

Adults and Health Committee

Date of Meeting:	27 March 2023
Report Title:	Progress Report for All Age Carers Strategy 2021 - 2025
Report of:	Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director of Adults, Health, and Integration
Report Reference No:	AH/27/2022-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report provides the committees with an update on progress in delivering the Cheshire East All Age Carers Strategy since presenting the strategy to the committees in March 2021. This update will evidence how we have implemented the carer pathways through strong working partnership working with health, social care, commissioning, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, and embracing carers across all age groups and disability groups.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The All-Age Carers Strategy 2021-2025 is the overarching plan to ensure all carers receive the right support at the right time. The strategy has been co-produced with adult carers, young carers, working carers, and older carers.

The All-Age Carers Strategy is the product of extensive engagement with carers and stakeholders which began in October 2020 and has included a carers forum, a stakeholder group, a public survey an engagement and consultation event for young carers and young adult carers. Feedback and ideas from the different interest groups has shaped the priorities and proposed actions in the strategy.

The strategy identifies six priorities to be taken forward over the next five years:

- **Health and Wellbeing** - We will work across the place to ensure a diverse offer is available for our carers of all ages to stay healthy, well, active and to have fun.
- **Early Support for Carers** - We will work together to ensure access to co-ordinated services that provide the right support at the right time. Across all sectors social care, health, and communities.
- **Prevention – Carer breaks / Respite** - We will work with our providers and carers to look at how we can offer regular respite in different environments that are suitable to the carer and the cared for
- **Information / Access / Processes** - We will ensure that carers have access to good quality advice and support when they need it: a range of options are available to access information and advice to help build connections.
- **Employment, Education and Training** - We will offer support for working carers through carer friendly employment, promoted in collaboration with the national Employers for Carers Network.
- **Young Carers** - We will ensure that young carers are identified at the earliest possible opportunity, so they are able to learn, develop and thrive and to experience a positive childhood.

This report provides the committees with an update on progress in delivering the Cheshire East All Age Carers Strategy since presenting the strategy to the committees in March 2021. This update will evidence how we have implemented the carer pathways through strong working partnership working with health, social care, commissioning, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, and embracing carers across all age groups and disability groups.

Effective support for unpaid, informal, or family-based caring arrangements remains critical to the sustainability of our health and social care system and the success of the all age carers' hub. Making Space, the commissioned provider of our all-age carers' hub, has and will play a pivotal role in this. Also, the hospital discharge to home initiative to support carers designed to further shift the focus from acute interventions to care and support delivered closer to home.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the Adults and Health Committee and the Children and Families Committee note the progress in delivering the All-Age Carers Strategy 2021-2025.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The All-Age Carers Strategy plays an important role in ensuring that the council meets its statutory duties under the Care Act and supports the choice and control of carers thereby increasing their independence, choice and control and allowing health and wellbeing and young carers to thrive and develop.
- 4.2. Cheshire East carers are a diverse group. Improving the wellbeing of carers in Cheshire East and ensuring that all are offered the right support at the right time is a cross cutting priority that requires a whole system approach.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. Not applicable as this is an update report.

6. Background

- 6.1. The All-Age Carers Strategy 2021-2025 was published in September 2021 and is included at Appendix A.

6.2. Recommission of the All-Age Carers Service

- 6.3. Our Cheshire East carers played a significant role in choosing the all age carers service. The providers who submitted their application for the bid were requested to present and demonstrate how they would support our carers. Providers were interviewed by a cohort of carers on different days:
 - Adult carer and working carer
 - Parent carer
 - Young carer and young person

The above carers then marked each provider once a question and answers session were concluded. Making Space were the successful provider and they have been working closely with commissioners and carers to mobilise the service which went live on 1 January 2023.

It was noted that the new provider will:

We will utilise our in-house fundraising team to access funding through grant applications. The team will support local projects by applying for opportunities such as Knutsford Fund – Small Grants Programme to source funding for wellbeing events.

Local recruitment

We target 75% of roles to be filled by local residents, achieved through local recruitment initiatives:

Volunteering

We are an Accredited Volunteering programme member (NCVO) and will

target 48 hours volunteering support towards NEETS cohort to aid with CV/career advice.

Work Placements

Target 3 unpaid/1 paid work placement from locality colleges e.g., Mid Cheshire College/Macclesfield College/Warrington and Vale Royal College (we have an established relationship Amy Yorke careers advisor), Health and Social Care students, including minimum 1 young carer student to build on their real-world experience away from education settings.

6.4. Development of all age carers forum

6.5. The all-age carers forum oversees the delivery of the implementation plan and scrutinises and challenges progress against the plan. There have been six carer forums held where updates have been shared.

6.6. The carers forum played an active role in the Learning Disability Conference held at Cranage Hall in June last year. The next carers forum will be held face to face at Sandbach Town Hall where the new all age carers service will attend to meet the carers and to celebrate Young Carers Week.

6.7. Young Carers Forum

6.8. There are 3 forums for young carers:

- All Hallows Catholic College
- Sandbach High School
- Alsager High School

6.9. These will be supported by the appointed young carer support officers within Cheshire East carers' hub and officers from children's services.

6.10. Information and Advice Workshop

6.11. The information and advice workshop was held on 4 October 2022. In attendance were carers, volunteers, health and social care professionals and commissioned services. Carers shared their experiences around information and advice and communication, which demonstrated that systematic changes need to be made to create better services and clearer pathways especially within the hospitals.

6.12. A map (please see Appendix B) was developed of all the information that is available for carers, which showed there is a lot of information. At the workshop it was clear that there was duplication in people doing the same

thing, receiving the same information, and sharing it with the same people. This is an area that the Cheshire East carers' hub will lead on improving.

- 6.13.** Health and social care are becoming integrated, which has resulted in some improvements, however, we need to maintain the momentum in raising of awareness for all carers, ensuring this is constant in both areas.
- 6.14. Identify Carers**
- 6.15.** Carers need to be identified as early as possible to ensure that appropriate support, advice, and information are offered. Often carers only seek or are offered support once they reach a crisis point. Early identification can support the carer with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to enable them to manage their caring role while still having a life of their own and maintaining their own health and wellbeing. We need to ensure that parent carers are identified as carers and their support needs are recognised and met.
- 6.16.** The NHS Long Term Plan Jan 2019-2023 outlines a revised health model in which patients get more options, better support, and properly joined-up care at the right time in the optimal care setting. Supporting carers is recognised as an important strand to this model.
- 6.17.** To investigate and challenge the above statement a bid was submitted to NHS England to deliver a project to develop, test and evaluate a hospital discharge pathway for carers and raise general carer awareness amongst staff. The project was a collaboration of Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Mid Cheshire NHS Trust, with Cheshire East Council taking the lead.
- 6.18.** This took shape by engaging with key stakeholders to develop an integrated pathway that would identify carers prior to discharge and signpost them for advice and support in preparation for discharge
- 6.19.** We opted to test out a digital approach to supporting carers, to overcome the challenges faced with trying to recruit specific carer champion roles for wards and the restrictions imposed by COVID. Following research of digital support that was available, we teamed up with [Mobilise](#) who currently deliver 21 contracts across the UK commissioned by local authorities, NHS, and local carer support services. They provide online support and information for carers, empowering those that care to thrive.
- 6.20.** The online resources developed and provided by Mobilise for carers focused on the following:
- Information and advice from others who had been through this process.

- Emotional and bespoke support available in the form of an individual support call with a carers coach or via live chat on the website.
 - The opportunity to 'ask anything' as it was likely that situations will be individual, and solutions may be specific to local circumstances.
 - Signposting to local support.
- 6.21.** We identified a small number of wards at each of the three hospital sites where we could test out the new approach, focusing on those wards who supported older frail people, to identify and signpost carers for support in preparation for the person being discharged home.
- 6.22.** Key themes that came out of engagement with carers and staff were the lack of information and support available for carers, poor communication with carers, and carers not knowing what to do when things didn't go as expected.
- 6.23.** We developed a pathway to help guide staff through the process and know who and where to signpost carers to for support. Discharge co-ordinators from the identified wards shared the contact details for the Mobilise website with the carer, or if they are not digitally enabled, they could directly book them a telephone support slot with Mobilise or give them the number for their local carers centre. For people being cared for with dementia or cognitive impairment, the discharge co-ordinator would send the carer's contact details to the Alzheimer's Society, where an officer would follow them up with a phone call, offering to arrange a home visit or telephone appointment for an assessment, working with the carer to agree a support plan. They were also able to refer and signpost the carer and extended family to statutory services, voluntary services, Mobilise and to the relevant carers centre.
- 6.24.** In addition to the referral pathway, we explored training for staff and tested out an e-learning package to help staff better understand, involve and signpost carers for support.
- 6.25.** We had positive feedback on the Mobilise website from both carers and staff, with 225 people visiting the site over the four-week testing period. Ward staff have actively been using the support pathway and providing carers and people being cared for with signposting information.
- 6.26.** Learning that can be taken away from this project:
- It is essential to involve carers at the earliest opportunity in the discharge process.
 - The way that a person is asked the question about whether they are a carer is important, as many carers don't recognise themselves as

carers or as needing support, and don't reach out until they reach crisis.

- Carer awareness is essential for staff and should be a core part of their induction and training.

6.27. From a carer's perspective, we received the following feedback:

"Thank you so much for the website link it has been invaluable in learning about how to navigate mum's care in the UK from here!"

Daughter of Hospital Patient, living in Canada.

"Thank you, I have checked it out, could be useful if Dad ends up in hospital again."

Daughter/carer for Dad living at home.

"Thanks for the link, can never have enough information."

Carer/husband.

"It's good to know there are sites like this for when we feel lost, my daughters are helping me have a look through while my husband is in hospital."

Carer/wife.

6.28. The learning from this project will be shared across the other wards in the hospitals that care for older people and with community teams who support people at home following their discharge from hospital. Please also see the Trust Discharge Project Report at Appendix C.

6.29. Carer Awareness

6.30. The [Cheshire East all age awareness e-Learning module](#) has been co-produced with carers from Cheshire East. It consists of two modules, one for adults, and one for young carers. On completion, successful candidates can wear their carers champion badge with pride.

6.31. Most of the hospital discharge teams have completed the training as have frontline social work teams. They have used the training as part of their continuation of their registration status. Health and social care students have completed the e-learning and are carer champions.

6.32. Prompt cards have been devised to encourage junior doctors and other therapy teams, including social prescribers to ask the question 'have you identified a carer?'. There has been a 30% increase in carers being registered as a carer within their GP practice.

6.33. Data on the carer awareness e-learning as at 2 February 2023 is included below:

	Leighton Hospital			Macclesfield Hospital			Countess of Chester Hospital			Education School/College		
	Not started	Incomplete	Passed	Not started	Incomplete	Passed	Not started	Incomplete	Passed	Not started	Incomplete	Passed
Carer Aware	30	15	59	14	4	39	1	2	1	7	1	9
Young Carer	37	11	56	13	6	38	2	1	1	7	2	8

6.34. Hospital discharge to home scheme / carers – October 2021 – present

6.35. Due to the current pressures within the NHS (including winter pressures) we needed to start exploring options to alleviate these and free up hospital bed capacity quicker, but more importantly reach out to our unpaid carers. We did this via the Carer Hospital Discharge to Home Scheme. Under this scheme, a one-off incentive payment can be paid to an unpaid carer (family or friend) to support them in their caring role on discharge. The aim of this scheme is to:

- Safely create space in the current care market
- Reduce delayed discharges and free up hospital bed capacity
- Help to reduce the need for formal care at home support and short stays.
- Support and recognise the carers of Cheshire East in their role by paying them a one-off incentive payment.
- Identify hidden carers in Cheshire East.

6.36. The scheme is aimed at patients who are ready for hospital discharge but need some support to recover or recuperate, which could be met through informal care, either entirely or alongside reduced formal support. This has been a huge success and the numbers we have supported through the scheme to date are:

- **Leighton Hospital** - 14 hospital discharges
- **Macclesfield Hospital** - 7 hospital discharges
- **Community Rehabilitation Wards:**
Aston Ward Congleton – 3 hospital Discharges
Elmhurst Winsford – 1 discharge and 2 pending

As of 7 February 2023, there are a further 17 pending referrals where the scheme is looking at supporting a hospital discharge. For more information, please see Appendix C.

6.37. Comments from carers and health professionals regarding the scheme:

“This scheme has been pivotal in supporting discharges from East Cheshire NHS Trust since it started in January. It provides a truly person-centred approach and offers support to carers so that they can continue

caring. Jill and her team are the driving force behind this and never miss an opportunity to promote this amazing offer!"

Debbie Burgess, Deputy Associate Director Community Services

"Thanks for getting in touch as it shows he has not been forgotten about and people have his interest at heart. The information provided by yourselves was a great help."

Carer for his dad, who was supported by the scheme

"I could cry, you really don't have to do that. It's been so hard and that's the nicest thing that's happened to me. I feel like I'm constantly battling with someone to get what my mum needs and it is exhausting."

Carer for her mum, who was supported by the scheme

"I don't know what you did or said but I feel like we have made great progress today. Thank you once again for your help - I can't tell you how much our family appreciate it. Oh goodness, this has helped, it is such hard work and I feel as if no one notices me. The care service has got back to me, I'm now registered with my doctor too."

Working carer for her mum, who was supported by the scheme

6.38. Working Carers

6.39. It is estimated that five million people juggle work and care in the UK - one in seven in every workplace - and this figure is set to increase. Given the stresses and strains that can result from balancing work and caring, it is unsurprising that one in six carers give up work or reduce their hours to care.

6.40. We have worked closely with the council's Human Resource team and have collated an information and advice section for our council working carers on the Centranet.

6.41. We are currently looking at the working carers policy to see if we need to enhance the offer we currently have. We have encouraged managers to reach out to working carers within their performance review conversations and supervision sessions.

6.42. We have developed a school's guide for working carers (Appendix E) which has been commended by our trade unions.

6.43. We held a support session for staff in September 2021 with over 30 officers including managers on the call. Another session is planned for June 2023.

6.44. Male Carers

6.45. More than four in ten (42%) of the UK's unpaid carers are male. The report '[Husband, Partner, Dad, Son, Carer?](#)' investigates the experiences and needs of male carers to help raise awareness of the fact that male carers may not be getting the support they need.

6.46. Employers and health and social care professionals need to be aware that male carers in employment are less likely to identify or describe themselves as a carer to others. Their need for support may not therefore be immediately obvious and might result in them missing out on vital help.

6.47. Awareness raising is needed of the caring role many employed men undertake and the support available to them. Employers need to have, and make sure all staff are aware of, policies to support carers at work.

6.48. Support needs to be developed in a practical, supportive, and non-stigmatising way for men taking on caring roles, particularly later in life, who may find aspects of domestic work difficult if they have previously been done by the person they now care for and for men providing intimate or personal care for women.

6.49. Within the council we have connected with some male carers, and they have shared their experiences. A working group has been developed and an opportunity for us to listen, hear and try and understand the pressures and concerns.

6.50. We have played an integral role in a two domestic homicide reviews where male carers have been at the centre of those situations

6.51. A Carer Passport

Is a record which identifies a carer in some way and leads to provision of support, services, or other benefits in response. The schemes could be based in hospitals, workplaces, communities, mental health trusts, schools, colleges, and universities

The Carer Passport scheme, is being designed and co-produced with carers and Cheshire East Carers Hub to address carers in recognising their caring role, connecting them to local support and enabling them receive discounts or local concessions in the community to make life a little easier. In employment Carer Passports provide a straightforward way to discuss and document the flexibility and support a business can give to enable employees to combine caring with work

6.52. Operations teams - Adults and Children's

The senior commissioning manager supports all the teams within social care, working and liaising where there are carers involved. Since October 2021 there have been 48 cases supported through the following:

- Face to face with the carer and client
- Attending care plan reviews
- Intervening where a carer is challenging
- Complaints
- MP enquiries
- Domestic homicide reviews.

6.53. Young Carers

6.54. As a result of consultation and engagement with young carers, the young carers' assessments will be brought back in house.

6.55. Changes to screening tools and pathways to include young carers is ongoing and Cheshire East carers' hub are working collaboratively with Cheshire Young Carers who work across 32 schools and offer school activities across Cheshire East during term time and school holidays. Young carers accessing A&E services with self-injurious behaviours will be identified and signposted for support. Young carers are included in pathways dealing with self-harm.

6.56. School nurses will be actively involved in the identification of young carers in schools and will be able to support and refer.

6.57. Cheshire East carers' hub has two young carer officers who will plan a timetable and work collaboratively with all schools and gain further knowledge from the educational leads who currently work with young carers e.g., Alsager School, so there is a joined-up approach. There will be thematic sessions planned for school assemblies to raise awareness for young carers.

6.58. Young carers forums will be led by the Cheshire East carers' hub and a lead officer from children's services. Young carer champions will be identified following the all-age carer awareness e-learning for all staff.

6.59. The All-Age Carers Strategy links and aligns with all the following strategies and workplans. Carers are the golden thread and link in everything we do.

- Assistive technology
- Live Well for Longer
- Learning Disability

- Dementia
- Direct Payments and PA's
- Care at Home
- Accommodation with Care
- Mental Health
- Autism
- Schools and Education

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

7.1.1. The Care Act ensures that carers have as many rights for support as those they care for. For those assessed as having eligible needs, authorities are required to provide advocacy and personal budgets.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

7.1.2. Local authorities must have regard to carer participation in education, training and recreation.

7.1.3. The Care Act 2014 also makes specific provision for Young Carers in the transition from children to adult's services

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted> 1.3.3

7.2. Finance

7.2.1. The all-age carers' hub is funded in full via the Better Care Fund.

7.3. Policy

7.3.1. The all-age carers' hub provides a strategic approach to addressing the support and services for carers in Cheshire East.

7.4. Equality

7.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment is available.

7.5. Human Resources

7.6. Risk Management

7.7. Rural Communities

7.7.1. We have linked closely with rural communities, and the hospital discharge to home scheme has assisted our carers who live in the rural areas of Cheshire East. The incentive has been able to support carers to reach out to their wider family and tap into support around carer respite. It is very difficult to find care at home providers that can offer respite within the home currently

7.7.2. Access to community-based support is particularly useful for carers in rural communities who may find it harder to access support networks and public transport. Cheshire East carers' hub has linked in with our rural communities to seek further support for our carers.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. This is a progress report on all age carers – the impact on young carers is included within the report.

7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. Carers are a big solution in supporting the cared for and their loved ones. Public health offers the opportunity for carers and the public to obtain greater reassurance through knowing that there are some health and wellbeing programmes to support them. The hospital discharge to home scheme for carers automatically registers them with the carers hub and also with their G.P. these are the places that ensure all carers have that community wrap around support for them.

7.10. Climate Change

The forthcoming Social Care Green Paper will also include a focus on how society supports and recognises carers as a vital part of a sustainable health and social care system to ensure that they are properly valued, recognised, and supported to provide care in a way that supports their own health and wellbeing

While the Carers development plan is an important step in improving support for carers, we recognise that there is still more to do, and we remain committed to continuing to find new ways to support carers. The work we have done around the hospital discharge to home scheme has been commended both regionally and nationally.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Jill.stenton@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A – All Age Carers Strategy 2021-2025 Appendix B - Carers Info Map Flourish Appendix C – Trust Discharge Project Appendix D – Hospital Discharge to Home Scheme / Carers Appendix E – School guide for working carers Appendix F – Delivery plan for adults Appendix G – Delivery plan for Young Carers Appendix H – Young Carers Delivery Plan Appendix I – Action Plan for Parent Carers