

Meeting of:	<b>Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Tuesday, 05 March 2024</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Support for Unpaid Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan
Purpose of Report:	To update Scrutiny Committee on the development of support for unpaid carers
Report Owner:	Director of Social Services
Responsible Officer:	Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Service Outcomes
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Operational Manager, Finance Operational Manager, Legal Services
Policy Framework:	This report is consistent with the Policy Framework and Budget
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Scrutiny Report provides an overview of the developments in service provision and support available to unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan, as highlighted in the Unpaid Carers Annual Report 2023.</li> </ul>

## **Recommendations**

1. That Scrutiny Committee considers the Annual Report for Unpaid Carers and the work undertaken to recognise and support unpaid carers in the Vale of Glamorgan. (link: <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/jBTfMOsEZlxuCxB?loc=swsp> ).
2. That Scrutiny considers the duties of the Council and its partners regarding delivering services for Unpaid Carers within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
3. That Scrutiny considers how the Council, and its partners are meeting the Ministerial Priorities for Unpaid Carers and the regional work of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Board.
4. That Scrutiny receives a report on support for Unpaid Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan on an annual basis.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To ensure that Members continue to exercise effective oversight of this important function, undertaken by the Social Services Directorate, on an annual basis.
2. That Scrutiny Members maintain awareness of the duties outlined within legislation.
3. That Scrutiny Members are aware of the Ministerial Priorities set for Unpaid Carers and the regional work undertaken to meet them.
4. To facilitate support from the lead Member for Unpaid Carers.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Social Services Directorate produces an Annual Report to Scrutiny Members each year and the last Report was presented to Scrutiny on 7th March 2023.
- 1.2 Over the last year several developments have been implemented and progressed, many of which are delivered in partnership and on a regional basis.
- 1.3 The Directorate continues to develop its response to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and manage its statutory responsibilities and local needs within its resources, making the most of collaborative arrangements and Government funding streams when available.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 The core funding for unpaid carers services has enabled us to continue with local support for unpaid carers across the Vale of Glamorgan. In addition, grant funding provided through the Regional Partnership Board has enabled the development and introduction of some new services.
- 2.2 The Council has maximised the impact of the available funding by reviewing and refining the support we provide, to ensure it is meeting our statutory obligations, while encouraging creativity and innovation in our delivery models.

- 2.3 Working on a regional footprint with partners, both within the social care sector and external to it, has brought a greater sharing of experience and knowledge as well as resources and expertise, benefitting the Unpaid Carers we seek to support.
- 2.4 The recruitment of two Unpaid Carer Representatives to the Regional Unpaid Carers Board has led to Welsh Government funding being provided to facilitate the first Regional Unpaid Carers Assembly. The event encouraged Unpaid Carers to come together to gain information about the support available and the commitments within the Charter.
- 2.5 The effects of providing care will always mean respite is one of the main requests made by carers for support. Opportunities for a break from the care giving role are available through care planning, local and regional Unpaid Carers services in the statutory and 3rd sector.
- 2.6 The Welsh Government Priorities for Unpaid Carers are: 'Identifying and valuing Unpaid Carers', 'Providing information, advice and assistance', 'Supporting life alongside caring', and 'Supporting Unpaid Carers in education and the workplace'. The attached Unpaid Carers Annual Report highlights how we are focusing on meeting these objectives.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1 The work of the Regional Unpaid Carers Board falls under the governance of the Regional Partnership Board.
- 3.2 The Unpaid Carers Board provides regular highlight reports on its progress to the Regional Partnership Board.
- 3.3 The membership of the Unpaid Carers Board brings together a broad range of service and lived experiences to enhance and implement the Regional Delivery Plan.
- 3.4 The Council, within its own statutory remit and as a regional Partner, are committed to improve the recognition of unpaid carers in our communities and to ensure that the local authority and its region are a place that supports the highest quality of life for those providing and in receipt of unpaid care.
- 3.5 Ensuring a wide range of services and support for Unpaid Carers will assist them in balancing care with a life of their own and help sustain the unpaid carer's role.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1 There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a direct result of this report.

## **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

**5.1** There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

### **Employment**

**5.2** There are no employment implications resulting from this report.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.3** The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced new rights and entitlements for unpaid carers in Wales. It introduced a broader definition of a carer and placed stronger duties on local authorities to identify, assess and support unpaid carers.
- 5.4** Included in the Act is the continuation of the requirement on the NHS and Local Authorities in Wales to co-operate in relation to the delivery of preventative services unless this is incompatible with their own duties. It also requires regional partnerships to ensure information, advice and assistance is offered across the region in a manner which is accessible and suits the needs of their population.
- 5.5** The United Nations Convention and the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have relevance to a child as a young carer. Article 3 includes the provision that in all actions concerning children by public or private social welfare institutions etc. the best interests of the child should be of primary consideration. Article 12 makes provision of ensuring that the child's views are expressed freely and given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. There are other Articles which relate to the rights of the child.

## **6. Background Papers**

Reports to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023;  
8<sup>th</sup> March 2022; 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

# Health and Social Care: Unpaid Carers Update Report 2023

## Our Vision

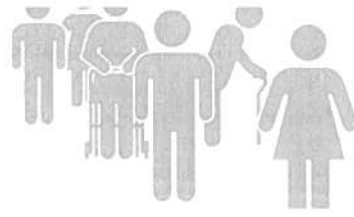
**Adult Carers:** *To identify and recognise unpaid carers for the vital contribution they make to the community and the people they care for, and in doing so enable unpaid carers to have a life alongside caring.*

**Young Carers:** *Young carers are really important to us, to the communities where they live and to the people they care for. We want to make sure that they are recognised and supported if they care for someone, so that we can help them and the person they care for, and make sure they have time to do things for themselves.*



## Introduction:

An unpaid carer is someone who provides unpaid care to an adult or disabled child. The cared for person may be a family member or a friend, who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem, or an addiction, cannot manage without their support.



An unpaid carer could be a husband caring for his wife, a parent caring for their child who has care and support needs, or a child caring for their parent. The care unpaid carers provide ranges from providing practical help, to personal care, and to supporting emotional and mental wellbeing.

As unpaid carers continue to struggle with the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Cost of Living crisis and the consequences from ongoing difficulties within health and social care, efforts continue to be made at national, regional, and local levels to provide vital support to them.

**Carers UK, in their annual report State of Caring 2023-the impact of caring on health in Wales state that :**



- More than a quarter (28%) of unpaid carers are in bad or very bad mental health
- Half of unpaid carers say their physical health has suffered as a result of caring, and 23% say they have sustained injuries through caring.
- More than three-quarters (76%) of carers are worried about being able to provide care in the future
- 82% have continuous low mood, 82% have feelings of hopelessness and 73% regularly feel tearful.
- Not getting support is taking its toll on worn out unpaid carers: having to wait long periods for health treatment - or putting it off because of the demands of their caring role; being unable to rely on fragmented social care services to support with caring, and struggling financially because they cannot earn a higher income.'

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No one service or action can alleviate the struggles of all unpaid carers. Each care- giving situation will be unique and present its own challenges.

However, by continuing to raise awareness, ensuring the promotion and understanding of unpaid carers issues, as well as delivering information, services, and support aimed at improving the lives and experiences of unpaid carers, we can all make a difference.

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**Here are some of the activities and actions taken that impact on the unpaid carers supporting our communities within the Vale of Glamorgan over the past year.**

## **1. Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Board**

The Unpaid Carers Board established under the auspices of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board, has met regularly during 2023.

Their purpose is to

*Key projects delivered for 2022-23 include:*

1. *Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway*
2. *Dementia carer information and support program*
3. *Young carers in school/Discharge support for unpaid carers*
4. *Engagement*
5. *Delivery of a regional unpaid carers charter and implement an agreed delivery plan*

## **2. Cardiff and the Vale Carers Gateway**

The **Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway** aims to improve the quality of life for unpaid carers, and the cared for, in Cardiff and the Vale, helping them sustain their caring role and enhance their ability to have a life outside caring. It does this by making it easier for unpaid carers to access information about support and services in the region. The Gateway provides a 'one stop shop' approach to supporting and engaging with unpaid carers, providing them with information and advice about services which will support them in their caring role. The Gateway links with existing services and providers, will not duplicate services already provided, and will act as the central link across the region for unpaid Carers. It does this through a centralised helpline and email enquiry line and face to face support via drop-in sessions in community locations, so unpaid carers are able to receive information and advice closer to home. The current contract to deliver a regional Carers Gateway is to be retendered in 2024.

### 3. Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Charter

March 2023 saw the official launch of the **Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Charter**, pledging the commitment of partners across the region, including NHS, local authorities, voluntary and 3rd sector organisations, to support unpaid carers. The Charter has been actively promoted in the Vale. It is published on the Corporate Website, shared via social media and unpaid carers bulletins produced by the Team for both staff and unpaid carers. Its commitments are reflected in the Service and Team Plan actions.

### 4. Regional Young Carers Task Group

The **Regional Young Carer Task Group** has reformed as a sub-group of the Regional Unpaid Carers Board. It is currently collating the activities undertaken by partners, separately and collaboratively, to map these against the aspirations of the Young Carers Charter (a child and young person friendly version of the Unpaid Carers Charter). The group are actively involved in promoting the Charter itself and will be engaged in a joint programme of promotion and publicity to mark Young Carers Action Day in March 2024.

This group enables information sharing and collaboration between the statutory and the 3rd sector organisations who support young carers.

### 5. Unpaid Carers Breaks

**Amser**, Welsh for 'time', is the grant fund for third sector organisations delivering personalised, flexible, and creative short breaks to unpaid carers in Wales.

Funded by Welsh Government, Amser is part of the Short Breaks Scheme for unpaid carers and aims to enable 30,000 carers to take a break from caring by 2025.

A range of break options to meet the diverse communities of Wales have been funded through this programme. These aim to improve carer resilience and wellbeing and to support the sustainability of the carer's caring relationship.

Information about organisations offering breaks and the types of breaks available are listed on the Carers Trust [website](#).

The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership received funding from this initiative directly, which enabled them to make available a grant scheme to 3rd sector providers locally to deliver services to unpaid carers. In partnership with C3SC **the Unpaid Carers Short Breaks Small Grants Programme** aimed to support voluntary sector groups with service development and sustainability to help unpaid carers access information, advice and provision that will provide support with the cost of living, tackling loneliness and social isolation, taking breaks and other pressures.

### 6. Young Carers Identity Card



An Annual Report for the **Young Carers ID (YCID) card** was produced to demonstrate the implementation of a national rollout of this Welsh Government initiative. 2022/23 was the final year funding was provided to deliver the YCID. Everyone in Vale who is receiving young carer support via YMCA Cardiff has received full information about the card and those who are being assessed to join the projects have been given an active offer of receiving a YCID.

The Vale Young Carers Project has built YCID card support into their young carers ambassador programme. This programme is designed to develop confidence, leadership skills and a voice for the young carer community within YMCA Cardiff, it also provides peer to peer discussions which will include the importance and benefits of YCID.

The YMCA, have worked closely with The Young Carers in Schools Programme, provided by The Care Collective who include the YCID within activities and training in secondary schools across the region and in the small number of primary schools currently trialling the programme as a pilot.

Although Welsh Government funding has ended, the Young Carers Project will continue to support the administration of YCID for the region, so that young carers can apply for and receive a valid i.d. card. Supplies, processes, and equipment are in place to deliver this in the short term.

There are lots of reasons young carers have told us they would like an ID card, including:

- To raise awareness of their responsibilities and to give formal recognition to their role,
- To discreetly let people know about their caring responsibilities without having to share personal details over and over again,
- To give confidence to ask for help or understanding from professionals like teachers, doctors and pharmacists,
- School related: Explanation of school lateness/ absence due to caring role or being able to get an extension on homework/ assignment if caring role is an impact.

Discussions are ongoing about what needs to be done to continue promotion of the card to a wider audience, benefits to be added, and how this can be achieved, all as a regional approach.

## 7. Cardiff and Vale Carer Assembly

Unpaid Carers Assembly **Cardiff and Vale Carer Assembly**, in November, was an event designed by unpaid carers, for unpaid carers, and with unpaid carers.

Unpaid carers were invited to come along and meet the local organisations who provide services and support, and take up the opportunity to connect, share experiences, and build a support network with other carers.

The event was free to attend and included lunch and refreshments

The year 2023 has seen several improvements made to the support and services for unpaid carers available from the Vale Social

Services Department, with a number of projects currently in progress.

## 8. Carers Services and Development Team

The year began with the implementation of a revised staffing structure, creating a **Carers Services and Development team** with a dedicated team leader, and under the direct line management of the Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Services outcomes, who has a strategic responsibility for unpaid carers. A matrix management arrangement was incorporated into this for the six carers support posts across Adult and Children Services.

The main purpose of the Team is:

- To develop, monitor and support services to unpaid carers within the Directorate.
- To advise on and support service development and delivery across Vale council services in relation to unpaid carers.
- To provide a conduit and a resource for national and regional policy development and implementation in relation to unpaid carers.
- To interpret, develop understanding and build consensus about the implications of legislation or policy changes and achieve key outcomes for unpaid carer

## 9. Parent Carers and Young Carers

A new post created to support **parent and young carers**, based with the Family Advice Line service, has enabled us to firmly establish a single referral pathway for information and support for the parents of children with a disability, and young people who carry out the role of an unpaid carer. The Social Care Officer (Carers) post holder is helping us to respond to the growing number of requests for parent carer assessments in particular and is beginning to establish their presence with partner agencies and stakeholders, facilitating improved cooperation and collaboration. An example of this was in the Summer 2023 when the Social Care Officer attended the Welsh Government sponsored Young Carers Festival where they were able to meet and support many young

Not all referrals into our service results in an assessment, all young carers and parent carers will receive information and advice that supports them in their caring roles. This signposting and provision of information is provided following a what matters conversation and is tailored to individual needs and circumstances. For some this provision provides valuable sources of support and information.

## 10. Care Inspectorate Wales

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)** carried out a performance evaluation inspection of children and young people's services (C&YPS) and adult services (AS) in the Vale of Glamorgan County Council in January 2023. The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers. While the report and feedback were positive and, is a reflection and recognition of the hard work and dedication within the department, it afforded the opportunity to reflect in more detail on some of the findings in relation to recording and management of referrals for support for unpaid carers. As a result, a programme of work has commenced and been incorporated into the Business Improvement Plans of the Department. Specifically, reviews are underway of the Referral pathways for all unpaid carers, ensuring an appropriate and proportionate response through each stage of the information, support and planning stages of referrals. This includes the recording and reporting of data for statutory returns as well as for performance improvement and monitoring purposes. Guidance to support practice and decision making are also in development to assist practitioners in their interactions with unpaid carers.

## 11. Carers Connect Over Coffee

'**Carers Connect over Coffee**', was a Carers' Event that took place in March 2023. In a successful example of joint working, the Unpaid Carers Team joined forces with the Social Care Workforce Development (SCWD) Team to provide an opportunity for unpaid carers to connect with local services and combining this with an afternoon tea and a chance to chat and share experiences. Service providers were kept busy with a continuous flow of unpaid carers seeking help with matters relating to benefits, rights, assistive technology, and maintaining wellbeing, among many other current issues. Working with the SCWD Team we have been

able to provide unpaid carers with more frequent opportunities to develop their skills, such as first aid, moving and handling people safely, and managing challenging behaviour.

A survey planned for 2024 will help us to identify any further development needs that we may be able to support.



## 12. Active April

Collaboration was again the theme in April when the national Carers UK Active Carers focused their activities to deliver an '**Active April**' campaign. The campaign, which takes place throughout April each year, aims to support unpaid carers to be more active by providing a range of information, resources, and activity opportunities, including online sessions, a month-long movement challenge from Carers UK and virtual events.

While recognising the challenges that unpaid carers face in being active, the annual campaign raises awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of moving more and highlight how unpaid carers can be supported to do this.

We added our support to this initiative for the first time and combined the above information with details about what is available from the Vale of Glamorgan Council to show additional and more local ways unpaid carers can get more active. There are many options available to suit all levels of fitness and ability and the promotion signposted to our website to find out more ([Sports, Play and Healthy Living \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/sports-play-and-healthy-living))

## 13. Carers Information

**Carers Bulletins** and mailings are being delivered frequently utilising the Gov Delivery email marketing platform for the public sector, as well as traditional postal of hard copies. This enables us to respond quickly to information that comes to our attention and will be of interest to unpaid carers and those who work with them, as well as a marketing tool for our own initiatives and information. There are currently x unpaid carers on our mailing list along with x professionals and services providers. Mailings are also shared internally with staff, both for their own benefit and for those they may be supporting in their roles. Information is also shared through the corporate **social media channels**, reaching an audience far wider than known unpaid carers in the Vale. We have used this channel for promoting events such as Carers Week in June and Carers Rights Day in November.

## 14. Case Studies and Feedback from Unpaid Carers

Case study 1. Unpaid Carer for an Adult

**Background:**

Adult 1 is a 79-year-old carer for her husband who has multiple health conditions including Parkinson's Disease. Her husband can only mobilize with a walking frame for short distances and his standing tolerance is very low. Added to this, the carer herself recently suffered a fall and was struggling with her caring role.

**Description.** Carer turned to the Carers Gateway for information, advice and assistance and was told about her rights under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014.

**What success looks like.** A referral was made to the Vale of Glamorgan Adult Services for a Carers Needs Assessment. A package of care was put in place and her husband's needs are being met by professional carers, wife and her daughter.

**Maria's feedback was as follows:**

"[We are] so grateful for your support. The last 18 months have been such an upheaval in our lives but since contacting you and Social Services, we have received swift support and the system has caught us".

What has been learnt. The Carers Gateway have a valuable partnership with Adult Services, capturing carers' circumstances and when appropriate, escalating cases for statutory Carers Needs Assessments.

**Outcomes.** The information passed between the gateway and the local authority is always with the carers' consent and by sharing, we are able to work on the principle of "tell me once", saving time for all concerned.

**Case study 2. Unpaid Carer for an Adult**

**Background:** Adult A is an 80-year-old carer for her husband who has Alzheimer's Disease. The case was referred to the Carers Gateway by the Memory Team at the University Hospital Llandough.

**Description.** Adult A said she is managing at the moment, but now acknowledges that as her health declines, she will need support in the future.

**What success looks like.** Adult A was provided with a package of signpost information appropriate to her role. In particular, one signpost was for the Herbert Protocol. Adult A's husband, as a symptom of his condition, can sometimes wander off and due to his lack of capacity, becomes very vulnerable. The Herbert Protocol is a form that police forces (including South Wales Police) can hold with identifiable information that can help, should her husband be found needing assistance.

**Feedback was as follows:**

"Very many thanks for the information you have sent me. I find it very encouraging to know that there are a lot of positive ways in which we can move forward".

And added:

"You have a lovely calming voice and I thank you".

**What has been learnt.** The Carers Gateway team have a breadth of knowledge about services that can be provided to carers. Also, the personal touch of a calm voice makes a huge difference to carers who seek a human dimension to the difficulties that can sometimes be overwhelming.

**Outcomes.** This demonstrates how the Carers Wellbeing Workers respond to enquiries by first completing a What Matters conversation which in turn leads to information, advice and assistance that is tailored to the carers' own circumstances.

## 14. Vaccinations for Carers

1. The UK COVID-19 **vaccination programme** is now entering its third autumn season. Vaccination helps to protect against severe illness, hospitalisations, and deaths from COVID-19. The advice for this autumn is to offer the vaccine to those at high risk of serious disease and who are therefore most likely to benefit from vaccination. Specifically, JCVI advises persons aged 16 to 64 years who are carers be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine this autumn. Vale unpaid carers services are represented on the Winter Respiratory Vaccination Steering Group, to assist in identifying opportunities to engage and inform unpaid carers of the availability of vaccinations and encourage uptake, for both Covid-10 booster and influenza vaccinations.

## 15. Vale unpaid Carers Logo

A new **Vale Unpaid Carers Services Logo** was designed and adopted late in 2023. We wanted a distinct logo for a number of reasons. It will create a first impression, which invites people to interact with us and helps us to create a 'brand' identity, which will help people remember us. It will also distinguish us from other services.

We've started using the Logo on publications, web based information and social media. You can see the new logo here and at the top of this Report.

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Unpaid carers are a valued asset within our communities and without their continued support for those who are vulnerable and requiring assistance, our own health and social care services would be unable to cope.

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# Health and Social Care: Unpaid Carers Update Report 2023

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