

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol ar Gwella mynediad at gymorth i ofalwyr di-dâl](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee consultation on Improving access to support for unpaid carers.](#)

UC05 : Ymateb gan: Gyngor Caerdydd | Response from: Cardiff Council

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## Senedd Inquiry

### Health & Social Care Committee

#### Improving Access to Support for Unpaid Carers

The inquiry will seek to examine the current provision of, and access to, respite care services for unpaid carers across Wales, and identify changes to improve statutory support and enable unpaid carers to sustain a life beyond caring.

A response from Cardiff Council is provided below:

**The main barriers faced by unpaid carers in accessing the support they need; including any specific challenges for carers based on factors such as age, ethnicity or where they live**

1. Following the launch of Cardiff Council's Ageing Well Strategy in 2022, which set out a commitment to support and value unpaid carers, significant engagement has taken place with Unpaid Carers which has provided good insight into the challenges and barriers that they encounter.
2. These include:-
  - Cultural and language barriers: These can affect engagement with services, particularly among unpaid carers from ethnic minority communities. Those who cannot speak English or cannot speak English well are reporting challenges with accessing Health Services in particular primary care.
  - Digital exclusion: Digital only resources can exclude older unpaid carers
  - Digital Poverty: The ability to fund devices, network access can be a barrier to accessing digital support and information.
  - Time Constraints Carers often report limited time to seek support
  - Social Isolation especially those in full-time caring roles

- Variation in access: While urban Cardiff has more options, carers in peripheral areas may face transport and accessibility issues. Community transport is oversubscribed.
- Accessing Trusted and current information – reports of information overload and issues related to how to evaluate accuracy. In addition access to localised information which can often be more helpful.
- Lack of awareness and identification: It can take in some cases several years for family members to identify as an unpaid carer.
- In addition professionals do not always realise that service users are unpaid carers and capitalise on opportunities to offer support
- Financial Impacts: Cost of Living crisis, additional costs associated with caring
- Working unpaid carers – support infrastructure e.g. Helplines/ Peer support groups usually offer by day time, inconsistent approach to supporting unpaid Carers in some workplaces.

To improve accessibility and services for unpaid carers Cardiff Council has a range of support available which recognises that supporting and valuing unpaid carers is ***Everybody's Business***:-

### **Council Provision**

- Care'Diff - a communication platform that acknowledges and values unpaid carers and ensures that their voices are heard was launched in March 2023. Care'Diff provides non-digital information to unpaid carers both through the quarterly Care'Diff newsletter and via Unpaid 'Carers Corners' in Cardiff's Hubs and Libraries, and digital updates via email and social media. There is regular engagement with unpaid carers to gather their views through targeted groups and via attendance at events targeted towards unpaid carers or which unpaid carers will have an interest.
- Carer Friendly Hubs - We know what a vital job unpaid carers do and the contribution they make to society. We want to support and value unpaid carers and help them access useful information and support. Unpaid carers are able to access advice through our Hubs and Libraries including advice on carers allowance, blue badges, activities in the community and financial support. The Hubs and Libraries Service have made commitments to the Carer Friendly accredited regional programme that is delivered by TuVida and are recognised as a Carer Friendly service.
- Our Age Friendly Advice officer delivers a rolling programme of advice clinics in Hubs across the City and supports our older customers with

information that is important to them including Power of Attorney, Fuel poverty, Pension credit as well as signposting them to sources of support.

- 'Carers Corners' have been installed in all Hubs and Libraries to provide up to date information and guidance in printed formats.
- The Dementia Friendly Cardiff website provides information about services and support to assist people living with dementia and their families. The website features services that Cardiff Council and external organisations provide. There are also pages dedicated to information, advice and assistance, events happening in Cardiff for those living with dementia and carers and dementia-friendly volunteering opportunities
- The Age-Friendly Cardiff website has a page called 'Looking after others (unpaid carers)', which provides information and support for unpaid carers. This page is being expanded following user testing by unpaid carers who requested more content and improved navigation. Changes are being co-produced with unpaid carers to ensure the website meets their needs and will be ongoing over FY25/26.
- The 'Hubs for All' project was launched at the end of August 2023 to provide care and wellbeing support from dedicated staff in a mainstream community setting to both older people and their carers. Hubs for All offers person-centred support and social engagement for older people, as well as much needed respite, support and signposting for their unpaid carers. This service is currently available in St Mellons, Rhiwbina, Grangetown and Llandaff North Hubs
- DEWIS is a website that aims to help people including unpaid carers access local support services in Wales and find the information and advice they need to improve their wellbeing. Work has been taken place to better categorise Unpaid Carer information on this directory in Cardiff and the Vale to improve search results
- The Independent Living Service deliver information and advice sessions across the hubs and libraries, as well as within other local community settings. The sessions are available to anyone who would like to understand more about what support is available to them (or the people they look after) to live independently in their home and remain an active part of their community. They are able to offer advice on topics such as opportunities to maximise your income, aids, equipment and technology that can support people at home, social activities in your area and much more.
- Cardiff Council's Money Advice Team provides advice and assistance to people including unpaid carers who may be falling behind with payments

of rent, council tax or utility bills. The team help unpaid carers budget and maximise their income by checking benefit entitlement including Carers Allowance and help them to make claims, and appeal against benefit decisions.

- Caring Friends - Volunteer befriending service available to unpaid carers delivered by Cardiff Council Wellbeing Support Service. Volunteers are matched with unpaid carers who provide wellbeing as well as practical support.
- The Short break funding that is provided by Welsh Government under the regional Unpaid Carers programme to provide unpaid carers with opportunities to take a break from their caring duties will also be available this financial year.
- Approaches have been made to ethnic minority community groups with the aim of developing culturally competent posters that aim to help community members with caring responsibilities to identify as unpaid carers and receive support

In addition there is an array of third sector provision available to unpaid carers in Cardiff. Effective signposting processes are in place to ensure that unpaid carers are made aware of the support available:-

### **Third Sector Provision**

There are a range of local and national charities and groups that support unpaid carers in Cardiff including: -

- CAER Carers Club
- Butetown Carers Club
- Glenwood Church and Wellbeing Centre Carers Group
- Calon Corus' Forget-me-not Chorus
- Cardiff and the Vale Parents Federation
- Alzheimer's UK – CRISP and Carers Groups
- Parkinsons UK
- MS Cymru
- Recovery Cymru/ Adferiad/ Kaleidoscope (3<sup>rd</sup> sector partnership providing CAVDAS)
- Marie Curie
- Headspace South East Wales
- Carers Wales and Carers UK
- Carers Trust Cymru
- Cardiff People First/All Wales People First
- V21 Sbectrwrm Centre
- PedalPower Inclusive Cycling
- Llanrumney Hall

- ACE
- Citizens Advice Cardiff and the Vale
- Age Cymru and Age UK
- Dementia Carers
- TuVida Carers Financial Wellbeing Service
- Moss Rose Cottage CIC

### **The current availability of respite care across Wales, including levels of variation across regions.**

#### **3. Respite**

- Cardiff Council currently provides respite for older people in care homes under the following placement categories – General Residential, Residential Dementia, General Nursing & Nursing Dementia.
- Two block beds are commissioned in a Residential Home called Woodcroft located in Rumney – Hafod is the care provider. One bed is for emergency respite ( up to 2 weeks) and the other is for planned respite where stays are typically between 2-3 weeks.
- Although Cardiff Council does not currently block contract any respite nursing beds consideration is being given to whether there is sufficient need to do so as challenges are being experienced in securing nursing respite placement in a timely way.
- In addition to the block contract at Woodcroft requests for respite placement in care homes are put out to tender on our Dynamic Approved Provider List. Placements are secured using individual service agreements.
- Cardiff Council also has two respite/reablement flats in the Extra Care provision – Llys Enfys – where care and support is commissioned from Radis and the landlord

#### **A wider approach to respite based on what matters to the unpaid carer**

Cardiff Council has also adopted a wider approach to support unpaid carers to take a break from their caring responsibilities which recognises the significance of identifying what matters to them. This includes:-

- The launch of Caring Friends a Volunteering befriending service for unpaid carers. Volunteers are matched with unpaid carers to provide emotional support through telephone calls, in person visits and practical help with household tasks.

- Delivery of a Shortbreak Grants Piloted in Q3/4 of 2024/2025 in the Carers assessment service
  - Through funding provided by the regional partnership vouchers were gifted for innovative breaks to unpaid carers such as fishing equipment, gym memberships, and theatre tickets
  - Unpaid carers were asked what a break would look like to them. Award allocations ranged from £59.99 to £2,004.
  - 46 unpaid carers received a voucher or equipment purchased including:
    - Garden furniture and gardening equipment
    - Fishing equipment
    - Home gym equipment
    - Treadmills
    - Winter clothing
    - Laptops/tablet
    - Afternoon tea kits for home use
    - Duolingo voucher (to learn a new language)
    - 31 had grants for experiences including spa breaks, theatre vouchers, hotel breaks, cinema vouchers, or meals out.
  
- **Hubs for all**
  - The Hubs for All project was launched at the end of August 2023 to provide care and wellbeing support from dedicated staff in a mainstream community setting to both older people and their carers. Hubs for All offers person-centred support and social engagement for older people, as well as much needed respite and signposting for their unpaid carers.
  
- **Support groups and activities in Hubs and Libraries including Dementia Cafes**
  - A diverse range of inclusive activities and events take place in Cardiff's Hubs and Libraries with the aim of improving wellbeing which welcome older people and their unpaid carers. This includes arts and craft groups, physical activity groups such as Tai Chi, walking groups, badminton, gardening groups etc, Dementia Cafe's, Sporting reminiscence, Social and wellbeing groups.
  
- **Supporting Regional Partnership funded Short Breaks programme**
  - The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (RPB) provided funding to 8 third sector organisations who delivered 1334 Shortbreaks during 2024/2025 financial year.
  - Delivery since start of funding in 2022-2023 – 5033 carers accessed a short break via a regionally funded third sector organisation. 26 different third sector organisations have received funding over the 3 years delivering 34 different schemes.

## The extent to which the demand for carers support services is being assessed and addressed, and current levels of unmet needs

### 4. The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment (2022–2027) highlights:

- **Unmet Needs:** Many carers report emotional and financial strain, with limited access to tailored support
- **Low Uptake of Carers Assessments:** Despite statutory duties, uptake remains low, partly due to carers not identifying themselves or declining assessments
- **COVID-19 Impact:** The pandemic exacerbated isolation and reduced face-to-face engagement, affecting carers' ability to access services

### Caring for Carers Survey

In order to learn more about the challenges of unpaid carers and to gain insight into the barriers as well as the opportunities for them to take a break from their caring duties a Caring For Carers Consultation was launched in December 2022. 656 unpaid carers participated in the survey:-

#### Key findings

- 51.2% indicated that they were unaware of any options that can help
- 69.2% said they have never accessed any help that allowed them to take a break

It was evident that a large proportion of the survey participants wanted to get involved in future consultations and shaping services that had the potential to positively impact them.

#### Co-Production

Cardiff Council approached Carers Wales, to deliver a series of focus groups that aimed to help review and reshape support that is provided unpaid carers including Carers Assessments and training and support. Carers Wales in conjunction with the focus group participants compiled a series of recommendations which have been used to inform improvements and shape services that better meet the needs of unpaid carers.

#### Improvements to Carers Assessment Service:

- Carers Assessment Service was integrated into the Independent Living Service in April 2024 expanding the offer to Unpaid Carers applying a whole system approach to the support available and embedding the team at the first point of contact
- Creation of fact sheets and guides detailing the carers assessment process
- Implemented a carers satisfaction survey to ensure carers are able to feedback areas for improvement as part of the carers assessment process
- Recruitment of an additional 3 Carers Assessment Officers
- Reduced the number of people awaiting a carers assessment from 330 to 83 (August 25)
- Introduction of a Home Visit service for carers assessments
- Outreach drop-in advice, information and assistance sessions held in a range of locations across Cardiff
- Carers assessment officers now trusted assessors for Tech Enabled Care provision
- In October 2024 a dedicated phonenumber was launched for unpaid carers. Unpaid carers are currently engaged in co-creating a new name for the phonenumber
- Work is taking place on the development of clear outcome focused carer support plans and reviews

### **Roll out of “Carers Advice and Awareness” training**

- Internally developed training co-produced with local carers
- Training has been delivered to Communities staff including Hubs, Libraries and Advice staff. In addition the Carers team and staff delivering financial assessments have received the training.
- Level 1 and 2 Carers Advice and Awareness training has been made available. Level 1 has been included in all new Hubs, Libraries and Advice staff mandatory induction training
- Training is available as a standalone course and available to all Council staff
- Internally delivering TuVida Carer Friendly training in partnership to support attainment of Carer Friendly accreditation for services

### **Census Review**

- Reviews of the 2021 census data have been taken undertaken to gain greater insight into a City wide analysis of population needs and demographics in relation to Unpaid Carers. This has been of particular use in identifying areas of the City with low levels of Unpaid carer self identification where further work is needed.

### **Unpaid Carers of Neurodivergent People**

- Following a Community Wellbeing based survey in relation to activities and groups a high proportion of Unpaid Carers who are caring for Neurodivergent people responded. The feedback received was a lack of

support groups that met their needs. Initial work has taken place to develop a co-produced group. This work is ongoing.

In addition the approach that Cardiff Council is taking to ensuring that supporting unpaid carers is everybody's business has been outlined in the wide range of services and initiatives detailed in **section 1** above.

### **The role of Regional Partnership Boards in the provision of support for unpaid carers, and the effectiveness of current commissioning practices for services**

5. The RPB plays a key role in coordinating support. Key initiatives include:-

- **Unpaid Carers Charter:** Relunched in 2025, it outlines commitments from NHS, local authorities, and third-sector partners to improve identification, recognition, and support for carers
- **Short Breaks Scheme:** Delivered in partnership with Carers Trust Wales and C3SC, this scheme has been praised for improving carers' wellbeing and reducing isolation
- **Commitment to raise awareness of unpaid carers rights** and available support to ethnic minority groups
- **Development of Unpaid Carers Wellbeing handbook** to signpost carers for mental health and wellbeing support with a digital counterpart hosted on DEWIS

A robust delivery plan is put in place on an annual basis which focuses on driving forward improvements.

The 2025-26 plan priority areas are:-

#### **Carer Friendly**

1. Increase awareness of unpaid carers within health and social care through new carer friendly training
2. Increase awareness of the Unpaid Carers Charter through comms campaign and co-produced evaluation
3. Co-produce the 3rd annual Unpaid Carers Assembly and develop wider engagement/coproduction

#### **Information and Advice**

1. Embed new models of Information and Advice for unpaid carers into business as usual, following 24-25 arrangements
2. Develop awareness campaigns for underrepresented communities

3. Develop local resource and online presence to signpost carers for mental health and wellbeing support
4. Increase discharge support for unpaid carers through designated hospital based support staff

### **Respite/Short Breaks**

1. Commission the 3rd sector to provide short breaks for unpaid carers
2. Improve understanding and signposting of local opportunities for respite

### **Young Carers/In Schools Programme**

1. Evaluate and develop the existing model of young carers support (including support and training for schools)
2. Exploring regional (AIDI) Young Carers ID cards
3. Co-produce the 2nd annual Young Carers Celebration event

### **Partnership Collaboration**

1. Improve links across other RPB programmes

## **The actions required to improve the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provisions for unpaid carers (including Carers Assessments and support plans).**

### **5. Right to Well-being**

- Carers Assessment team responsive to wellbeing needs of Unpaid Carers and operate a referral system to sources of support where needed
- Carer Friendly Hubs and Libraries – Cardiff's Hubs and Library Service are working towards Carer Friendly accreditation. This includes the delivery of specialist book resources, training of staff, accessible buildings and activity and events that support the wellbeing of both unpaid carers and the people they look after.
- Events and Activity programmes are delivered within Hub and Libraries that are accessible for unpaid carers and the people that they look after
- Wellbeing Mentor Service that provides low level mental health support and supports re-connection with the community. The service also adopts a referral model to other sources for support where needed.
- Delivery of a volunteer led Befriending Service for unpaid Carers to provide emotional support

- Support provided to Unpaid Carers in relation to individuals attending our Care Hubs and Hubs for All provision. This includes signposting, identifying and helping to alleviate unpaid Carer stress as well as enabling community triaging when the needs of the individuals potentially escalate.
- Current workstream to develop a Carers Handbook in collaboration with Age Cymru and Compassionate Cymru to address anticipatory grief, impact on the unpaid carer during transition to residential care, bereavement and life after Caring. This will include localised signposting to sources of support.

### **Right to Information, Advice, and Assistance**

The reach of the Care'Diff newsletter, which provides information about a range of services for unpaid carers, has grown since it was launched in April 2023. There are currently over 140 different distribution points in GP surgeries, pharmacies, Hubs/Libraries, hospitals, leisure centres and 3rd sector run community centres, this network is constantly growing. The newsletter contains targeted updates for unpaid carers when new services or support are available. It shares stories of unpaid carers experiences and signposts to community support and local authority services. Finally, it is also used to request further information and encourage unpaid carers to reach out about their experiences so we can improve our future offer.

To further support unpaid carers, branded 'Carers Corners' have been installed into all Hubs and Libraries to provide up to date information and guidance in printed formats.

The Age Friendly Cardiff website was launched in October 2023 and includes a 'Looking after others' page which focuses on unpaid carer information

Cardiff's Adult Services website is currently being redeveloped and will focus on prevention as well as working with unpaid carers to ensure that the information provided meets their requirements.

### **Duty to Assess Carers' Needs**

Cardiff's carer assessment has been redeveloped in collaboration with unpaid carers. This has attracted positive feedback.

The availability of the new assessment has been promoted widely to communities. Promotion has included:-

- Corporate Press Releases
- Cardiff Council Corporate and Carediff social media platforms
- Articles in Care'Diff Newsletter

The promotion of the rights of unpaid carers to an assessment as well as the improved offer is an ongoing process.

Work will continue to expand Carer friendly training to community frontline teams outside of adult services to support staff in other settings to identify carers and ensure those who require an assessment are effectively signposted to the Carers Team.

### **Support Planning**

Care and support plans are in place however work is underway to create improved outcome focussed support plans which will include regular reviews to be responsive to changing circumstances with the aim of preventing the occurrence of crisis

### **Active Offer of Welsh Language**

Welsh Language officers are available within Cardiff Council's First Point of Contact team who are able to respond in the unpaid carers preferred language from the outset.

### **Advocacy**

Cardiff Council commissions Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Gateway to provide advocacy support to unpaid carers where required.

### **Co-production and Participation**

Alongside ongoing co-production as part of the Care'diff platform Cardiff Adult Services have established the 'Adult Services Innovation and Transformation Forum (Section 16)' in line with Section 16 of the Social Services and Wellbeing act.

A Transformation and Innovation Forum has been established to respond to the requirements of section 16 . The forum aims to rebalance the adult social care market in Cardiff, enhancing our ability to deliver high-quality, person-centred services. To ensure good representation on the forum, partners have been recruited from health, Care providers and unpaid carer champions to represent the people who receive services.

The involvement of the unpaid carers is crucial in ensuring that the forum's work is informed by lived experience. The forum has made consultation and involvement in the commissioning process a focus this year.