

## Carers Scrutiny Spotlight Update January 2024

### Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

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#### 1) Recommendation

That the Committee note this report that provides an update on its recommendations of March 2023 and the work in progress.

#### 2) Background / Introduction

In March 2023 the Adult Health and Care Committee published a report subsequently approved (with amendments) by Cabinet, which included a number of recommendations. These are set out in the table below.

	Recommendation March 2023
1	That the Committee recognises the invaluable role of replacement care and urges the Council to develop an effective replacement care offer for unpaid carers.
2	(i) That further work is undertaken with Primary Care to improve carer identification and referral by GP surgeries into Devon Carers to ensure a more consistent offer.  (ii) That NHS Devon Integrated Care Board, the Hospital Trusts and the County Council continue to ensure carers' appointments and carers' elective surgery are prioritised; that medical staff know they are carers and support is put in place when they go home after surgery.
3	That there is system wide recognition and a holistic approach taken to support and address carers isolation, embedded in all work of the County Council's including in its commissioning arrangements.
4	That work continues, and is expanded, to promote the sign up of organisations and communities to "Carer Friendly Devon.
5	That One Devon considers longer-term funding for community and voluntary sector groups to help ensure sustainability in their work.
6	That the County Council reviews its needs assessment process to ensure it is taking the views of the carer into account as well as the cared for person and prioritises a reduction in any backlog over the next 12 months.
7	That Health and Adult Care Scrutiny continues to closely monitor unpaid carers and further recommends Children's Scrutiny does likewise in terms of young carers.

### 3) Main Body - update on the Committee's proposals of March 2023

#### 3.1 Overall developments in Carer Support.

##### Context

At the point of this Spotlight Review intensive work is currently under way as the Carer support service contract needs to be re-tendered ("Caring Well in Devon" is currently in its 6<sup>th</sup> year of a 5+1+ contract). This work is taking place in the context of the financial challenges facing the County Council.

##### Current developments at "Devon Carers"

- 3.1.1 The delivery of the "Caring Well in Devon" contract is generally strong and management is positive and proactive, although staff morale and turnover at Devon Carers have been affected by the Consultation on potential reductions (subsequently withdrawn) which was launched in 2023, the uncertainty arising at this point in the contract prior to the re-tender and the cost of living issues (related to long term depreciation of the relative value of the salaries on offer). Inevitably this is leading to some delays, though the action of the service Managers in introducing a new "first line response" function means that carers who are in the most urgent need are identified when they make contact and wherever possible action is taken very quickly to meet and de-escalate need.
- 3.1.2 Recently the service achieved re-accreditation by the Helplines Partnership, an important marker of quality.
- 3.1.3 Around 600 new carers a month are registering with the service which is high.
- 3.1.4 Carer Friendly Devon work is providing value; North Devon District Council is now participating.

##### Carers' Programme Developments

- 3.1.7 The Integrated Care Board is providing 12 months' funding to Local Care Partnerships for a "**Carers' Champion**" function; these will be supported by NHS Devon Commissioners and Devon Carers and be invited to a monthly forum to share good practice and progress. They will support the NHS Long Term Plan requirements for Carers including:
  - Achieving the General Practice Quality Markers for Carers
  - Supporting the adoption of Carer Passports

- Supporting Young Carers
- Developing links with local Carers Services.

The active participation of partners is critical to meeting the objectives of the carers programme of work.

3.1.8 The recognition and coding on Practice systems for carers is of high interest, and Devon Carers has undertaken the work necessary on their side to facilitate the two-way exchange of information.

3.1.9 DCC is progressing towards being able to submit an application for the “Employers for Carers” **Carer Confident Level 2** standard and registering with Devon Carers as a **carer friendly employer**.

3.1.10 The **Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF)** is providing funding for two or more projects with one specifically focussed on unpaid carers. Broadly, Local Authorities in an Integrated Care Board area form a consortium to agree and submit an Expression of Interest. EOIs are due to be submitted by 12 January with results late March. The process is being supported by the Social Care Institute for Excellence. In Devon we are focussing on improving availability and accessibility of carers breaks (including replacement care), consistency in this across the Integrated Care System, and building the digital contribution to the carers offer and to solutions for carers breaks.

3.1.11 We are preparing for a **re-procurement of the Carers’ support service** currently provided by Westbank (as mentioned above). There is much groundwork to be done, preliminary decisions to be made and agreements to be reached to enable this to proceed.

3.1.12 In general, the **delivery aspects of the Carers’ Programme** - such as carer breaks payments, the Citizens’ Advice carers’ work, delivery of Passports etc, are proceeding to plan, though demand is high.

## 3.2 Update on the Committee’s Specific Recommendations

	Recommendation March 2023	Update January 2024
1	That the Committee recognises the invaluable role of replacement care and urges the Council to develop an effective replacement care offer for unpaid carers.	<p>The low-cost volunteer-provided Time for You sitting service is now extended across the County though significantly restricted by low volunteer availability.</p> <p>We completed a Replacement Care needs assessment and are looking for opportunities to develop on this objective. However capacity and finance have proved restraining factors. It is hoped that the use of the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) will enable</p>

		improvement in this area.
2	<p>(iii) That further work is undertaken with Primary Care to improve carer identification and referral by GP surgeries into Devon Carers to ensure a more consistent offer.</p> <p>(iv) That NHS Devon Integrated Care Board, the Hospital Trusts and the County Council continue to ensure carers' appointments and carers' elective surgery are prioritised; that medical staff know they are carers and support is put in place when they go home after surgery.</p>	<p>(i) Devon Carers is now fully prepared to enable this, and the opportunity of having Carer Champions in LCP's is hoped to provide the Primary Care complement to this to make it work.</p> <p>(ii) Increased take-up and use of the Carer Passport alongside the availability of the Carers Hospital Scheme is making significant improvements in the recognition and support of carers when they or the person they care for may require hospitalisation.</p>
3	That there is system wide recognition and a holistic approach taken to support and address carers isolation, embedded in all work of the County Council's including in its commissioning arrangements.	The Carers Partnership Steering Group commissioned a special study of Carer Isolation and Loneliness which was completed in 2023. It contains recommendations which were adopted by CPSG. An action plan is being developed and means of promoting these recommendations are now being actively sought.
4	That work continues, and is expanded, to promote the sign up of organisations and communities to "Carer Friendly Devon.	This work is continuing at pace and gathering momentum.
5	That One Devon considers longer-term funding for community and voluntary sector groups to help ensure sustainability in their work.	This is outside the specific scope of the Carers Programme. It has been referred to Integrated Care Board Managers for consideration.
6	That the County Council reviews its needs assessment process to ensure it is taking the views of the carer into account as well as the cared for person and prioritises a reduction in any backlog over the next 12 months.	DCC is currently developing Practice Standards, supporting training and a specific Carer practice standard. This will also be in focus of the CQC review.
7	That Health and Adult Care Scrutiny continues to closely monitor unpaid carers and further recommends Children's Scrutiny does likewise in terms of young carers.	This proposal has been made and it is understood that the Children's Scrutiny Committee is already acting on it.

## **4. Key Issues**

The following themes were considered by the Committee. Commentary is offered additional to the report on recommendations.

### ***Carer Identification***

- 4.1 Carer Identification has increased from around 25,000 carers at March 2023 report to over 28,000 at December 2023. This is a significant level of improvement in a short space of time. However, identification is sensitive to a range of factors including for example stories that carer support is less available, as carers will often believe that there are people who need the support more than they do themselves. The carer offer will also need to flex within the available budget to support more people.

### ***Paid Care Workers***

- 4.2 Members listened to evidence that a lack of paid care workers, a need for more training for those working with people with complex needs and stability with respect to service to individuals are all issues. These are all issues which are being considered in relation to the ARF. The contribution of International Recruits has been particularly relevant in this period and the sufficiency of markets is now much stronger.

### ***Assessments***

- 4.3 The involvement of Carers in the needs assessments of those they care for continues to be an issue. This issue is being addressed in the Practice Standards and supporting training being developed (see above)

### ***Individual Budgets/Direct Payments***

- 4.4 Members considered cash levels of Direct Payments for the people Carers are supporting and the availability of self-employed/independent care workers rather than workers through agencies. We refer to the latter as “Personal Assistants” and this issue is one being addressed under “paid care workers”.
- 4.5 The cash values of Direct Payments for the purchase of care are in general determined by reviews of the needs of the cared-for person.

### ***Single Point of Contact***

- 4.6 Integrated Adult Social Care has recently made changes to its functioning that should improve the experience of people who use services and their carers, by increasing consistency and changes to telephony.

## ***Social Isolation***

- 4.7 The carers support service is incorporating thinking on social isolation of carers into all of its activities; we will be monitoring this outcome carefully as our action plan unfolds

## ***Carers Hospital Service***

- 4.8 The Carers Hospital Service continues, although future funding is yet to be resolved and will be considered as part of the carers recommissioning process and thinking has commenced on how to support the Virtual Wards developments.

Issues identified in relation to NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (representation of Carers), delays in diagnoses and any other issues not specifically identified above are in progress.

## **5. Options / Alternative**

N/A

## **6. Consultations**

No consultations have been required for this update report

## **7. Strategic Plan**

This report responds directly to the priorities identified by the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee Carers' Spotlight in March 2023.

These align with the vision and the following priorities in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 - <https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan>

- Tackle poverty and inequality (address poverty, health and other inequalities)
- Improve health and wellbeing, including any public health impacts
- Help communities be safe, connected and resilient

Actions to improve Carers' lives by definition addresses their disproportionate experience of poverty, inequalities in health social isolation and loneliness, and by focussing on improving their connections with their local communities supports community resilience.

These Recommendations also support the delivery of the Councils' Strategy for Carers, "Caring Well in Devon", published 2023.

## **8. Financial Considerations**

There are no additional identified costs associated with this report.

## **9. Legal Considerations**

There are no specific legal considerations.

## **10. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)**

No environmental considerations have been identified in relation to this update on the Committee's Recommendations

## **11. Equality Considerations**

Under the Equality Act 2010, carers are protected from unlawful discrimination 'by association' in relation to the protected characteristics of disability and age. Carers also have additional protected characteristics such as sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race and religion or belief. The Public Sector Equality Duties also place a requirement on the County Council to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; and encourage participation in public life) and foster good relations across all protected characteristic groups. Minority or marginalised groups may experience barriers or lack confidence in accessing carer support.

## **12. Risk Management Considerations**

No risks have been identified in association with this update on the Committee's Recommendations

## **13. Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations**

This report is submitted in response to a request from the Committee for an update.

### **Name**

Tandra Forster, Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

### **Electoral Divisions: All**

Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health: Councillor James McInnes.

## **Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

None

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