

Divisions Affected - All

People Overview Scrutiny Committee - 12 January 2023

Unpaid Carers Services

Report by Karen Fuller, Interim Corporate Director of Adult and Housing

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The People Overview Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:** recognise the immense contribution carers make to our society, caring for family, friends and neighbours; also, to acknowledge the importance of providing high quality support for carers, because whilst caring can be a rewarding and positive experience for both the carer and the cared-for person, being a carer is also associated with a higher risk of poverty, poor mental wellbeing and physical health, and can restrict social, education and employment opportunities. (Ref. Carers' health and experiences of primary care 2022 survey).

Executive Summary

2. This paper provides information about the carer population in Oxfordshire, and explains the measures used to understand the wellbeing of our carers. It revisits the results of the survey of Adult Carers in England (Para.36) *Best practice review, service user and carer experience*. (See link in appendix D) It presents current activity which is being conducted collaboratively with voluntary sector partners and unpaid carers in our community that aims to explore carer experiences and develop an action plan that aims to increase positive outcomes and overall satisfaction for carers who are in need of support.

The paper summarises services provided by both Adult Social Care and Children's services, including the service offered for families looking after the special educational needs of children (SEND) and related provision. This paper also provides an update on the development of a new strategic plan, the *Oxfordshire All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy*, to support carers across the health and social care system.

Background

3. The Oxfordshire Way is guiding our approach to strengthening support for Carers. This is our vision of supporting people to live well at home in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. The Oxfordshire

Way aims to provide people with the ability to support themselves through personal, local and system assets to lead independent lives. It is critical that carers are supported to protect their health and wellbeing, so they can continue to care in the way that they wish to and have a life alongside caring.

4. This work supports four of the Council's nine priorities in the following ways:
 - Support carers and the social care system: underpinning the process of developing support options is a co-production approach with carers themselves to ensure commissioned support will meet their needs and lead to positive outcomes. Promoting awareness of support available so that carers can benefit from the support available. Ensuring that information is readily available in alternative formats, including developing digital options to enable people to self-serve where appropriate.
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents: a key priority guiding the development of the *Oxfordshire All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy*. As part of the Oxfordshire Way approach, all operational teams the teams are actively considering a carer's needs, as carers are critical to the success of any approach that aims to support people to live independent lives.
 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire: focused work is taking place to understand the needs and priorities of those who may face barriers to having their views heard due to factors including socio-economic disadvantage, language or cultural barriers. The outcome will be that future services are better able to support people from all our communities.
 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential – work with Young Carers and their families to access support within their communities, build on their strengths and make positive changes to family life in order to enable Young Carers to pursue their goals in life.

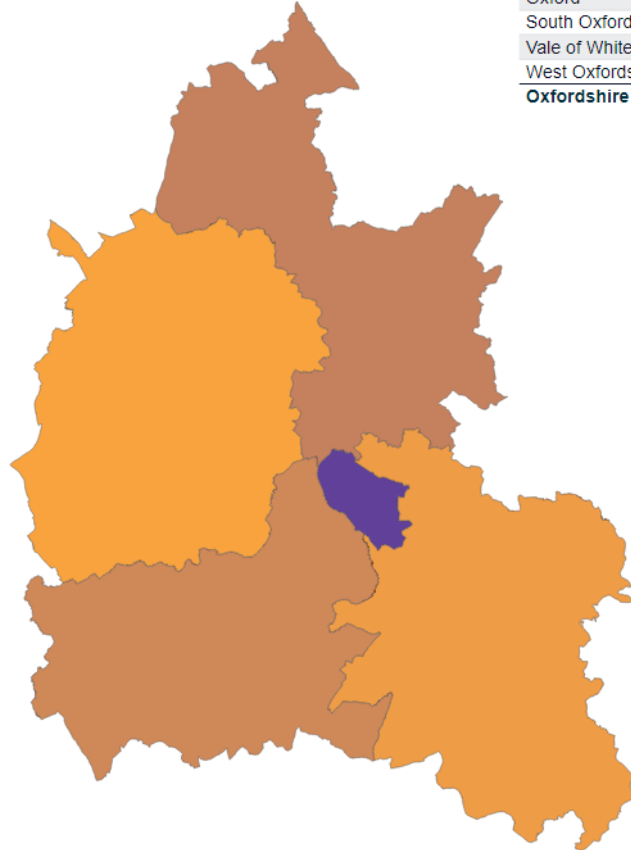
5. The main source of data on the number of unpaid carers in Oxfordshire comes from the census. The 2021 census will publish a data release on 19 January 2023 on data about health, disability and unpaid care in England and Wales.
 - The 2011 census identified 9.4% of the local population (61,100 people) provided informal care in Oxfordshire, which is 0.9% points lower than the average for England. The % of people providing unpaid care varied from 7.8% in Oxford City to 10.3% in the Vale of the White Horse. Over 11,000 people were providing over 50 hours of care a week
 - 17,400 residents of Oxfordshire were providing 20 or more hours of unpaid care, of whom a third (34%) were aged 65 or over.
 - 4,200 residents were combining full time work with providing 20 or more hours per week of unpaid care.

6. In 2020-2021, there was a total of 4,275 carers in Oxfordshire who were registered and receiving a service in the form of a carers assessment or a direct payment (from a pooled Health and Social Care budget). This was 0.77% of the adult population, above the regional average (0.72%) and below national average (0.84%).

7. As of 31 March 2022, there were 21,746 carers registered by 66 GP practices in Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The registration of and coding of carers by GPs has been highlighted in guidance (see [link in appendix D](#))

% of patients carers by GP's lower tier council

Council	Percentage
Cherwell	2.83%
Oxford	1.62%
South Oxfordshire	3.33%
Vale of White Horse	2.95%
West Oxfordshire	3.46%
Oxfordshire	2.70%



8. Every other year unpaid carers who have been assessed by Oxfordshire County Council are assessed in the national survey to find out more about our Carer population. The last survey was sent out in September 2021 to 1600 carers of whom 465 (29%) responded. They told us
- 53% of people they cared for had a physical disability; 38% a long-standing illness and 35% dementia
 - 78% of people lived with the person they cared for
 - 62% were satisfied with the support they received; 16% were dissatisfied and 22% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - 13% of carers said they had no time to do things they value or enjoy and 19% felt they were neglecting themselves; 19% felt socially isolated and 24% felt they had no encouragement or support in their caring role
 - 20% reported that they had had to visit their GP as their health had been affected by their caring role
 - 63% have been caring over 5 years, with 40% providing over 100 hours care per week
 - Nearly three quarters provide personal care (72.4%)

Carers services

9. Carers services currently provided in Oxfordshire;

Description of Service	Service includes:
<p>Carers Oxfordshire Our principal commissioned support to unpaid adult carers in Oxfordshire. OCC is the lead commissioner which is a partnership between Action for Carers, Rethink and the council's Customer Services Centre funded by the council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group – now BOB ICS</p> <p>The current contract started on 1st April 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, advice and support online, over the phone and face to face • Carers' assessment, support planning and review • Mental health carers' support service • Peer support, training and befriending services • Care Matters, a quarterly newsletter for people who look after family members, friends or neighbours • Practical support with housework/gardening etc. • See Appendix C for stories of Difference Report
<p>Respite services Commissioned from care providers such as StyleAcre and the Order of St John for example and breaks for carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Breaks (see details in Appendix C) on carers experiences of the services • Sitting service • Cared for Short stay respite
<p>Oxfordshire County Council Directly provided services for adult carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers joint assessments. 2,045 people have been assessed jointly with individuals they care for between April-Nov 2022. • Provide personal budget payments to enable carers to take a break. • Carers' wellbeing payments (administered by Carers Oxfordshire on behalf of the Council). 1,623 carers have received direct payment of up to £300 to support their own wellbeing. Carers have used these payments on a wide variety of things e.g. purchase of new orthopaedic mattress, days out, carers holiday and driving lessons.
<p>Oxfordshire County Council Directly provided services for young carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially Young Carers needs are assessed and subsequently categorised. • Those who have been identified with level 2-4 needs (see <i>Appendix A</i>) and who would benefit from Early Help, a Strengths and Needs form or C&FA and Child Development Checklist is

	<p>completed to determine the intervention required and supports the development of an outcome-focused Team Around the Family Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This prevents the need for a statutory assessment (managed by MASH) • A Young Carer’s strengths and needs are identified through the Early Help process. This is a whole family, multi-agency process led by the professional who has identified that a family or young person could benefit from early help. • The council’s Locality and Community Support Service and Targeted Early Help teams support Young Carers and their families to access support within their communities and also help co-ordinate the “Team Around the Family” multi-agency process, which seeks to support families to build on their strengths and make positive changes to family life. This process helps identify and resolve issues at an early stage to prevent potential escalation where statutory services may be required. • When a Young Carers is identified as having more complex needs, where Statutory Services may be required, they are supported by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
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The NHS also provide extensive support to unpaid carers through their services including Primary Care, Oxford University Hospitals and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Performance and comparison data

10. The Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2021-22 (see link in appendix D)

Provides comparison data that enables Oxfordshire to benchmark performance. The eligible population for this survey covers all service users aged 18 and over who are in receipt, at the point that data are extracted, of long-term support services provided or commissioned by the council or an NHS health partner under Section 75 Agreements and part of a care/support plan following an assessment of need. The survey asks service users questions about quality of life and what impact care and support services

have on their quality of life. It also collects information about self-reported general health and wellbeing.

11. The **Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2021-22** measures carer satisfaction via the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF):
 - Carer reported quality of life
 - I have as much social contact as I want with people I like (combined with user survey)
 - Overall satisfaction of carers with social services
 - The proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for
 - The proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about services (combined with user survey)

12. As reported to People Scrutiny in April, Oxfordshire unpaid carers reported lower levels of satisfaction across all five measures. Some of this may have been related to the pandemic (e.g., proportion of carers who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like). We also know that overall results have fallen nationally over the last four surveys. The survey responses were not specific and therefore we are carrying out further exploration of carers' experiences via focus groups and other engagement activities to support rapid improvement and inform the development of the new strategy.

13. In light of the findings reported, we have taken a number of immediate actions that focus on how we can rapidly improve our systems, processes and services to address the headline issues reported in the **Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2021-22**.

14. This activity is also informing the development of the *Oxfordshire All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy* to be published in spring 2023.

Actions taken to address findings from survey

15. A summary of the immediate actions taken by the Council and partners (the full action plan is included in *Appendix B*):

Topic	Initial Action Taken
Recognition: Making unpaid carers feel visible, valued and supported can make a real difference to their lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have provided training for key groups of staff in our customer service centre and care providers to ensure carers are identified and signposted to Carers Oxfordshire for further support • Encouraged Carers to take advantage of their priority status in the vaccination programme • Raised awareness of new improvements in Carers Leave provision to encourage employers to adopt good practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted support to address cost of living crisis to carers, to ensure carers are receiving all benefits to which they are entitled. Developing targeted support for carers via the Household Support Fund, aimed at those encountering increased energy costs due to caring responsibilities • Supporting the promotion of New Carers “Passports” introduced by Oxford University Hospital
<p>First Point of Contact: “I don’t want to repeat my particular circumstances over and over”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Oxfordshire use the same Liquid Logic database as the council’s directly employed social care workforce to record all Carers Assessments, improving the sharing of information and joined up service provision. • Carers Assessments are conducted using a strengths-based approach. Over 12-month period 2,965 carers were assessed and supported to access financial support and enhanced wellbeing support. • Customer Service Advisors are trained to provide enhanced advice at the first point of contact and to improve identification of carers • Protocol introduced to flag carer involvement on referrals to locality teams • Each locality team now has a dedicated Carers Champion, from June 2022, to ensure all staff are informed and able to access best information and advice for carers • Carers Oxfordshire have integrated key staff into locality social care teams which ensures the needs of the carer is reflected in an individual care plan.
<p>Access to Information: Carers’ feedback has highlighted the need to have improved information available in all formats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several engagement events have taken place during the summer and autumn of 2022 to listen to carers. • Carers are now going directly to the carers service – the new Carers Line has received over 4,600 calls since 1 April 2022 • New website for carers facilitates better direct access to specialist carers services, regularly has over 1,000 visits each month (see link) • Financial letters following assessments have been reviewed to ensure these are written in accessible language that can be understood. • Additional guidance (including how-to videos) has been added to websites to support searching for

	<p>best information (Live Well Oxfordshire and Carers Oxfordshire)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased leaflet distribution across GP surgeries, libraries and other settings • Piloting additional leaflet distribution through our equipment provider
<p>Timeliness: The impact of not having a responsive enough service remains a common theme leading to dissatisfaction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of the Community Information Network service, referrals from our Customer Service Centre to community services have increased from 33% to 42% in the 12 months to October 2022. This means that an increasing number of referrals have been resolved without requiring a statutory review, improving response times. • Adult social care, health partners and voluntary community sectors are working in collaboration to improve transparency and delivery of support and information • Project to install new telephony underway in Adult Social Care which will introduce better call monitoring information allowing improved call management and targeted actions. • Post Covid we have returned to more face-to-face in person interaction which improves the understanding of the issue that needs to be resolved, and therefore speeds up progress of resolution leading to a greater degree of customer satisfaction response times
<p>Quality of Life: Supporting carers to have their own life alongside from their caring role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Oxfordshire now fund a Short Breaks Coordinator improving the range of short breaks available • In partnership with a private provider 2,000 meals have been provided for carers and their families over six months, allowing 150 carers to have one hour or more back into their day • Carers Oxfordshire introduced the 'Carefree' project which offers a carer and one other person a free three-day holiday in a hotel of their own choice – 45 carers have had a break from their caring role • Engaging with national communities of practice to adopt best practice approach to co-production of our Respite programme
<p>Quality of services for cared-for: "I want to know I can trust the person caring for my</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers to review current providers' approaches to supporting unpaid carers, both in their own workforce and the families they support

relative so that I can get out to do other things”

- Ensure the commissioning quality improvement review process includes unpaid carers.

The All-Age Unpaid Carers’ Strategy overview

16. On behalf of the Oxfordshire wider social and health care system, the Health Education and Social Care Commissioning service are co-ordinating the development of the strategy.

Along with carers we are co-producing a review and a draft strategy for consultation in Spring. We are engaging with our NHS, Community and Voluntary Sector, City and District Council partners.

17. Strategy Plan and Timetable

Activity	Timeline	Status	Next Steps
Prioritise and evaluate data analysis gathered from Carers’ engagement events. Commissioners and all stakeholders Service providers National data	November/ December 2022	On track	Review returns and begin analysis
Determine local and national themes from evaluation material	November/ December 2022	On track	Initial results from online questions returned. Listening events with carers in carers groups on track and events with carers from less well represented communities on track
Formulate 1 st draft review paper	November/ December 2022	On track	Compile draft for review by stakeholder group meeting January 16
In person engagement events with Young Carers and Seldom Heard Voices	January/ February 2023	On Track	Engagement lead sending out survey and identifying groups to attend
Agree vision and mission statements	January/ February 2023	On Track	Draft ready for Jan 16 th
Online listening events	January/ February 2023	On track	Establishing contact with relevant carers
1 st Draft All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy	March 2023		
Governance processing	March 2023		

Draft document circulated for public consultation	April 2023		
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All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy Co-production

18. In order to embed the lived experience of carers in the development of this strategy, a stakeholder group has been established which includes both carers and statutory partners. This group is determining the approach to the governance and delivery of the strategy. Carers are included in the co-production and engagement events, and a number of opportunities to drill down into common areas of concern is emerging.
19. As part of the additional work we are doing to understand Carers' responses to the national survey questions we are investigating carers' views on strategic priorities for the refreshed All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy. A follow up survey was posted on the Carers Oxfordshire website. The questions asked:
- a. Whether Carers in Oxfordshire are aware that there is a current Carers Strategy in place
 - b. Whether the existing priorities of the current strategy are still important to Carers:
 - To identify carers and effectively support them, improving their health and wellbeing and providing opportunities for a break from their caring role
 - To safeguard the most vulnerable carers who need more support to look after themselves, particularly during times of change and transition
 - To encourage and enable carers to have an active life outside their caring role, including fulfilling their education, employment and training potential
 - c. Whether Oxfordshire County Council and its partners (including Health) are meeting these priorities
 - d. Whether there is something important to carers they would like to include and/or we could have done differently to support them
20. Out of the 73 responses to date received the results showed us that:
- The 50.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware that there is Carers' strategy in place. 43.8% disagreed/strongly disagreed (the remainder of the respondents gave a "neutral" response).
 - The 37.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the 3 priorities set out in the Carers Strategy are still important to them, against 6.8% who do not. 15% of the respondents remained neutral and the 8.2% did not provide a response.

- The 20.5 % of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Council are meeting these priorities, whereas 28.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 37% of respondents gave a neutral response and 13.7% did not provide a response.

21. The survey remains open and includes an opportunity for Carers to provide their contact details. These individuals are invited to join an active carers participation network, which has been developed to support co-production of the strategy and related action plans.
22. We will work with The Embolden Project (hosted by the Oxford Family Support Network, co-producing support options with older parent carers) and use this engagement to better inform priorities.

Financial Implications

23. It is not anticipated that there will be any financial impact for adult or childrens services, but it is more about continuing to work effectively and potentially tailoring the service to meet the evolving need of Oxfordshire residents; therefore, utilising existing resources more effectively as we continue to improve our information on, and support of, Oxfordshire’s carer population.

Current Oxfordshire spend

Service	Provider	Carers Direct Payments £
Carers Grants – OP, MH, LD	Carers Oxfordshire (Action for Carers/Rethink)	£525,250
Carers Contract		£837,302
Better Care Funding for short breaks		£100,000

Current legislation

24. The responsibilities of Oxfordshire County Council are set out in the Care Act 2014, Mental Health Act 2007, Mental Capacity Act 2005, and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard.

Staff Implications

25. The County Council, along with our NHS City and District partners have HR policies in place for the provision of carers leave and additional provision for employees. The same is true for most of our Voluntary Sector Partners and partners in the independent sector. Employers' terms and conditions in the sector largely already exceed the expectations set out in the new carers leave

provisions in the private members bill passing through parliament now. Some in the sector may have to revise their policies to align.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

26. Being a parent or carer is not a protected characteristic. However, parents and carers who experience unfair treatment at work due to their childcare or caring responsibilities may be covered under other protected characteristics.
27. Some of the equality considerations that we have been mindful of while developing this strategy include:
 - We are aware that often the sample size of people from ethnic minority backgrounds can be too small to make reliable comparisons. Therefore, experiences and issues which are particular to or more pronounced for people from those backgrounds' may not be fully captured/addressed. As an example, the impact of the pandemic has been devastating in many ways for unpaid carers as they are far more likely to suffer financial hardship and this even more common amongst Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers.
 - There are still often societal expectations of women as caregivers. The Survey of Adult Carers in England 2021/2022 showed that women make up the majority of unpaid carers – in fact over 70% of carers are women.
 - Whilst there are not clear statistics on LGBTQ+ unpaid carers, for the LGBTQ+ community there may be additional challenges during the caring journey. Some people feel the support services are not for them and will not understand their needs. Some people may access support late or not at all because they anticipate stigma or discrimination. This adds to the impact on the carer's life and can increase feelings of isolation.
 - Some of the problems young carers might face are difficulties in recognising their role within the family. They may feel different from other young people who may not understand what it's like being a young carer. Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying, and stressful. For young carers, this can negatively impact their experience in education which may have a lasting effect on their life chances.
28. Addressing these inequalities will be a key consideration when developing the Strategy Plan and the Equality Impact Assessment.

Sustainability Implications

29. Improving Oxfordshire's support for carers will contribute to the building of sustainable communities by supporting those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage, recognising the value of their contribution and involving them from the outset both in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages, in line with the Oxfordshire Way. It will also maximise health promotion by supporting carers to remain

mentally and physically well and support a sustainable economy by enabling them to fulfil their education and employment potential. There is a specific priority in the Carers Strategy in relation to working carers and access to education, training, and employment.

Consultations

30. We will complete a consultation on the final proposed strategy and priorities.

NAME

[SLT Member] Karen Fuller

Annex:

Nil.]

Background papers:

The Carers Strategy 2017

[CarersStrategy \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/carerstrategy)

Embolden Project

Oxford Health Family, Friends and Carers Strategy 2021-24

[Family, Friends and Carers Strategy 2021-24](#)

Oxford University Hospital Carers passport

[Other Documents:]

Contact Officer:

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3rd January 2023

Appendix A: The Current service model for Young Carers – Level of Needs

1. Level 2 – Additional Needs

Children and young people, including those who are disabled/seriously ill and Young Carers, who may become vulnerable and who will require additional support due to their own development, family circumstances or environmental factors. They are at risk of not reaching their full potential and life chances may be impaired without additional services. This can be a single or multi-agency response and won't always necessitate a response from the Local Authority. At level 2 it would be expected that a Strengths and Needs form is completed with the family.

Children at level 2 of Threshold of Needs (TON) can be supported by the community. Community partners can access Locality Community Support Service (LCSS) for advice and support.

- Where a child or young person is identified as a Young Carer an additional assessment section for Young Carers within the Strengths and Needs form must be completed, along with the child development check list.

Level 3 – Complex Needs

Children and young people, including those who are disabled/seriously ill and Young Carers, whose needs are complex and who require support from more than one agency. They are at risk of social or educational exclusion; their health, welfare, social or educational development is being impaired; and life chances will be impaired without the provision of additional services. At level 3 of TON the requirement for either Targeted Early Help (3a) or a statutory intervention (3b) is required.

- Where a child or young person is identified as a Young Carer and need is considered at level 3a of TON the additional assessment section for young carers within the Strengths and Needs form must be completed, along with the child development check list. If this was not completed at level 2, Targeted Early Help will complete.
- Targeted Early Help can be accessed via LCSS.
- Where a child or young person is identified as a Young Carer and need is considered at level 3b of TON the additional assessment section for Young Carers within the C&FA must be completed, along with the child development check list.
- Statutory services are accessed via Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH); LCSS or escalations via Targeted Early Help

Level 4 - Critical Needs

Children and young people, including those who are disabled/seriously ill and Young Carers, who have critical and enduring needs. They have experienced,

and/or are at risk of significant harm and may be removed from home to ensure their safety.

Children at level 4 of TON will require immediate statutory intervention. This may include investigation under s47 and will include a child and family assessment.

- Where a child or young person is identified as a young carer, an additional assessment section for Young Carers within the C&FA must be completed, along with the child development check list.
- Statutory services are accessed via MASH; LCSS or escalations via Targeted Early Help

Appendix B: Summary of Actions taken to date in response to The Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2021-22

Action Plan	v0.1	
Workstream/Activity	Status	Notes
Communication		
Financial comms	On track	
Review the reach and simplicity of financial communications to address e.g. lack of understanding of financial assessments and the calculations for the cared for person	Completed	17/06/2022: Financial circumstances forms are being amalgamated and reviewed. Some letters have been identified as requiring simplification. Timescales to be gauged. 30/06/2022 - first drafts of some revised letters are being worked on w/c 4/7/22 one financial circumstance form for Non-Residential and Residential services has already been drafted but requires further revision, work is planned to carry on with this w/c 11/7/22. 06/10/2022 - Financial Assessment Team have designed a combined and simplified forms and initial contact letters, this is currently being trialled.
Carers Oxfordshire to add links to financial support info. such as Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service on its website	Completed	27/05/2022: Confirmed Carers Oxfordshire website signposts to specialist services such as Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service. The new Carers Oxfordshire website received 5,000 new visits in the first 6 months. 17/06/2022: New page on Carers Oxfordshire website re understanding benefits 08/07/2022: Increased support now available on Carersline for financial/benefits through increased training.
Care Cap explained	No longer required	Government have postponed the care cap for another 2 years, work currently on hold.
Improvements in support for those setting up Direct Payments	Completed	09/05/2022 New Direct Payments support service now in place and fully staffed 27/05/2022: Update carers at Listening Events on improvements in Direct Payments support
Maximise the uptake of eligible benefits (Department of Work & Pensions and Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service)	Completed	20/05/2022: Carers Oxfordshire to mentor Carers Champions 27/05/2022: Carers Oxfordshire recruiting worker to sit in with Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service. 17/06/2022: Next edition of Care Matters (beginning of August) will include a section on understanding benefits; Carers Champions to go on mailing list for care matters; also, events being arranged with Better Housing Better Health and Silver Stuff to inform about benefits, Power Of Attorneys etc. 24/06/22: Email reminder for Operational Teams has been circulated by Team Managers that benefits advisory services are available in Oxon, including Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service to ensure effective signposting for carers. 14/07/2022: Carers Oxfordshire & Oxfordshire Specialist Advice Service has produced a practice note on benefits available to carers for use by Operational Teams. 06/10/2022 - Confirmed that Social Health & Care Team have circulated with team, Carers Champion to enforce use in daily huddles.
Addressing fears about losing their home on parent(s)' death	On hold	Clear information sheets required; also, video re financial assessments, 12-week property disregards etc. needs review/updating. Continues to be a long-term project alongside the care cap project, will need to be looked at alongside care cap to avoid duplication.

Addressing lack of knowledge about eligibility to receive free equipment until they have already bought their own	On track	17/06/2022: All GP surgeries under (formerly) Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group have been sent Live Well Oxfordshire brochures and contact details to order additional copies for patients. 09/08/2022: Adult Social Care workers will be delivering paper-based information to Service Users at home visits as required. 09/08/2022: Carers Oxfordshire is distributing NRS leaflets as a pilot this month to increase knowledge.
Non-financial comms	On track	
Information for Adult Social Care teams to ensure carers and cared for understand the home care offer	On track	20/05/2022: the new homecare framework has time slots for visits rather than specific times Website development is underway, templates ready – needs to be reviewed – target date is 2nd week of Jan.
Improvements in information available to carers	On track	09/05/2022 Listening Events agenda will include request for clarity on improvements that are required so this can be included in the wider comms improvement project already under way as part of Team Led Transformation. 17/06/2022: Carers Oxfordshire now has a marketing manager to improve its communications; and is producing a marketing strategy (30 Oct 2022). Carers' week gave opportunities for going out into the community. Booklet of Carers Services, information on the support available from Carers Oxfordshire available 17th November 2022. Web Site updates monthly. 20/09/22 Short animated video to communicate Carers Oxfordshire services made with Oxfordshire County Council to improve access to information. To go live September/October 2022.
Information provision for those whose first language is not English	On track	08/07/2022 - Top 5 languages translated in Oxfordshire information from Oxfordshire County Council's language team sent to Carers Oxfordshire and leaflets and business cards printed.
Providing information in different formats	On track	Both videos have been completed, the videos have been viewed by a group of unpaid carers for feedback and potential further improvements
Training on signposting to information for Social & Health Care Team	Completed	20/05/2022: First session on 06/07/2022 scheduled. Session to be recorded for inclusion in future induction. 22/06/2022 - Carers Oxfordshire has been included in Social & Health Care Team induction and training schedule
Addressing lack of support for dementia pre-diagnosis	On track	23/06/2022: Email sent to Rethink Mental Health & Dementia Oxfordshire. This is clearly a gap in the service. Need to understand the numbers of people involved. Adult Social Care refer pre-diagnosis Service Users to GPs, Age UK, Carers Oxfordshire. 24/6/22: Find fact sheets on supporting people pre-diagnosis (CC) 08/07/2022: Health has sent fact sheets. Also, Dementia Oxfordshire provides some info and advice via its helpline and in training sessions, though currently has insufficient resource to do more. 08/07/2022: Commissioning to look at getting prevention funds to resource expansion of these services. 09/08/2022: Better Care Fund investment has been discussed.
Understanding how people use the online resources to find information	On track	27/05/2022: Digital team is meeting users, observing them using the site and gaining a better understanding of how and what they search for, to direct improvements needed to the websites. (Live Well Oxfordshire). More sessions scheduled. 14/07/2022 Scoping meeting with Digital team to discuss carers journey and access to digital services. Initial review 09/08/2022: Development meeting with Oxfordshire County Council on 12/08/2022.

		14/12/22. Digital board approve next steps to Live Well Oxfordshire improvements
Carers want more information about dementia, its progression, etc.	On track	27/05/2022 Adult Social Care met with Dementia Oxfordshire to discuss how Adult Social Care and Dementia Oxfordshire can work closer together. First Carers champion meeting 7/7 Dementia Oxfordshire attending. 5/6/22 Dementia Oxfordshire has contacts in locality team and front door/safeguarding/review. Team managers will be attending their team meetings to tell teams what they offer. Dementia Oxfordshire will attend Carers' champion meeting.
Addressing digital exclusion	On track	
Wider availability of paper-based comms	Completed	17/06/2022: Live Well brochure has been distributed to GP practices, hospitals, libraries etc. GPs have already requested extra copies. Next Care Matters edition is due August, c8,000 of which are sent directly to carers.
Establishing where people are looking for information to better target comms	On track	27/05/2022: Carers Oxfordshire workers gathering data on how callers found their number. The Digital Team is also observing how users search the internet and Oxfordshire County Council/Live Well Oxfordshire websites for information. 17/06/2022: Age UK Oxfordshire digital buddies scheme can be promoted to assist carers. 20/09/22: Carers Oxfordshire support Enrych to provide IT training in the home especially for carers 29/06/2022: An entry for Age UK Oxfordshire's Tech Buddies scheme has been added to Live Well Oxfordshire & Operational team managers emailed to request their staff to promote this. Digital Board scoping improvements to Live Well Oxfordshire
Partnership working	On track	24/6/22: Ensuring partners understand each other's remit e.g. around self-funders. 01/11/2022 Signposting event successfully completed. Further schedule to be arranged.
Commitment to update carers on a quarterly basis about progress on all actions, principally via the Carers Oxfordshire newsletter, beginning July 2022	On track	14/07/2022: Carers Oxfordshire to use News page on Carers Oxfordshire website to feedback progress.
Workstream		
Timeliness	On track	
New telephony system for Adult Social Care to address calls not being answered/returned	On track	25/11/2022 - Business support team have received some training around the use of the new system, ICT currently trialling with use and reporting elements -
Adult Social Care staff/business support voicemail messages to be updated	Completed	15/6/2022: Adult Social Care in discussion with Business Development and Team Managers about this and ensuring a standardised voicemail message is used (1st week of July)
Referral protocol re Carers & Social & Health Care Team being developed + carers referred to Adult Social Care flagged in LAS	On track	Relationship building between Adult Social Care and Voluntary Community Sector Enterprises initiated by the project is improving communication, especially for urgent referrals. 22/11/2022 Initial contact changes agreed, to be confirmed at Change Control and to be built in by ICT.

Review impact of Oxfordshire Way in reducing delays	On track	Adult Social Care Team Managers review of allocation list to offer referrals to Carers Oxfordshire while they are waiting. 15/6 Doing this for one team initially who are doing whole list sweep 16/21 June. To measure outcomes 22/11/2022 - Community Information Network representative present in Signposting event
Quality Assurance Team completing case audits focusing on carers	Completed	20/05/2022: audits started. These look at whether the Care Act is being met re carers. 27 audits completed. Review scheduled over the next 6 weeks to establish main themes. Report completed
Review progress of LAS checks by Carers Oxfordshire & LAS Improvement Team.	On track	09/05/2022 data cleansing going well and >2,000 (out of 6,000) LAS records up to date
Workstream		
Quality of Life		
Addressing reports of lack of respite availability/tiredness/lack of time	On track	20/05/2022: Video to be produced on respite options. Carers Oxfordshire already facilitates short breaks for carers e.g. Carefree provides free breaks for carers Will be addressed through strategic review process underway
Ensuring carers have information about respite options available, and eligibility	To be planned	a working group to investigate what respite options carers would like 15/07/2022: Get clarity from Listening Events on what carers would like. 09/08/2022: Guidance note including respite being co-produced with Carers Champions Network.
Addressing isolation/loneliness	On track	Creative consultation work being done by Carers Oxfordshire to ascertain from carers what they want and would help them. Planning for face to face and virtual creative sessions for 10-15 carers. looking to use existing groups to facilitate this. New role to map and model all carer support groups across the county to scope and reduce duplication of support.
Ineligibility for blue badges for parking	Completed	13/06/2022: Blue badge criteria are from Department of Transport and ineligibility reasons are notified to applicants.
Parking issues	On track	10/06/2022: Oxford University Hospitals Carers passports give free parking at hospitals to carers. Carers to be notified during assessments and at Listening Events.
Workstream		
Quality of Care		
Self-funders and Direct Payments recipients want more support and information	To be planned	28/06 2022: Brokerage plans to re-evaluate the impact on self-funders as part of the care cap and how it's going to impact brokerage, which will likely require more staff. Provide advice notes on how to gauge quality and how to get assistance if things go wrong. To investigate what information. already available on Oxfordshire County Council website & whether it needs updating.
Providing assurance to carers about processes to investigate and address reports of poor care	To be planned	10/06/2022: quarterly contract meetings are held with framework providers; issues dealt with under Standards of Care/Serious Concerns meetings. Info shared with Care Quality Commissioning & safeguarding. Review how Live Well Oxfordshire can support this.

Appendix C: Stories of difference

Improving quality of life for carers

Action for Carers Oxfordshire has been allocated £100,000 funding from the Better Care Fund in order to expand the work they have been doing to give carers a break and help to improve their quality of life.

National research released for Carers Week 2021¹ found that Carers are exhausted and worn-out. 72% of carers have not had any breaks from their caring role at all. Of those who got a break, a third (33%) used the time to complete practical tasks or housework. showing that carers' use breaks to complete essential tasks that others may take for granted and not for their own wellbeing.

If they had a break, they would use it to focus on their wellbeing (53%) and physical health (52%) and to maintain social connections (50%).

Laundry pilot

Since September 2022, Action for Carers Oxfordshire has been providing carers with a weekly washing and ironing service, collected from and returned to the home. 4 weeks support is £140 per carer. The number of carers supported so far has been 100. There are plans to use the BCF allocation to provide the laundry service to a further 200 carers.

I work as a Social Worker, so my job can be both emotionally and physically demanding. Finishing work and transferring straight into a caring role can often add to this exhaustion. Then with all the associated household tasks on top of this, such as ironing it is rare to get any down time.

Carers were asked what impact the laundry service had had on them and their ability to continue in their caring role. 51 carers responded and a high percentage strongly agreed that the service had supported them with their mental health and improved their ability to continue their caring role.

For each statement below select to what extent you agree or disagree.	% AGREE	% STRONGLY AGREE
<input type="radio"/> supported my mental health	20	80
<input checked="" type="radio"/> supported my physical health	22	64
<input checked="" type="radio"/> helped me financially	26	58
<input type="radio"/> improved my ability to continue my caring role	23	77

¹ ['Breaks or breakdown', Carers Week 2021 report | Carers UK](#)

Feet Up Fridays

In partnership with Thomas Franks Feeding Communities, Action for Carers Oxfordshire has organised the delivery of a hot meal for the carer and the whole family on a Friday for 8 weeks. The focus has been on reaching those who are most in need who live in deprived areas of Oxfordshire. The focus in Phase 3 will be the wider areas of Oxfordshire and working carers.

It has meant that I've had a proper meal on the days I am exhausted and overwhelmed rather than just a bowl of cereal. The fact that on the difficult days there are meals ready in the freezer and I don't have to think of shopping, cooking etc, it's a huge weight off my mind.

I would sometimes go 4 days without a proper meal

Phase 1: pilot during COVID – supported 150 carers

Phase 2: June – December 2022 – supported 106 carers

Phase 3: January – December 2023 – plan to support 450 carers

Carers were asked what impact Feet Up Friday had had on them. 52 carers responded and a high percentage strongly agreed that this scheme had helped them financially, had improved their ability to continue their caring role, and had enabled them to take a break and do something for themselves.

For each statement below select to what extent you agree or disagree. 52 respondents	% AGREE	% STRONGLY AGREE
• supported my mental health	33	51
• supported my physical health	44	41
○ helped me financially	33	65
○ improved my ability to continue my caring role	35	60
○ enabled me to take a break and do something for myself	31	61

Cleaning

The highest number of requests from carers for other practical help was for cleaning. In response to this, Action for Carers Oxfordshire is creating a cleaning offer which could provide either a fortnightly regular clean for 3 months or a one off deep clean and organise in the home.

Someone to help cleaning the house once a week. It gets me down that the house is often a mess and I don't have the energy to keep it clean.

House cleaning service. I have a disability myself which greatly impacts my ability to do anything. I find keeping a home clean is very physically exhausting so much of it gets neglected so as to conserve energy and not crash so that I am bed bound..

It is planned to provide 60 carers with the cleaning support from January 2023 to March 2023, using the BCF allocation. The focus will be on carers with high support needs roles who find it harder to do chores and working carers who juggle work and care.

Short breaks away

Carers have told Action for Carers Oxfordshire how they would like to spend time away from caring if they could. The results showed that they mostly want to focus on something for themselves. Some wanted to spend time improving their own wellbeing and a small amount wanted respite for the cared for person, or time together.

Spa Breaks

So far, 30 carers have been given £100 to use on SpaBreaks.com and it is planned to reach a further 70 carers. The feedback received has been very positive and carers have reported they have felt valued and cared for. 100% of carers strongly agreed that the Spa Break has improved their ability to continue their caring role.

It was my first ever spa day and it was invaluable. We don't really go on holiday and just this one day off to relax made me feel as if I'd been away for a week! I cannot put into words how much of a boost it has been towards my mental health. Absolutely amazing. I know I will need a few more similar days in the year and hope to save up for some

There is also a new opportunity which will introduce opportunities for **Spa Breaks at home** for carers who can't take a day out. Spa packs will be delivered to the home.

Carefree

Action for Carers Oxfordshire has a partnership with Carefree. Carers (plus one) can have one or two nights away in a hotel for just the admin fee of £25. 283 carers have been referred and 70 carers have booked breaks.

It has given me a break from caring responsibilities and given me alone time with my spouse. It was a restful break in quality surroundings. I would not normally have taken this break because of the cost and hassle, I gained mentally because my stress level was reduced and I got to do things for me and not others!

In the new year, it is planned to offer breaks for the carer and the cared for person.

Bursaries

Some carers have said they would like to take up hobbies. Carers can receive up to £50 towards a course of their choice, for example floristry, art and design, photography. So far 47 carers have been supported with this scheme. There are plans to increase the offer to up £150 to enable carers to finish a tier or a higher cost course.

1 July – 30 September 2022:

Referrals to Carers Oxfordshire		Carers Assessments completed	
Received from	Number	Type	Number
Self referral	467	Assessments via portal	231
GP Practices	34	Assessments in person/phone	561
Ops Teams	61	Reviews	332
Other professionals	166		
Total:	728	Total:	1,124

Carers reached	
Method	Number
Referrals	728
Carersline	970
Website (hits)	603
Care Matters newsletter	9,058
Total:	11,359

Appendix D: Links to other documents

Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2021-22

[Microsoft Power BI](#)

The registration of and coding of carers by GPs guidance

[NHS England » Coding Unpaid Carers: SNOMED CT](#)

Carers Oxfordshire Website

[Carers Ox website link](#)