

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	15 December 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Adult Carers Strategy 2023 – 28 Annual Progress Report
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Anna Wright, Social Care and Public Health
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	David Coleman-Groom Executive Director, People Adults
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jane Senior, Director of Commissioning, People Adults Diana Balsom, Interim Commissioner for Prevention and Carers
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	YES
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Decision Subject to Call In:</b>	YES
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Revised Action Plan Appendix 2 – Carers Promotions Appendix 3 – Revised Equalities Impact Assessment

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

#### 1.1 This report sets out

- Progress against year two of the Adult Carers Strategy currently covering the period 2023-26
- Revisions to the action plan to take account of findings in the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) Local Authority Assessment report for Adult Social Care Services within Slough
- The benefits and intention of developing an all-age Carers Strategy in conjunction with Slough Children First to commence in 2027.

#### Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the progress made during year two in the delivery of the Carers Strategy Action Plan along with actions for year three as set out at Appendix 1
2. Agree the development of an All-age Carers Strategy over 2026 to commence in 2027.

Reason for recommendations:

1. To ensure that tangible progress has been made against the delivery of the Action Plan set out within the of Slough Adult Carers Strategy 2023 – 26.
2. To ensure actions arising from the CQC report are embedded within the ongoing Carers development work.
3. To recognise and address the needs of carers across the entire lifespan with the aim of improving outcomes and ensuring improved business efficiencies.

To ensure that Carers in Slough are supported in their caring role and achieve positive outcomes. This progress update to Cabinet was developed with the Carers Support Service for Slough and includes co-produced approaches to supporting carers priorities.

## **Commissioner Review**

This report is outside the scope for pre-publication commissioner review; please check the [Commissioners' instruction 5 to CLT to sign off papers](#) for further details.

## **2. Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

Publishing the progress of the Adult Carers Strategy 2023-26 contributes to the following priorities:

#### **2.1 Corporate Plan:**

A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives

- Working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing –
- Supporting residents to be as independent as possible whilst providing quality services for the most vulnerable.

#### **2.2 Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25**

Priority 2: Integration –

- Increase the number of people living independently at home and decrease the proportion living in care homes –
- Increase the number of people who are managing their own health and care needs.

## Options considered

Options	Pros	Cons
<b>Option 1</b> Do not update Cabinet on the progress in the implementation of the Adult Carers Strategy 2023- 26.  <b>Not recommended</b>	No clear advantage to not reporting on progress.	Fails to provide members with assurance that the Carers Strategy is being implemented.  Lack of transparency and accountability.
<b>Option 2</b> Deliver an annual progress update on the implementation of the Adult Carers Strategy 2023-26 in line with its incorporated Action Plan	Transparency accountability to, and oversight from Members in the delivery of a Cabinet approved Strategy.  Opportunity to share more widely the positive progress which has been made at pace	Does not incorporate developmental requirements concerning the CQC Assessment undertaken in 2025 or steps to develop an All-Age Carers Strategy over 2026.
<b>Option 3</b> Deliver an annual progress update on the implementation of the Adult Carers Strategy 2023-26 along with a revised action plan incorporating both requirements arising from CQC Assessment Report and steps to develop an All-Age Carers Strategy.  <b>Recommended</b>	Transparency accountability to, and oversight from Members in the delivery of a Cabinet approved Strategy  Opportunity to share more widely the positive progress which has been made at pace  Opportunity to formalise the response to CQC  Responds to concerns raised by members of Carers Steering by providing a set of robust actions	None

### 2.3 Background

2.3.1 The Slough Adult Carers Strategy 2023-26 was approved at Cabinet in September 2023. The Strategy sets out how the Council, working with its partners and carers, will support and encourage carers to manage their own health and wellbeing, and ensure that the right support is known about and available at the right time. The 'Slough Adult Carers Strategy 2023-26 – year two update and planned activity for year three ' is shown at Appendix 1.

2.3.2 The aim of the strategy is to ensure that Slough is a place where adult carers can balance their caring roles with achieving a desired quality of life. Importantly, the Strategy seeks to minimise the negative impacts of caring upon health and wellbeing and prevent carer breakdown, and this will be achieved through a range of initiatives set out within the Carers Strategy Action Plan.

2.3.3 The Strategy sets out key priorities for Adult Carers, aligned to intended Corporate Objectives (which went out to consultation). The priorities are to:

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

2.3.4 The Strategy has been informed by engagement and co-production with carers. The engagement confirmed that the carer's voice should be central to service development. Delivery of the Carers Strategy Action Plan contained within the Strategy is being overseen by a Carers Steering Group comprising carers, volunteers, the Co-production Network, Council officers and professional stakeholders including representatives from Frimley ICB. Progress in Year 1 of the Strategy was reported to Cabinet in October 2024. Information concerning highlights and challenges within Year 2 alongside additional areas for inclusion within the strategy are shown below.

### **2.3.5 Year 2 Summary Highlights and Challenges:**

Year 2 of the Strategy has seen a number of key highlights, full details of which are included with Appendix One.

- An increase in Carers groups and associated wellbeing groups funded by the One Slough Community Fund – with funding increasing from £6000 for three specific Carers groups to £27,588 for 5 specific Carers groups
- Greater integration of the Carers Support and Development post into operational teams.
- Increase in Carers registrations by over 60% in past 7 months
- Review of the Carers Discount Card and increase in offers from 13 to 30
- Launch of the Carers UK digital information platform, the Jointly App and the Ask Sara online personalised advice on aids to independent living, providing clear and current advice, information and guidance
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Carers Forum in September 2025 hosted by the Moxy Hotel (Slough), attracting 70 carers.
- Carers Rights Day – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 - Hosted at Elite Banqueting Suite, with the theme of 'Recognising your Rights' attracted over 100 carers. There were stalls providing information and advice from SBC staff on Direct Payments, Managing Debt and Welfare Benefits along with other organisations such as Costco.

- Carers Week 2025 Celebration Event – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 - on the theme of **Caring About Equality**. The event was hosted by Pinewood Hotel, attended by over 150 carers alongside representatives, volunteers, and partners from the local community.
- Development of a dashboard of Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) indicators to demonstrate progress against the strategy and CQC improvements.
- Development of actions to improve carers services in response to CQC inspection of local authority services.
- Initial consideration of plans to establish an all-age carers pathway.

#### 2.3.6 There have also been a number of challenges, including:

- Ongoing capacity issues within the Commissioning Team.
- Time constraints placed upon the ability of Carers to be as involved as much as they would like in Carers Steering Group activities, due to their caring responsibilities.
- Carer -related issues identified within the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report of Adult Social Care (ASC) services in Slough (listed below).
- Limitations in using Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) indicators to reflect the Carer experience in Slough – leading to broadening of the use of statutory Carers indicators to evidence progress.
- Slippage in the development of replacement care which would enable a respite offer for Carers of people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism. The Business Case to be revisited with a revised timeline for commissioning with a clear financial proposal.

#### 2.3.7 Next Steps for the Adult Carers Strategy Steering Group over 2026

The Commissioner for Carers and Prevention, working with the Head of Commissioning and the Carers Steering Group will continue to deliver the Carers Strategy. This will incorporate additional actions to respond to areas for development included within the CQC Inspection Report and also scope out plans with Slough Children First for developing an All-Age Carers Strategy including an All-Age Carers Pathway.

#### 2.3.8 CQC Assessment report – Carers

The CQC Assessment Report of Slough Adult Social Care services was published in July 2025 and the findings related to Carers were presented to the Carers Steering Group in July 2025. The steering group strongly supported the proposal to develop an action plan to respond to the developmental areas summarised below:

##### Carers' Assessments and Support

Whilst Carers assessments are carried out through a duty system to avoid waiting lists, feedback obtained by the CQC from Carers was mixed. Some had received Care Act assessments and felt they were supportive and outcome-focused, while others had not received assessments or had not felt supported.

##### Waiting Times and Access

Waiting times varied: Some teams had no waiting lists, while others had significant delays of up to 313 days for assessments.

105 overdue carers reviews were reported in the 12 months leading up to March 2025.

#### Accessibility of Information

Carers struggled to access information: 3 carers said it was difficult to get in touch with staff or find visible support in community settings.

#### Transition Challenges

Unpaid carers faced challenges during transitions from children to adult services, including gaps in direct payments and poor communication.

#### Employment

Dependent on their caring commitment, Carers who wish to work, struggle with finding employment that can adjust to their needs.

Actions to address these issues have been approved by the ASC DLT and are incorporated into the action plan shown at Appendix 1.

### **2.3.9 Carers Pathways – including an all-age approach**

An all-age approach to Carers ensures recognition of the diversity of caring roles, including children, working-age adults, and older carers. It ensures no age group is overlooked, promoting equity in access to services and resources.

Working in partnership with Slough Children First will be essential to developing a revised All Age Strategy for 2027

#### 2.3.10 Anticipated benefits include:

- Early Identification and Intervention
- Seamless Transitions as Carers move through life stages
- Improved Health and Wellbeing
- Economic and Employment Benefits
- Better Outcomes for Those Being Cared For
- Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation

## **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

### **3.1 *Financial implications***

3.1.1 Whilst there are no financial implications directly relating to the publication of the update on the Carers Strategy, The Carers Strategy is funded through Slough Borough Council's general fund, reflected by current budgets. There are instances of identifying additional external funding through either the Better Care Fund or external sponsorship.

3.1.2 It is important that these opportunities are optimised to increase the funds available for the implementation of the carers' strategy, as Council support is restricted by the

available budget. Any procurement activity arising out of the Action Plan will be subject to approval through the Council's Contract Procedures Rules and will only be authorised subject to the availability of budget.

The Carers Strategy will need to be delivered within the existing Adult Social Care budget envelope once approved for 2026/27.

### 3.2 *Legal implications*

3.2.1 This strategy is produced in accordance with the Care and Support Statutory Guidance and sets out the steps that the Council has taken and will take to:

- (i) discharge its statutory obligations including general duties and specific duties to carers under the Care Act 2014
- (ii) analyse local needs of carers and keep them under review
- (iii) shape the local market as well as establish joint working partnership with health partners and align its functions with the wider corporate planning.

3.2.2 In devising an all-age strategy which may include a pathway for carers, consideration will need to be given to the legal provisions that deal with young carers' needs assessment and provision of services for young carers as well as support for parents who are the main carers of disabled children. The relevant legislations and statutory guidance are (i) the Children Act 1989, ss 17ZA- 17ZF, the Young Carers (Needs Assessment) Regulations 2015, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Care Act 2014 and Care and Support Statutory Guidance. Where there may be overlap between the parents' needs in their role as main carers and parents having needs of their own, consideration will need to be given to whether these assessments will be streamlined and the steps that may be taken to achieve this. Joint working between children services and adult social care will be required when considering the legal obligations for different age groups, how duties can be streamlined, timescales for assessments, the local market and how resources will be used to discharge those obligations.

### 3.3 *Risk management implications*

#### 3.3.1

Risk	Assessment of Risk	Mitigation	Residual risk
Capacity of commissioner and carers support officer to respond to the action plan in conjunction with other activities	Medium	There has been some reshaping of responsibilities across the Commissioning Team allowing for more targeted focus on delivery of the action plan over 2026.	Low
Insufficient budget to support any commissioning	High	Budget availability to be confirmed in advance of commencement of any	Medium

intentions arising out of the Carers Strategy Action Plan		particular commissioning project. Ensuring best value considerations. Medium Robust cost / benefit analysis .	
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### 3.4 *Environmental implications*

#### 3.4.1 There are no environmental implications

### 3.5 *Equality implications*

- 3.5.1 The implementation of the Adult Carers Strategy, along with the In-house Carers Support Service aims to have a positive impact on all groups with protected characteristics.
- 3.5.2 Actions set out within the strategy specifically aim to increase awareness of the support available to Carers, which includes carers who do not recognise themselves as such and therefore are not accessing the support available.
- 3.5.3 An analysis of the Carers who have registered with the preventative support offered by the Carers Support service show some positive improvements in representation for Carers who identify as Asian or from Asian descent, over representation by female Carers and no Carers identifying as LGBTQ+. Full detail are included within the Appendix 3.

	Jul-23	Oct-25	Slough Census 2021 unpaid carers
Female	65%	81%	58.10%
Indian	5%	17%	17.80%
Pakistani	9%	13%	22.10%
Hindu	2%	8%	6.30%
Muslim	14%	18%	27.10%
Sikh	0	5%	12.20%

However, this is based on a cohort of just 104 people.

- 3.5.4 Equalities data from Carers known to ASC will be collated within the Survey of Adult Carers in Slough will be collated during November 25, which will add depth to the picture, with the addition of around 600 carers – should they all consent to completing the survey.

- 3.5.5 In tackling equitable provision, we consider the following key aspects :

- Access to information – including community languages, literacy, sight impairments
- Access to provision – physical or digital challenges

- Differences in experience of provision – are Carers from particular groups supported in equitable ways, making reasonable adjustments to adjust to their needs?
- Differences in outcome – do Carers from particular groups experience equitable outcomes?

3.5.6 Whilst these issues are addressed within the Strategy, we recognise that there are priority groups to focus on including Carers of South Asian descent, Carers from Muslim communities, male Carers and LGBT Carers.

### 3.6 *Corporate Parenting Implications*

3.6.1 There are no corporate parenting implications

### 3.7 *Procurement implications*

3.7.1 There are no procurement implications

### 3.8 *Workforce implications*

3.8.1 There are no workforce implications

### 3.9 *Property implications*

3.9.1 There are no property implications

## 4. **Background Papers**

Local Authority Assessment CQC Report

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/g8856/Public%20reports%20pack%2020th-Oct-2025%202018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

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