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# Support for Carers

Adult Social Care LMB & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 23.04.26

Lead director/officer: Kate Galoppi / Rebecca Hayward

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Rebecca Hayward
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- Report version number: 3

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on carers work in the city and to set out our key priorities over the next 9 months.
- 1.2. The report will focus on the following areas:
  - i. CQC and Peer Review Findings
  - ii. New Carers Strategy 2026 -2030
  - iii. Commissioned Carers Support Service (Age UK)
  - iv. Short Breaks for Carers
  - v. Accelerating Reform Fund (LLR) Carer Projects:
    - a) Carers Emergency Support Plan
    - b) Hospital Discharge Grant
    - c) THINK Carer Training
  - vi. New Guide for Carers and carers assessments
- 1.3. A previous report on carers was presented to scrutiny in Nov 2024.

### 2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1. Commission members are recommended to:
  - a) note the current work that is being undertaken in response to the CQC inspection and Peer Review to improve support carers
  - b) note the commitment and approach to co-production in our work to develop support for carers.
  - c) to provide comment and feedback on the current arrangements

### 3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1. As part of the CQC inspection and peer review stakeholders were invited to give feedback on the City's approach to supporting carers, this included people with lived experience as well as voluntary and community providers and statutory partners.
- 3.2. A Carers Strategy workshop was held on February 3rd at Age UK, Leicester. The workshop was targeted at carers, organisations who support carers, and professionals working with carers. The aim of the workshop was to review our current strategic priorities to see if they are still relevant and fit for purpose, to provide feedback on what matters to carers and to identify any gaps. The workshop

was attended by 11 carers and 12 people from organisations that represent and/or support carers. The workshop was very positively received, and attendees were keen to be involved in developing the new strategy.

- 3.3. To ensure a wider input from carers we intend to publish an online survey on the council's consultation website, Citizen Space from April – May to gather wider views.
- 3.4. A further workshop with carers and partners will be held in May/June to agree in co-production the new priorities and develop the Leicester City Carers Strategy (2026-2030). A co-production working group will then support the development of a robust delivery plan.
- 3.5. As part of the review of our short breaks offer for carers of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, engagement and consultation with carers and families and providers has taken place and identified that an enablement model is required that increases peoples' independence and offering a person-centred environment and variety of activities.
- 3.6. The Accelerating Reform Fund care projects are being co-produced, and the Emergency Support Plan has been developed by a co-production group of carers across LLR.
- 3.7. A new Guide for Carers is being developed co-productively with carers and social work teams.
- 3.8. Engagement with city carers via our co-production group Making it Real has identified a gap for carers in having their voice heard and being directly involved in shaping our offer for carers. As a result of this feedback, we are now including a carers group as part of the participation service.

## **4. Background and report information**

### **4.1. Background and Context**

- 4.1.1. A carer is someone who looks after a family member, friend or neighbour who could not manage without their help. According to the Office for National Statistics Census 2021, there were 26,527 unpaid carers in Leicester, but there could be many more who haven't identified themselves as unpaid carers.
- 4.1.2. Our ongoing commitment to carers is set out in our Annual Plan:  
*'We want informal carers to feel well supported, able to continue their caring role and live a good life'.*
- 4.1.3. In the financial year 2025/26, adult social care directly supported 712 carers. This is a slight increase on the previous years. Of these, 620 had a carers assessment, the remaining 92 were referred to other sources of support, including to the carers support service.
  - 480 had a joint assessment with the cared-for-person.
  - 130 had a separate assessment from the cared for person.

As a result of a carers assessment the support provided included:

- 50 carers received carer respite, this is support to the cared for person and could be additional home care hours or a short break in a residential care home.
- 31 carers received a one-off direct payment.

#### 4.2. CQC Inspection and Peer Review Findings

4.2.1. In early 2025 the CQC inspected Leicester City Council Adult Social Care and issued their findings in a report dated July 2025. CQC rated the council overall as “requires improvement”. There were specific issues raised about the council’s response to Carers.

4.2.2. The key areas for improvement in the CQC inspection in relation to carers were:

- Withdrawal of Carers Support and not being replaced causing challenges in accessing information and advice
- Long waits for carer assessments with a median wait time of 119 days, the longest being 719 days against a target of 28-42 days
- Some carers reported that they weren’t offered Carers Assessments
- Inconsistent approach to Carers Assessments

4.2.3. In December 2025 Adult Social Care underwent a peer review, with a specific focus on carers, led by Northamptonshire County Council. The review identified areas of strength as well areas for improvement. The areas for improvement were:

- Inconsistencies in staff understanding of what support is available
- Strategic vision for carers is not always clearly communicated or understood
- Most Carers assessments are completed jointly in the context of how to support them in their caring role and not necessarily recognising them as individuals
- Offer to working age and young carers (under 18) is not clear.
- Improve information for carers including refreshing websites
- More work to engage ‘anchor’ institutions (universities, football, rugby)

4.2.4. To support and have oversight of our work to support carers across adult social care we have set up an internal Carers Oversight Group. The Carers Oversight Group, established in October 2025, is an internal group of officers from Adult Social Care chaired by Ruth Lake, Service Director. It currently meets every 4 weeks and is responsible for having strategic oversight of any work that is aimed at improving our offer to carers, ensuring work related to carers is cohesive and aligned with departmental strategic priorities, including having oversight of and supporting the delivery of the carer’s strategy and action plan. The 7 primary workstreams are:

- i. Carers Support Service
- ii. Developing a new Carers Strategy

- iii. Improved Information, Advice & Guidance for Carers
- iv. Developing a new Guide for Carers and Carers Assessments
- v. Accelerating Reform Fund
  - a) Emergency Support Plan
  - b) Hospital Discharge Grant
  - c) THINK Carer Training
- vi. Short Breaks for Carers
- vii. Carers Data and Key Performance Indicators

#### 4.3. Carers Strategy

- 4.3.1. The current Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Carers Strategy (2022-25) was joint with County and Rutland and expired at the end of 2025. Oversight and review of the joint carers strategy sat with the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Carers Delivery Group (CDG). The CDG membership comprises officers from each of the 3 local authorities, the ICB, University Hospitals, Healthwatch and a representative from each of the City's (Age UK) and County's (Voluntary Action South Leicestershire) commissioned carers support service as well as a couple of carers with lived experience. Administration and leadership of the CDG currently sits with County Council who we are working with to take forward a review of the membership, terms of reference and governance structure.
- 4.3.2. In November 2025 it was agreed that each local authority would develop its own carers strategy going forward. The new Leicester City Carers Strategy for 2026-2030 will be developed in co-production with carers and partners that represent and support carers in Leicester.
- 4.3.3. The previous strategy had the following 8 priorities, and these are currently being reviewed and evaluated to inform the development of a new strategy.
- 1) Carers are identified early and recognised - Building awareness of caring and its diversity
  - 2) Carers are valued and involved - Caring today and in the future
  - 3) Carers Are Informed - Carers receive easily accessible, appropriate information, advice and signposting
  - 4) Carer Friendly Communities
  - 5) Carers have a life alongside caring – Health, education, employment and financial wellbeing
  - 6) ‘Care with Confidence – Technology and skills supporting you to care effectively’
  - 7) Carers can access the right support at the right time - Services and Systems that work for carers
  - 8) Supporting Young Carers
- 4.3.4. Some highlights of progress against these priorities over the last 18 months includes:

- Held a successful Carers conference (June 2025) for professionals in health and social care and voluntary sector partners to raise awareness and the importance of early identification of carers and the support available to them.
- Carers are involved; we have set up a carers panel to work alongside Age UK to continuously improve and promote the Carers Support Service. We have commissioned a new Carers Participation Service, due to go live this summer. Carers have co-produced the Carers Emergency Support Plan. Carers involved in revising the carers practice guidance
- New website for the Carers Support Service with more information and improved layout and navigation.
- Carers Support Service - targeted outreach to raise the profile of the service in hospitals and local GP surgeries as well as being involved in the Leading Better Lives community drop ins and information festivals.
- Carers Support Service new support groups established for parent carers and carers of people with ADHD.
- Delivered the Hospital Discharge Grant for carers
- Increased promotion and take up of the Carers passport – an LLR wide initiative that gives carers recognition and enables carers to access a variety of services and support.
- Work to improve the move between children's and adult services with young carers and parent carers, so that they can consider and plan for their future aspirations in terms of college, university, leaving home and ageing.
- Carers are a key consideration of our leading better lives work and feature significantly in our early action plans and activities.

4.3.5. In November it was confirmed that each of the three local authorities would be developing their own strategies independently. This gives each local authority the opportunity to develop a place based co-produced strategy that reflects the voice of carers and what is important to them and their communities. Work is currently underway to gather views and feedback from carers and partners to inform and shape the new strategy.

4.3.6. A workshop with carers, organisations who support carers, and professionals working with carers to review our current strategic and to identify any gaps was held in February. There was a good response to reviewing the previous Strategy's priorities and it was felt that some of the priorities could be amalgamated and re-worded. The workshop was very positively received, and attendees were keen to be involved in developing the new strategy.

4.3.7. To ensure a wider input from carers we have an online survey on the council's Citizen Space. The survey will be easily accessed via a QR code which will be widely publicised via a press release, social media and sending to partner organisations and providers working with carers to share across their networks and with carers they support. The survey will also be sent to approx. 1,500 carers who have accessed the council's Carers Support Service (and given their

consent to be contacted). The Carers Support Service will be doing some outreach and attending a range of community events to promote the survey.

- 4.3.8. The new strategy will be co-produced, and a co-production working group will be established. It is proposed that the strategy will be developed as a video, supported by a short 2- or 3-page written strategy or Charter. A delivery plan will sit underneath the strategy setting out the deliverables and key performance measures.

#### 4.4. **Commissioned Carers Support Service.**

- 4.4.1. Age UK continues to deliver our commissioned carer support service to all carers over the age of 18. The current contractual period runs from July 2024 until June 2027 with an option to extend to 30 June 2029. The contract value is £770k over 5 years (£154k pa) and the service is jointly funded with health who currently contribute 16% of the funding through a section 256 arrangement.
- 4.4.2. The service supported over 500 carers in 2025/2026 with over half being self-referrals.
- 4.4.3. The support service is a crucial part of the support available to carers across the city and is preventative in nature. Whilst it is difficult to anticipate how much this service contributes in terms of cost savings in helping to prevent carer breakdown, it is recognised that the carer support service alleviates pressure on adult social care by supporting carers with advice and information, financial/benefit advice, drop in's and other practical help such as peer support, emergency planning, and carers passports.
- 4.4.4. The service has just launched a new refreshed website with clear information and guidance for carers. It stands separate to their main Age UK website meaning carers can more easily access information in one click. [Support In Leicester for Unpaid Carers - Leicester Carers Support Service](#)
- 4.4.5. The service continues to respond to feedback from carers and has recently established some new carer drop-ins and support groups targeted at specific communities, for example the Neurodiversity Peer support group and LGBTQ+ Carers Café.

#### 4.5. **Short Breaks**

- 4.5.1. Work is ongoing to develop an enablement focused short breaks offer for people caring for people with profound and multiple disabilities. We are currently working closely with the provider market to develop a model that whilst also giving carers respite, will increase people's independence and offer a person-centred environment and variety of activities.
- 4.5.2. A brochure is being developed in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and Leicester Partnership Trust to give carers clear information about what is available across the region.

#### 4.6. **Accelerating Reform Fund (LLR) Carer Projects:**

- 4.6.1. In January 2024 the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) launched the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) focused on embedding and scaling approaches

to transform care and support, including for unpaid carers. Funding is allocated to local authorities through ICS (Integrated Care System) geographies to encourage collaboration between local authorities and local health boards.

4.6.2. The funding has been carried over into 2026, and we are currently delivering the following key projects:

- a) Carers Emergency Support Plan
- b) Hospital Discharge Grant
- c) THINK Carer Training

4.6.3. As part of a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland consortium we have already delivered a very successful 'Summer Carers Conference', in June '25 aimed at health and social care professionals and voluntary and community sector organisations working with carers, to raise awareness and the importance of early identification of carers and the support available to them. We are planning a second conference in June this year to follow up on progress made and to launch the Emergency Support Plan and promote the THINK carer training now available for professional working with carers.

#### **4.6.4. Carers Emergency Support Plan**

4.6.4.1. Support for carers in a crisis is something that has been repeatedly raised by carers as a priority. The Emergency Support Plan has been co-produced with carers, and a standard template has now been developed for use across LLR that can be shared with key organisations, e.g. hospitals, GP, social care, to support carers feel confident and better able to manage their carer responsibilities. To ensure accessibility the Plan will be available in a variety of formats, online, QR code, printable hard copy. It has also been agreed in partnership with Lions Clubs that the plan can be used to piggyback on the already established 'message in a bottle' scheme used by first responders in emergencies. The final version of the Plan will be launched at our carers conference in June.

#### **4.6.5. Hospital Discharge Grant for Carers**

4.6.5.1. The aim of the discharge grant is to provide carers with additional support in the form of a one-off grant, up to a maximum of £200 that could be used to unblock barriers to hospital discharge and potentially 'speed' it up, as well as ensuring that the carers needs are advocated for in the discharge process. The grant programme was launched in February 2026 and ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Take up of the grant was good and it has been positively received by carers. Over 135 carers have been awarded a grant within the city and over £23,000 has been awarded. Grant money has been used to purchase new bedding, help towards costs of new washer/dryers and incontinence pads.

#### **4.6.6. THINK Carer Training**

4.6.6.1. Following feedback from the summer conference in June from health and social care staff and the voluntary and community sector it was clear that

more awareness and training was needed around the importance of carer identification and to build staff confidence in having conversations with carers are feeling able to signpost them to sources of support. On the back of this funding was allocated to develop and deliver a THINK Carer training programme across LLR.

- 4.6.6.2. Take up of the training has been popular with all 8 sessions scheduled for 2025 now fully booked. Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive and we are now exploring the possibility of running further sessions.

#### 4.7. **Guide for Carers and carers assessments**

- 4.7.1. Social Work Teams have been working with carers to develop a new Guide for Carers; this uses plain language and sets out what carers can expect from a carers assessment.

#### 4.8. **Summary**

- 4.8.1. The report outlines the range of activity currently being undertaken which puts carers at the heart of what we do in adult social care. The carer voice is essential to this work, and all plans will continue to be coproduced with our carer community in Leicester. Whilst there is still a lot to do, the clear sense of where we are working well to support our carers, and where we need to improve will drive our work and ambitions to ensure carers are well supported, feel able to continue to care and live a good life in our city.

## 5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications within this report which is focused on the approach to developing our support for carers. Any resultant Carer's strategy will likely inform the local authority's plans for developing its respite provision offer to carers and available resources will need to be considered at that point.

Signed: Matt Cooper, Business Manager (finance), Ext 2145

Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026

### 5.2 Legal implications

There are no apparent legal implications directly arising from the content of this report.

Signed: Emma Young, Senior Lawyer

Dated: 13 April 2026

### 5.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The report sets out the work currently in progress to support carers in the city, along with key priorities for the next nine months. Equality considerations have been built into this work, and a co-production approach ensures that carers voices and lived experience are fully represented. For example, this includes developing the new Carers Strategy for 2026-2030 and updating guidance for carers and carers assessments. Work currently underway on the CQC and peer review findings, commissioned support services, short breaks, improving information, advice and guidance and data on carers, along with key performance indicators should lead to improved services for carers, who will be from across a range of protected characteristics. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessment (EIAs) are carried out as part of the currently underway to support carers in the city, to ensure that we can demonstrate that equalities impacts have been considered. The EIA process enables the Council to identify potential issues, take appropriate action to reduce or remove negative impacts, where possible, and maximise any potential for positive impact. As an ongoing process, the EIAs should be reviewed regularly as part of the decision-making process and updated to reflect the outcomes of any engagement or consultation.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency), Ext 372249

Dated: 09.04.26

#### 5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

#### **6. Background information and other papers:**

#### **7. Summary of appendices:**

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No**

**9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No**