

# Medway Joint Carers Strategy

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Championing Carers of Medway



Created in Partnership with  
Medway Carers and Stakeholders

2019 - 2025

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## Foreword



As a Council, we recognise the essential contribution that carers make to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of Medway residents. Supporting Medway carers, both young and old to continue to carry out this valuable role is key to maintaining a balanced and person centred health and care environment.

Over the past few years, local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have been presented with a range of new and different challenges. This has led to the development of new and innovative models of care. One key theme shared by many of these new models, is an emphasis on how unpaid carers support people being discharged from hospital to live independently in their own homes.

Carers provide a more personalised approach to care because they are experts by experience. They know the person they care for better than any health and social care professional. The support they give makes sure the cared for person receives appropriate care at the right time, in the right place and when required.

The strategy has been co-produced with carers and key partners. It demonstrates Medway's commitment to carers and sets out new ways of making sure carers are valued and receive the recognition and support they deserve.

The Medway Joint Carers Strategy is to be extended to meet the same timelines as the Peoples and Adult Social Care Strategies, both of which run from 2021 to 2025, to ensure a collaborative approach. The Peoples and Adult Social Care Strategies 2021-2025 will align key outcomes agreed within the Medway Joint Carers Strategy.

### **Strategic Summary**

The strategy describes how Medway health and social care will work with key stakeholders and the voluntary sector over the next five years to make sure carers across Medway are identified and supported to meet their needs.



The Care Act 2014<sup>1</sup> and Children and Families Act 2014<sup>2</sup> placed a legal duty on Local Authorities in England to assess and identify the needs of carers. Local authorities must offer personalised support to carers to improve their wellbeing. The NHS has also pledged its support to carers. In 2014 NHS England's published its Commitment to Carers<sup>3</sup> setting out the priorities and actions of the NHS to support the physical and mental health of carers. Recently the NHS has published the NHS Long Term Plan<sup>4</sup>. This contains a number of new pledges by the NHS to ensure that carers are considered in the way the NHS delivers care.

The 2011 census<sup>5</sup> found there were six million unpaid carers in England and Wales and 166,363 young carers aged under 18 years old. The number of carers continues to grow. There are over 25,000 identified carers in Medway<sup>6</sup>. However, the actual true number of those providing unpaid care, is likely to be much higher.

This strategy provides insight into the large amount of unpaid care provided by carers. It describes how the care they provide helps the person they care for to remain living independently for as long as possible. They care for their partner, sibling, relative or friends out of love, duty, or devotion but often do not know they are entitled to support.

The strategy also describes the carers support services in place across Medway and examines how supporting carers, is not just about delivering services, but about providing support, information and advice that recognises the valuable contribution that carers make, while helping them to manage their own needs.

The strategy has been co-created with a range of partners and stakeholders including statutory, community and voluntary sector organisations and in consultation with adult and young carers. It reflects the key priorities set out in the National Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting Carers Today<sup>7</sup>.

The strategy is designed to influence health and social care services and non-statutory services delivered within the wider community to ensure they understand and respond to the needs of carers.

The Medway Joint Carers' Strategy has six key priorities:

- 1. Identification and recognition of all carers in Medway**
- 2. Provision of good quality Information, advice, guidance and support**
- 3. Ensure carers access and are involved in assessment and support planning**
- 4. High quality carers support services**
- 5. Support to maintain physical, emotional health and wellbeing**
- 6. Respecting the expertise that carers have**

The success of the strategy will be determined by a robust implementation plan that will set out our priorities. It will describe what we think good looks like and how we

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<sup>1</sup> Care Act 2014

<sup>2</sup> The Children and Families Act 2014

<sup>3</sup> NHS England's Commitment to Carers 2014

<sup>4</sup> NHS Long Term Plan

<sup>5</sup> Census 2011

<sup>6</sup> Her Majesty's Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2015

<sup>7</sup> Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting Carers Today



are going to achieve and measure success. A partnership approach will be used to deliver the Strategy to make sure all aspects of commissioning and health and social care policy that affect carers in Medway are considered.

## Introduction

People, within Medway and across the UK, are on average living much longer. For many people living longer is associated with a poorer quality of life. People are experiencing chronic complex long-term health conditions and this means the number of people requiring care and support is continuing to rise. This has resulted in an increasing number of people taking on a caring role at some point in their lives.

Unpaid carers in the UK make an important and undervalued contribution not only to loved ones, neighbours and friends, but to the very sustainability of the NHS. Carers save the health and social care system £132 billion pounds per year. Medway carers alone contribute £540 million a year<sup>8</sup> to the local health and social care system. To make this contribution, carers often make great sacrifices to support the people they look after. If a small percentage of people in Medway were unable to continue caring, the economic impact would be significant.

Caring can be rewarding and fulfilling but the impact on them can be insufficiently recognised or valued. This is because carers do not often recognise themselves as carers and consequently do not access support services. This means the contribution they make to their communities is not easy to measure.

## The Vision

The success of implementing the strategy lies firmly in a collaborative and joined up approach. Bringing together carers, young carers, health and social care professionals, and the voluntary sector.

Medway Council has worked closely with The Medway Carers Partnership, Medway CCG, adult and young carers and key representatives from different organisations to develop the following vision:

*Medway Council, key partners and stakeholders across health and social care and the voluntary community sector will work in partnership with carers, making sure carers of all ages from all parts of the community are identified, valued and supported to have a quality life of their own.*

The strategy sets out how we will support carers and the person they care for, to live full, meaningful and active lives. How we will help people to live independently for as long as possible, and to play a full part in their local communities. We want to recognise carers in a timely manner. Ensuring that in different health, social care or community settings they are treated with respect, valued and supported.

## Legislation and Policy Context

The Care Act 2014 gives local authorities a legal duty to understand better their role in supporting carers. It made it easier for local authorities and partners to have a

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<sup>8</sup> Carer UK State of Caring 2015



wider focus on the whole population in need of care, rather than just those with eligible needs. This includes promoting carer well-being and making sure that every person who receives support, either by statutory services or funded by themselves, will have choice and control over the way that support is provided to them.

New duties for local authorities:

- To assess a carer's need for support
- To provide a support plan to eligible carers and carry out an assessment so that support is provided when the wellbeing of a carer is being affected by their caring
- To provide, or arrange services to prevent or delay the need for care and support
- To provide information and advice about care services and how to access them

The Children & Families Act came into effect on 1st April 2014. This gives local authorities a duty to give young carers and parent carers the right to a carer's assessment and to make sure their eligible needs are met. Local authorities are required to work together with health, housing, welfare and employment services to make services more joined up.

In 2014, NHS England published the Five Year Forward View and NHS England's Commitment to Carers. These documents highlighted the important role that carers play to helping the NHS. The NHS promised to support the wellbeing of carers and to recognise and respect them in their caring role. It promised to involve carers in discussions about the person they care for, and to share relevant information. It promised to provide flexible care wherever possible and signpost carers to the relevant services.

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan, 2019, the NHS commits to continuing to identify and support carers. Particularly those from vulnerable communities. The NHS will encourage the national adoption of carer's passports to help health professionals identify someone as a carer. Quality marks for carer-friendly GP practices will help carers identify GP services that will support their needs. The NHS wants to help carers understand the out-of-hours options available to them and make sure that appropriate back-up support is in place for when they need it in an emergency.

## **Local Strategic Context**

The population of Medway is approximately 278,000 and is estimated to grow to approximately 330,000 by 2035. Over 21 per cent of Medway's population is aged 65 or over. As the population grows and more people are living longer, more people are living with long term health and social care needs. This is leading to an increase in the number of unpaid carers and the amount of care they provide.

The number of patients in Medway with one or more long-term conditions is increasing. A long-term condition can include a range of conditions such as Asthma, Coronary Heart Disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Diabetes,



Epilepsy, Heart Failure, Hypertension, Learning difficulties, Osteoporosis and Stroke.<sup>9</sup>

- 53,547 people have one long term condition
- 19,847 have two long term conditions
- 12,879 have three long term conditions
- 28,012 people have a common mental health disorder
- 10,459 people have alcohol dependency problems
- 4250 working age adults have a learning disability, this is expected to increase to 4,440 by 2025
- 2,858 people over 65 have dementia age and this is expected to increase to 5,195 by 2035

The strategy supports the priorities set out in a range of local strategic plans. Medway's Council Plan 2016/17 - 2020/21 describes how the council will provide the best possible services for residents and describes how it wants to support people in Medway to realise their potential. This includes ensuring that older and disabled people are supported to live independently, and communities are healthy and active.

Medway Council's Adult Social Care Strategy 'Getting Better Together' states "We will support the people of Medway to live full, active lives; to live independently for as long as possible, and to play a full part in their local communities". Adult Social Care in Medway works in a strength-based way using the 'Three Conversation' approach to deliver a more person centred approach to care and support. This makes best use of a person's strengths before considering the use of traditional social care service provision.

The vision of the Medway Health and Wellbeing Strategy is that the lives of all people in Medway 'will be as full, meaningful and healthy as possible'. This will be achieved through the following themes: give every child a good start, enable our older population to live independently and well, prevent early death and increase years of healthy life, improve mental and physical health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.

It is recognised the important role carers play in supporting new models of delivering care. There is a more joined-up approach between NHS Medway and Medway Council to deliver out-of-hospital services and care in the community. It brings together a range of clinical services, health and social care expertise, and the voluntary and community sector to provide more 'joined up' ways of working.

The NHS, social care and public health in Kent and Medway are also working together to develop a sustainability and transformation partnership (STP). This will transform the health and wellbeing of people in Kent and Medway. It will determine the quality of care people receive by ensuring services are delivered across Kent and Medway in more joined-up ways.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Long-term conditions audit [dated 10 July 2019], iCAP Central



## Who is a Carer?



A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to illness or disability relies on their support. Unpaid carers are the largest source of care and support to older people, disabled people and others with care and support needs. Without this support, the needs of the cared for person would likely increase and lead them to become more reliant on more expensive packages of care and support.

Carers can be anyone of any age. They can be from a diverse range of social or economic backgrounds. They could be elderly, frail, disabled or suffering from long term illness themselves. Many carers don't recognise themselves as a carer. They see themselves as someone's parent, a husband or a wife, a son or daughter or a friend or neighbour who is supporting a loved one or friend.

Some carers, such as those from travelling or ethnic communities are not traditionally recognised by members of their communities as a carer and seldom come into contact with support services. Other groups of carers such as carers from the military community, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community groups are also less likely to be accessing services.

Some carers may require a range of specific support if they are looking after someone who has complex needs - suffering with mental health issues, substance misuse or dementia. For carers looking after someone who is terminally ill it can be especially challenging and stressful. Juggling care needs in the knowledge that they are going to lose the person they love.

Some carers known as 'Sandwich Carers' maybe caring for an elderly relative alongside raising children and going to work. This is especially true for parent carers who maybe looking after a child with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or





terminally ill but also trying to look after other children, elderly parents and go to work.

Older carers can be particularly vulnerable. They maybe frail and experiencing health issues themselves but also looking after a loved one with complex health needs. Adequate home care support must be in place for the person they care for.

## About Carers in Medway



Carers UK predict that there will be a 40 per cent rise in the number of carers needed by 2037, resulting in an estimated nine million carers nationally.

According to the Census 2011:

- 6.5 million people in the UK are carers
- Over 1.6 million carers provide more than 50 hours of caring a week
- 1.2 million people in England aged 65 are providing unpaid care to a disabled, seriously ill or older relative or friend
- 166,363 young carers are aged under 18 years old

Recent polling published by Carers UK has suggested there are now as many as 8.8 million adult carers in the UK. The number of people aged 65 years or over who are caring has grown to over 2 million

There is currently no central registration to allow us to determine the number of carers in Medway. However, the number of carers is increasing and most of them are in the working age group. The number of unpaid carers in Medway is predicted to increase to 35,000 by 2037.

In Medway, according to the Census in 2011:

- Over 25,000 people were providing some form of unpaid care (nearly 10 per cent of the total population)



- One sixth of carers are recorded as a carer by their GP
- Over three-quarters of carers are aged over 50 with the largest group of carers being women aged 55-59
- Carers aged under the age of 18 account for less than 2% of all identified carers – we know this figure is a lot higher in reality
- There are an estimated 661 young carers under the age of 16
- There are 1,632 young adult carers aged 16 - 24 providing unpaid care

At the end of the financial year 2017/18 Medway Council were aware of 1594 carers. 987 of these carers were supported through information & advice or provided with a direct payment and 510 carers received an assessment or a review.

In 2018, the Medway adult carers' service (Carers FIRST), supported over 3800 carers with information and advice. Nearly 900 carers were provided with one to one wellbeing support and 530 carers were referred to specialist services. The young carers' service (IMAGO) completed over 100 young carers' assessments.

### **What Carers Say...**

Caring can have a significant impact on health. Many carers report to having suffered mental or physical ill health as a result of caring. They feel tired, depressed and stressed and are twice as likely to say that they are socially isolated having lost touch with friends and family. Many carers say they are close to breaking point and are desperate for some time to themselves, to sleep and see friends and family. Carers say that regular breaks from caring would make the most difference to improving their health and wellbeing.

Every year, Carers UK undertakes a "State of Caring" report<sup>10</sup> to collect evidence on a range of issues affecting carers' lives in the UK. In 2019, the survey identified that:

- 39% are struggling financially with nearly 70% using their own money to pay for the care support or equipment for the person they care for
  - Only 17% of carers have had a conversation with an NHS professional about the medical condition of the person they care for and what to do in a crisis or when they are no longer able to provide care
  - 29 % of carers felt that an emergency hospital admission could have been prevented if they had more care and support for the person they care for
  - Only 30% of carers felt that their need for support to look after their own physical and mental health had been considered by professionals
  - 81% of carers have felt lonely or isolated as a result of their caring responsibilities
- 39% of carers reported that they had to give up work to care

Carers were asked what type of practical support they receive or buy. The most popular type of support was equipment in the home of the person they care for (like hoists, grab rails or easy-grip handles on taps) with 48% receiving or buying this.

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<sup>10</sup> Carers UK, State of Caring report 2019



There has been an increase in the number of carers or the person they care using technology to support care and caring. This includes the use of remote health care such as online GP appointments or online consultations. A high proportion of carers reported to using the internet as a source of information and nearly 20% of carers who report to using technology said that they used remote monitoring and alerts such as personal alarms and 13% use vital sign monitoring such as blood glucose monitor. There are still significant opportunities to increase the numbers of carers who use technology to help them in their caring role.

## Young Carers and Young Adult Carers



Young carers often provide inappropriate care for their age. This can impact on their health and wellbeing and their ability to learn and attend school. Young carers often feel socially isolated because it is difficult for them to build and maintain relationships with their peers through a healthy social life. Through the transition years, young adult carers are more likely to suffer from financial hardship. They are also more likely than their peers to have difficulties with educational commitments and access to employment due to their caring responsibilities.

Many young carers say they have not told anyone about their caring role. It is only when a young carer meets a health or social care professional that they realise they are carer. Young carers say they feel invisible and often in distress, with up to 40 per cent reporting mental health problems arising from their experience of caring.

Healthwatch Medway recently carried out an engagement process with young carers in Medway to hear directly about their experiences as a young carer and determine their future needs. They were asked to feedback on the draft strategy.



The recommendations from Healthwatch Medway:

- NHS staff need to be more understanding of the responsibilities that young carers have for the person they care such as handling medication
- Consider how the move from child to adult services is not always smooth and that sometimes the young person feels in 'limbo'
- Young carers feel socially isolated and require better support around respite to allow them to live their own meaningful lives
- Consider providing more financial support to young carers, including help with transport to school or college.
- More advice and support around accessing mental health and wellbeing support services

## Services for Medway Carers



Adult Social Care in Medway offers assessments for any carer who cares for a Medway resident. This enables the council to determine the level of need for a carer to see if they are eligible for additional support from adult social care. Where a carer has eligible needs, a 'Carers Support Plan' will detail the support to be provided. This may be through personalised budget such as a direct payment or through commissioned services for the person they care for. This may include respite, day care or sitting services. The direct payment can be used flexibly to support the carer to have a break and maintain their caring role. Carers have put their direct payment towards things like a short break, a washing machine if they wash the cared for person's clothes, massage or reflexology treatments, gardening, or driving lessons. Where appropriate, carers are signposted to support from the carers support service who will determine eligibility for a Carer's Support Payment.

Medway Council and Medway CCG have jointly commissioned a carers' support service for adult and young carers through Carers FIRST. The service forms part of



the Medway Voluntary Community Sector 'Better Together' Consortium – a partnership working together to provide a joined-up approach to supporting Medway residents. A key theme of the work they deliver is about identifying and supporting carers.

Carers FIRST support carers at any stage of their caring journey; from a recent diagnosis, through to end of life. The support continues if the cared-for person dies or until the carer no longer requires help. This is through the following:

- Information, advice, and guidance
- Support for carers so that they know their rights and the help available to them
- Community support networks and group activities
- Support in workplaces, hospitals and GP practices to help staff understand the issues facing carers and how to signpost carers to services
- Work with Medway Wellbeing Navigator Service and community link workers to identify carers, make sure they are registered on GP systems and signposted to services or help
- A carers' coordinator placed in Medway Maritime Hospital to help carers when the cared for person is admitted or discharged from hospital
- A carers support payment or support is provided as an urgent response to carers who are not receiving financial support through the local authority.

Carers FIRST makes sure young carers are helped through a young carer's assessment. They work closely with health and social care to make sure that the person the young carer is caring for has proper support in place, not relying on the young person. They help young carers to access community and school-based activities that help to reduce the long-term impact on young carers' development.

## Priorities

The development of the strategy involved extensive consultation with carers and stakeholders to establish six priorities that are important for both adult and young carers in Medway. The strategy must be deliverable at a local level and priorities need to be realistic and deliverable within allocated budgets taking consideration of the legal requirements put on Medway Council to provide high quality and effective support services for adult and young carers in Medway.

### 1. Identification and recognition of all carers in Medway

Identifying a carer at the start of their caring role is essential to the carer receiving appropriate information advice and guidance when they need it. Only a small proportion of carers in Medway are known to services so we need to improve the way in which carers are identified to make sure they receive appropriate support.

Young carers and young adult carers need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure that they are not undertaking inappropriate caring roles and are aware of their entitlement to a young carer's assessment or adult carer's assessment. We will consider how young carers are better identified when the person they care for is assessed by adult social care.



Health and social care services, GP practices, community services and hospitals are often the first point of contact for carers seeking help and advice. Carers FIRST will work closely with services to help them to identify and register carers more effectively through awareness training. Health and social care services need to ensure their frontline staff are aware of their obligation to identify and support carers. We will consider how to support the introduction of “carer passports” and the development of ‘carer friendly’ GP practices and workplaces.

Priority	What does good look like	How are we going to achieve this
1.1. Health and social care professionals to recognise and identify carers	A highly skilled health and social care workforce, able to recognise and identify carers, understand carers’ issues and provide details of appropriate information and support to help them in their caring role	Awareness training for key health and social care professionals and voluntary organisations and better data recording systems and processes
1.2. Medway employers support their employees with their caring role	Carers are identified and supported with flexible working, support and advice that enables carers to carry out their caring duties while remaining in the workplace	Work with key partners & employers and the Medway Healthy Workplace Programme to support ‘carer friendly’ workplaces
1.3. Carers are identified through hospital discharge or within a primary care setting	Primary care and hospital staff are able to identify carers when presenting with the person they care for or when the person they care for is admitted or discharged from hospital	A carer support coordinator will be placed in Medway Maritime Hospital and Wellbeing Navigators and link workers are placed in the hospital and GP practices
1.4. Identify ‘hidden carers’ and carers looking after someone with complex needs	Carers from hard to reach groups or looking after people with complex health issues - dementia, learning disability or a terminally ill person, are identified and better supported in their caring role	The carers service (Carers FIRST) to raise awareness of carers’ groups and use appropriate and easily accessible information and advice
1.5. Increase the number of young carers identified and supported	Young carers are identified before or when the assessment for the cared-for person takes place and made aware of their entitlement to a young carer’s assessment and support services	Awareness training for professionals coming into contact with young people. Better data recording systems and processes between council services and carers’ services

## 2. Provide good quality information, advice, guidance and support to carers

Carers need reliable, good quality information and advice to support them to provide good quality care while maintaining their own health and wellbeing. We will improve



the digital access to information and support by continuing to develop a digitally accessible and up to date, directory of preventative and community services.

We will ensure all carers are aware of their eligibility to a carer's assessment, a carer's health check with their GP and a free annual flu vaccination. We will better support carers who are looking after someone with complex needs such as dementia or a mental health condition and ensure the needs of older carers are improved by providing appropriate information and support for their needs.

Priority	What does good look like	How are we going to achieve this
2.1. Good quality Information and advice is provided by professionals.	Carers have access to high quality information and advice that is available in appropriate and accessible formats including a digitally online directory of services	'Make Every Contact Count' training to ensure frontline staff are aware of Information and advice. Continue to develop the directory of services
2.2. Provision of financial, legal and advocacy advice and information	Carers have access to a wide range of information to support them with financial issues	Collaborative partnership working between commissioned voluntary sector services providing financial support (Citizens Advice Medway), housing, benefits and health and social care
2.3. Carers are better supported with their caring role	Carers are supported to self-care and manage in their caring role. Carers looking after someone with complex needs e.g. dementia or terminally ill, feel better supported	Information, advice and support and training is provided to support carers look after someone with complex or challenging needs
2.4. Carers have opportunities to adopt new skills to support them in the workplace and education	More carers are supported to reach their educational or employment goals/attainment through high quality information and advice	Health professionals and carers' services will provide support around employment and educational opportunities and signpost to relevant services

### 3. Carers have access and involvement in assessment and support planning

A statutory carer's assessment helps to determine whether a carer is eligible for additional support. Health professionals need to know how to refer or signpost carers to services through clear processes and pathways so that assessments can happen in a timely manner. Once the eligible needs have been determined, appropriate support needs to be agreed with the carer and reviewed regularly.

Young carers need to be supported through a young carer's assessment or adult carer's assessment where appropriate to ensure that they have appropriate support in place and are not undertaking inappropriate caring roles.

Carers will be supported to be more involved in the assessment and support planning for the person they care for. Health professionals will ask the person with



health needs, at the first point of contact whether and how they would like their family or friends to be involved in discussions and decisions about their care and support.<sup>11</sup>

Priority	What does good look like	How are we going to achieve this
3.1. Carers are consulted on the care and treatment of the person they care for	Carers feel recognised, respected and involved in the care planning of the person they care for	Health and social care professionals understand the importance of including carers in any assessment of the person they care for
3.2. Carers are aware of their entitlement to an assessment and regular reviews	Carers are better informed of their entitlement to a carer's assessment and are reviewed and assessed in their caring role to determine a carer's support needs.	Awareness training for health professionals and improved processes are in place to ensure carers are reviewed when the person they care for is reviewed
3.3. Carers are included in the assessment process of the cared-for person	Carers are recognised for the experts they are, and able to input into assessment and progress meetings for the person they care for	Adult Social Care use a strength-based approach that ensures that the carer has input into assessments and reviews where appropriate
3.4. Young carers are consulted with about the care and support or treatment plans for the cared-for person	Young carers are considered in the context of the whole family and not in isolation.	Professionals use a strength-based approach that ensures that the young carer has input into the adult assessments and reviews using a whole family approach

#### 4. High quality carers' support services

Carers need high quality carers' support services delivered in a timely manner. Access to respite can sometimes be complicated to obtain so we need to consider alternatives to residential respite, offering increased value for money and flexibility. Carers want a simpler process for accessing and managing direct payments and buying services, so we will review respite and day care services and explore new and innovative ways of supporting both carers and the cared for to manage direct payments.

NICE guidance of Dementia Management, outlines how carers of people with dementia should have access to comprehensive range of respite and short-break

<sup>11</sup>National Institute for Care Excellence <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng86/chapter/recommendations#co-production-and-enabling-people-to-make-decisions>





services that meet the needs of both the carer and the person with dementia.<sup>12</sup> We will review service provision and ensure that carers are aware of the options available to them locally.

It is difficult for carers to access out of hours support in times of crisis. Health professionals need to have “contingency planning” conversations with carers to help carers understand the services available in times of crisis and emergencies. Carers will also be made aware of how community equipment and the use of assistive technology can support both the carer and the cared for to live independently and help a carer to have a life alongside caring.

Young carers will be supported to develop a life outside of caring through a range of school and community activities that ensure they are supported to reach their full potential through opportunities for education, training and employment.

Priority	What does good look like	How are we going to achieve this
4.1. Carers receive a high quality statutory carer's assessment	An increase in the number of carers receiving a carers assessment and provided with appropriate support	Awareness training on current legislation and available respite and support services
4.2. Carers have access to crisis support and 'out of hours' emergency details	Carers feel the burden and anxiety that caring causes is reduced especially at a time of crisis and are appropriately signposted in case of emergency	Services supporting carers to provide information and support on crisis planning. GPs to have 'contingency planning conversations' with carers
4.3. Carers can identify themselves as a carer in an emergency	Carers feel confident that should something happen to them the person that they care for will be safe and cared for	Development and promotion of an emergency card that provides details of the cared-for person
4.4. Support groups for carers looking after someone with complex needs	Carers feel better supported to care for a terminally ill person and someone with complex needs; dementia, substance misuse, mental health issues	Training and support for carers looking after someone with complex needs including end of life.
4.5. Develop the carers' offer within the community for respite care	Carers and the cared for person have more choice over the type of support they receive and are able to use their direct payments more flexibly to meet their needs	A review of respite and day care to develop the offer of respite care and the use of direct payments

<sup>12</sup> National Institute for Care Excellence  
<https://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/dementia#path=view%3A/pathways/dementia/dementia-management.xml&content=view-quality-statement%3Aquality-statements-respite-services-for-carers>



4.6. The provision of young carer services and activities	Young carers are supported to have a life outside of caring and are supported to engage with their peers through the provision of activities and initiatives that support young carers	The young carers' service (Carers FIRST) to work with schools and community groups to deliver activities
4.7. Young carers are provided with education and work opportunities	More young carers are reaching their educational attainment levels to enable them to fulfil their full potential.	The young carers service (carers FIRST) to work with Medway Council, schools, colleges and universities to support young carers to access education and employment opportunities

## 5. Carers are supported to maintain their emotional and physical health

Carers often put the needs of the person they care for before their own needs and therefore more likely to experience poor physical and mental health. Carers will be supported to self-manage and maintain their own emotional wellbeing and physical health, while continuing in their caring role. We will ensure frontline staff are aware of how to support carers to access a range of community activities and public health initiatives, including stop smoking services, weight management, and community peer support groups.

Community link workers will also support carers to make positive choices to promote good health and emotional wellbeing. These include many non-medical schemes such as walking groups, arts groups and lunch clubs or schemes that offer assistance to obtain advice for issues such as housing, benefits or debt management.

Priority	What does good look like	How are we going to achieve this
5.1. Carers are considered at health and care reviews for the cared for person	More carers are offered support to maintain their health and wellbeing when coming into contact with health professionals	GPs to hold and maintain a carers' register and use appropriate systems to register and signpost carers to information and advice
5.2. Carers are offered flexible GP appointments	Carers are able to maintain their own health and wellbeing through regular health checks and free flu vaccinations	GPs to hold and maintain a carers' register and ensure carers have access to convenient appointment times and regular health checks
5.3. Provision of training and advice to support carers in their caring role	Carers have access to advice and training to help with their caring role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid training</li> <li>• Moving and Handling</li> <li>• Specific conditions</li> </ul>	Carers services and health professionals will provide or signpost carers to support and training



5.4. Carers are supported to look after their own mental health and wellbeing	Carers feel less socially isolated and more connected to friends and the community. Carers are better informed of how equipment and care technology can support them in their caring role	Carers services and health professionals to be knowledgeable of activities and are better able to facilitate carers in accessing to activities and that support health and well-being
5.5. All carers are supported to maintain their health and wellbeing	An increase in young carers and young adult carers who feel supported to maintain their health and well-being	Young carers service to provide advice and support to ensure young carers are supported and signposted to appropriate services

## 6. Respect for the expertise that carers have

Carers want to be recognised by health and social care professionals as the experts they are. They want to be included and listened to in decisions that affect those that they care for and want to be respected and valued for the knowledge they have around a person's care needs. Young carers, where appropriate also need to be included in adult conversations and decision-making processes.

Carers need to be better informed of the treatment, medication and clinical needs of the cared for person, to support them in their caring role. They need to be better supported to deal with a person's care needs in a crisis and at end of life.

Carers will continue to be represented on key strategic groups across health and social care, such as Medway Carers Partnership and Healthwatch forums. This will ensure that the 'voice' of the carer and young carer is heard when planning health and social care services.

Priority	What does good look like	How are we going to achieve this
6.1. Carers are listened to when discussing the needs of the person they care for	Carers feel respected and valued for the care they provide	Awareness training for professionals so that they consider input from carers when the needs of the person they care for are assessed
6.2. Carers are represented at strategic health meetings	Carers 'voice' is heard and the expertise they have is shared across health and social care and community organisations	Ensure carers are represented on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medway Carers Partnership</li> <li>• Healthwatch forums</li> <li>• Health consultations</li> </ul>
6.3. Carers are provided with information on the care needs of the 'care for' person	Carer are better supported to look after the person they care for and are more informed of their medical needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medication and side effects</li> <li>• Crisis management</li> <li>• Prognosis/end of life</li> </ul>	Health professions will make sure carers receive information and advice to support them in their caring role



<p>6.4. Young carers are considered and included in discussions and decision-making process of the cared for person</p>	<p>Young carers are involved in the development of support services and feel valued for the input into decision making processes, where appropriate, including end of life,</p>	<p>Awareness training for professionals so that the young carer is considered and involved in the assessment and reviews of the person they care for.</p>
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## Delivering the Strategy

The strategy is the result of work done through the Medway Carers' Partnership. The Partnership brings together all relevant partners including young, adult and parent carers, commissioners, health and social care, public health and a range of voluntary community groups.

Achieving the vision and priorities set out in the strategy will require a continuation of the strong partnership and collaborative working that is already being delivered in Medway. This will enable all aspects of commissioning, health and social care policy and other factors that affect the population of Medway and impact on the role of carers to be considered.

An implementation plan has been developed to drive forward the actions from the strategy. Any new policy guidance and emerging strategies will be reviewed and considered. The Medway Carers' Partnership will plan consultations with carers to allow an annual review of the strategy, capturing the successes against the strategy and informing areas of further development for consideration.

## References

[Care Act 2014](#)

[Carers Action Plan 2018-2020: Supporting Carers Today](#)

[Carers UK: State of Caring 2015 Report](#)

[Carers UK: State of Caring 2016 Report](#)

[Carers UK: Valuing Carers 2015](#)

[Census 2001](#)

[Census 2011](#)

["Getting Better Together" – Medway's Adult Social Care Strategy 2016 – 2020](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#)



[Kent & Medway Sustainable Transformation Plan](#)

[Medway's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

[NICE Guidance](#)

[NHS England: An Integrated Approach to Identifying and Assessing Carer Health and Wellbeing 2016](#)

[NHS England's Commitment to Carers 2014](#)

[NHS Five Year Forward View](#)

[NHS England's Commitment to Carers](#)

[NHS Long Term Plan](#)

[Public Health Profiles: Adult Social Care](#)

Public expenditure on health services for the 2014-15 financial year is £134.1bn. *Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2015* [July 2015] HM Treasury

