



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Joint All Age Carers Strategy

2025 – 2029

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Foreword

The Stoke-on-Trent Joint All Age Carers Strategy is presented by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board.

The strategy sets out our shared vision and aspirations for improving carer services for young and adult carers within the city over the next four years. We want Stoke-on-Trent to recognise and support our unpaid carers. Achieving this means working together as a city.

We have been engaging with many partners including carers with a lived experience to review the support currently offered in Stoke-on Trent. The findings are, that there is support out there for carers but much more must be done.

We will acknowledge our carers, we want them to understand that they are appreciated and valued greatly. They will have a voice and we will listen to what they tell us. We will include them in making decisions on the services we provide to ensure we have services that can support them as well as the person they care for.

We will endeavour to identify hidden carers ensuring that all carers can easily access help and support at the right time for them and we will continue to offer accessible carers assessments that will support them in accessing the care and support tailored to their needs.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, your knowledge, care and commitment in creating this Strategy will make a meaningful difference to Carers lives.

Cllr Duncan Walker (Cabinet Member for Adult services)

Cllr Sarah Hill (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Introduction

This All Age Carers Strategy was created by Stoke on Trent City Council, NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on- Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the carers Partnership Board, as a result of listening to what carers were saying about their lives being an unpaid carer.

The aim of the strategy is to ensure that carers have the right, timely support, advice and information that enables them to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and their life outside of caring.

New research from the Centre for Care, published in partnership with Carers UK, has found that the economic value of contributions made by unpaid carers in the UK is now £184 billion a year. The combined NHS budget across the UK in 2021/2022 was £189 billion – meaning that carers are providing the value of care equivalent to a second NHS.

Stoke on Trent City Council recognises and values the contribution of our unpaid carers, who often do not recognise themselves as a carer, but as a loved one caring

for a family member, friend or neighbour. We all at some point in our lives could become a carer, caring for a short amount of time, now and again or having a fulltime commitment to caring. This Joint All Age Strategy aims to support and improve the caring lives of Stoke on Trent's carers whatever caring role they have. With continual learning from our lived experienced carers, Stoke City Council will ensure this vital role is recognised, has a voice and supported through invested partnership initiatives and approaches to enable carers to meet the outcomes they need.

The strategy sets out priorities over four years and will inform the strategic planning, service delivery and commissioning of support for carers across the city. This Strategy informs how we will all work together to make improvements to the lives of unpaid carers by ensuring carers are recognised, have a voice and supported through invested partnership initiatives and approaches.

Stoke on Trent Carers Partnership Board

Stoke on Trent Carers Partnership Board is made up of Stoke on Trent Partners who have a passion for supporting our valued carers. The Partnership meet quarterly to discuss and address the needs of our carers. The Partnership were invaluable to contributing to this strategy.

Membership

- Alzheimer's Society
- Carers
- Healthwatch UK
- NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on- Trent Integrated Care Board
- Lifeworks
- North Staffs Carers
- PEGIS - Parent Engagement Group in Stoke
- Royal Voluntary Service
- Staffordshire Fire Service
- Stoke City Council
- VAST

Context

Our unpaid adult and young carers in Stoke on Trent

Many carers do not see themselves as carer; this is because it can be difficult for carers to see their caring role as separate from the relationship they have with the person they care, whether that relationship is as a parent, child, sibling, partner, or a friend.

This Strategy will help us to deliver priority outcomes in key local plans and support Health and Social Care Strategies:

Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care - Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, ICS

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 | Stoke-on-Trent

Our Corporate Strategy and Priorities 2024 – 2028

Our Corporate strategy 'Our City, 'Our Wellbeing' seven key themes below will contribute to improved community wellbeing.

- 1 Healthier - Creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens
- 2 Wealthier - Reducing hardship and enabling greater shared prosperity
- 3 Safer Building empowered communities, safe from the threat of harm
- 4 Greener - Conserving our environment and living more sustainably
- 5 Cleaner - Working together to clean up our city and our communities
- 6 Fairer - Tackling inequality and improving life chances for everyone
7. Skilled - Providing opportunities for people to improve their skills and education



'Our City, Our Wellbeing' Priority 6 – A Fairer City states

Objectives: Enable residents of all ages to have greater control over their lives.
Take steps to ensure that council policies and actions actively promote greater fairness.

Outcomes: Residents feel more in control of their own lives and able to shape their futures

Actions: Provide stronger, more integrated support for carers

Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2024 - 2028

The Market Position Statement specifically describes the social care market within our city, Stoke-on-Trent. The Council endeavours to use this Market Position Statement to share useful, accurate and up to date information to all stakeholders including carers.

- Embedding Co-production in everything we do by involving people who use services, their families and carers in the redesign, creation and monitoring of services.
- Contract for the provision of All Age Carers Support Service
- A wide and varied voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) across the city which is key to delaying the need for formal care services, supporting carers and signposting people to other services.
- Introduce a digital offer to support unpaid carers
- Introduce on-line self-assessments for carers
- Introduce on-line Care Act assessments
- Enhance our carers offer, to prevent carer breakdown and support people to maintain their caring roles
- Enhance our internal Shared Lives offer to support more people with dementia and their carers.
- Offer short breaks and sitting services for carers, rather than a bed-based respite offer, supporting carers to have a break and the cared for to remain in their own home.

Legislation

The Care Act 2014 defines a Carer as:

“an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult” and “A carer is someone who helps another person, usually a relative or friend, in their day-to-day life. This is not the same as someone who provides care professionally, or through a voluntary organisation”.

The Children and Families Act 2014 defines a Young Carer as

“a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person”.

The Children’s and Families Act 2014 also defines a Parent Carer as “a person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility”.

NHS Long Term Plan The plan builds on the policy platform laid out in the *NHS five year forward view* (Forward View) which articulated the need to integrate care to meet the needs of a changing population.

Carers Assessments

The Carer’s Care Act Assessment for both adult and young adults are undertaken by our Social Care Teams.

For carers whose cared for have a social care assessment, they can request a joint assessment with their cared for at the point of their cared for Social Care review

- This is an opportunity for carers to discuss early support and to prevent carer breakdown.
- Carer's Assessments can help towards contingency planning for the peace of mind for the carer and this would reduce pressure on Adult Social Care.
- The support that a carer could be eligible for includes:
 - Respite care
 - Equipment to help with caring role
 - Personal budget

We acknowledge that more needs to be done to raise awareness around carer assessments by working with our Social Workers, promoting carer's assessments, ensuring we have good processes in place and pursuing an online self-assessment function

National and Local Picture

Insert map of city from MPS.

Local Data

As of 2024, the population of Stoke-on-Trent is estimated to be around **258,000**. This reflects a steady growth over the past few years.

[**Stoke On Trent Population \(2024\) - Total Population**](#)

As of 2024, there are approximately **27,000 unpaid carers** in Stoke-on-Trent.

[**State of Caring 2024: the impact of unpaid caring on finances | Carers UK**](#)

In Stoke-on-Trent, around **4.3% of residents aged five years and over** reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week.

[**2021 Census**](#)

National Data

2021 Census there were approximately 4.7 million unpaid carers in England aged 5 years and over.

In England the percentage of people providing unpaid care was higher in females than males; in England 10.3% of females provided unpaid care compared with 7.6% of males

There were approximately 120,000 young unpaid carers (aged between 5 and 17 years) in England

There was a higher percentage of people providing unpaid care in the most deprived areas in England 10.1% compared with the least deprived areas, which had the lowest percentage of people providing unpaid care in both England 8.1%

[**Unpaid care by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics**](#)

In 2021 estimated economic value of the contributions made by carers in England and Wales was £162 billion per year. The economic value of the contributions made by unpaid carers in England and Wales is roughly equivalent to the budget for NHS health service spending

Carers Uk Valuing Carers 2021

<https://www.carersuk.org/media/2d51e03c/valuing-carers-report.pdf>

Over half of carers (51%) said that their financial situation is having a negative impact on their mental health, and 61% feel stressed or anxious when they think about their financial situation.

State of Caring Survey 2024

Without the right support, 1 in 6 carers give up work or reduce working hours to care. But many will be your most skilled and experienced staff, the 45-64 year olds at the peak of their careers.

With 1 in 7 people now juggling work with caring for someone who is older, ill or disabled - and our population ageing – carers are a growing reality in our workforce.

Carer Confident | Carers UK

48% of young carers said that being a young carer made them feel stressed and 44% said it made them feel tired.

61 young carers in school found that 38% had mental health problems.

The demands of their caring role and their family's circumstances were often one of the reasons they found it difficult to access support, from the difficulty of arranging appointments without help from a parent, to worrying about revealing that they are “not good enough” to care for their family member.

The criteria for accessing Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services can discourage young carers from getting support so that problems become even harder to tackle and cause more harm.

The Importance of Young Carers' Mental Health | Carers Trust

Engagement and Coproduction

Through support from Stoke on Trent Carers Partnership Board a range of engagement and coproduction activities were undertaken with carers with lived experience to enable these carers voices to be heard. This helped to develop this strategy by identifying carers priorities and outcomes and the actions needed to support them. Engagement and coproduction activities were delivered via surveys, face to face conversations, telephone calls and group discussions:

- Communities Together - Community Lounge Sessions
- Stoke-on-Trent All Age Carer Support Service:
Engagement Questionnaire for Adult & Young Carers Across Stoke on Trent
- Survey of Adult Carers in England 2023-24
- Stoke City Council Carers Online Survey Questionnaire
- Respite Engagement Sessions

- Library Sessions
- Healthwatch Stoke on Trent - Who Cares for the Carers? October 2023

Priorities & Outcomes

PRIORITY 1: Recognition and Feeling Valued. The Council and Partners within wider communities will champion unpaid carers in their day-to-day work, promotions and events. Raising carer awareness and recognising the invaluable contributions of unpaid carers is essential for their well-being and the well-being of those they care for.

I am no longer me, I am a carer, I want my old life back

PRIORITY 2: Young Carers. Will be recognised early on in their caring role to enable schools, health services and other services and organisations to support and provide practical help

I worry about mum when I am at school. The school know I care for my mum. My mum feels guilty about the impact of caring for her has on me.

Busy but on the opposite side I feel it has given me an opportunity that others don't get to have. It is great knowing that I am helping mum with her health and needs

PRIORITY 3: Realising and Reaching Potential. Carers will have educational, employment and training opportunities.

My manager had no understanding of my caring role which impacted on my training and learning to further my career

PRIORITY 4: Life Outside of Caring. Carers will have their own life, will participate in social activities, hobbies and interests.

If I want to have a few hours off, to have time to myself, such as a shopping trip, I have to plan this weeks in advance. Nothing can be done on the spur of the moment

PRIORITY 5: Supporting Carers to stay Healthy. Carers will be supported to maintain their carer's role well, they will feel mentally and physically well to continue caring.

Not had any contact with anyone other than the GP and hospital, both of which were not great at giving information or assistance

PRIORITY 6: Information, Advice and Guidance. Carers will have accessible information, advice and guidance which will include a digital offer but also in the form of leaflets and posters in day-to-day places and locations such as doctors' surgeries.

Not everyone has access to the internet, yet this is the way you are expected to find information these days and that is not helpful to those of us who can't get information this way.

PRIORITY 7: Rest and Recharge. Carers will access carer break opportunities that will enable them to rest and concentrate on their own wellbeing.

I feel stressed, ill & depressed at times, I just need help at hand and someone to talk to at these times, just need a break

PRIORITY 8: Finance and Employment Support. Adult and Young Carers will not be worried about their finances, they will be able to access financial and employment support.

I worry about money, I had to give up my little job that enabled me to do the things I want to do.

PRIORITY 9: A voice, are listened to. Carers will feel listened to and will have someone and somewhere to go to, to be heard.

Its so hard no one listens properly, they tell us what has to be done but we know best.

PRIORITY 10: Choice & Control. Carers will feel in control and will choose what is best for themselves and their cared for.

I know my own husband and I know my own mind.
Services are doing things we don't want

PRIORITY 11: Carers Assessment. Carer's accessible online assessment will identify the carer's needs, personal outcomes, and the impact of their caring role on their wellbeing. The assessment will help determine if the caring role is sustainable and if the carer is willing and able to continue providing care.

I have been waiting for an assessment since 2021."
"I haven't applied as I wasn't aware I could have one.

How we will deliver

PRIORITY 1: Recognition and Feeling Valued The Council, Partners wider communities will champion unpaid carers in their day to day work, promotions, events. Raising carer awareness and recognising the invaluable contributions of unpaid carers is essential for their well-being and the well-being of those they care for.

- We will recognise the importance of the role a carer plays and we will listen and learn from their lived experience
- We will prioritise early identification of carers
- We will explore every opportunity to promote and celebrate the commitment carers have to their caring role throughout the year including annual 'Carers Week'

- We will respect the role of carers and will involve them in the life of the person they care
- We will work with health colleagues to increase awareness, identification and support for carers ensuring they have someone to go to that can support them
- We will work with partners to increase training and awareness opportunities for carers and professionals
- We will continue to actively work alongside all organisations and groups that can offer support to carers and who can refer into specialist carers support when needed.

PRIORITY 2: Young Carers Will be recognised early on in their caring role to enable schools, health services and other services and organisations to support and provide practical help.

- We will work with external partners to increase early identification through awareness briefings and ensure a clear and efficient referral pathway.
- We will ensure that young carers Champions are established in all schools. Young carers Champions will have strategic responsibility within their school for identifying young carers and to ensure that support is in place in school and relevant referrals are made.
- We will work with parents, carers and young carers Champions to identify solutions to challenges facing the young carers on an individual basis for a personalised approach.
- Young carers case workers will complete holistic assessments with the young carer to ensure that the whole family are considered, during assessment and in care planning, with a view to optimising the young carer's wellbeing.
- We will work with partners to provide the right support at the right time for young carers to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- Young carers will have accessible support information within schools and online.
- We will work closely with post 16 education providers, adult services, partner agencies and commissioned services to ensure a smooth assessment and transition as young carers move into adulthood.

PRIORITY 3: Realising and Reaching Potential All young and adult carers will have educational, employment and training opportunities.

- We will work with primary, secondary, further and higher education settings to raise awareness, identify and support young and adult carers
- We will reach out to local employers to raise awareness, identify and support carers
- We will provide quality information about employment rights, education opportunities, appropriate support services
- We will raise awareness of the vital role that volunteering can play in gaining skills and experience
- We will encourage and promote routes to support carers into volunteering opportunities with local organisations

PRIORITY 4: Life Outside of Caring. All young and adult carers will have their own life, will participate in social activities, hobbies and interests.

- We will work with our local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations to offer a wider choice of activities and support across the whole of the city
- We will support carers who want to work or engage in education and support those that do work or are in education.
- We will work with partners to increase training and awareness opportunities for carers
- To enable carers to access social groups locally, we will be promoting online directories, and promoting face to face groups
- We will provide opportunities to enable carers to have a break from caring.
- We will offer respite to carers when needed, by providing day centre services and day opportunities
- We will endeavour to align day opportunities with the carers needs as well as the cared for
- Ensure carers have understanding and support in accessing a personal budget (whether it be health or social care) when they have been assessed as having eligible needs
- We will link with local libraries, community centres for regular drop-in sessions

PRIORITY 5: Supporting Carers to stay Healthy. All young and adult carers are maintaining their carer's role well, they feel mentally and physically well to continue caring.

- We will work with our wider partners to ensure there is carer awareness to support carers health and wellbeing
- We will ensure we commission services that support healthy lifestyles to improve carers physical and mental health
- We will promote the role of Health Social Prescribers for carers to connect with community services to improve their health and wellbeing.
- We will invest in digital solutions and assistive technology options that will support carer health and wellbeing
- We will create opportunities with partners that will support the wellbeing of carers
- We will provide a range of breaks funded across partners.
- We will align day opportunities with the needs of carers as well as the cared for.

PRIORITY 6: Information, Advice and Guidance. All young and adult carers will have accessible information, advice and guidance which will include a digital offer but also in the form of leaflets and posters in day-to-day places and locations such as doctors surgeries.

- We will work alongside our partners in Health, VCSE sector and Private organisations to ensure carer information is visible and accessible
- We will explore training opportunities for practitioners to deliver the right information at the right time to support carers
- We will promote carer awareness with Stoke employers
- We will ensure our Health or Social Care practitioners will be trained to deliver the right information and support to carers
- We will ensure Information is accessible, up to date and provided in various formats to reach the needs of all carers.

- Our Council website will hold carer information to enable carers to make informed decisions
- We will ensure carers will have an opportunity to directly speak to a professional who can advise and offer support
- We will continue to pursue digital solutions to support carers to access the right information and advice

PRIORITY 7: Rest and Recharge. All young and adult carers will access carer break opportunities that will enable them to rest and concentrate on their own wellbeing.

- We will ensure respite is available to give carers temporary breaks to focus on their own well-being while ensuring their loved ones continue to receive the care they need
- We will encourage and support carers to take regular breaks to maintain their own health, preventing burnout and ensuring they can continue to provide high-quality care
- We will recognise the importance of personal time: to enable carers to take up activities, hobbies, or with other family members and friends, which is essential for maintaining a balanced life.
- We will support VCSE sector organisations who offer support groups and workshops to help manage carers stress and help them to rest and recharge

PRIORITY 8: Finance and Employment Support. Adult and young carers are not worried about their finances, they can access financial and employment support.

- We will continue to offer access to advice and support with financial management and welfare benefit entitlement
- We will continue to develop and promote advice, support, and advocacy services
- We advocate for policies that support flexible working hours, paid family leave, and job protection for carers
- We will promote local organisations who provide financial support for carers

PRIORITY 9: A voice, are listened to. All young and adult carers will feel listened to and will have someone and somewhere to go to, to be heard.

- We will ensure carers voices are heard
- We will involve carers through engagement, consultation and co-designing services.
- We will ensure carers have access to Advocacy support
- We will promote our partners who support carers to voice their needs and opinions effectively.

PRIORITY 10: Choice & Control. All young and adult carers will feel in control and will choose what is best for themselves and their cared for.

- We will ensure that carers have the right to make choices about how they live their life with their cared for.
- Our services will be coproduced with carers
- Carers will be listened to throughout the support they receive.
- We will ensure that workforces know and understand the needs carers
- We will support carers to do things for themselves rather than having things done for them.
- We will empower carers to make their own choices and be in control of their caring role

PRIORITY 11: Carers Assessment. Carer's accessible online assessment will identify the carer's needs, personal outcomes, and the impact of their caring role on their wellbeing.

- We will identify and assess the carer who appears to need support, regardless of whether the carer requests it.
- We will explore digital offers for carers so that they can undertake their own online assessment
- We will provide carers assessments either face-to-face, by phone or online assessment.
- We will undertake a timely assessment to avoid carer breakdown
- We will carry out carers assessments so they can be fully understood by the carer and the cared for

How we will monitor delivery

Through the Carers Partnership Board we will work with carers and wider partners to co-produce an implementation plan which will inform the work being done during the life of this Strategy.

The Carers Partnership Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Joint All-Age Carers Strategy and monitoring completion of the actions within the delivery plan.

This Carers Partnership Board will report on progress annually, to the Health and Wellbeing Board.