

Divisions Affected - All

Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board

26th September 2024

ALL-AGE UNPAID CARERS' STRATEGY UPDATE

Report by Karen Fuller, Director of Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Health and Wellbeing Board is RECOMMENDED to**
 - Note the progress achieved in the first three quarters of the implementation of the All-age Unpaid Carers Strategy and the Action Plan
 - Approve the mechanisms established to monitor the progress against the Strategy's agreed priorities and reporting progress to the Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Comment on the progress achieved to date and make recommendations for ensuring faster progress in the coming months
 - Note that the Place Based Partnership will be accountable for progress and ensuring all health partners are meeting their commitments under the Strategy

Executive Summary

2. Following the decision of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 16th March 2023, Oxfordshire's All-age Unpaid Carers Strategy was co-produced with carers and published in Autumn 2023, based on the priorities expressed by carers and strategic review of supporting carers in Oxfordshire.
3. Following the approval of the Strategy, an Action Plan was developed bringing together all the activities and commitments from all organisations in line with their own remit under each priority of the Strategy.
4. The Carers Strategy Oversight Group was established with representatives from all statutory and voluntary organisations and carers to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.
5. This report summarises the progress as reported by the organisations on the activities they carried out in the first three quarters of the implementation.

Carers in the UK

6. Carers UK data¹ show that
 - Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men,
 - One in seven people in the workplace in the UK are juggling work and care,
 - Between 2010 and 2020, people aged 45-65 were the largest age group to become unpaid carers,
 - Carers are facing pressure on their finances: 25% of carers are cutting back on essentials, and 63% are extremely worried about managing their monthly costs,
 - Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers are more likely to be struggling financially- 58% said they were worried about their finances compared to 37% of white carers,
 - Carer's Allowance is the main carer's benefit and is £76.75 per week (2023/24) for a minimum of 35 hours. It is the lowest benefit of its kind.
 - Caring can have a significant impact on carers' health and wellbeing: 60% of carers report a long-term health condition or disability compared to 50% non-carers.
 - Over a quarter of carers feel lonely often or always, this increases to half of carers for LGBT carers.
7. Value of unpaid care in England and Wales is estimated to be £162 billion per year (£445 million every day), exceeding that of the entire NHS budget in England for health service spending (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023).²

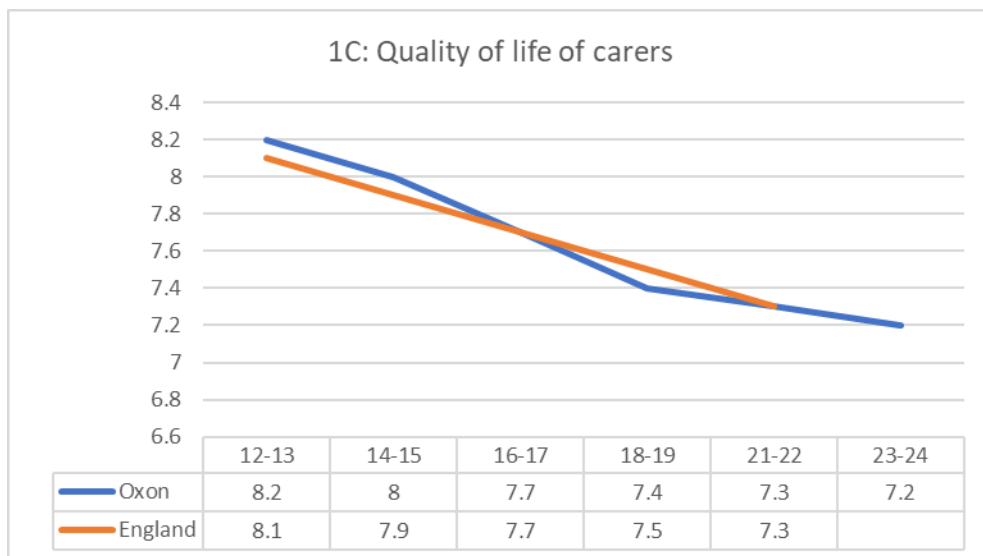
Oxfordshire's Carers

8. According to Census 2021, 52,674 residents were providing unpaid care in Oxfordshire, and 26% of them said they provide more than 50 hours of care. There were 983 young carers in Oxfordshire.
9. Carer's Survey is one way we get insights into our carers. In the last survey we received 297 responses out of an eligible population of 3918 which gives a confidence error of 5.5%. Older carers were more likely to respond - so the results may be skewed to their views. The findings show that of the people who responded
 - They are typically a white (95%) older (66%) woman (67%) who lives with (80%) the person they care for.
 - A third of them care for a second person
 - More than half of them live with a condition themselves
 - 72% provide personal care, 40% have been caring for more than 10 years
 - The person they care for is typically an older partner, 45% have a physical disability, over a third have dementia, over a third have a sensory impairment

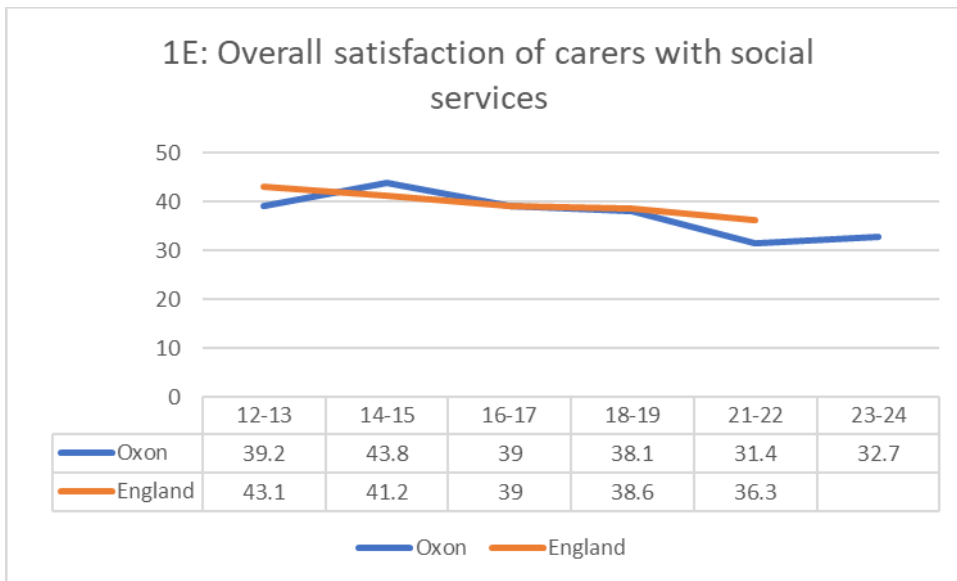
¹ [Key facts and figures | Carers UK](#)

² [Value of unpaid care in England and Wales now exceeds that of NHS budget | the Centre for Care](#)

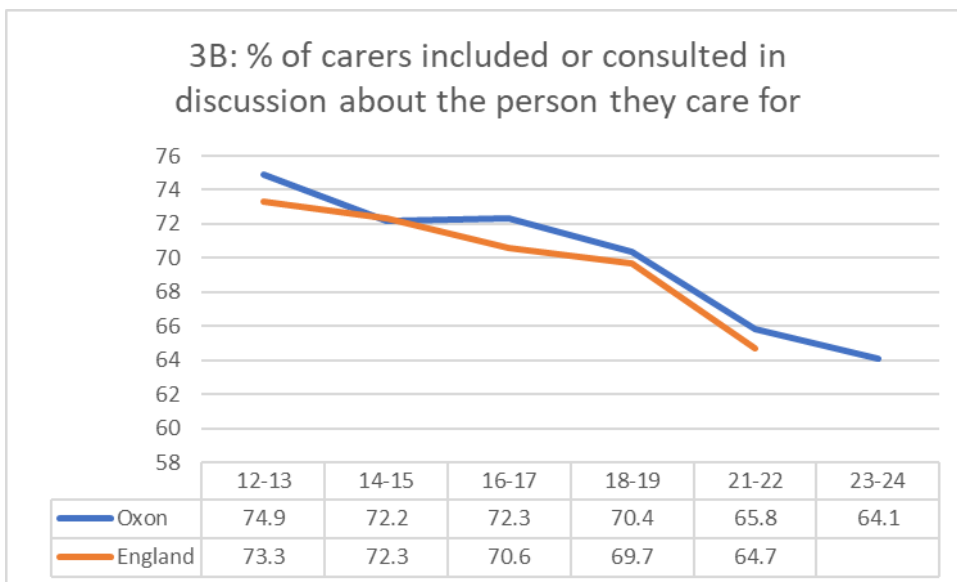
- 25% receive home care
10. In terms of the support they receive,
- 85% have had an assessment or review in the year
 - 50% have received direct payment, 46% information and advice only and 4% had other support
 - Over a third have had a support via a carers group
 - Employment support remains very limited
11. The impact of caring in Oxfordshire is parallel to the national picture:
- 80% of our carers feel tired, 63% stressed and over a half become irritable and depressed
 - Nearly half feel lonely
 - Nearly a half experience financial difficulty
12. In terms of the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures



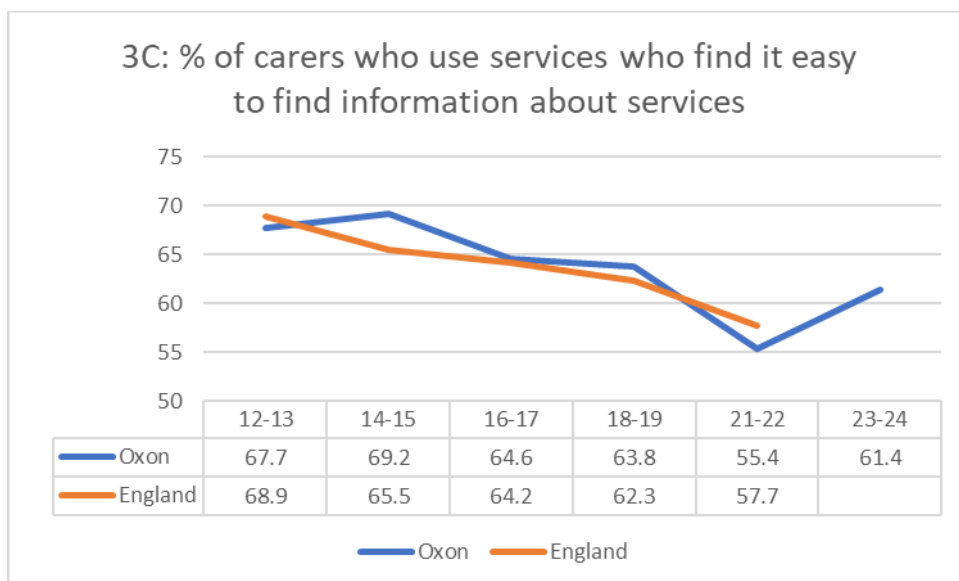
Quality of life is falling both locally and nationally. Nationally it is falling faster. Since 18-19 we have started to turn the curve



Again – nationally satisfaction is falling year on year. In Oxfordshire this last year satisfaction grew slightly though is still below the national average



People consulted again fell. This is in line with the national position



Both locally and nationally performance on access to information has been falling – however in the last survey (Nov 23) locally the figure rose

- In Oxfordshire, our carers reported a higher level of satisfaction with social services, and ease in finding information about support, but they felt less consulted in discussions about the person they care for.

Oxfordshire’s All-age Unpaid Carers Strategy and Action Plan

- Following the decision of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 16th March 2023, Oxfordshire’s [All-age Unpaid Carers’ Strategy](#) was co-produced with carers and published in Autumn 2023, reflecting the priorities expressed by carers and findings of the strategic review of supporting carers in Oxfordshire.
- One of the main issues raised by carers was their confusion with the health and social care system and limited joined up working among organisations supporting carers. This fragmented system not only limited the effectiveness of support carers receive, but also meant carers needed to understand and work with various systems of support, for themselves and the person they care for.
- In response, the new Carers’ Strategy was developed as a system strategy to enable all organisations to work towards a common mission, establish connections, join up efforts and achieve better outcomes for carers.
- Oxfordshire’s All-age Unpaid Carers’ Strategy 2023-2026 has three broad priorities covering all aspects of supporting our carers:

Priority 1: To identify carers and effectively support them, improving their health and wellbeing and providing opportunities for a break from their caring role.

Priority 2: To safeguard adult and young carers at risk who need more

support to look after themselves, particularly during times of change and transition.

Priority 3: To encourage and enable carers **to have an active life outside their caring role**, including fulfilling their education, employment, and training potential.

18. The priorities of the Strategy are in line with Oxfordshire’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2030, specifically
 - risk of poor mental health and wellbeing being higher among young carers
 - large number of unpaid carers providing support for people with dementia and how valuable the support provided by Dementia Oxfordshire is in supporting them,
 - importance of carers continuing to do activities they love for longer
19. Priority 1 of the Carers’ Strategy regarding identification and recording of carers allows us to more effectively target support across health and social care systems and help deliver Priorities 2 and 3. This aligns with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy’s ambition to improve the extent, quality and accessibility of digital infrastructure.
20. Each organisation’s commitments under each of the three priorities of the Strategy are detailed in the Strategy Action Plan with tasks and outcomes.
21. As the Strategy covers three years, the Action Plan will be updated annually reflecting the progress achieved in the implementation and identifying areas of focus.
22. Current high-level Action Plan (Annex 1) was adopted by the Carers’ Strategy Oversight Group to oversee the implementation of short- and medium-term priorities.
23. The Oversight Group oversees the implementation of the Strategy with members from across all partners and carers. This Group meets quarterly to receive progress reports shared by all partners.

Progress to date

24. A snapshot of some key successes from our contracted provider, Carers Oxfordshire, since the launch of the Strategy:

Strategy development Number of carers who contributed to strategy development	374	
Referrals into Carers Oxfordshire	Number	% increase
July 22- June 23	2845	
July 23- June 24 (post strategy)	3408	20%

Carers ID Cards		
Jul- Sept 2023	0	
Oct- Dec 23	103	
Jan- March 24	135	31%
Apr- June 24	190	41%
Short Breaks		
Number of carers accessing short breaks since strategy launch	662	
Max Cards		
Number of Max cards issued to families, giving discounts on activities and holidays UK wide.	553	

25. In the first quarter of the implementation all organisations met to strength joint working practices. This included agreeing governance arrangements for the life of the Strategy. We built on joint initiatives already in development, for example, the launch of the Carers' ID card, between Carers Oxfordshire and Oxford University Hospitals. Also, the collaboration between Carers Oxfordshire and ICB colleagues to produce standardised local GP surgery information to assist carers to self-identify.
26. Carers are integral to the success of the Strategy and action plan and attend and co-chair the quarterly oversight meetings. This is an opportunity for carers to review progress, ask questions and have their voice heard.
27. As anticipated, progress has been made at different rates for each priority. Connections are made at the quarterly meeting between organisations with clear actions to follow up opportunities they identified for more collaboration.
28. Highlights of the Strategy's achievements to date include
 - Identifying carers - OCC extracted the data from the PHI database for the first time and analysed this to identify key demographics of carers known to health partners.
 - Review of information shared by GP practices online and links to Carers Oxfordshire webpage is underway.
 - Work is under way to link carers' contingency plans to their NHS shared care records. Early results demonstrate an increased number of contingency plans have been created.
 - Launch of [Carers ID](#) which help carers to show that they are an unpaid carer and ensure they and their cared for get the support they need. IDs are used in Oxford University Hospitals as well, and carers shared very positive feedback about this initiative which helped them when they are in hospitals.
 - Established an OCC Carers Support Group for staff with caring responsibilities. Positive feedback from staff
 - Developed a protocol and training for professionals in Children's Social Care supporting Young Carers
 - Oxford Health published a new [Carers Handbook for Mental Health carers](#), which is for anyone who cares for or supports someone receiving care and treatment from our adult and older adult mental health services

- New Carers Leave Act 2023 provisions were promoted to all local employers.
 - The Oversight Group meetings additionally provide opportunities for research into best practice and BOB-wide collaboration.
29. We remain committed to our principles of co-production and value working alongside our carers and receiving their feedback on the progress made and actions to be taken. We continue to include and encourage carers representing different caring experiences within the Oversight Group.
30. Accelerated Reform Fund (ARF) – national one-off funding in 2024-5. Carers Oxfordshire and OCC are working together to deliver ARF projects.
- reviewing the carers assessment to ensure it is strengths-based and meets carers’ needs, by looking at best practice from other local authorities and gathering carer views
 - reviewing and mapping the carers short breaks offer to co-produce and redesign the offer
 - work to improve BOB-wide communication to carers around self-identification is underway

Financial Implications

31. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However:
- A [2018 National Audit office report](#) estimated the value of care the public purse would have to replace if not provided by informal care as £58.6bn
 - In England, the average amount an informal carer saves the state annually is £12,500. For Oxfordshire’s 26% of carers providing 50+ hours per week, this equates to £1.7m+ annual savings to the state

Legal Implications

32. Supporting carers is a statutory responsibility as defined in the Care Act 2014. Our strategy supports us meeting the statutory duties although publishing a strategy itself is not a legal requirement.

Staff Implications

33. The implementation of the Strategy has been overseen by Health, Education and Social Care Service within Adult Social Care, requiring each partner organisation to identify officers responsible for coordinating the delivery of activities and reporting progress to OCC quarterly. This requires every organisation to utilise their resource to support delivery of this strategy. Beyond this, there are no new or additional staff implications.

Sustainability Implications

34. The process of developing and implementing the strategy itself has no direct sustainability implications.

NAME Karen Fuller, Director of Adult Social Care

Annex: 1. Carers Strategy Action Plan: Link to action plan on public facing webpage: [All-age Unpaid Carers' Strategy](#)

Background papers: None

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August 2024

Annex 1: Carers Strategy High Level Action Plan (as of July 2024)

Actions	Owner	Target Completion Date	RAG Status	
Priority 1: Identifying carers and effectively supporting them				
Improve carers identification and recording	Analyse existing carers data and identify gaps	OCC	14/03/2024	Completed
	Improve recording of carers on LAS	OCC- SCHT	27/06/2024	Completed
	Improve recording of carers on LAS (joint assessments)	OCC - ASC teams	15/10/2024	On Track
	Improve identification and recording of young carers, by staff training and system changes	OCC- Children's teams	15/09/2024	On Track
	Support carer identification by GPs	ICB BOB	15/09/2024	Risk of Delay
	Utilise Carers Champions in identifying and supporting carers	OCC and all partners	15/10/2024	On Track
	Increase referrals to Carers Oxfordshire by increasing identification and accurate recording of carers	All partners	01/03/2025	On Track
Expand and enhance support programmes for carers	Improve supporting carers by working with them, using existing and new channels (all partners have a range of support options for carers including 1:1 support, support groups, training, workshops, information and advice, training)	All partners in coordination with Carers Oxfordshire and OCC	15/10/2026	On Track
	Co-produce a Carers Handbook for Adult Mental Health Services	Oxford Health	12/03/2024	Completed
Ensure carers have opportunities for breaks from their caring role to	Analyse existing breaks/respite services available to carers	OCC	05/09/2024	Risk of Delay
	Simplify and improve carers short breaks and respite options	OCC	15/11/2024	Risk of Delay

support their wellbeing	Guide parent carers to relevant services and organisations	Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum	15/10/2026	On Track
Priority 2: Safeguarding adult and young carers at risk, particularly during times of change and transition				
Refreshing/developing Carers training		All partners	15/10/2024	On Track
Review and increase identification and support of carers from seldom heard groups and families in Oxfordshire's most deprived wards		OCC and Carers Oxfordshire	15/02/2025	On Track
Review and simplify processes to ensure young carers receive support in line with their level of need		OCC- Children's teams	15/09/2024	On Track
Review and improve transition from being a young carer to adult carer		OCC	15/05/2024	Completed
Support carers in hospital using a Carers Passport		OUH and OH	01/05/2024	Completed
Support people and their carers during dementia diagnosis		Dementia Oxfordshire	01/11/2024	On Track
All partners to ensure effective signposting to Carers Oxfordshire		All partners	15/10/2025	On Track
Priority 3: Encouraging and enabling carers to have an active life outside their caring role				
Clarify what respite offer is available for carers		OCC	05/09/2024	Risk of Delay
Develop and communicate a referral process for respite		OCC	15/11/2024	Risk of Delay
Ensure effective identification of OCC staff with caring responsibilities		OCC	15/02/2025	On Track
Set up a Carers Network in OCC		OCC	15/03/2024	Completed
Improve developing support for carers by working with them, using existing and new channels (all partners to have a range of support options for carers including 1:1 support, support groups, training, workshops, information and advice, training)		All partners in coordination with Carers Oxfordshire and OCC	15/10/2026	On Track
Working in partnership with voluntary sector and schools, ensure young carers have opportunities for breaks		OCC- Children's teams	15/10/2026	On Track