



Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission Report

Carer Overview and Update on Carer Strategy Refresh 2022- 2025

Lead Member: Cllr Sarah Russell

Lead Strategic Director: Martin Samuels

Date: 8 December 2022



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission on progress with the refresh of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Carers Strategy.
- 1.2 The report also provides detail on the delivery of a number of strands of work that are happening across Leicester for family carers, which whilst not providing formal feedback to the strategy do provide an invaluable ongoing opportunity for engagement with family carers.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Carers are a group of people that are increasing in numbers. Whilst we await the findings of the most recent census which will give us our best estimate, it is believed that the caring community in Leicester alone is now in excess of 70,000 people.
- 2.2 The pandemic has inevitably had the biggest impact on this, with many people who were previously independent slipping into the clinically extremely vulnerable category requiring support from family and friends, combined with the natural decline in health of those people who were unable to access routine health care for a long period of time.
- 2.3 The LLR Carers Strategy 2022-2025 is a joint strategy which includes all local authorities, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and other health partners across LLR and is a refresh of the LLR Joint Carers Strategy 2018-2021 Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Carers.
- 2.4 The decision to refresh the LLR Joint Carers Strategy 2018-2021 was made as many of the key priorities within it remained pertinent to carers, but needed to be contextualised in light of the pandemic.
- 2.5 Formal engagement with this group of people is becoming increasingly more difficult. Colleagues across Leicestershire & Rutland have also reported that responses to some consultation exercises from carers are much lower, leading to the view that carers are experiencing engagement fatigue and indeed responses to our own bi-annual National Carers Survey were also low.
- 2.6 Despite this there is an appetite from some groups of carers to engage, and a sub-group of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Carer Delivery Group approached senior leaders at the end of 2021 with a proposal for how this might look. An agreement was made to submit a funding proposal to the Integrated Care Board which would include resource to support the governance arrangements around carers and carer engagement. The funding proposal was unsuccessful.

- 2.7 A well-attended consultation event was held in July 2022. Whilst this did not result in higher numbers of online surveys being completed, the attendance of over 100 participants provided qualitative insights and themes which are reflected in the strategy refresh. A report on the findings from the City Council's public consultation can be found at Appendix 2
- 2.8 Council officers promoted the consultation exercise and the opportunity for attendance at groups to discuss the exercise further through the City Mayor's office who have considerable links with voluntary sector organisations, the Integrated Care Board, Voluntary Action Leicester's networks, members of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Carer Delivery Group and carer support organisations. Promotion was also undertaken through a Mobilise pilot. See further information about Mobilise and its reach at paragraph 4.8 – 4.14

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 3.1 Progress on refreshing the LLR Joint Carers Strategy be noted
- 3.2 Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission members are invited to review the contextual information included in the report and provide comment/feedback

4. Report

- 4.1 Carers in Leicester have told us that the most important things to them are that they are identified as carers, that they are included in the conversations happening around the care of the person they look after, involved in the planning and delivery of that care, that they are provided with appropriate information and advice and are able to take a break from their caring role. The strategy reflects those issues.
- 4.2 The Government white paper, 'People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform', published in December 2021, builds on the National Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 and is centred around three core strands:
- 1) Working with the sector to kick-start a change in the services provided to support unpaid carers
 - 2) Identifying, recognising and involving unpaid carers
 - 3) Supporting the economic and social participation of unpaid carers
- 4.3 These three strands of work have been included as part of Leicester City Council's Adult Social Care Reforms Programme and will feature as part of the delivery plan under the Strategy, to be co-designed with carers at the start of 2023.
- 4.4 Progress against the existing strategy and new proposed actions can be seen at Appendix 3. This reflects the findings of the consultation exercise, but also of the ongoing intelligence we receive through the various initiatives with carers as further outlined in this report. The results from this have supported the development and drafting of the joint Carers strategy refresh 2022-25 (appendix 1). A delivery plan supporting the strategy refresh is in the process of being co-

produced, drawing on experiences of a cross section of carers from across the city.

Identification of carers, information advice & support

- 4.5 Given the significant work between health and care in supporting effective hospital discharges, it was recognised that the voice of the Carer was really important to help manage successful discharges. To support this a series of videos have been co-produced with carers in the City to promote the importance of identifying carers to staff working in health and social care settings particularly aimed at those involved in admitting or discharging people from hospital. The videos can be found here:
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL36li8AN28RaOj5YvbqIIANAXjtrDUNj8>

The carers involved in this piece of work helped to develop 5 key messages based around the acronym, THINK, see below.

- T Think Family Carer**
- H Help individuals to identify as a family carer**
- I Involve family carers in decision-making and planning**
- N Note the family carer contact details**
- K Know where family carers can seek support and signpost**

- 4.6 In partnership with University Hospitals of Leicester, Leicestershire Partnership Trust and Age UK, there will be posters promoting these messages to both staff and families/patients in these settings to ensure that carers receive a leaflet which provides them with useful information about being a carer and signposts them to the appropriate carer support service for their area. It is also proposed that the videos and a small reflective exercise be included as e-learning and form part of the induction for all new staff working in Adult Social Care, as well as for staff that are involved in the emerging frailty and end of life virtual wards.
- 4.7 In addition to this, Adult Social Care have been working in partnership with Public Health to consider how technology can support the identification of carers through the Prevention and Promotion Fund for Better Mental Health (BMH Fund) by procuring online support for carers through the organisation Mobilise. The purpose of the BMH Fund was to mitigate the impact of poverty following the COVID-19 pandemic. Poverty increases the risk of mental health problems. Successfully supporting the mental wellbeing of people living in poverty and reducing the number of people with mental health problems experiencing poverty, requires complex engagement. There's evidence of carers experiencing poverty, digital poverty, isolation, and poor mental health.

4.8 The initiative included:

- Online platform will improve the number of carers known to local services via Mobilise, an online app ¹
- Opportunities to share practical advice about supporting carer mental health and the challenges of looking after vulnerable people
- Provision of general online support for unpaid carers
- Development of a network to support carers
- Project evaluation.

4.9 Mobilise has been operating in Leicester since the start of April 2022. The services key performance indicators are in relation to discovering individual carers, engaging with individual carers, and supporting individual carers. The numbers at the end of the initial 6-month period are as follows:

Discover – Target 10,000	Engage – Target 300	Support - 100
10,593	627	188

4.10 The service exceeded all targets by the end of the initial contract term and has been extended for a further 6 months so that the impact of the service on individual carer wellbeing can be measured fully, as well as how connected the service is with the other carer support services in the City. Further work also needs to be done to improve the information offer to young carers, and people from minority backgrounds which has not yet been explored in detail.

4.11 An insight report from Mobilise has identified that:

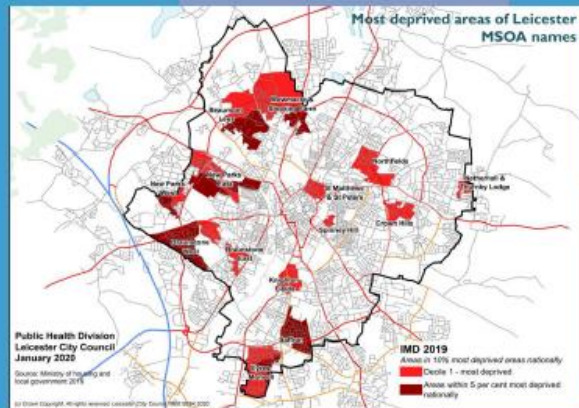
- 57% of carers were female and 43% male.
 - This a much more balanced reach when compared with the gender of carers that access our traditional commissioned carer support services (where only 30% are male).
 - One of the things that we wanted to explore is whether this style of engagement and support was of more benefit to male carers.
- 54% of carers that accessed Mobilise were also working.
 - 60% of those were earning under £128 per week.
- 75% of carers were spending over 35 hours a week caring
- 85% of carers accessing Mobilise are of working age, whilst only 45% of carers accessing traditional commissioned support are of working age.
 - This might suggest that finding information and support online, works more effectively for working age carers, it is perhaps more suited to people who have to balance caring commitments with employment; 63% of interactions outside working hours and 23% at weekends.
- 79% of interactions with Leicester carers were from mobile phones, more than the national average.
- Mobilise showed that access to support was even across Leicester.
- 30% of carers self-assessed as having poor health and wellbeing.

4.12 The initiative has enabled us to link the carers that have utilised this service with information that not only promoted the carer strategy, but also to other council information that may be of benefit to them at this difficult time, such as the Better Off Leicester tool.

¹ See <https://www.mobiliseonline.co.uk/leicester>

- 4.13 Mobilise has also been able to provide us with a 'heat map' of the carers that have engaged, which demonstrates that carers accessing the service are from some of the most deprived wards in Leicester. The intelligence from this initiative will be crucial to our future service planning.

Location of carers in Leicester



Heat map of carers reached by Mobilise match some of the most deprived wards in Leicester and UK with high health inequalities.

Taking a break from caring

- 4.14 Another piece of work in partnership with Public Health through the BMH Fund involved a variation in the contract to the commissioned carer support service whereby Age UK would administer a fund of £24,500 to support carers to access and book a short break using the Carefree platform.
- 4.15 Carefree seeks to improve the wellbeing of carers by enabling them to take time away from caring responsibilities. Carefree invites the hospitality sector to donate under-utilised accommodation to them, which they in turn offer to unpaid carers that are over the age of 18 and provide 30 hours of care or more, for a break admin fee of £25. Age UK will from these funds, pay the break admin fee on behalf of eligible carers to enable them to take advantage of the break which can be a one- or two-night hotel booking for a carer plus their companion (which must not be the person they care for).
- 4.16 Carers do not have to be accessing the Carer Support Service already to access this facility, but they do have to meet the eligibility criteria which is set by Carefree. We are in the process of trying to publicise this offer more widely, as take up has been slower than anticipated. It is also of note that anecdotal feedback from carers is that whilst the cost of the accommodation through this offer is a good one, the costs associated with travel, food and potentially finding replacement care are still out of reach for some people, particularly as the cost-of-living crisis worsens, and as part of the evaluation, officers will be considering this as part of their evaluation.

Working Carers

- 4.17 The findings from Mobilise have confirmed that support for carers who are also in employment ought not to only be available during usual office opening hours, as many carers are seeking information and advice late at night, at weekends and usually can't get to traditional building-based carer support services.
- 4.18 Formerly Leicester City Council had a robust offer of support for carers that are also employed by the Council, including an internal carer passport scheme and an employee carer support group. This was a key group of people that officers could engage with about commissioning exercises, strategic work and distribute relevant information to support employees in their caring role . After numerous attempts to revive the group, due to inactivity over a number of years and lack of a chair, a management decision was taken to disband the group at the end of August 2022. Officers from Adult Social Care have attempted to ensure that these members of staff are aware of the support on offer to them from Adult Social Care and the voluntary sector, but at a time where there are even more carers who are under considerably more pressure, this is less than ideal.
- 4.19 We will be exploring how to provide support to this group of carers as part of our strategy delivery plan and a further report will be brought forward as appropriate. This will include information about how support is offered by other councils, including Leicestershire County Council which may inform our own approach.

Young Carers

- 4.20 Officers in Adult Social Care will be working closely with the newly appointed Young Care co-ordinator to ensure there is a streamlined pathway in place for young carers who are transitioning from children's services into Adult Social Care services.

5.1 Finance

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

Martin Judson, Head of Finance

5.2 Legal

Following the consultation, results must be conscientiously taken into account before the proposals are finalised. The responses must be fed into the decision-making process and in a transparent manner in accordance with any information given as to how this will happen. If this is not done it may leave a decision open to challenge

on the basis the decision was taken without regard to the consultation and it was nothing more the appearance to engage.

The Authority has a legal obligation under section 149 Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic (pregnancy and maternity, age discrimination, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it. These matters must form an integral part of the decision making processes in relation to the Carer Strategy.

Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor (Commercial & Contracts Legal) Ext 1423

5.3 Equalities

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty should be paid before and at the time a decision is taken, in such a way that it can influence the final decision.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The report provides an update on the outcome of the public consultation exercise carried out in relation to the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Carers Strategy refresh, and seeks approval for final sign off and launch of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022-2025. If approval is agreed this should lead to positive outcomes for carers who will be from a range of protected characteristics.

Experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers have been identified as an area to progress and these will be incorporated into the delivery plan of the strategy.

It is recommended that an equality impact assessment be undertaken on any element of the delivery plan which will affect carers and those that they care for as highlighted above. An understanding of the potential impacts, the maximisation of positive impacts and the identification of appropriate mitigations where there is a disproportionate negative impact can be achieved through ongoing engagement/consultation with carers and stakeholders and analysis of monitoring data. The consultation process needs to be fair, accessible and proportionate for those participating in it.

In addition, as changes are implemented, it will be important to monitor for any unexpected disproportionate negative impacts or where we are unsure of the impact, in order that they can be addressed swiftly and effectively. This will be beneficial in ensuring that there are no barriers to accessing support arising from any particular protected characteristic/s.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 454 4175

5.4 Climate Change

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. As service delivery generally contributes to the council's carbon emissions, any potential impacts from implementation of the strategy could be managed through measures such as encouraging sustainable staff travel behaviours, using buildings efficiently and following sustainable procurement guidance, as appropriate and applicable to the service.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

5.5 Other None

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Final Carer Strategy

Appendix 2: Public Consultation Findings report

Appendix 3: Addendum You said, We did

7. Background Papers

The current carers strategy can be accessed on our website through the link below.

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/185857/joint-carers-strategy-2018-2021-recognising-valuing-and-supporting-carers-in-leicester-leicestershire-and-rutland.pdf>

8. Is this a Key Decision - No