

Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards



Draft Carer Strategy
2023 -2028

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Have your say

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has worked with the Carer Network to develop 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards'. The strategy and supporting information is available at [Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/caring-together-in-belfast-2023-onwards)

The Trust is issuing the strategy for public consultation from 7th June 2023 to 8th September 2023. We wish to seek views about our draft strategy and would be delighted if you would complete our short questionnaire which is available at [Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/caring-together-in-belfast-2023-onwards) or scan the QR code.



If you have any queries or wish to discuss any aspect of the strategy, please do not hesitate to contact the Carer Support Team at CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net or telephone 028 95042126.

We aim to make this engagement as inclusive as possible. If you require the questionnaire in alternative formats or in a language other than English, please email CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net or telephone 028 95042126.

Foreword

Carers come from all walks of life. They could be people who support and provide unpaid care for family members throughout their lives, to those who step into caring when needed to do so sometimes unexpectedly.

It is increasingly part of all our lives as more people are living longer. Evidence tells us that the average person has a 50% chance of becoming a carer by the time they reach 50.

The charity Carers UK, shares data which consistently reminds us that for every pound spend on Health and Social Care (HSC), this is matched pound for pound by caring provided by unpaid and family carers. Without that support, HSC would collapse.

However, that goodwill is not inexhaustible as we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic when we saw that the stress and strain on carers took a particularly heavy toll.

Not all will seek the support of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, but when they do we must be able to respond.

It is in that regard, that in my role as Non-Executive Director for the Belfast Trust Board, that I have had the privilege to meet and work with many carers over the last eight years. Without exception, they are to be valued as equal partners for their experience and expertise and to have their voice meaningfully listened to in the planning and delivery of services. This will ultimately help support and sustain family and unpaid carers in their caring role.

The establishment of the Carer Network as a formal structure of involvement offers that opportunity. The Carer Network brings together a representative group of carers from across Trust services and I had the pleasure of Chairing the Network. The quality and diversity of the circa 25 individuals and their level of experience and expertise has been nothing short of remarkable.

This strategy, *Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards*, is the result of the Carer Network efforts working together with a committed staff group over many months. Working together, we have identified and tested the following priorities through wider engagement in readiness for formal consultation.

- Reach all carers
- Navigate carer support
- Support carer health and wellbeing
- Connect with and involve carers

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust recognises the significant and vital contribution that carers make. The dedicated Carer Support Team is tangible evidence of that commitment, acting as an essential point of access, coordination and navigation across the whole organisation.

We owe a massive debt of gratitude to those who continue in their caring role for as long as they are able and willing. I commend this strategy and hope it receives the wide support and endorsement it truly deserves as the call to action is compelling.

Anne O'Reilly
Non-Executive Director
Carer Network Chair (March 2022 – June 2023)

Introduction

Belfast, as the largest Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust in Northern Ireland, recognises the significant and vital contribution that unpaid and family carers make in its communities. The Trust values the support that carers provide to the person they care for, which often prevents, reduces and delays the need for more formal services. In 2021, 40,200 people across Belfast identified themselves as a carer providing unpaid care. This strategy identifies the actions that are needed to progress support for carers.

Caring can come about unexpectedly or can develop gradually over time. Whilst caring 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. This can impact on their own health and wellbeing, relationships, employment opportunities, finances and having the time to participate in social and leisure activities.

The Trust recognises that being a carer can be tough at times. We want to ensure that carers have the support they need to look after their own health and wellbeing, and to continue in the caring role for as long as they are willing and able. The needs of carers continues to change, which means the type of support we need to provide is also changing. This was very evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when HSC had to rethink how services and carer supports were provided in the safest way possible. As we have been emerging and adapting to live with the Coronavirus, carers continue to face significant challenges. We need to be creative and resourceful in how carers are supported.

Each year carers save the NI Executive, £4.6bn¹. Belfast Trust has a central role to play in helping to build a better system that puts carers at the heart of its organisation. The Trust is committed to developing and delivering its services with carers in line with its values:



The Department of Health is currently undertaking a Reform of Adult Social Care, which recognises carers as a core element of Adult Social Care. The Reform sets the direction of travel for carers at a regional level, and when implemented, will bring about significant changes to support for carers. The Trust awaits the outcome of the Reform and will up-date this strategy and work in partnership with carers to advance the recommendations and actions.

'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards' sets out how Belfast Trust will work to support unpaid and family carers. The Trust has listened to many voices in the development of this strategy including carers, Trust staff who deliver services and the Community and Voluntary sector. The Trust has co-designed this strategy with the Carer Network and builds on the work of previous Carer Strategies. We have listened to and worked with the Carer Network to convert what we have heard into action: clearly showing that we care because you care. This strategy sets out to minimise the negative impact that caring can have, and to sustain carers who choose to continue in their caring role.

Part 1 Landscape of caring

Who is a carer?

For the purpose of this strategy, the regionally agreed definition is that a 'carer is any person aged 16 or over who provides, or intends to provide, a substantial amount of unpaid care to another person on a regular basis (this includes those with parental responsibility for a child with a disability).²

Carers include:

Adult Carers

An adult aged 18 and over who is caring for another adult. This may be a spouse, parent, partner, friend, neighbour, relative or adult child.

Parent Carers

A parent or guardian who provides care to a child (up to the age of 18) to a degree greater than would be normally expected in a parenting role.

Young Carers

Children and young people aged 8-18, who care for or support a family member who is ill or has a disability.

Young Adult Carers

Individuals aged 18-25 who are in a caring role.

Older Carers

Individuals aged 65+.

Working Carers

People in full or part-time employment, who also provide unpaid care to a family member, partner or friend.

Black and Minority Ethnic Carers (BAME)

A carer from a minority ethnic background who may encounter language or cultural barriers.

The regional picture

Carers UK estimated in 2019, that there are about 8.8 million adult carers in the UK. Across Northern Ireland, the 2021 Census³ preliminary data showed:

- 1 in 8 people provide unpaid care (222,200)
- 1 in 5 of those are aged 40 to 64
- 2,600 children aged 5-14 provide unpaid care
- 68,700 people care 50+ hours a week

Evidence shows that there are variations in the level of caring between different genders and also across different age groupings. There is a higher percentage of women (17%) compared with men (10%) with a caring responsibility.¹ This is supported by research which finds that women provide much more unpaid care, and more intensive forms of care, than men.³ There was also a higher percentage of people with caring responsibilities aged 35-74 when compared with those aged 16-34, and 75 and over.⁴

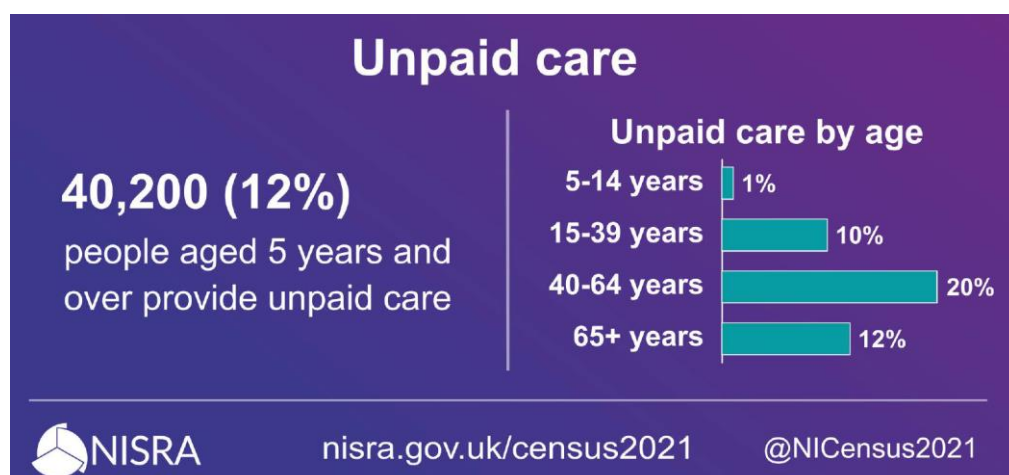
About Belfast Trust carers

Approximately 40,200 carers aged 5 and over provide unpaid care in Belfast, equating to 12% of the city's population. This marks a decrease in the number of carers (43,674) identifying themselves from the last Census in 2011. Analysis, undertaken to determine why the number of unpaid carers dropped in the Census 2021, has identified and attributed this to:

- The Census being undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions reduced travel and limited visits to people from other households. Caring responsibilities that were previously shared may have changed and resulted in one carer taking on all aspects of care due to rules on household mixing. There was a higher number of deaths than expected in the older population. Both these factors, could have led to a reduction in the need for unpaid care.⁶
- A change in the wording of the census question compared to previous surveys may have impacted on the number of people who self-reported as an unpaid carer.⁶

In Belfast, the majority of care is provided by carers who are aged 40-64, as shown by Table 1. In line with the regional picture, the majority of carers are 40-64 years or 20% of this age group. 1% or 420 of those aged 5-14 identified as young carers.³

Table 1 **Number of people in the Belfast Trust who provide unpaid care³**



Since 2011, the population aged 65 and over has seen the largest increase; rising by 62,800, or 24%, to 326,500. The number of those aged 85 and over has grown with every census, expanding to 39,400 in 2021. With this escalation in the number of older people, it is anticipated there will be an increase in the need for carers to care for an ageing population.

The Census 2021 showed the breakdown of hours provided by carers:

- 5% of persons aged 5 and over provide 1-19 hours of care
- 3% of persons aged 5 and over provide 20-49 hours of care
- 4% of persons aged 5 and over provide 50+ hours of care. This means that nearly 14,000 people in Belfast are providing this level of intense care.

In 2021, nearly 20,000 carers (15,350 individuals in Belfast and 4,060 in Lisburn and Castlereagh) were claiming Carers Allowance, which is a non-contributory benefit for people who:

- Look after a severely disabled person for at least 35 hours per week
- Are not gainfully employed (i.e. not earning more than £128 per week after certain deductions)
- Are not subject to immigration control
- Are not in full-time education⁷

The Trust has a duty to offer those who are providing regular and substantial care the opportunity to discuss their caring role. This is currently known as a carer assessment. Table 2 provides an overview of carer assessments offered and completed for 2019-2023. Carers decline the offer of a carer assessment and this data is also record to reflect on the reasons why.

Table 2 Carer assessments offered and accepted, 2019 - 2023

Period	Assessments offered	Assessments completed
2019-2020	3022	2037
2020-2021	2603	2235
2021-2022	3537	3036
2022-2023	Data not yet available	Data not yet available

This data provides a picture of caring in Belfast Trust.

Impact of caring

Belfast Trust has worked closely with carers to develop 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards', and have gotten a clear picture about the challenges of caring in relation to the financial, emotional, physical and social impacts. In today's society, we know that one in five people has a caring responsibility. To adequately support those carers we need to understand the impact it has on them.

Without unpaid carers, Health and Social Care would simply collapse. The overarching message from a recent Inquiry was that 'the contribution of the unpaid carer is particularly invisible, unrecognised and unsupported and their voice goes unheard'.⁸

At the time of writing, the Reform of Adult Social Care (ASC) in Northern Ireland alongside work being advanced in the UK, seeks to transform how social care is delivered. The contribution of carers and support required is recognised and a set of recommendations in the Reform of ASC include a renewed regional Carer Strategy, up-dated legislation to identify and meet the needs of carers and enhanced cross-sectoral working.

Through our engagement with carers, our findings echoed findings from other research and engagement, which told us that we needed to:

- Identify carers
- Help carers navigate the system to access information and support
- Review respite as carers were at risk of reaching breaking point

Caring can have a significant impact on the health of carers. The recent State of Caring survey identified that 21% of carers said their health was 'bad' or 'very bad' and 30% stated that their mental health was 'bad' or 'very bad'.⁹ Carers reported that the lack of opportunity to take a break created emotional stress, with 41% of carers not having taken a break in the last year. Carers report loneliness and isolation due to not having sufficient support. This was exacerbated during the pandemic.¹⁰

In Belfast, working-age carers up to 64 years, accounted for the biggest proportion in the 2021 Census data. For this group, caring can impact on an individual's ability to secure or maintain employment; those with jobs are likely to be juggling work and caring. People with higher caring responsibilities (35+ hours a week) have lower employment rates, with just 2 in 5 employed.¹¹ 75% reported worrying about continuing to juggle work and care.⁹ Working conditions can support carers to remain in employment but less than a third of carers reported having access to paid carers leave from work to help to balance work and care. 46% stated that they don't have access to flexible working arrangements.⁹ Carers noted that they have had to reduce their hours at work to help manage their caring responsibilities. Women are also disproportionately affected, being three times as likely to be in part-time work as men.⁹

The financial impact of caring has been reported by many carers. Various expenditures can be associated with caring, which may include equipment, increased fuel and transport bills, and clothing or laundry costs. Carers are recognised as a group at huge risk of poverty due to the impact of caring on an individual's and household income. Poverty amongst carers in Northern Ireland is at the highest level of all four UK nations, with tens of thousands of carers not having enough money to cover their monthly expenses or provide a decent standard of living.¹² Over a quarter of carers (27%) stated in 2022 that they were struggling to make ends meet. 23% said they were cutting back on essentials like food or heating, more than double the share last year.⁹ Carers with relatively low caring responsibilities (less than 20 hours per week) have lower poverty rates than those caring for 20 to 34 hours or over 35 hours a week.¹¹

The lack of access to information and support affects carers' ability to carry out their caring role and look after their own health and wellbeing.⁹ During our engagement with carers, the words *navigation*, *transition*, *trigger points* and *pathways* cropped up frequently. All were related to the importance of accessing services – the right information and support at the right time.

A Carer Network member told us that they '*had trained for years to do the job that they do, but when they became a family carer overnight, they had to take on the role with no skills, training or support*'. This was echoed in the Adult Social Care Committee findings which evidenced the '*difficulties of navigating the system, often without help, and being left to themselves to figure out where to look and what to look for*'.⁸

Carers were one of the demographic groups most severely affected by the social restrictions put into place to manage the pandemic. Restrictions have been lifted and society now lives with COVID-19. However, nearly a quarter of carers still worry about catching the Coronavirus, demonstrating that this illness still impacts on carers' lives.⁹ This continues to reduce access to social networks and relationships and can lead to social isolation and loneliness.

Carers report that a digital divide was created due to a surge in developing and providing online resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Offline methods are still required, particularly for older carers, as there is a fear of not being able to access information, and as a result, will not get the support they need.⁹

Part 2 Laying the foundations for the new Carer Strategy

In developing the new Carer Strategy for Belfast Trust, a range of information was considered which is set out in this section.

Policy influencers

Renewing the Carers Strategy has been shaped by the following Policies:

Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland), 2002²

Duties introduced through the *Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002* set out a requirement for Health and Social Care Trusts to carry out an assessment of the carer's ability to provide, and to continue to provide, care for that person and take the results of that assessment into account in deciding what, if any, support to provide to that person.

Department of Health – Caring for Carers, 2006¹³

This strategy outlines the Department of Health's commitment to supporting carers.

Department of Health – Review of the support provision for carers, 2009¹⁴

A series of recommendations developed to further embed actions to progress the Caring for Carers Strategy.

Department of Health – Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together, 2016¹⁵

This document recognises that carers are an equal partner in providing care, and supports are required to enable carers to care. Carers also need support to enable them to do the things that those without caring responsibilities take for granted such as working, going out socially, having a break or going on holidays. In the case of young carers, they need help and support just to do the things that young people do.

This document identifies that the needs of carers are changing, which means the type of support required is also changing. It recognises the need to encourage greater take-up of carer's assessments and expand the options for short breaks, as well as enabling the greater use of personalisation and personal budgets where appropriate. It sets out the need to ensure carers can access up-to-date information and, crucially to consider support for carers to live their own lives.

Department of Health - Reform of Adult Social Care, 2022¹⁶

The Reform proposes that carers will be supported in their caring duties and entitled to support in their own right. This includes a duty to identify need and meet eligible assessed need.

At the time of writing this strategy, actions to progress the Reform proposals for carers had not yet been developed.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland – Section 75 duties¹⁷

Section 75 requires public authorities to have due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependents and persons without.

Integrated Care System NI

A new way of planning and managing our health and social care system is in development, to be called *Integrated Care System NI*. This will mean that a range of people, including unpaid and family carers, will work together at a local level to better understand the needs of local people in relation to their health and wellbeing. The aim will be to agree better ways to meet those needs.

This strategy recognises that there are many other policy areas of work which recognise the role of unpaid and family carers.

Department of Health - Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031¹⁸

This Strategy identifies actions that are necessary to embed unpaid carers, families and others in help and support to people with mental ill health. The Strategy also considers the development of mental health policy and wider decision-making.

Belfast Trust Carer Support Structure

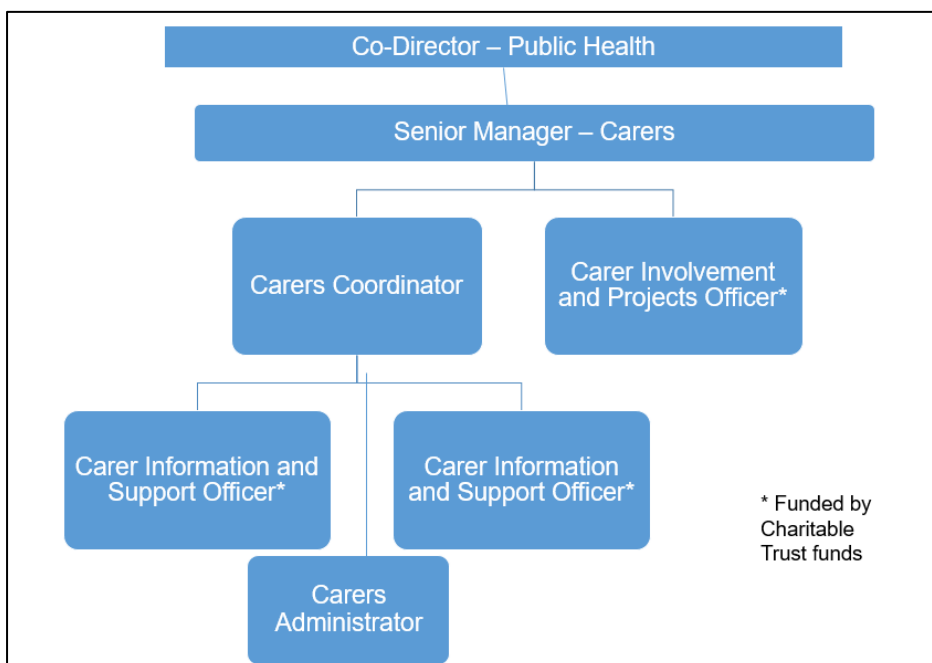
The Carer Support Service working through the Trust Carer Strategy Committee is responsible for taking forward the Carer Strategy. Through the creation of the Carer Network, the Trust has established an involvement structure to effectively and meaningfully involve carers in this work. The Trust will continue to strengthen carer involvement during the duration of this Strategy.

Figure 1 Belfast Trust Carer Involvement structure



The Carer Support Service (CSS) was reconfigured and strengthened as a result of a Review undertaken in 2019. Additional funding was secured to expand the team and the structure is set out in figure 2.

Figure 2 Carer Support Service Structure



Caring Together in Belfast, 2017 – 2021: A reflection on what we achieved

The review of the previous strategy, (Caring Together in Belfast, 2017-2021), identified that much work has been achieved. The outcomes are set out below. The review covered: what we set out to do, how well we did and what difference did we make.

During the 2017-2021 implementation period, the Carer Support Service had several challenges including key members of staff on sick leave and supporting carers in response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lessons learned from this experience have influenced how we planned this Strategy.

We set out to	We do so by
1 Reach all Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding young carer grants - Referring young carers to access an assessment and support via voluntary sector organisation - Funding the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Carers Group - Piloting a Carer Pharmacy Initiative - Developing online Staff Information Pack - Piloting work in West Belfast to engage GP's - Delivering Carer Awareness training - Developing a framework for Belfast Trust staff with a caring role to share information
2 Develop Carer Support Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing a central Carer Support Service point of contact - Strengthening the Carer Support Service team - Piloting a Carers Workers Forum - Mapping carer supports in the Community and Voluntary Sector
3 Support Carer Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offering carer assessments in line with our Statutory Duty - Reconfiguring carer services in response to carer need during the COVID-19 pandemic e.g. Listening Ear support - Setting up a carer counselling service - Hosting and delivering a monthly activity programme providing both online and face to face support - Providing short breaks - Providing carer one-off payments - Training staff to undertake Carer Assessments
4 Communicate with and involve carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a central Carer Information List to increase the number of carers we reach - Publishing Carer Newsletters - Establishing a Carer Network

Part 3 Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards: Our focus for the next five years

Carers are at the heart of this strategy and have worked with the Trust to co-produce the priorities and actions.

This is the third Carer Strategy for Belfast Trust. For each, there has been extensive engagement. As part of the previous Strategy, a key priority was to actively involve carers. Thus a Carer Network was established in 2022. The Network set out to identify and develop carer priorities through the development of the Carer Strategy.

Working with the Carer Network, we undertook to sense check the priorities set out in the previous strategy. This was used as the basis for our work. The Carer Network then up-dated the priorities and set out actions required to continue to progress and advance carer supports.

The next stage was to test the priorities across Belfast Trust. The feedback showed overwhelming support for the four priority areas and the actions within them.

How we engaged

A range of methods were undertaken to engage carers across Belfast, including:

- Four community-based events held in North, South, East and West Belfast
- Online sessions – daytime/evening for working carers and those unable to attend in person
- Online questionnaires for adults and young carers
- Freepost return postcards
- Focus groups with: Young carers, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic carers and Working carers

These opportunities were disseminated to carers via the Carer Information List (over 3,000 carers), across Trust staff teams, an information session at a Health and Wellbeing Centre and via Community and Voluntary organisations etc. Various communication channels were used to highlight the opportunity to get involved, including the Trust website and social media outlets, local press and internal Trust communication platforms.

Nearly 250 people inputted into our strategy via the following methods:


	Carers	Staff	Community and voluntary sector
Face to face events	24	16	20
Online events	27		6
Online questionnaires	96	3	1
Young carer online questionnaires	13		
Freepost return postcards	34		

What you told us was working well

Carers were asked what is currently working well. This was to identify and recognise what is good about what we currently provide and what needs to continue. A snapshot of responses is provided below.

Carer Information List

Carers felt they were kept up-to-date with what's happening by receiving regular emails through the Carer Information List. They felt that they were given lots of relevant information and resources. It also meant that carers knew where they could go for carer-specific support when they needed it, as they were then connected into the Carer Support Service.



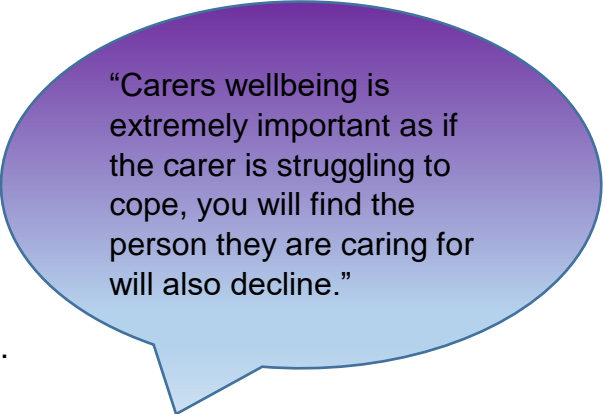
"I really feel Belfast Trust Carer support are trying to reach and offer practical support. It is very much appreciated in a bewildering situation."

Monthly Activity Programme

Carers gave positive feedback about the breadth of activities and support offered by the Carer Support Service at different times of day. Carers felt they had recognition through this support. The online programme of activities hosted during the COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted.

Carers commented that it was easy to book into activities and they were given good notice of events. They also appreciated that some activities were face to face and others online. Days out, the walking group, online yoga and carer grants were identified as being especially helpful. Activities were considered beneficial for carers' physical and mental health, and carers particularly valued the emotional support provided by the service.

Carers stated that the activities were an opportunity to take some time out and join in relaxation activities which they wouldn't normally participate in or perhaps be able to afford. The chance to meet other carers and avail of peer support was also valued. Carers valued that there were many opportunities to learn through the information sessions and it was a great way to meet other carers.



"Carers wellbeing is extremely important as if the carer is struggling to cope, you will find the person they are caring for will also decline."

Carer information and signposting

Information and support provided by the Carer Support Team was seen as a valuable resource. Signposting to other services through the Carer Support Team has been important for families to access assistance within the Trust and through the Community and Voluntary sector (C&V sector).

Our vision for 2023 Onwards

This strategy sets out the vision, priorities and actions that carers across Belfast Trust have told us are important to them.

Vision - We will work in partnership to deliver the highest quality support to Belfast Trust carers.

To achieve all what we have set out to do, we will work with individuals, organisations and communities and are committed to working together to achieve our collective vision.



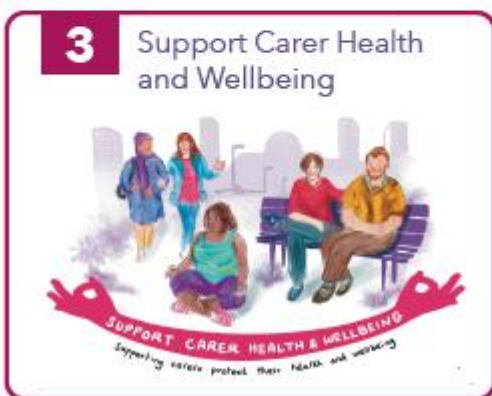
Priorities - Four priority areas are identified as areas for action. For each, we have set out the strategic intention, the actions to be undertaken, how we will measure if we have made a difference and who we will work with.



Raise awareness and identify carers within families and communities



Identify the support that carers require at different stages



Supporting carers to protect their health and wellbeing



Connect with and empower carers to get involved

By 2028, every Belfast Trust carer should:

- Have timely access to the information they need to support them in their caring role
- Clearly navigate carer supports along the carer journey
- Understand their rights and have timely access to a Carers Assessment
- Be identified and recognised as part of the care pathway
- Have information and be linked to support across Belfast to care for their own health and wellbeing
- Have the opportunity to get involved to help shape and deliver services which are carer-focused.

Action Plan 2023-2028

The following section sets out our focus for the next five years to advance the four priorities. Each priority is set out to show:

- The Intent – what are we going to do?
- The Action – how we are going to do this over the five year period?
- The Measure – how will we know we have made a difference?
- The Stakeholders – who the Carer Support Service and Carers will work with to implement?

An annual action plan will be developed to progress this work.



Priority 1 Reach all carers



INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
Provide information for carers across Belfast Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure carer information is available and up-dated in all Belfast Trust settings e.g. hospital and outpatient settings, Health and Wellbeing Centres etc. - Undertake and review annual carer survey to assess how well we are reaching carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer information is available and accessible in all Trust settings - Inventory of information points - Carer survey 	BHSCT Service areas
Actively recognise carers and understand how carers are identified across Belfast Trust services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish and undertake a regular Carer Assessment Audit across Trust services and identify areas for action - Services know their carer population - Carer supports developed and aligned to service areas - Identify carers across Trust sites and services, including hospital (in-patient and outpatient settings) and community settings i.e. Health and Wellbeing Centres, Day Centres etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer Assessment Audit baseline is in place - Carer Assessment Audit undertaken regularly - Number of information stand events/clinics 	BHSCT Service areas
Support understanding of carer role in HSC to increase awareness. Identify carers in communities by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition and understanding of carer's role – issue Carer ID cards and host recognition event for carers as part of the annual Carers Week campaign. - Engage GP Practices to be 'Carer Aware' to provide carer information, undertake e - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased range of information shared in various outlets citywide, raising awareness of carers across Belfast communities - Number of Carer ID cards issued - Number attending Recognition event and media coverage 	GP Federation Pharmacy Department of Health Belfast City Council/ Lisburn

INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
working with a range of stakeholders including GP's, Pharmacies, schools, C&V sector and Professional Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learning and clear referral pathway in place to Carer Supports - Explore opportunities and engage local communities to advance availability of 'Carer Aware' outlets e.g. pharmacies, libraries etc. - Engage Area Partnership Boards to integrate carer awareness into community supports - Work with Special Education Needs schools to engage parent carers and identify young carers - Establish a public awareness campaign - Deliver Carer Awareness sessions to local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of GP Practices engaged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer information available - E-learning implemented and number of hits recorded - Number of 'Carer Aware' outlets - Public Awareness campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of partners/outlets involved - Variety of information channels available 	and Castlereagh Council Libraries NI Education Authority Belfast Area Partnership Boards
Increase awareness of carers and supports available to Trust staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver Carer Awareness sessions - Actively promote the role of unpaid and family carers across Belfast Trust - Include 'carer awareness' information in the Trust staff induction programme - Review current carer staff training and develop e-learning - Trust Services develop plans to reach and support carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service areas have dedicated Carer Action Plan and clear reporting/assurance structures. - Number of Carer Awareness training sessions and number of staff attending - Number of staff Carer Information Clinics - Development of e-learning and number of staff accessing 	BHSCT Service areas
Target identified groups to increase awareness of carers and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with services to share carer information across BAME communities and increase awareness of cultural barriers - Work with services and education providers to actively identify young carers and promote access to supports available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of BAME Carers accessing information and support - BAME Carer Support Group in place - Increased number of young carers are identified: 	BHSCT Service areas (HR, Equality Team and Community Development) Unions

INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
supports available: - Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Carers - Young Carers - Older Carers - Working Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop linkages with Older Peoples Forums to identify older carers - Belfast Trust leads by example as a carer supporting organisation and establish a Trust Staff Carers Forum - Deliver information programme for staff who have a caring role - Explore opportunities to raise awareness of working carers across Belfast and identify models of good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising campaign in Belfast schools - Number of young carer information sessions within Belfast Trust - Young carer information developed and disseminated via a range of methods - Carer profile included as part of Trust staff equality monitoring data - Increased information for Belfast Trust staff who are also carers - Staff Carer Forum in place 	Business in the Community Education Authority Action for Children Belfast City /Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils Education Authority
Enhance how we communicate and share carer information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the Carer Information List as core information source for carer related information across Belfast Trust - Co-develop and implement a Communication Plan to use a variety of channels to reach and connect with carers, including online and offline - Develop a Carer Information Platform to contain all carer related information and supports in one location - Up-date and actively disseminate the core Carer Information Pack - Teams will actively develop and add to the core carer information, creating service specific Carer Information Packs - Translate Carer Information to support minority ethnic communities to access support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are more informed about support available and how to access. - Carer Information List is increased annually - Communication plan outcomes and targets in place to include number of interactions via online and offline sources, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media hits - Website hits - Information platform hits - Newspapers/community bulletins/ interviews - Carer Information Packs in place, widely disseminated and translated for identified BAME communities 	BHSCT Service areas

Priority 2 Navigate carer support



INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
Strengthen the Trust Carer Support Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connect carers to services to access support - Provide expert advice on carer-related issues across the Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are connected to services in a timely way - Carer queries are responded to and referred as required to appropriate service or agency 	Carer Support Service BHSCT Service areas External agencies as identified
Support carers to navigate information and support at different stages of caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map the different stages of caring to understand the information and support needs from newly diagnosed, hospital admission, discharge, on-going support, bereavement etc. for Belfast Trust and other HSC Trust Carer services - Co-develop Carer Navigation Framework (one-stop shop) to provide carer specific information, support and signposting at the different stages of caring including linkages to other HSC Trusts - Identify gaps and develop information and support in line with carer need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different stages of caring are identified and key carer-specific information is in place or developed for each stage - Trust Carer Navigation Framework is in place for each service area and accessible to all staff to promote consistency across service areas at the different stages of caring - Carers are better informed and supported to navigate services at key stages and in line with need, e.g. end of life: - Information is collated, accessible, up-to-date and accessible via a central platform 	BHSCT Service areas C&V sector
Map and share carer supports available,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain database of current carer C&V sector supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater awareness and referral to C&V supports - Carer Worker Forum outcomes in place 	BHSCT Service Areas C&V sector

INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
including community and voluntary sector organisations across Belfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share and up-date carer information and supports available via Staff Information platform and Carer Information Platform - Develop signposting mechanisms to C&V sector supports. - Lead Carer Worker Forum to enhance working with C&V organisations 		
Carers are identified recognised as a partner within the care pathway with service user, care provider and carer working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer partners is established, promoted and embedded across all Trust services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are identified as partners in care (when appropriate) - Increase in numbers of carers engaged with services - Carers identified similar to Trust staff as an unpaid workforce 	BHSCT Service areas
Create a carer champion role within each service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer Champion role developed and promoted across the Trust - Teams will identify a team member as a central resource for carers issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer Champion named person put in place for each team in service areas - Increased access to information for staff 	BHSCT Service areas

Priority 3 Support carer health and wellbeing



INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
<p>Develop a Carer Support Framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-produce Carer Support Pathway to establish a Trust Carer Assessment standard of good practice. To include: identification of carers, offer of assessment, who and how assessment is undertaken to utilise appropriate approach and recorded and outcomes/action plan linking to carer-specific and commissioned support services - Undertake continual programme of quality improvement (PDSA) approach based on the Carer Assessment Audit findings - Effectively utilise Encompass across all service areas to standardise and efficiently record carer assessment activity - Up-date and co-deliver staff Carer Awareness and Assessment training to promote greater understanding of carers role and supports required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer Support Pathway is in place setting out standard of good practice with assurance/governance frameworks in place. - Number of carer assessments undertaken and increase in numbers offered and completed in line with our Department of Health targets - Carer Assessment Audit findings are measured and areas for improvement identified and actioned - Number attending Carer Awareness and Assessment training - Carer Assessment and Awareness training is mandatory - Carers Awareness is included in Trust staff induction - Carers report more positive experience of staff interactions to discuss carer supports 	<p>BHSCT Service areas Learning and Development HR</p>

INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
Review and enhance the range of responsive respite supports, to enable carers to continue to care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore and enhance carer supports available in local communities - Explore models in place across UK - Current respite services are mapped and carers are engaged to identify and identify carer needs in relation to respite - Actively promote and support the implementation of Direct Payments for carers - C&V sector contracted supports are reviewed and aligned to identify carer need - Access to carer respite is enhanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff and carers are better informed of Carer Respite services available across the Trust - Number of carers offered and accessing Direct Payments in lieu of Trust respite services - Respite services are more responsive to identified carer need 	BHSCT Service areas C&V sector Care Homes
Deliver a flexible and responsive programme of events and activities to support carers' emotional, physical and social health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host a carer-led hybrid monthly activity programme - Support BAME Carers to engage and access peer support - Raise awareness, understand needs and identify specific support mechanisms for young carers - Explore establishing a Young Carer Champion - Carer support mirrors Trust staff well-being supports e.g. BWell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of carers access support to enhance emotional, physical and social health and well-being - Increased number of Carers attending monthly programme - Number of new carers attending - Number of BAME carers engaged - Young carer supports available - Resources are enhanced to further develop carer supports 	BHSCT Service areas Action for Children C&V sector

INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
Identify and provide effective support mechanisms to ensure carer's emotional wellbeing is supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host and promote Carer Connect mechanisms to share experiences and access peer support - Explore, develop and share emotional supports available across Belfast communities - Provide responsive and carer emotional support through bespoke Carer Counselling programme - Provide access and promote access to a helpline for carer crisis and emotional support - Develop a pathway for emotional and crisis support which is widely promoted via staff and carer platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number and availability of opportunities across Belfast for carer peer support - Outcome monitoring in place for the carer counselling service - Emotional and crisis carer supports are accessible and responsive 	BHSCT Service areas Lifeline C&V sector Carers NI
Advance a carer peer-led support programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore and advance volunteering opportunities to support carers across Trust settings by identifying volunteer roles and developing role descriptions - Establish a Carer Support volunteer model to engage carers with lived experience - Undertake and evaluate pilot to test effectiveness of volunteer model for Carer Support Service 	- Volunteer programme in place providing opportunities for carers with lived experience to support carers across Belfast Trust	Volunteer Service Volunteer Now

Priority 4 Actively connect and involve carers



INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
<p>Work in partnership with the Carer Network to continue to advance and implement carer priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Carer Network member involvement and actively refresh membership on a regular basis - Co-produce with the Carer Network, the implementation of the Carer Strategy and annual review to determine what was achieved and identify key actions moving forward - Engage the Carer Network to support carer representation on the Integrated Care System, Belfast Area Implementation Board and support identification of carer needs to commission services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer Network is identified as a representative carer structure across the Trust and strengthened: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four Workshop meetings a year - Social networks are strengthened - Training needs are mapped and training identified to support training needs - Members are actively involved across Trust services - Membership is refreshed to support a diverse Network of carer representation - Carer Strategy developed and in place with annual action plan and measures - Carer involvement platform developed creating range of opportunities for carers to get involved and tracked for impact via Trust PPI monitoring - Carer Network is aligned to the Trust Involvement Assurance process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carer Network - PPI Team - Carers NI
<p>Actively listen and involve carers to shape services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-develop carer supports - Increase awareness of Care Opinion and other feedback mechanisms to hear the voice of carers supporting users using Trust services - Support development of mechanism to integrate carer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are actively involved to shape carer support services - Feedback/evaluation in place for all events/meetings and improvement lens applied to all feedback - Care Opinion/ Patient experience incorporates a carer lens with information shared for review/identified areas for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Experience Team

INTENT	ACTION	MEASUREMENT	STAKEHOLDERS
	<p>voices into Trust services e.g. Young Carers</p>		
<p>Explore technology and other platforms to support carers in their caring role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in pilot/trials to test technology support designed for carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are involved in co-designing technology to advance carer supports to support independent living 	<p>BHSCT Service areas PHA Age NI</p>
<p>Build capacity and empower carers to advocate for themselves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host advocacy training and review feedback - Collate and share information on advocacy services for carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of carers attending training 	<p>Carers NI</p>

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