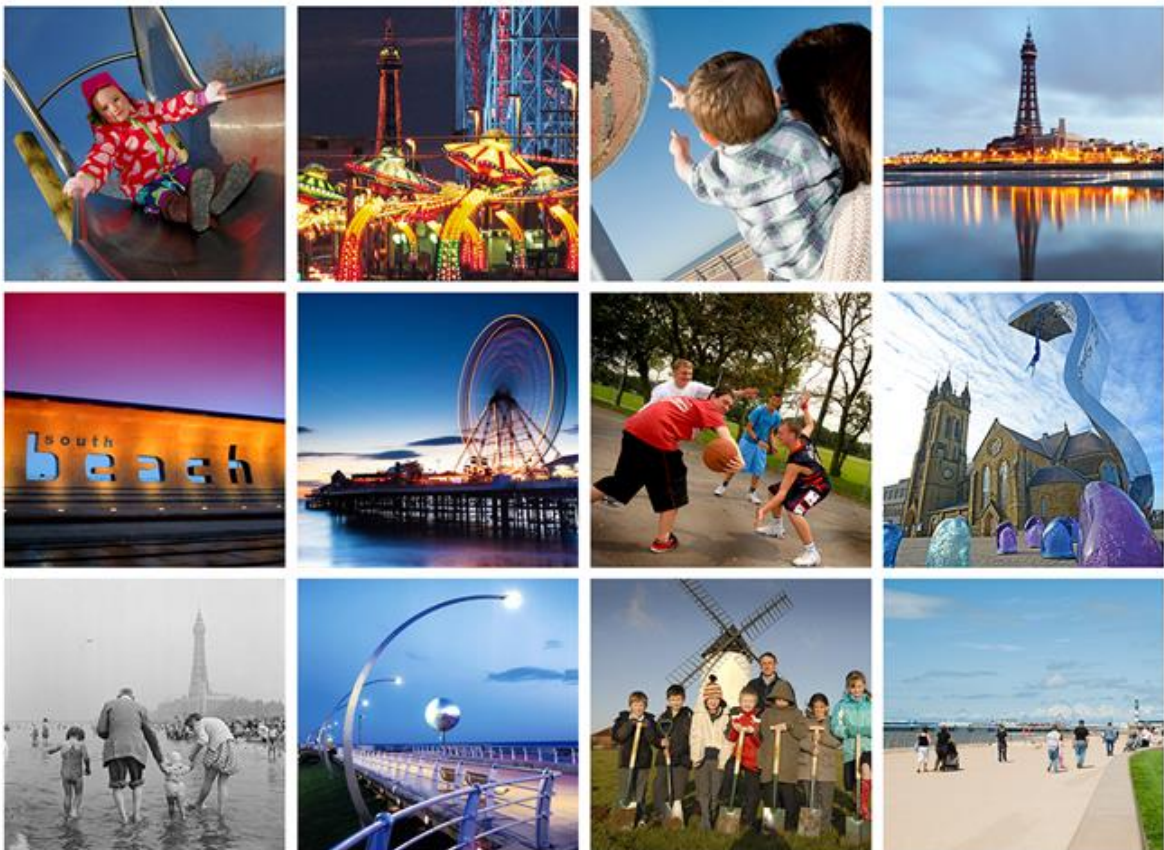


# Blackpool Adult Carers Strategy 2023-2028



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## Executive Summary

Carers play a vital role in our communities. They are the people who provide unpaid care, help and support to either a family member or friend who would not be able to manage without them. Unpaid carers provide an incredible amount of support to: those they care for, their friends and family, the wider health and social care system, and to society. In Blackpool, more than 16,000 people provide unpaid care for another person<sup>1</sup>.

Carers are often the unsung heroes in our communities who provide essential support to those they care for, without any support for themselves. Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others, this is because they feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend. Despite initiatives to identify carers and their needs, many carers remain unidentified and do not access the support they need.

Caring can place a real strain on individuals – emotionally, physically and financially. The negative impacts of caring have only been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and current cost of living crisis. Therefore, it is now more important than ever that we are able to successfully identify, offer information and advice, and provide support to all those who provide unpaid care.

This strategy covers Adult Carers in Blackpool. An Adult Carer is adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult. This document sets out how Blackpool Council will work together with key stakeholders over the next five years to: identify and support all unpaid carers across Blackpool; address gaps in current support for carers, reducing the pressures of caring by encouraging carers to take breaks and enabling carers to lead fulfilled, independent lives.

This strategy has been developed based on inputs and feedback from a wide range of carers and relevant stakeholders in order to deliver on the priorities and outcomes most important to carers.

## Vision

Over the course of this five year strategy our vision is to enable Carers across Blackpool to feel recognised, valued and supported to lead fulfilled, independent lives alongside their caring role.

The Carers Strategy 2023-2028 has been developed based on inputs and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Blackpool Carers Centre
- Carers peer support groups
- Current carers engaged with the Authority
- Adult Social Care
- Health Watch
- Integrated Care Board for Lancashire and South Cumbria
- NHS Commitment to Carers Programme North West Carers Leads
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services North West Carers Leads
- Current Day Service Providers.

## Priorities

To achieve our vision, there are five key priorities which we will aim to deliver:

1. Identifying Carers
2. Working with Carers
3. Communication: Information and advice
4. Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)
5. Health and Wellbeing of Carers

These priorities will be delivered through an action plan (see Appendix 1).

## Measuring Progress

The deliverables within this strategy will be monitored through:

- Monitoring actions in the action plan
- Monitoring Key Performance Indicators associated with the priorities.
- Monitoring feedback from the Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE).

# Introduction

## Who is a Carer?

The definition of a Carer is:

*'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'<sup>ii</sup>.*

Within this definition, there are three types of carers:

1. **Adult Carers:** *'An adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult (an "adult needing care")'<sup>iii</sup>.*
2. **Young Carers** - *'A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'<sup>iv</sup>.*
3. **Parent Carers** - *'A person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility'<sup>v</sup>.*

While anyone can become a Carer, the role of a 'Carer' should not be confused with 'care worker' or 'care staff' who are either undertaking a caring role as part of paid employment or as volunteers attached to a voluntary organisation.

Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others. This is because Carers may feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend.

## Who do Carers care for?

Carers provide vital unpaid support to a family member or friend who could not manage to live independently or whose health or wellbeing would deteriorate without their help.

Someone can be a carer for more than one person at a time. The cared for may be affected by the following:

- A physical, learning or sensory disability;
- Frailty;
- Mental health condition;
- Drug and/or alcohol issues;
- Another long term and/or fluctuating illness.

## What care do Carers provide?

Carers will often provide care whilst juggling other commitments such as education or paid employment. Examples of the types of care provided by Carers are:

- Personal care such as assistance with bathing, dressing and medication;
- Domestic tasks such as cooking, shopping and cleaning;
- Accompanying to appointments;
- Transportation;
- Help managing finances;
- Emotional support.

It is important that carers are enabled to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring. A carer does not need to be living with the person they care for.

Anybody can become a carer at any time in their life and person's caring role will often change over time. A caring role may last years, until the death or change of relationship with the cared for person. It may be temporary for a few days, weeks, or months, until the recovery of the cared for person.

## Carer's Needs

Being a carer can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding. Many carers put their own needs last and there may be times when it is difficult for carers to take care of themselves. It is important that carers are supported to look after their physical, mental and financial wellbeing. Many carers find it easier to continue in their caring role if they can get some support. Any carer who appears to have needs for support has the right to a Carer's Assessment by the council.

## National Context

### Overview

Anyone, anytime can become a Carer. In 2020, there were approximately 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, equating to around 1 in 4 people<sup>vi</sup>. In April 2021, more women (57%) provided unpaid care than men (43%)<sup>vii</sup>. The majority of Carers (46%) are aged between 46-65<sup>viii</sup>. As people are living longer and the population ages, the demand for care is projected to grow. There is a 65% likelihood that adults will provide care at some point in their lives<sup>ix</sup>.

The 2011 Census reported that of the population providing unpaid care in England and Wales, 3.7 million people provide 1-19 hours per week, 775,000 provide 20-49 hours and 1.4 million provide 50 hours or more unpaid care<sup>x</sup>.

### Identifying Carers

Despite national figures, the real number of carers in the UK is likely to be considerably higher as they do not take into account 'hidden carers'. 'Hidden carers' refer to carers who do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others, and so do not, or struggle to, access support. Some people may not view themselves as a carer because:

- Becoming a carer can be a gradual process, and carers may not recognise the changing nature of their relationship with the person they support;
- Carers may prefer to continue identifying primarily as a husband, wife, partner, sibling, parent, child or friend, rather than as a carer;
- Carers often become engulfed by competing demands, including working and caring, and as a result may overlook their own needs as a carer and may not seek support;
- The person being supported may not accept that they have care and support needs;
- The carer does not live with the person or the person has moved away from home, for example into supported living or residential care.

## The Value of Carers

Unpaid carers provide an incredible amount of support to those they care for, to their friends and family, to the wider health and social care system, and to society. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the financial value of the contribution by unpaid Carers in the UK is estimated to be £193 billion per year<sup>xi</sup>. In the North of England alone, the estimated value of care provided since the beginning of the pandemic was £31.1 billion (£122 million per day during the pandemic)<sup>xii</sup>.

### Impact of COVID-19 and the challenges faced by Carers

A Carers Week report estimated that 4.5 million people in the UK became unpaid carers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>xiii</sup>. This is in addition to the 9.1 million unpaid carers who were already caring before the start of the pandemic.

In the report, the most frequently chosen challenges by all unpaid carers were:

- Managing the stress and responsibility (71%);
- The negative impacts on their physical and mental health (70%);
- Not being able to take time away from caring (66%);
- The impact it has on other personal relationships (63%);
- The negative impact it has on their ability to do paid work (55%);
- The financial impact of the additional care costs (53%);
- Not having anyone to talk to about the challenges of caring (50%).

### Breaks for Carers

Caring for a family member, friend, or neighbour can be challenging and often comes at significant personal cost. It is important that carers are regularly given the opportunity to have a meaningful break from caring.



A break could be provided by accessing care services such as replacement care, sitting services, a day service, or through support from family and friends providing either respite or essential care.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many carers were already struggling to access meaningful breaks. For example, 40% of carers have reported that they had not had a day off for more than a year, and a quarter (25%) had not for more than five years<sup>xiv</sup>. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many carers have had to continue without the same level of support. In 2021, 75% of working carers have reported that they are exhausted as a result of caring and 55% are overwhelmed by their caring role<sup>xv</sup>

### The cost of living crisis

Individuals and families across the UK are currently facing significant financial pressures as result of the cost of living crisis. Inflation is at the highest rate for 30 years, which has seen soaring energy prices and increases in basic essentials such as food and fuel.

Carers already face several additional costs such extra costs from equipment, care, travel and food. Almost two-thirds (63%) of carers are spending their own money on care or support services or products for the person they care for<sup>xvi</sup>. At the same time, their capacity to work to earn money is reduced, with carers working below their potential or having to give up work entirely in order to care.

Based on a 2022 survey of over 3,300 Carers, Carers UK has revealed that 45% of unpaid carers said they are currently unable to manage their monthly expenses and that any further increases in energy bills will negatively affect their own physical and mental health or that of the person they care for.

Many Carers are now taking difficult measures to manage their monthly expenses; 45% of carers are relying on their savings, 26% are using credit cards, and 14% are using bank overdrafts. 64% of Carers receiving Carer's Allowance or Carer Element of Universal Credit have cut back on heating and 24% are using foodbanks<sup>xvii</sup>.

## Support for Carers

### Benefits

Carers are entitled to a range of benefits to help with the costs of caring. Those in receipt of the following benefits are still classed as an unpaid carer as these benefits only supports them in providing the care their loved ones require.

Carers may be entitled to one or more of the following state benefits:

- Carer's Allowance
- Carer's Credit
- Carer Premium
- Disability Living Allowance for children.

The Carer's Allowance is the main state benefit for carers and is £76.75 (2023) a week<sup>xviii</sup>. Carers must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone, and must not be in full-time education or have earnings of more than £139 per week after tax. This can create problems for those in paid work to receive additional paid support.

In November 2020, there were 1.3 million Carer's Allowance claimants in Great Britain. Women made up 68% of the total<sup>xix</sup>.

The carer premium is payable with means-tested benefits such as Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance contribution to help ensure Carers do not lose out on some social security benefits, such as the State Pension, because of gaps in their NI record.

A parent carer of disabled child may be eligible for Disability Living Allowance for children which is between £24.45 and £156.90 per week (2022)<sup>xx</sup>.

## Legal and Policy Context

### Care Act 2014 – Carer’s Assessment

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a responsibility to identify carers and are required to assess:

- a) Whether the carer does have needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future), and;
- b) If the carer does, what those needs are (or are likely to be in the future).

A Carer’s Assessment aims to see what help Carers might need in their caring role, and must include an assessment of:

- a) Whether the carer is able, and is likely to continue to be able, to provide care for the adult needing care,
- b) Whether the carer is willing, and is likely to continue to be willing, to do so,
- c) The impact of the carer’s needs for support on the matters specified in section 1(2),
- d) The outcomes that the carer wishes to achieve in day-to-day life, and
- e) Whether, and if so to what extent, the provision of support could contribute to the achievement of those outcomes.

### Children and Families Act 2014

Local authorities have a duty under section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure young carers and their families are identified and their needs for support are assessed. Adults and Children’s services have a joint responsibility to ensure that young carers have a transition assessment as they approach adulthood and whilst they are in transition.

### The National Carers Strategy 2008-2018

The National Carers Strategy set out the vision that by 2018, carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities.

### Carers Action Plan 2018-2020

The Carers Action Plan outlined the cross-government programme of work to support carers in England for the two year period. Building on the National Carers strategy, the Carers Action Plan was structured around the following themes:

- Services and systems that work for carers;
- Employment and financial wellbeing;
- Supporting young carers;
- Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society;
- Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers.

### The NHS Long Term Plan 2019

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to identifying and supporting unpaid carers, particularly those from vulnerable communities. To help Carers identify GP services that can accommodate their needs, the Plan refers to Quality marks for carer-friendly GP practices to be developed with the Care Quality Commission.

The NHS also aims to encourage the national adoption of carer’s passports, which identify someone as a carer and enable staff to involve them in a patient’s care, and set out guidelines for their use. These will be complemented by developments to electronic health records that allow carers to share their caring status with healthcare professionals.

### Health and Care Bill 2021-2022

The Health and Care Bill builds on the proposals for change set out by the NHS Long-Term Plan, while also incorporating lessons learnt from the pandemic. It introduces Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships which will be responsible for bringing together local NHS and local government to deliver joined up care for its local population. It is anticipated that the Bill will bring changes for carers in line with the Carers Action Plan. The Bill is due to be implemented during 2022.

## Local Context

Blackpool has a total population of approximately 141,100 people<sup>xxi</sup>. The latest available data (Census 2011) estimates there are approximately 16,319 people who provide unpaid care in Blackpool<sup>xxii</sup>. This is a 5.7% rise in the number of Carers compared to 2001 census data (15,443). The current number of people registered with Blackpool Carers Centre is 10,992.

Carers UK estimates that nationally, each carer saves the economy by an average of £19,336 per year<sup>xxiii</sup>. Using this figure and the latest available data on the number of unpaid carers in Blackpool, the combined annual savings from all unpaid carers in Blackpool is estimated to be £315.5 million a year.

The health of people in Blackpool is generally lower than the national average. The town records one of the lowest life expectancy rates nationally 74.1 years for males and 79.5 years for females<sup>xxiv</sup>. Blackpool has a larger proportion of people aged 50+ than the national average. By 2030, the number of people aged 65+ who provide unpaid care in Blackpool is projected to rise from 4,164 to 4,836<sup>xxv</sup>. Health priorities for Blackpool including alcohol and drug misuse, mental health, smoking and obesity. 33.6% of households have one member of household with a long term illness/disability.

### Hours of care provided each week

See the table below for breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Blackpool each week<sup>xxvi</sup>.

Hours of care provided	Number of people	% of resident population
1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	8,635	6.1%
20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	2,592	1.8%
50 or more hours unpaid care a week	5,092	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,319</b>	<b>11.5%</b>

Table 2: Breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Blackpool each week.

## Change in unpaid care

Change in unpaid care between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021) are as follows<sup>xxvii</sup>:

Unpaid care provision	2011	2021	Direction of Travel (DOT)
No unpaid care provision	87.8%	89.1%	↑
Up to 19 hours	6.4%	4.3%	↓
20-49 hours	1.9%	2.7%	↑
50 + hours	3.8%	3.9%	↑

Table 1: Change in unpaid care between 2021 and 2022

## Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)

The SACE is a national survey that takes place every other year and is conducted by Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs). The survey seeks the opinions of carers aged 18+, caring for a person aged 18+, on a number of topics that are considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside their unpaid caring role. 1,029 Blackpool carers were included within the initial eligible population. After removing those that were no longer considered eligible, we had a cohort of 801 carers who went on to receive a postal copy of the survey. The 2021/22 response rate was 40%.

### Carer Demographics

- 7 in 10 carers included in the eligible population were female and they accounted for 72% of responses.
- The majority of carers were aged 55 or above; half were between 55 and 74.
- 'Ethnic group' was either refused/undeclared/not known for 30% of carers in the eligible population.
- 9 in 10 carers included in the sample had received a carer assessment/reassessment in the last 12 months.
- A fifth of carers included in the eligible population received a direct payment.
- 50% cared for someone with a physical support need.
- 96% of carers were able to complete the questionnaire without the help of anyone else
- 4 in 5 carers live with the person that they care for.



## Findings – Carer Satisfaction

There has been a decrease in the proportion of carers reporting that they were extremely or very satisfied with the care and support they receive in this year's SACE. Carers reporting any level of dissatisfaction has increased from 6.6% in 2018/19 to 9.0% in 2020/21.

### Carer Health

The majority of carers said that they felt tired, had disturbed sleep and/or general feelings of stress as a result of caring.

Almost half responding to this question said they felt depressed and/or short tempered/irritable; a third of carers experienced physical strain; a fifth said it made an existing condition worse or that they had developed a new or additional health condition. 57 carers reported a loss of appetite which they attributed to their caring role; 51 had to see their own GP.

### Looking After myself

25% of carers say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like; 1 in 5 responded to said they were not able to spend enough time looking after themselves and they felt they were neglecting themselves.

### Social Contact

Fewer carers felt they had as much social contact as they wanted this year with a reduction reported from 31% in 2018/19 to 26% in 2021/22. 20% said they felt socially isolated in comparison to 17% last time the SACE was undertaken.

### Encouragement and Support

This year sees a reduction in the proportion of carers stating they felt they had encouragement and support in their caring role from 40% to 35%. Almost a quarter (23%) said they didn't feel they had any; last time the SACE was undertaken, less than a fifth felt this way (18).

### Information and Advice

Most carers who had tried to find information or advice about support, services or benefits said that they found it 'fairly easy to find'. 1 in 5 said it was 'very easy'; nearly 3 in every 10 people found it either 'fairly' or 'very' difficult to find. Of those accessing information and advice, 31% found it 'very helpful'; 62% said it was 'quite helpful'; 6% thought it was 'quite unhelpful' and 1% said it was 'very unhelpful'.

## Discussions and Consultations

A quarter of carers said that they had not been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for. Of those that had, 40% said they 'always' felt involved/consulted.

### Financial Difficulties

During 2020/21, 42% of respondents said that caring had caused them financial difficulties. There has been no significant change since the survey was last undertaken in 2018/19, where the proportion was only slightly lower at 40%.

**Declines can be seen in all but one of the derived Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures:**

Description	2018-19	2021-22	DOT
Carer reported quality of life	7.6	7.2	↓
Proportion of carers who reported they had as much social contact as they would like	31.2%	25.9%	↓
Overall satisfaction of carers with social services	53.5%	46.9%	↓
The proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for	77.0%	70.1%	↓
The proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about services	71.4%	71.9%	↑

Table 3: Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures

## Engagement

Engagement sessions with carer peer groups from Blackpool Carers Centre were held to understand what is working and not working for them, how needs can best be met and what potential gaps in current services there may be.

A total number of 17 carers were engaged in these sessions.

### Issues with current services

Carers were asked to tell us their experience of issues with current services. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Lack of joined-up working and communication between services e.g. Alcohol and mental health services.
- Repetitive questions asked by services.
- Lack of consistency of care workers.
- Not being recognised or valued as a carer.
- Not being involved in discussions and decisions about the cared for.
- Diagnostic labels and stigma.
- Difficultly navigating social care and services.

### Improving services

Carers were asked to tell us what they would find helpful, and how could services be improved. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Accountability.
- Consistency of care workers –need to maintain a familiar care worker with any changes notified in advance.
- Regular and open dialogue.
- Focus on prevention.
- Effective signposting and referrals to services.
- Clear information on services.
- Carer voice present in service delivery.
- Liaison between services.
- Support for staff.
- Encouragement and support for Carers.
- Recognise and value Carers.
- Learn and apply best practice examples from local authorities.
- Having a minimum service delivery standard.
- Information on benefits and financial support for carers.

### Care Act Assessment

Carers were asked to tell us about their experiences of receiving a Carer's Assessment. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- An easy process.
- No follow-up.
- Would benefit from a Carers Assessment more than once, especially as the demands of the caring role increase.

### Identifying as a Carer

Carers were asked to tell us their experience of identifying as a carer. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Did not identify as a carer until recognised as such by others
- The newness of being a carer can be scary and overwhelming.
- Positive impact of identifying as a carer – emotional relief and reduce the feeling of isolation and burden of being a carer
- Fear and worry are a barrier for older carers identifying as a carer as they have a fear of losing their house, having to pay lots of money for care services and fear their loved one being removed for their home.

### Carer Health and Wellbeing

Carers told us of the impact that caring has on their health and wellbeing: Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Unable to 'switch off'.
- Self-blame.
- No breaks.
- Find little time for themselves.
- Negative impact on mental health.
- Negative impact of physical health.

### Positive Feedback

Carers were asked to provide positive feedback on current services. The following services received the following compliments:

- Adult Social Care in Blackpool are very responsive.
- Vitaline Blackpool (24 hour monitoring and emergency response services) is an excellent service.
- Dementia Awareness training provided by Blackpool Carers Centre was invaluable.

## Support we provide for Carers

Blackpool Carers Centre receive funding via a contract managed by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Blackpool Council contributes an amount to the ICB for this contract.

Additionally the Authority is funding carers support workers from Blackpool Carers Centre based within the Transfer of Care Hub (TOCH) at Victoria Hospital and also a Young Carers Link worker. Blackpool Carers Centre also lever in additional funding from other sources and fundraising activities.

### Carer's Assessment

Anyone who is an unpaid carer for a family member or friend has the right to a Carer's Assessment (joint or separately).

At a Carer's Assessment, the carer can discuss their own needs with the council, separate to the needs of the person they care for. Carers can discuss anything they think would help with their own health and wellbeing or with managing other aspects of their life, including their caring role. Carers are entitled to an assessment regardless of the amount or type of care they provide, their financial means or their level of need for support.

The council uses this information to support the carer and decide what help it can offer. The assessment is an ongoing, flexible process and includes any reviews undertaken.

The number of carers receiving and declining assessments is recorded on Blackpool's Referrals, Assessments and Package of Care (RAP) return. The following is a breakdown of Carer's Assessments for the period 2021/22:

- The Number of Carers receiving joint assessment/review: **216**
- The Number of Carers receiving separate assessment/review: **643**
- Number of Carers declining an assessment: **753**

16.6% declined assessment or review because they had one completed in the last 12 months.

The figures are based on those who view themselves as a carer. Please note where carers have received both a separate and a joint assessment (or have also declined an assessment/review); they appear in each relevant lines above.

### Carer Friendly Workplace

Approximately, 1 in 7 people in every workplace juggle a caring role with their career<sup>xxviii</sup>. The number of working carers is growing and given the stresses and strains that can result from balancing work and caring, it is unsurprising that 1 in 6 carers give up work or reduce their hours to care<sup>xxix</sup>. Therefore, it is important that working carers feel supported by their organisation to help retain employees with caring responsibilities.

Blackpool Council is committed to supporting working carers by addressing, providing support and by raising awareness of informal carers both internally and externally. Support can be offered through several channels including:

- Policy and guidance, including flexible working and leave policies.
- Practical support such as allowing mobiles at desks, closer car parking in case of emergencies.
- Peer support including encouraging staff well-being groups and support sessions.
- Promoting support through positive links with carer organisations, occupational health teams and other professionals.
- Dedicated section for carers on the internal staff website 'The Hub',

Blackpool Council also encourage businesses and suppliers to consider carers within their workforce. This is included in the council's social value guide for suppliers which states: *'As employers, we need to provide the best support we can offer to our employees, particularly if they are experiencing challenges outside of work that impact their wellbeing in the workplace. This should be reflected wherever possible in the values and culture of all our organisations.'*

## Priorities

### Priority 1 - Identifying Carers

**Objective: Carers are identified and encouraged to recognise their role and rights.**

Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others. This means carers often do not, or struggle to, access support. It is important that carers are identified and encouraged to access support in order to prevent the escalation of their own needs, and those of the person they look after.

It is important that we use every opportunity to identify carers as early as possible, including GP appointments, flu jab appointments, home visits, outpatient appointments, transfer to and from hospital, social care and other needs assessments, including admission and discharge assessments and planning meetings.

**To improve the identification of carers we aim to:**

- Ask people with care and support needs whether anyone gives them help or support, apart from paid practitioners.
- Ask people 'does someone rely on you?' to support people to identify as a carers
- Avoid making assumptions about who might be providing care, taking into account that carers may not be family members or may not live with the person
- Train professionals to identify carers in the course of their work.
- Record details about carers who have been identified (with their consent).
- Develop a publicity campaign to help people to self-identify as a carer and explain the benefits for both them and the cared for.
- Use opportunities such as Carers Week to help people to self-identify as a carer.

**What does success look like?**

- Increase in the number of identified carers.
- Increase in the number of Carers Assessments offered.

### Priority 2 – Working with Carers

**Objective: Carers are valued, respected and listened to and will be supported to actively be involved in decision making and care planning for the person they care for.**

Carers play a vital role in our communities and so it is important that carers are recognised and valued for the work they do. Carers have valuable knowledge about the person they care for and are often key to understanding the person's needs and preferences. Providing the person gives consent and their wishes remain central, carers should be supported to actively participate in decision making and care planning for the person they care for, in order to help practitioners provide the right type of care and support.

**To ensure carers are valued and supported to actively participate in decision making and care planning for the person they care for, we aim to:**

- Recognise carers as essential contributors to the assessment of the person they care for.
- Check if the person being cared for gives consent for the carer to be involved.
- When consent is given, ensure that care plans include evidence of the carer's contribution.
- Ensure timely communication, in a suitable language, with Carers during and post assessment of the cared for person.
- Maintain a dialogue with carers to ensure the needs of the cared for person are met.
- Ensure that we involve carers in reviews, design and redesign of social care services so that user experience is taken into account through coproduction.

**What does success look like?**

- Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.

### Priority 3 – Communication: Information and Advice

**Objective: Carers have access to a range of good quality information and advice which is clear, relevant and readily available.**

Access to clear, relevant and timely information and advice enable carers to take control of, and make well-informed choices about the care and support for the person they care for, as well as themselves. Not only does information and advice help to promote people's wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control, it is also a vital component of preventing, reducing and delaying the need for care and support.

**To improve the communication of information and advice to carers, we aim to:**

- Maintain up to date signposting and referral points for carers, including financial services.
- Review the information and advice available for carers to ensure that it is informative, accessible, in a range of formats (online and offline) and consistence across all organisations that support carers.
- Inform carers of where they can get help and speak to someone in the event of a crisis.
- Develop online and offline awareness on current financial support and benefits offered to carers and how to access them.
- Work with partners to review how information can be made available more widely.
- Inform carers when changes are made to services and what this means.
- Map out pathways into carers services and where possible establish less complex pathways to services.

**What does success looks like?**

- Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find and helpful.

### Priority 4– Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)

**Objective: Services are joined up to meet the needs, choices and aspirations of the service user.**

The success of implementing the strategy lies firmly in a collaborative and joined up approach. Carers may not be fully aware of services available to them and may find it difficult to navigate fragmented services, thereby creating unnecessary additional demands for the carer. Service users have told us that they want services to be joined up. Therefore, it is important that the council works collaboratively and in partnership with other services and organisations to ensure that our services work seamlessly for people.

**To improve the integration of services, we aim to:**

- Ensure continuity of care, including when people move between different services, settings or areas.
- Ensure that the transition from children's to adult services is as seamless as possible by using an agreed approach to working across social care teams.
- Consider opportunities for closer working between services and organisations at appropriate points in service reviews.
- Work collaboratively with services and organisations to avoid duplication of support.
- Develop best practices for inclusion in commissioned services to improve (as necessary) information between professionals, providers and services in accordance with GDPR guidance.

**What does success looks like?**

- Increase in the number of carers who are satisfied with the care and support they receive.
- Increase in the overall satisfaction of carers with social services.



## Priority 5 – Health and Wellbeing of Carers

### Objective: To support and maintain the health and wellbeing of carers in Blackpool

Many carers struggle to maintain their own health and wellbeing and often overlook their own needs because of their caring responsibilities. It is important carers are offered a Carer's Assessment by the council to discuss their own needs, separate to the needs of the person they care for. At a Carer's Assessment, carers can discuss anything they think would help with their own health and wellbeing or with managing other aspects of their life, including their caring role.

It is also important that carers are regularly reminded of the value of having a break from caring and the options available to them. Taking a break will help improve carers' health and wellbeing and help them to continue in their caring role. By supporting carers to manage their health and wellbeing, they can maximise their independence, choice and control, live healthier lives, and where possible reduce their future needs for care and support.

To support and maintain the health and wellbeing of carers in Blackpool, we will:

- Inform carers of their right to a Carer's Assessment, what this is, the benefits of having one, how to obtain one, and that they can still access community support without a formal assessment.
- Advise of the outcome of the Carer's Assessment as soon as possible following the Assessment date (including providing a copy of the Assessment).
- Ensure carers having a Carer's Assessment are given the opportunity to discuss what matters most to them, including their own health, wellbeing and social care needs, including work, education or training.
- Review the Carer's Assessment process to identify where improvements can be made to ensure that this process enables carers to have the right support to plan for the future.

- Ensure carers are regularly given the opportunity to discuss the value of having a break from caring and the options available to them.
- Review the Council's HR Policies in relation to employees who are carers and produce a catch-all guidance document for employers to set a good example.
- Work with partners to review the current training offered to carers and engage with carers to understand their training needs and requirements.
- Produce a summary of current support services available to adult carers which enable the provision of appropriate breaks, both in and away from the home and a clear explanation of how carers can use respite units in order to access a break from caring.
- Work with partners to ensure loneliness and isolation among carers is addressed and there is appropriate support available for those hard to reach carers supporting complex needs.

### What does success look like?

- Increase in Carers reporting they have quality of life.
- Increase in the number of Carer's Assessments undertaken.
- Increase in the number of carers who have received support enabling them to take a break of 24 hours or more.
- Decrease in the number of carers who say that their health has been negatively affected by their caring role.
- Decrease in the number of carers who say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like.

## Delivery and monitoring progress

These priorities will be delivered through an action plan (see Appendix 1).

Blackpool Council's Carers Lead will oversee the strategy. Adult social care and health scrutiny committee will receive an annual progress report detailing progress made in delivering the action plan. The Carers Lead will be responsible for working with carers, partners and stakeholders to deliver the actions as set out within the action plan (see Appendix 1).

The deliverables within this strategy will be monitored through the following:

- Monitoring actions in the action plan.
- Monitoring Key Performance Indicators associated with the priorities.
- Monitoring of feedback from the Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE).

The strategy will be reviewed halfway through the course to assess the success of the implementation of the strategy.

## Key Performance Indicators

A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been defined to measure the impact of the strategy and action plan. Baseline figures are based on the 21/22 SACE results which were sent randomly to 801 carers with a 40% response rate and also our internal recording and reporting:

### Priority 1 – Identifying Carers

We are currently establishing a system which accurately reflects actual current numbers of carers (it previously didn't exclude those no longer in a caring role). We are also updating data held in the data warehouse which will allow us to accurately update the number of carers assessments offered.

- Total number of identified carers.
- Total number of carers assessments offered.

### Priority 2 – Working with Carers

- 70.1% of carers responding reported they felt they had been included or consulted in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.

### Priority 3 – Communication: Information and Advice

- 71.9% of carers who responded reported that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find

### Priority 4 – Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)

- 46.9% of carers responding said that they were either extremely or very satisfied with the support services they had received. A further 29.2% said they were quite satisfied.

### Priority 5 – Health and Wellbeing of Carers

- Carers reported quality of life score. NHS Digital calculate this measure based on responses to 6 different questions. The 2021/22 outcome score is 7.2

- Total number of Carer's Assessments conducted.  
In the 2022/23 SALT (Short and Long Term) return, 169 carers were assessed or reviewed jointly with the person they care for and a further 615 were assessed or reviewed separately.
- Part 1 -Total number of carers supported to have a break.  
As reported in the SALT (2022/23), 992 carers received some form of respite during the year.  
Part 2 – Did it meet their need? Was it the right type, duration and frequency to maintain their caring role?  
To be discussed with carers further, working alongside carer organisations.
- Total number of carers who say that their health has been negatively affected by their caring role.  
Only 9.9% of the respondents said that their health had not been affected by their caring role in the latest SACE. 80.1% said they felt tired; 46.2% reported feeling depressed; 18.3% said they had experienced a loss of appetite; 69.6% had disturbed sleep; 62.2% reported general feelings of stress; 34.9% said it had caused them some kind of physical strain (e.g. Back); 46.8% said it made them short tempered/irritable; 16.3% had had to go and see their GP due to the way their caring role had affected their health; 20.5% had developed their own health conditions as a result; 20.2% said caring had made an existing health condition worse and 1.3% said it had affected their health in other ways.
- Total number of carers who say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like.  
Responding to the question which asks 'Thinking about how much time you have to look after yourself – in terms of getting enough sleep or eating well, which statement best describes your present situation'. 53.8% said they were able to look after themselves; 25.3% said 'sometimes I can't look after myself well enough' and 20.8% said they felt they were neglecting themselves.

## Appendix 1– Adult Carers Action Plan

Table 4- Priority 1: Identifying Carers

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
1	<p>Review, refresh and promote Carer Awareness Training to ensure managers and staff who may encounter carers both as employees and general public, are trained to suitably identify and recognise the different types of carers the course of their work.</p> <p>Devise a training plan of who, when and frequency and set participation targets.</p>	Carers Lead/ OWD/HR	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	iPool Online Training	<p>Greater awareness of carers amongst Blackpool Council employees.</p> <p>Improve the identification of carers by to increase the number of identified carers and supported, through the uptake of training.</p>
2	Develop a publicity campaign involving local community services and organisations, for example posters and leaflets in GP surgeries, libraries and pharmacies, to help people to self-identify as a carer and explain the benefits of doing so, including the right to an assessment.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing until 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2027 with targeted approaches and campaign streams.		Increase in the number of self-identified carers.
3	Optimise opportunities to raise the profile of caring, to help people to self-identify, such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing annual activity until 2027	National campaign resources	Increase in the number of self-identified carers and links with professionals.
4	Optimise the carers data held to ensure it accurately reflects the overall landscape of carers within Blackpool.	Carers Lead and Business Intelligence Officer, Blackpool Council	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2024	Mosaic, SACE, Census	To ensure the carers data reflects an accurate, current picture of the scope of carers, their assessments and well-being.

Table 5- Priority 2: Working with Carers.

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
5	Actively involve carers in the care planning process and recognise carers as experts and essential contributors to the assessment of the person they care for by ensuring that, where consent is given, care plans include evidence of the carer's contribution.	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	Benchmarked every other year in line with survey data	Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)	Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.
6	Wherever appropriate and practicable we involve carers in reviews, design and redesign of services that are led by commissioning and work on embedding this approach throughout our operational service areas in Health & Social Care.	Carers Lead, Blackpool Council	Ongoing until 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2027		<p>Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.</p> <p>To ensure user experience is taken into account when reviewing and designing services through meaningful and open engagement sessions.</p>
7	Ensure timely communication including any changes to services, is carried out in a suitable language, with Carers during and following assessment of the cared for person and that the agreement of the cared for to share care plan is recorded where agreed.	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	Benchmarked every other year in line with survey data		<p>Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.</p> <p>Carers are advised of the outcome of the cared for person assessment and timeframe for any agreed action. Where changes are made to services, the implications are communicated and continuity of care is maintained with appropriate information sharing.</p>



Table 6- Priority 3: Communication: Information and Advice

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
8	Maintain up to date signposting and referral points for carers, covering all areas where carers need advice and information.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing in line with changing needs and focus		<p>Ensure frontline staff are aware of information and advice and are able to effectively signpost relevant services and support as needed.</p> <p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p>
9	Review the information and advice available for carers to ensure that this is informative, accessible, in a range of formats (online and offline) and consistent across all organisations that support carers.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing as required	Formation of Carers Reading Panel	<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p>
10	Inform carers of where they can get help and speak to someone in the event of a crisis and support them with advance contingency planning.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2027		<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p> <p>Carers are supported to develop contingency plans for times of crisis.</p>
11	Develop online and offline awareness on current financial support and benefits offered to carers and how to access them.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2027		<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p>

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
					Carers are aware of the financial support and benefits they may be entitled to and are able to access them if eligible.
12	Work with partners to review how information can be made available more widely.	Blackpool Carers Centre	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025		<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p> <p>Information on support and services available to carers is widely available.</p>

Table 7- Priority 4: Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
13	Develop awareness of young carers within Adult Social Care supported households, and ensure understanding of appropriate pathways to support.	Carers Lead, Blackpool Council	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2024		<p>Increase in the number of carers who are satisfied with the care and support they receive.</p> <p>Increase in the overall satisfaction of carers with social services.</p> <p>To provide joined up support for young carers in family settings.</p>
14	Organise a workshop with carers and partners to understand the story and the experience of carers in order enhance collaboration and avoid any duplication of work and lessen story-telling where possible.	Carers, Blackpool Carers Centre, and Carers Lead at Blackpool Council	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2024	Venue, Themes, Partners	<p>Increase in the number of carers who are satisfied with the care and support they receive.</p> <p>Increase in the overall satisfaction of carers with social services.</p>

Table 8- Priority 5: Health and Wellbeing of Carers

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
15	<p>Improve communication with Carers about their Carers Assessment, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing information about: the Assessment prior to it taking place, the benefits of having one, how to obtain one, the choice of medium (face to face, video call, etc.) and how to access community support within a formal assessment.</li> <li>Advising of the outcome of the Assessment as soon as possible (including providing a copy of the Assessment).</li> <li>Re-design the Carers Assessment process so that it stands alone rather than as a by-product of an assessment for the cared for, ensuring that the assessment process fully considers the impact of caring on the wellbeing of carers, identifies carers' eligible needs and responds to them appropriately, and that carers assessments are reviewed such the caring roll be significantly impacted and carers needs change..</li> </ul>	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	Ongoing		<p>Increase in the number of Carer's Assessments undertaken.</p> <p>Decrease in the number of carers who say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like.</p> <p>Increase in carers reported quality of life.</p> <p>Carer's are given the opportunity to discuss what matters most them, including their own health, wellbeing and social care needs, including work, education or training.</p>
16	Review the Council's HR Policies in relation to employees who are carers and produce a catch-all guidance document for employees	Carers Lead, Blackpool Council	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024		The Council, as an employer, has fit-for purposes policies that support employees who are carers.

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
17	Work with partners to review the current training offered to carers and engage with carers to understand their training needs and requirements.	Blackpool Carers Centre	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025		<p>Decrease in the number of carers who say that their health has been negatively affected by their caring role.</p> <p>Offer relevant training to support carers in their caring role, in order to empower and enable carers to enhance their own well-being and that of the people they care for.</p>
18	Produce a simple guide for choosing respite, to be readily available to adult carers enabling them to access the provision of appropriate breaks, both in and away from the home, giving a clear explanation of how carers can use respite units in order to access a break from caring and ensure staff also receive this and are fully aware.	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024		<p>Increase in the number of carers who have received support enabling them to take a break of 24 hours or more.</p> <p>Carers have access to appropriate support services which enable them to have adequate breaks from their caring role.</p>

<sup>i</sup> UK Census Data. Blackpool: Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW). 27 March 2011

<sup>ii</sup> NHS England. Who is considered a carer?

<sup>iii</sup> UK government. Care Act 2014.

<sup>iv</sup> UK government. Children and Families Act 2014.

<sup>v</sup> UK government. Children and Families Act 2014.

<sup>vi</sup> Carers Week. Carers Week 2020 Research Report: The rise in the number of unpaid carers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. 2020

<sup>vii</sup> Office for National Statistics. 2021. Coronavirus and the social impacts on unpaid carers in Great Britain: April 2021.

<sup>viii</sup> Carers UK. Will I care? The likelihood of being a carer in adult life. November 2019.

<sup>ix</sup> Carers UK. Will I care? The likelihood of being a carer in adult life. November 2019.

<sup>x</sup> Office for National Statistics. 2011 Census analysis: Unpaid care in England and Wales, 2011 and comparison with 2001. February 2013.

<sup>xi</sup> Carers UK. Unseen and undervalued: The value of unpaid care provided to date during the COVID-19 pandemic. November 2020

<sup>xii</sup> Carers UK. Unseen and undervalued: The value of unpaid care provided to date during the COVID-19 pandemic. November 2020.

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- <sup>xiii</sup> Carers Week. Carers Week 2020 Research Report: The rise in the number of unpaid carers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. 2020
- <sup>xiv</sup> Carers UK (2019) Give us a break
- <sup>xv</sup> Carers UK (2021) Breaks or breakdown. Carers Week 2021 report.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Carers UK. State of Caring 2021: A snapshot of unpaid care in the UK.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Carers UK. Under Pressure: Caring and the cost of living crisis. March 2022
- <sup>xviii</sup> UK government. Carer's Allowance. 2022.
- <sup>xix</sup> House of Commons. Informal Carers research briefing paper. June 2021.
- <sup>xx</sup> UK government. Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children. 2022.
- <sup>xxi</sup> ONS How life has changed in Blackpool: Census 2021, ONS (2023)
- <sup>xxii</sup> UK Census Data. Blackpool: Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW). 27 March 2011.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Carers UK. Facts and figures. Carers save the economy £132 billion per year, an average of £19336 per carer.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2018 to 2020, ONS (2021)
- <sup>xxv</sup> JSNA Blackpool. Social Care. March 2022.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> UK Census Data. Blackpool: Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW). 27 March 2011.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Carers UK. Employers for Carers.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Carers UK. Employers for Carers.