

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Karen Smith, Director of Adult Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2024

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL ADULTS CARERS STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the proposed Blackpool Council Adult Carers Strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Adult Carers Strategy and associated Action Plan for the period until 31 December 2028.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The need for this strategy is driven by the following:
- To update the current strategy which expired in 2015;
 - To ensure that the council achieves compliance with the relevant aspects of the Care Act 2014 and associated Guidance;
 - To develop an action plan that will help identify carers at an early stage, improve carers’ support and services, deliver a more coordinated approach, and to enable carers to lead fulfilled, independent lives.

The strategy as submitted has been informed consultation with stakeholders. The strategy was also supported by the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 28 September 2023.

- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 To not have a Carers Strategy this would mean that the Council would therefore not comply with the Care Act 2014, putting carers and their loved ones at risk from lack of co-ordinated support and risking budget pressure due to increase need for packages of care and increased stays in acute and long-term care settings and could leave the Council open to risk of litigation.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is: 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'.

Supporting carers in their caring role significantly benefits the community. 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. Therefore, it is in the best interest of communities that carers are and feel supported in their caring role.

This strategy outlines a clear vision and set of key priorities around how the Council, working together with key stakeholders, is going to help support Blackpool Adult Carers as much as possible in their caring role so that carers can continue providing care whilst also leading fulfilled, independent lives.

6.0 Background information

6.1 National figures estimate there are approximately, 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, equating to around 1 in 4 people. There are approximately 16,000 carers in Blackpool. 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. The financial value of the contribution by unpaid carers in the UK, is estimated to be £139 billion per year.

6.2 Additionally, 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 and as a result many carers do not, or struggle to, access support. Under Section 10 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a responsibility to identify carers and are required to assess whether the carer does have needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future), and, if the carer does, what those needs are (or are likely to be in the future). As a result, it is necessary that the Council has a strategy in place to identify carers and encourage them to recognise their role and rights.

- 6.3 A Carers Week report estimated that 4.5 million people in the UK became unpaid carers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This figure is in addition to the 9.1 million unpaid carers who were already caring before the start of the pandemic. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many carers had to continue without the same level of support. It is important that the Council understands and addresses the impact of COVID-19 on carers to better support carers moving forward and this strategy seeks to do that in its priorities and action plan.
- 6.4 Furthermore, individuals and families across the UK are currently facing significant financial pressures as result of the cost of living crisis. Carers already face several additional costs such extra costs from equipment, care, travel and food. For example, almost two-thirds (63%) of carers are spending their own money on care or support services or products for the person they care for. At the same time, a carer's 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. It is vital that information on the services and support available to carers is accurate and up to date, as well as being available in a range of accessible formats and through a range of channels.
- 6.5 A detailed review of local, regional and national evidence available and analysis was undertaken as part of the strategy development process.
- 6.6 This strategy was presented to the Adults, Health and Social Care Committee by Karen Smith, Director of Adult Services and Nigel McMurdo, Operations Director at Blackpool Carers Centre on the 28 September 2023. There were no changes required and the strategy was well received by all, the only request was to provide an update on any progress made on the actions.
- 6.7 Other additional research included:
- Desktop research of national, regional and intra-council plans and strategies to establish best practice and critical alignments.
 - Sessions with Carer Peer Groups from Blackpool Carers Centre to understand what is working and not working or them, their preferences and how needs can best be met and what potential gaps in current services there may be.
- 6.8 The attached strategy at Appendix 3a identifies 5 key priority areas: Identifying Carers, Working with Carers, Communication: Information and Advice, Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External), and Health and Wellbeing of Carers. These priorities will be delivered through the identified action plan and progress will be monitored additionally through identified key performance indicators and continued monitoring of the feedback received through the Survey of Adult Carers in England.
- 6.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 3a: Proposed Carers Strategy

7.2 Appendix 3b: Equalities Impact Analysis Assessment

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The commissioning contract for external carers services is currently managed by the Integrated Care Board with an agreed financial contribution passported across from the Adult Social Care budget to the Integrated Care Board. The Council's Adult Social Care teams also facilitate funding for a carers support worker in the Transfer of Care Hub.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 The strategy has been developed with reference to the Care Act 2014 and associated guidance.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The following risk considerations were evaluated, however regular monthly meetings between the Director of Adult Social Services, Carers Lead in Commissioning and the Management at Blackpool Carers Centre will ensure any concerns can be dealt with in a timely manner.

- A lack of buy-in from other Council services and partners.
- A change/decline in funding for the service will have a major influence on the course of the plan.
- A lack of buy-in from carers.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 The Head of Equality and Diversity noted that the Equality Analysis attached at Appendix 3b provided a comprehensive analysis.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 The Council will work together with key stakeholders to better support carers and at the same time supporting the carbon emissions reduction agenda. Examples could include encouraging service providers to adopt a sustainable travel hierarchy to encourage take up of the least polluting travel methods to minimise emissions. Another example could be to

promote low-carbon impact activities through green prescribing or encouraging outdoor respite care.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 The development of the strategy involved engagement with a range of local health and social care practitioners, commissioners and carers to gather information on what local stakeholders are currently doing to support carers in Blackpool, and how the council can work together with these stakeholders to better identify carers and improve the services and support offered to carers in Blackpool.

Key stakeholders consulted included:

- Blackpool Carers Centre – Discussions with Management team and Staff.
- Carers peer support groups - Face to Face engagement sessions with Mental Health Carers, Dementia and older adult carers.
- Wider public engagement – Via social media
- Current carers engaged with the Authority - Feedback through the Survey of Adult Carers England and Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework Surveys 21/22.
- Adult Social Care – Discussions with carer support workers, and regular meetings with the Senior Management Team.
- Integrated Care Board for Lancashire and South Cumbria – Shared knowledge and best practice.
- Health watch – Shared information from previous engagement campaigns.
- NHS Commitment to Carers Programme North West Carers Leads - Shared knowledge.
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, North West Carers Leads – Shared knowledge.
- Current Day Service Providers – Liaison with Director of Adult Services.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1	Is this a key decision?	Yes
15.2	If so, Forward Plan reference number:	10/2023
15.3	If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days?	No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process?

No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 8 March 2024

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

22.1

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1

25.0 Executive Members in attendance:

25.1

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1