groups.</p> <p>Increasing the numbers of carers registered for preventative support by 40% by 31st July 2024.</p> <p>Improved User satisfaction, carers feeling they have more say in service development.</p> <p>Increasing the hits to our carer webpage.</p> <p>Introduce an annual wellbeing survey/user satisfaction survey.</p>	<p>Changes to the current carers service provision</p> <p>KPIs and Outcome</p> <p>A new Carers Co-ordinator in place by December 2023.</p> <p>Develop the SBC carers webpage by March 31st 2024.</p> <p>Review and report progress with these developments and the new model by 31st March 2024.</p>
	<p>Re-establish the carers forum and a new Careers Steering Group</p>	<p>We will engage with the providers and with carers via the Co-production Network.</p> <p>We will engage all carers through the Co-production</p>	<p>Start date and drafting of a Terms of Reference for both the forum and for the new Carers Steering</p>

		<p>Network and wider Carers Groups and Carers Lead to set up the new Carers Steering Group which will be co-produced and be the monitor of this Carers Action Plan. The Away Day and Survey feedback are cross referred in this Strategy</p>	<p>Group to be in place by 30th November 2023.</p>
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