

Carers Plan on a Page (September 2023)

Caring for
carers

This plan on a page has been written together with adult carers, parent carers and young adult carers.

Purpose - To have clear actions of support for adult carers, parent carers and young adult carers in County Durham who have caring responsibilities.

A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older. Caring can be a rewarding experience but it can also be very challenging, with many carers juggling care with work and family commitments. In County Durham we are working together to make sure carers access the help, information and support available to them in the following areas:



1

Be Seen

Focus on early identification and carer recognition. Our aim is to identify and support all carers, especially those that may not be easy to reach, specifically targeting carers of people with dementia, working age carers, young adult carers, Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers and male carers, who are typically under-represented.

- We will work with our commissioned carer services, dementia support services and support health and social care professionals and organisations to identify, value and work with carers. This will include GPs, Acute and Mental Health Hospitals, Social Workers, Therapists, Social Prescribers and the Voluntary and Community Sector and Education sector.
- We will use different methods to raise awareness of what the term 'carer' means and to help people identify and see themselves as carers, including a range of communications, marketing and carer focused campaigns. We will talk to carers to understand any barriers in identifying as a carer and/or seeking support.
- We will recognise and respond to your needs as an adult carer, parent carer or young adult carer by providing you with an opportunity to have a carer assessment. A joint assessment can take place with the person you care for, or can be done separately if you prefer. We will also signpost you to other services who can provide additional or specialist support.
- We will provide you with appropriate information, advice and guidance on help available to you as a carer, including support available to you from our commissioned Carer Support Services and other organisations actively providing specific or specialist support to carers. Our support will consider individual communication needs for carers to overcome any barriers to carers accessing support.
- We will identify more young adult carers aged 16-24 years and deliver bespoke support through key times of transition into adulthood. This will include transitions into further education, training and employment.

2 Be Well and Healthy

Helping Carers to stay healthy, including emotional and physical support. Carers to feel safe, supported and enabled to continue in their caring role, education, leisure and working lives.

- We will raise awareness of the different ways you can take a break from your caring role including personalised NHS carers breaks for eligible carers and assessed need for respite through the Council, and help you to access these opportunities, including in times of crisis. We will talk to carers to understand any barriers in accessing breaks or respite to inform our work in this area.
- We will ensure free training that promotes your health and wellbeing is available, including training on Stress Management, Moving & Handling, Mental Health, Dementia, First Aid, Counselling sessions and specialist training.
- We will support you to maximise your income through helping you understand what benefits, grants, and debt support is available to you. This may include help with completing forms and you may be supported to access other services.
- We will provide opportunities and advice to increase the level of choice and control you have in your daily life.

3 Be Connected

Carers remain independent, part of their community and able to participate in work, training and learning. Carers to be supported and enabled to have a good quality of life.

- We will provide opportunities in the community where carers can come together and benefit from peer and community support - ie community groups, dementia friendly groups, events, carer discount card, carer breaks and grant funding.
- We will support and encourage greater carer awareness with local businesses and help them to achieve Carer Friendly and Dementia Friendly employer status. Durham County Council will support it's working carers via the Carers Staff Network.
- We will provide digital support, equipment and training to allow carers to access online services and stay connected.

4 Be Heard

Influencing change and innovation through carer voice and partnership working.

- We will provide opportunities for you to share your feedback on our services, make suggestions on how we can improve and will use your information to inform service developments and planning.
- With consent, we will include you and listen to your views during the care planning process and discussions about the person you care for.
- We will provide advocacy support services to ensure your voice as a carer is heard and your needs as a carer are effectively communicated and listened to. We will raise awareness of the range of advocacy support available to carers or the people they care for.
- We will raise awareness of caring by taking part in local and national events such as Carers Week, Carers Rights Day and other local initiatives. We will promote engagement with carers across local networks and organisations.



[durhamcarers.info](https://www.durhamcarers.info)