

Plymouth City All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy

Supporting carers, strengthening community

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Introducing Rod & Barbara



Who are Carers?

- A carer is anyone, including children and **adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help** because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.
- Young carers are **defined as above**, but under the age of 18
- Women have a 50:50 chance of providing care by the time they are aged 46, men by the age of 57; 11 years later **women are more likely to provide care**, and more likely to be working part-time
- Over **23,000 carers** in Plymouth according to last census
- Plymouth School Census 2025 identified **846 young carers** in schools, a **further 516 recorded on Eclipse** in Sept 2025 totalling **1,299 young carers** known to Children's Services.



Why do we need a strategy?

- Systemic problems in **social care sector**, retention and recruitment crises
- Insufficient funding, low pay, **over reliance on informal** family and friend carers
- An ageing population, **people living longer with conditions**, and care being brought closer to home
- Caring will feature in **even more people's lives** in the future
- Every day, **12,000 people** become unpaid carers



Why do we need a strategy?

- Carers more likely to have **health issues**, data shows health inequalities between those caring for disabled, older and ill-relatives and friends and those not.
- 2024 GP Patient survey in England - 70% of carers **long-term physical or mental health condition**, disability or illness compared to 59% of non-carers.
- Carers less likely to work, **more likely to live in poverty**, Carer's Allowance, the main carers' benefit is the lowest benefit of its kind at £83.30 per week (2025/6 rates)
- Young carers, impact on attendance, **attainment at school and access to higher education**, employment and training opportunities.
- Numerous studies have highlighted the **physical and mental health impact of caring** on young people.
- Young carers caring for 35 hours a week or more are **86% less likely to obtain a degree** and 46% less likely to enter employment



What is the Plymouth All-Age Unpaid Carers Strategy?

- Co-produced, the carers strategy **outlines key priorities** and commitments to support unpaid carers for over 3 years, 2025 -2027 (inclusive)
- It **addresses the needs of carers** of all ages and backgrounds
- It aims to create an **inclusive and caring environment** for those providing unpaid care
- It reflects Plymouth's commitment to **recognise and value** the vital role of unpaid carers
- Guides **decision-making** by serving as a reference point



CARERS IN PLYMOUTH



23,956

According to the 2021 Census, there are over twenty-three thousand carers in Plymouth.



Provide up to 19 hours of unpaid care per week



Provide 20-49 hours of unpaid care per week



Provide up to 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week



More women than men are carers, with the highest number in the 50-59 age group



In the 2024 School Census in Plymouth there were **730 young carers** identified in primary and secondary schools.

2025 – 2027

PLYMOUTH ALL AGE UNPAID CARERS STRATEGY

SUPPORTING
CARERS,
STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITY

CARERS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD



Who is the Carers Strategy for?

- **Unpaid carers in Plymouth** of all ages and backgrounds
- Those who **work with carers, including employers**
- The Carers Strategic **Partnership Board** (explanation of CSPB)
- Other Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise **(VCSE) organisations**



How was the Carers Strategy formed?



Task & Finish Group



Research & statutory guidance



Feedback through surveys



Carer engagement



What have Carers identified as the priorities for the strategy?

1. Improved access to support services that work for carers (including young carers)

Enhance carers' access to a comprehensive range of support services, including occupational therapy and community-based resources, while improving service coordination, communication, and responsiveness.

2. Enhanced financial support so carers have better access to support and information on financial matters and rights

Alleviate the financial burden on carers by helping them access available resources, grants, income support, and workplace flexibility.

3. Improved health, safety and wellbeing of unpaid carers (emotional and psychological support)

Support carers' mental and emotional wellbeing through access to trusted support systems, counselling, peer support, tailored breaks, and safeguarding.



What have Carers identified as the priorities for the strategy?

4. Early identification and recognition of unpaid carers

Increase recognition of unpaid carers' contributions, create platforms for advocacy, and ensure their inclusion in decision-making processes.

5. Improved information, advice and communication

Ensure that carers have clear, accessible information on available resources, support services, and care pathways, tailored to diverse needs

6. When your caring role changes – supporting carers during transitions

Support carers through the emotional and practical changes of transitioning out of their caregiving role, providing guidance on rebuilding their lives and fostering social connections.



The Implementation Plan

1. A Working Group from the CSPB met regularly to develop **the first draft of the action plan**
2. The Action Plan is based on the **6 priorities from the strategy** but also includes **actions from the previous CSPB plan**
3. Each member of the **Working Group is leading** the actions for each of the priorities.
4. Progress on the actions are **reported back to the CSPB**.



How will we know if it's making a difference?

1. Both **qualitative and quantitative** measures across the 6 priorities, i.e. carer feedback and satisfaction (surveys, voice groups)
2. Assessing **improvements in carers'** physical and mental health through check-ins
3. Tracking the **increase in the number of carers identified**
4. Measuring the **participation of carers in community** activities and support groups
5. Policy and **systematic changes**
6. The CSPB is working with the **HDRC** to create and implement an evaluation framework that encompasses all of the above



What is “No Wrong Doors for Young Carers”?

1. “No Wrong Doors” for Young Carers is a template MoU designed to **improve joint working** between adult and children's social care services, ICBs and other key organisations in respect of **identification and support for young carers and their families**. It covers a range of areas such as identification, whole-family approaches to support and transitions from children to adult services.
2. The 4th version of "No Wrong Doors for Young Carers" was **published in February 2024**. This was on the back of a national review and refresh of the MoU carried out by **Carers Trust on behalf of the LGA and ADASS as Partners in Care and Health**
3. Plymouth’s MOU has been **signed by** the Director of Adult Social Services; Director of Children’s Services; NHS Devon Integrated Care Board; Livewell Southwest; NHS UHP Trust; Time4U Partnership (The Children’s Society & PCC Community Youth Team); Improving Lives Plymouth; and Cabinet Members for Health and ASC; Children's Social Care; and Education, Skills



MOU - Key Principles

We will work together to fulfil our legal duties to young carers and young adult carers, and ensure that the following key principles underpin practice across our system:

1. Responsibility for responding to the needs of young carers, and ensuring an **appropriate assessment** is completed, rests with the service responsible for assessing the person they support, rather than the age of the carer
2. ASC, Children's Services and health practitioners working with individuals with care and support needs and their families have an equal role in **identifying young carers at the earliest opportunity**
3. Starting point should be **to assess the adult or child who needs care and support** and then see what remaining needs for support a young carer in the family has
4. Presence of a young carer in the family will constitute an appearance of need and should **initiate either an assessment, or the offer of an assessment, to the person needing care**



MOU - Key Principles Continued...

5. The adult's assessment and eligibility for support should take into account their parenting responsibilities and take a **whole family approach**.
6. Assessments should ascertain why a child is caring and changes needed to **prevent them from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities**. Seeking the views of both adults and children within the family separately where appropriate.
5. Consideration must be given to whether a young carer is a 'child in need' under the Children Act 1989, and whether their **welfare or development may suffer if support is not provided** to them and/or their family.



Any Questions?

Thanks for listening

