

# Understanding and supporting the needs of carers: The carers strategy

Consultation document

Spring / Summer 2016

2016 – 2019

## 1. Introduction

This document is the consultation document for the Joint Carers Strategy between South Gloucestershire Council and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. The following organisations have been directly involved in developing it and are signed up to delivering the commitments in it alongside the council and Clinical Commissioning Group:

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust  
Sirona Care and Health  
The Carers Support Centre  
North Bristol NHS Trust

This consultation document sets out a way forward for the next three years for how we identify, support and enable carers of all ages to balance their caring responsibilities with a life outside caring. It has been developed with a group of carers and ex-carers, as well as with key partner organisations.

We know that the demand for health and social care is rising. This is due to mainly to our ageing population, and we celebrate the fact that we are living longer. To maintain good health and to stay well we need to work together as a community to provide care and support both when people are well and when their health is not so good. Without a significant increase in resources to meet these challenges it is clear that we need to work differently to meet these needs, now and in the future.

Therefore this strategy focusses on how we can use the resources we have and work together to effectively identify and support carers.

In South Gloucestershire we want to make real changes for older people and over the coming months we are consulting on three issues that significantly impact on older people's wellbeing: dementia services, falls prevention and support for carers. Many carers care for older people, and many are older people themselves.

These matters do not affect anyone in isolation. All of the three strategies we are consulting on can be part of an individual's daily life and it makes sense to seek people's views on them at the same time. We would like to encourage you to take the time to let us have your comments and feedback on any one or all of these draft strategies.

However we recognise that becoming a carer can happen at any age. We are also asking adult carers under the age of 50, and young carers under the age of 18, what they think our priorities should be. Young adult carers aged 18 to 25 are also an important group that we want to hear from, as they can experience very different pressures from other adult carers.

The consultation survey asks a number of questions of carers and the organisations who are in touch with carers or support them:

**Do you agree with the priorities we have identified over the next three years?  
What do you feel are the most important tasks for us to do?  
What can we do differently to most effectively support carers?**

**If you are responding as an organisation, how can we best work together to ensure carers are identified, their needs are assessed and they are supported in their role?**

The deadline for responses is 22 August 2016. We encourage all carers to respond in whichever way suits them best. We are really keen to hear from young carers and young adult carers. We will also be arranging opportunities to meet carers and gain face to face feedback. Your responses will help to shape the strategy and action plan that comes from it.

Further information and the survey is available on our consultation webpage: [www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation) or from your local South Gloucestershire library and One Stop Shops.

You can find out more and tell us your views by:

**Email:** [consultation@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@southglos.gov.uk)

**Write to:** FREEPOST Plus RTCT-JXLE-EETT, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Carers Strategy Consultation, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, BRISTOL, BS15 9TR

**Phone:** 01454 868408

If you would like someone to talk to your group or organisation about these proposals, please contact us using the details above to arrange.

## **2. Why carers matter**

Many of us will be carers at some point in our lives. It is a role that can creep up gradually and for some it can be a life-long role. For others it can come unexpectedly and suddenly following a crisis. Carers contribute enormously not only to the individuals and families they support, but also to the health and social care system. If carers were to stop caring, it would cost councils and the NHS £132 billion per year to provide replacement care and support. <sup>i</sup>

Caring can impact significantly on all aspects of a carer's life and wellbeing, and it is important that carers receive information and support in their caring role. Supporting carers is in all our interests

## **Who are carers?**

“Anyone can become a carer. Carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be of any age. Many feel they are doing what anyone else would in the same situation – looking after their mother, son or best friend, and just getting on with it.”<sup>ii</sup>

Carers, sometimes called family carers, are relatives, friends or neighbours who look after someone who cannot manage at home without them. This could be caring for a relative (a parent, grandparent, sibling, child or other relative) or a spouse, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or who has mental health or substance misuse problems. Carers do not necessarily live with the person they are looking after.

Carers can be of any age, including young carers. A young carer is “...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age) ... This relates to care for any family member who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances.”<sup>iii</sup>

A young carer becomes vulnerable when:

“... the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, risking impacting on his or her emotional or physical well-being or educational achievement and life chances.”<sup>iv</sup>

Parent carers are adult members of families with children with additional needs.

## **Facts about carers**

6.5 million people in the UK are carers and this number continues to rise.<sup>v</sup>

Every year over 2.1 million adults become carers and almost as many people find that their caring responsibilities come to an end.

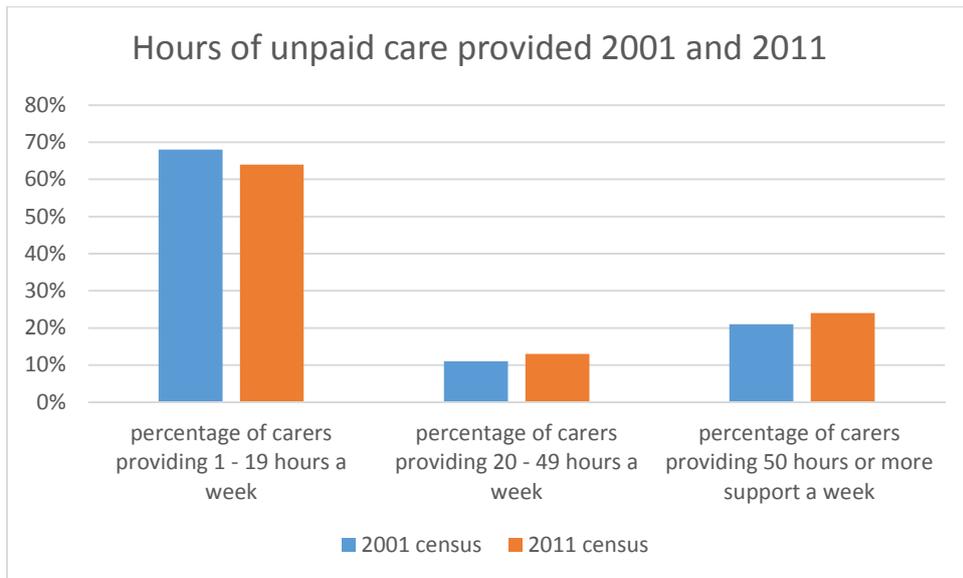
3 in 5 people will become a carer at some point in their lives, women have a 50% chance of providing care by the time they are 59, men by the time they are 75.

Data from the 2011 Census shows there are 27,639 carers in South Gloucestershire - 10.5% of the total population are carers, slightly above the national average of 10.3%. The proportion of older adults aged 50 and over who are caring is higher than the national average. There are 524 young carers aged 0 – 15, but this is likely to be an underestimate. There are 817 carers from black and minority ethnic communities in South Gloucestershire.

Hidden carers are people who don't recognise themselves as carers, and don't seek support, which can affect their ability to continue caring. Other carers can face particular disadvantage and stigma, due to the circumstances of the person they care for, or their cultural background. For example, carers of people with mental ill health or substance misuse can find it hard to access support, and young carers can feel reluctant to come forward through fear of impacts on the family.

24% of carers in South Gloucestershire (or over 6,600 carers) provide 50 hours or more a week of support. <sup>vi</sup> Figure one sets out the hours of care provided, as reported in the 2001 and 2011 census:

**Figure one**



The number of people aged 65 and over in South Gloucestershire who are carers is set to rise – figure two sets out the projected increase.<sup>vii</sup>

**Figure two**

	Number of people aged 65 and over who are caring	Percentage increase from 2015 figures
2015	7,798	
2020	8,425	8%
2025	9,234	18%
2030	10,442	34%

By 2045, the number of carers of all ages in South Gloucestershire is predicted to rise by 60% to approximately 43,000 carers.<sup>viii</sup>

### **The Impact of Caring**

Caring can affect people’s health and wellbeing in a number of ways:

- Juggling work and care - over three million people juggle care with work, however the demands of caring mean that 1 in 5 carers are forced to give up work altogether.<sup>ix</sup>
- Risks to educational attainment, life chances and opportunities for young carers. These impacts can carry into young adulthood, with impacts on physical and mental health and employment and training opportunities.
- Financially carers can face a steep drop in income if they have to leave work or reduce their hours to care, sometimes a double loss of salary if they are caring for a partner who also has to give up work as a result of their illness or disability.<sup>x</sup>
- 82% of carers report that caring has had a negative impact on their health. By putting the person they care for first, carers can put their own needs last, struggling to find time to exercise, eat healthy meals, see friends and family or see their GP. Carers' mental wellbeing is at risk, with carers vulnerable to stress, loneliness and isolation.<sup>xi</sup> Carers who care for 50 hours or more per week are at increased risk of ill health.

### **3. The National Picture**

Since the 2008 Department of Health publication *Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities*, there has been consistency in the national strategic vision for carers: there has been a focus on carers being recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities; and on support tailored to meet individuals' needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring.

*Recognised, Valued and Supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy (2010)*, and the *Carers Strategy Second National Action Plan 2014-2016* have been subsequently published. The four current priority areas are:

**Priority area 1:** Identifying carers at an early stage, recognising their contribution and involving them from the outset in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages.

**Priority area 2:** Carers releasing and realising their potential in education and employment. This encompasses support for young carers, young adult carers and carers of working age.

**Priority area 3:** Carers having a family and community life alongside caring, personalising support for carers around the life, goals and needs of the carer and providing good quality information, advice and support.

**Priority area 4:** Supporting carers to stay healthy, mentally and physically.

### **The Care Act 2014**

The Care Act represents a significant step forward for the rights of carers, and, for the first time, equal rights with the people for whom they care. Councils have to meet eligible needs for support for adult carers of adults, and understand the outcomes the carer wishes to achieve in day to day life. Carers assessments must explore whether a carer is willing and able to care and continue to care.

Councils have a duty to promote an individual's wellbeing, for carers and for people needing care and support. This should be done in the context of whole family support, and includes protection from abuse and neglect as part of the definition of wellbeing.

### **The Children and Families Act 2014 – Parent Carers**

Parents will have much more choice and control about the support they and their children receive. This includes a “local offer” of services for all children and young people with additional needs; a more streamlined assessment process; a new Education, Health and Care Plan for children and young people aged up to 25 produced with parents and young people; and the offer of a personal budget for families and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

There is also a more consistent approach to the support for parent carers alongside other carers: parent carers are no longer required to be providing a substantial amount of care on a regular basis to receive an assessment.

### **The Children and Families Act 2014 – Young Carers**

The act significantly strengthens the rights of young carers. All young carers have a right to an assessment regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it. Councils must take a whole family approach so the needs of everyone in the family are considered. This should trigger action from both children's and adults services – assessing why a child is caring, what needs to change and what would help the family to prevent children from taking on this responsibility in the first place.

### **The NHS Five Year Forward View**

People tell us that local health and social care does not always work well for them. It can be complicated and difficult for people to move from one service to another. We also know that many hospital services would be better delivered in the community or the need for admission avoided through people getting help earlier. More integrated health and care and more emphasis on early intervention and services delivered closer to people's homes is supported by NHS England's 2014 Five Year Forward View.

### **Safeguarding is Everyone's Business**

It is important to recognise that carers and the people they care for may be vulnerable and at risk of abuse and neglect. The Care Act identifies circumstances in which a carer could be involved in a situation that may require a safeguarding response, such as:

- a carer may witness or speak up about abuse or neglect
- a carer may experience intentional or unintentional harm from the adult they are trying to support or from professionals and organisations they are in contact with
- a carer may unintentionally or intentionally harm or neglect the adult they support on their own or with others

A carer's assessment is an important opportunity to consider whether it would be possible to provide information, or support that prevents abuse or neglect from occurring, for example, by providing training to the carer about the condition that the adult they care for has or to support them to care more safely.

Our objective continues to be to prevent and reduce the risk of significant harm to carers and those they care for from abuse or other types of exploitation, whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control over their lives and in making informed choices. Accountability and transparency are required by all partners in delivering safeguarding.

#### **4) Our Commitment to Carers in South Gloucestershire**

Our shared commitment to carers is: carers will be recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities, and respected as expert partners in care. The council will work with NHS services, its own staff and voluntary and community sector groups to identify carers as early as possible in their caring journey. We will ensure they have access to information on what is available and support them to maintain their own health and wellbeing and to achieve a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring. This applies to all carers, regardless of their age. We will continue to ensure carers are partners in the development of services and that we listen to what carers tell us. Carers are everybody's business.

Our aims are in line with those from the Second National Action Plan 2014 – 2016 and the National Strategy (2008):

- All efforts are made to identify carers, so they can access the information, advice and support that is available
- Carers feel their knowledge and experience are valued by health and social care professionals and that they are recognised and supported as an expert care partner
- Carers are involved in developing local strategies and services, so that services effectively meet carers' needs
- Carers are enabled to fulfil their education and employment potential
- Carers receive personalised support alongside those they support, enabling them to have a family and community life and a life outside caring
- Carers are supported to stay mentally and physically well, and are treated with dignity
- Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role. This will involve supporting carers with information on their

choices, ensuring they are aware of benefits to support them, and supporting them to enter or stay in work

- Children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive and to enjoy positive childhoods.

The aims for carers are also in line with the South Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 – 2016 (currently being revised), whose key principles and priority themes reflect the focus on identifying and supporting carers.

## **5) Achievements from the last strategy**

The South Gloucestershire Joint Carers Strategy 2011- 2014 was the second Joint Carers strategy for South Gloucestershire, and was produced by a partnership of carers' representatives, local organisations and agencies. The strategy set out five key aims, based on the National Carers Strategy (2008). Action plans were produced relating to the five aims, with an additional Young Carers Implementation Plan. Multi-agency groups met to make progress against the five aims.

We have listened to what carers have told us throughout the implementation of the last strategy.

Here are some of the key highlights since the strategy was published:

- Carers have worked in partnership to develop our work through the Carers Advisory Partnership and the Carers Strategy Implementation Group. Wider carers' views have been gathered through Carers Open Meetings. Our thanks go to the carers who have worked alongside us
- The development of a network of diverse carers groups, with carers making decisions on how they run their groups, who supports them to do this and how they spend the funding allocated to them. There are currently 19 groups plus a carers choir
- We developed a new way of identifying and registering carers. The number of carers registered is just under 4,000
- We created a carer's assessment process, so that more carers have had access to an assessment and have received support in their caring role
- Through the work of the Health project at the Carers Support Centre the number of carers on practice registers doubled between 2012 and 2015. The creation of a GP app and information has supported this
- We have been supporting carers through the hospital discharge process since 2013. 241 carers in South Gloucestershire were provided with 1:1 support, advice and information during the year 2014/2015 and this continues to rise each year
- We ran two Celebrating Carers events, a day of debates and workshops to identify new carers and recognise carers for all they do
- A range of community and voluntary sector groups received three year funding from the council, starting April 2015
- We were awarded government funding to support carers to stay in work
- We secured external funding to support young adult carers, aged 16 – 25

- We developed the Young Carers Zone, a dedicated space for young carers to meet, develop and receive support
- The development of young carers support groups in schools
- Young Carers' Voice has influenced the development of services and how young carers are supported.

## **6) What we need to do to meet our commitment**

Whilst there has been considerable progress since the last strategy, there remains much work to do to identify and support carers, and deliver the four aims of the current national action plan. We will ensure that all we do is in line with the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014

These are the areas we need to focus on to ensure carers are identified and supported:

### **Priority area 1: Identifying carers at an early stage, recognising their contribution and involving them in designing local care and in planning individual care packages.**

- Identify as many carers and young carers as possible, including self funders and “hidden” carers (either because they do not recognise themselves as a carer or because they don't wish to identify as a carer due to stigma)
- Take account of the needs of carers in all strategic developments, commissioning, engagement and service delivery
- Ensure carers' voices are heard, and they know how to make them heard, so that all service commissioning and provision is sensitive to them and benefits from their input
- Ensure that carers are actively involved in monitoring the progress of this strategy and influence thinking and decision making
- Listen and act on what carers tell us through their engagement with services and through the National Carers Survey.

### **Priority area 2: Carers releasing and realising their potential in education and employment.**

- Embed and develop how young carers will be assessed and their needs met so that they are not caring inappropriately
- Continue to work to understand the needs of young adult carers
- Continue to support the Carers in Paid Employment Project, and contribute to national learning on what helps working carers stay in work.

### **Priority area 3: Carers having a family and community life alongside caring, personalising support for carers and providing good quality information, advice and support.**

- Make the offer of support to carers clear, so that they are aware of what help is available and how to get it

- Ensure carers have the information, advice and support they need in a way that is meaningful to them
- Work with others so that carers are recognised and supported as widely as possible, and can easily access broader opportunities. This will apply to universal services, which are services such as libraries that can be used by anyone in South Gloucestershire
- Ensure support is equitable, proportionate, appropriate and personal.
- Continue to develop how carers of disabled children and young people are supported
- Ensure carers of people of working age with mental health issues are identified and supported
- Ensure there are breaks from caring in ways that recognise that carers are individuals with different needs
- Explore whether there is enough short break provision and if this is meeting carers' needs. For carers of people living with dementia this needs to be more creative, flexible and accessible, including options for overnight carer and increased sitting services
- Explore how emergency support for carers is working, and if it is meeting need.

**Priority area 4: Supporting carers to stay healthy, mentally and physically.**

- Work with communities to build upon the network of informal support for carers
- Promote existing health checks to carers to ensure they benefit, and make the case for additional health checks for carers of all ages
- Identify ways in which in which carers can feel more connected and less isolated
- Continue to work with health professionals and support carers who are in contact with NHS services through our Health Team Work in local hospitals and GP practices
- Consider how we can support carers organisations to increase the number of training sessions in relation to carers supporting people with dementia.

**7. How we will work together to make progress**

We will analyse the feedback we receive from carers and organisations from this consultation, and ensure it influences the final version of Understanding and Supporting the Needs of Carers. We will report on what we heard from the consultation, and how this has influenced the strategy.

The development of support for carers will be overseen by the Carers Advisory Partnership, which brings together voluntary and community sector organisations with statutory services and carer representatives.

The development of action plans relating to Understanding and Supporting the Needs of Carers will be the responsibility of the Carers Strategy Implementation Group. This group reports to the Carers Advisory Partnership and is made up of carers representatives and partners from the statutory and voluntary and community

sector. We will work with colleagues in children’s services and the voluntary sector to develop specific plans for young carers, to ensure their needs and outcomes are met.

We have prepared an initial equalities impact assessment as part of this consultation and we will review this in the light of what we hear during the consultation.

As support for carers develops, we will focus on how we measure the impacts of support and any new developments.

We will ensure we link to other strategies and commissioning, so that outcomes for carers are embedded across our wider work.

Once we have the final version of Understanding and Supporting the Needs of Carers, we will develop a way of communicating the progress we are making against our aims and the changes that are happening.

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<sup>i</sup> Carers UK Facts and figures <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-releases/facts-and-figures>

<sup>ii</sup> Carers Trust

<sup>iii</sup> Section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014

<sup>iv</sup> Carers Trust

<sup>v</sup> Facts about carers, Care UK 2014

<sup>vi</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>vii</sup> Projecting Older People Population Information System

<sup>viii</sup> Carers Trust Webpages – facts about carers

<sup>ix</sup> Carers UK 2011

<sup>x</sup> State of Caring Report 2015, Carers UK

<sup>xi</sup> State of Caring Report 2015, Carers UK