



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ALL-AGE CARERS STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2023



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FOREWORD

I am delighted to present our All-Age Carers Strategy for St Helens for 2023–2026.

This document offers insight into the challenges that unpaid family carers in St Helens are facing and a commitment to how we can all work to address them.

We have, in recent years, focused a significant amount of effort in identifying and supporting carers from across all our communities. This has been made possible in large part by the Council's productive partnerships with the Borough's numerous carers-supporting organisations and the Carers Partnership who we continue to work with.

Nevertheless, the demand for services is growing and will continue to do so. The COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the sustainability and viability of the care sector have yet to be fully established.

To help residents, keep or regain their independence, our commissioning strategy outlines how we want to address these difficulties by providing access to a wide variety of adult social care services. This extends to those people whose selfless efforts in caring for others provides so many opportunities for people to live happier and healthier lives.

As such, this Strategy and associated Plan has been informed, influenced, and driven by the voice of carers. At numerous meetings of the St Helens Carers' Partnership, working groups, engagement meetings and consultations over the past few years, carers have shared their needs and ideas with us. This will continue in earnest as we cannot

have a successful approach without those who best understand what it needs to look like.

This also means that ensuring that carers are acknowledged by their GP, school or college, neighbours or employers is one of our top concerns. To ensure that carers receive the assistance they require to carry out their wonderful work, we must all play a part.

While continuing to manage the budget in the short term, St Helens Borough Council places a high priority on adult social care and health integration. The Council supports social care while commissioning for outcomes in collaboration with a wide range of National Health Service and nonprofit partners. For individuals to live well for a longer period of time, we will collaborate with those receiving care, those providing care for them, and the organisations providing care, including the third sector.

Together we will continue to support those who support others.



M. M. Quinn

Councillor Marlene Quinn
Cabinet Member - Integrated Health & Care

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF CARERS

An adult or child who offers unpaid support to a partner, child, relative, or friend who cannot manage to live independently or whose health or wellbeing would worsen without this help is known as a carer. Those receiving this care may require assistance due to their frailty, disability, major medical condition, mental illness, or drug or alcohol abuse.

From a national perspective, policy has undergone several significant modifications in recent years, most notably The Children and Families Act 2014. The Act advances the government's commitment to strengthen families and carers, as well as to increase services, opportunities, and choices for disadvantaged children and adults.

The Care Act of 2014, the NHS Long Term Plan from 2009, the NICE guidelines from 2020, the Carers Action Plan from 2018-2020, NHS England's commitment to carers from 2014, the St Helens Health and Wellbeing strategy from 2018–2023, and the St Helens Borough Council plan are the cornerstones for guaranteeing that the statutory needs of those being cared for and carers are met.

From a more local perspective, this Strategy reflects our dedication to collaborating with and supporting carers in our Borough. It also reflects our gratitude for the enormous amount of time and effort they have invested in co-creating, developing, and enhancing caregiving services. Indeed, the Plan that will be developed alongside this Strategy will be co-produced with representatives from our Carers' Partnership to ensure that what we say we will do is grounded in the reality of what it is like to care for others.

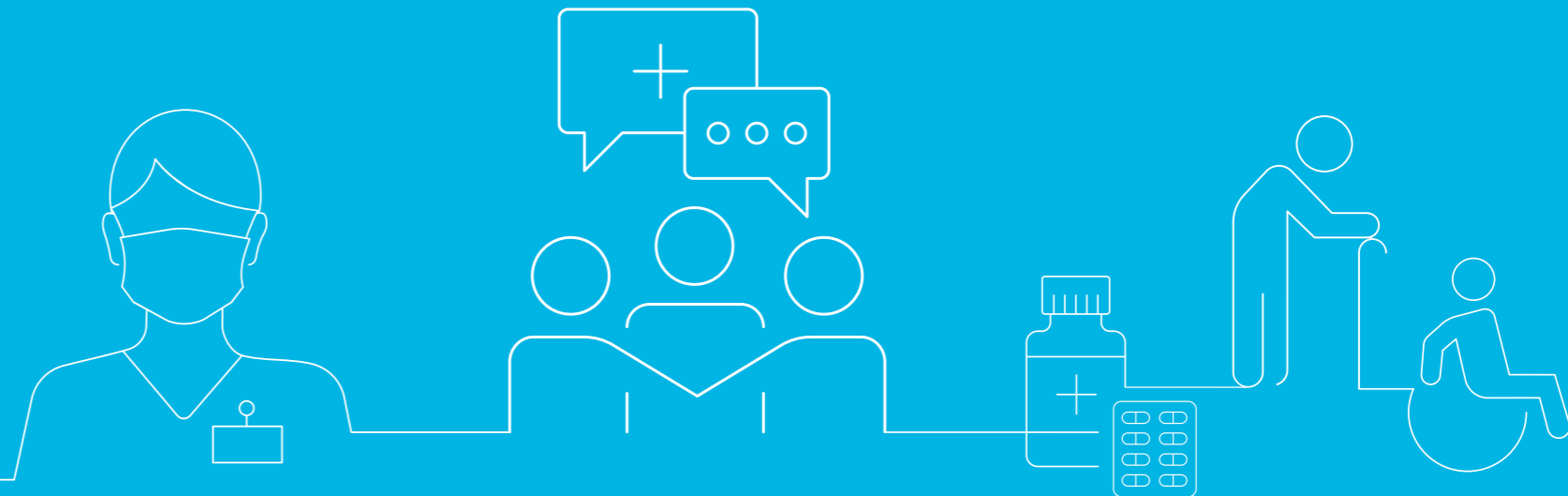
1.2. CARERS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Carers UK estimates that the number of unpaid carers in the UK has risen to 10.6 million, meaning that approximately 1 in 5 people are currently providing care. Equating this to St Helens, we can estimate that there are approximately 36,000 people who in our Borough who provide vital support for others. Often, these people juggle work and care and already have significant demands on their time, effort, and resources.

The vital nature of the role of carers and the extensive numbers we have in our Borough means that we cannot simply isolate a few activities to support those who need it. Instead, the promotion, inclusion and active involvement of carers needs to be actively ingrained in all of the work we do. In addition, the variety of needs across our communities means that all residents who make use of social care services, as well

as their family and carers, will receive support in a way that respects their rights and dignity. Services will be commissioned that consider the unique requirements and needs of our residents and anyone who provides non-statutory care.

In order to achieve this, we will collaborate across all of our partners (in the public sector and our communities) to ensure that we have a complete picture of what we need to do and who is best placed to undertake each part. We will also exchange ideas as to best practice which will be most notably enabled by listening to those who live, work and care in St Helens. In this regard, this Strategy has taken the 'carers' journey' into account and the priorities that we have highlighted are a result of discussions as to the most effective preventative interventions, education and support.



1.3. OUR COMMITMENTS

In the St Helens Adult Social Care Integrated Commission Strategy 2022-2024 we have stated that we will do things differently. This means that we will:

- **Satisfy the anticipated increase in demand and innovate** - To ensure that people receive high-quality services that fulfil their care needs and produce the desired outcomes for specific persons, we will foster improvement and identify novel methods of service delivery
- **Empower individuals** - To take charge of their own care and support and make defensible decisions about how and when to get assistance for living their lives
- **Increase chances for neighbourhoods to enter the care sector** - Making sure that people have access to a variety of care and support options

1.4. WORKING TOGETHER

How we deliver the above commitments, will be contained within the action plan associated with this document. However, this is not a singular Strategy and is created, influenced and delivered through our numerous partnerships, service providers and communities which includes:

- Service users, carers, and families
- Leaders of Integrated Care Boards, local authorities, and health partners

- **Maximise chances for locals** - To develop self-reliance, independence, and the ability to live a long, healthy life
- **Change the way we talk with service providers and partners** - So that we can jointly identify savings from service redesign, incorporate opportunities, and develop creative solutions that are supported by what benefits people.

The above will be made possible by redesigning more established services, such as residential care, and by creating new support models that encourage the passage from dependency to independence and steer clear of specialist bed-based care outside of St Helens.

The principles of wellbeing, enablement, opportunity, employment, community support, and short-term interventions will serve as the foundation for this work.

- Service providers for social services, health care, social and physical environment
- Health, social, and community service commissioners
- The community and voluntary sector

The delivery of coordinated and seamless services to help people live healthy, independent, and dignified lives increases with the integration of health and social care, which also improves results for the population.



2. VISION AND PRIORITIES

2.1. WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

We want to ensure that the huge number of carers in our Borough have the help and support they require as they balance the needs of the people they care for and their own. At the same time, we will develop a longer-term approach, focusing on health, wellbeing, and societal changes.

As such, our overall approach is multi-faceted and will be delivered across different levels. Our relationships with communities and people who care for others, the respect and compassion we offer one another, and the lifestyle decisions

we make are the foundation of good health, independence, and care. As part of our 'One Place, One System, One Ambition' vision for the St Helens Place Based Partnership, we want to continue to provide great integrated services to ensure that those being cared for and their carers can get aid and support in the appropriate place at the right time. It is important, therefore, that we set out a range of priorities specifically relating to supporting our population of carers.

2.2. OUR PRIORITIES

For us to meet the ambitions of our overall vision, we will focus on 10 key areas, highlighted on the following pages:



PRIORITY ONE

IMPROVE THE IDENTIFICATION OF AND SUPPORT FOR CARERS WHILE THE PERSON THEY CARE FOR IS IN HOSPITAL

Particularly at the time of diagnosis, while in the hospital and after discharge, we want all carers to be acknowledged, valued, and included.

To guarantee that people are better supported by health and care partners and decrease the number of avoidable hospital admissions, we will collaborate with both NHS Provider Trusts and Commissioners to put the national best practice into action.

This also applies to young people and the adults who are caring for them as they transition from child to adult services. In collaboration with those being cared for and carers, we will establish a more joined-up local service for those with various, complicated healthcare requirements.

PRIORITY TWO

PROVIDE TIMELY INFORMATION TO ASSIST PEOPLE IN THEIR ROLE AS CARERS, SHOW WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AND STRENGTHEN FAMILIES FOR THE FUTURE

Carers require timely information to enable families to move forward and assist them for their role as carers. To enhance the availability, content, and accessibility of information, we will enhance digital formats and provide advice more clearly and simply.

To enable this, we will utilise the St Helens All Age Carer Service to provide information, advice, emotional support, and access to self-help and self-management. This will include access to resources for carers in wider community services and provide opportunities for carers to share their opinions and experiences.

PRIORITY THREE

PROVIDE CLEAR AND IDENTIFIABLE POINTS OF ACCESS AND REFERENCE FOR ALL CARERS TO ACCESS INFORMATION, ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND HELP

We aim to further publicise the support, knowledge, and training accessible to carers. Through this, more people will be supported in their role as a carer and be equipped with the

right information and support needed to enable them to effectively fulfil their role.

PRIORITY FOUR

PROVIDE A HOLISTIC, PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH TO CARE AND ASSISTANCE THAT CONSIDERS HOW CARING FOR OTHERS AFFECTS RELATIONSHIPS, CHILDREN, AND YOUNG ADULTS

We seek a holistic approach to care and assistance that considers how caring for others affects relationships, children, and young adults. To this end, we will provide information, advice and assistance in relation to:

- Organisations that can assist with hardship funds and debt management, information on available benefits and how to submit claims
- Employment law, carers' rights and where to look for in-depth information

- Access services for both the carers and the cared-for individual, such as aids and adaptations, equipment like wheelchair rental, accessible holidays, respite breaks, voluntary agencies, and local activity groups for disabled children, vulnerable adults, older people, and those with mental illness
- Physical, social and emotional health.

PRIORITY FIVE

EFFECTIVE PLANNING TO AVERT CRISES BY PROVIDING EARLY ASSISTANCE AND PREPARATION

To avert crises, carers require early assistance and preparation. Access to timely information and the enhancement of carer-supportive communities will be key to this but, importantly, we will work with carers to plan more effectively. These plans will include a broader assessment of needs, requirements, and risks to identify the potential of a crisis before the event.

Through this, we will link carers with local resources, community groups and access to the elements listed in the priority above (holistic and person-centered approaches).

PRIORITY SIX

PROACTIVELY MONITOR CARERS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

We will work with partners across Primary Care to proactively monitor the physical and mental health of carers to assess the support and help we can provide. We will also more predictively plan the life journey of carers to ensure that trigger events and difficulties can be more proactively identified.

In particular, we will review the transition process from children's to adult services in order to improve the young adult, family and carer experience. Through this, more people will be supported in making plans to become ready for the future, including access to carer Personal Budgets.

PRIORITY SEVEN

ENSURE THAT ALL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES AND TOUCHPOINTS ARE CARER FRIENDLY IN ORDER TO RECOGNISE AND ASSIST THOSE WHO NEED IT

We will work with Primary Care partners to ensure that every GP practice in St Helens is carer friendly. This means that we will ensure that resources relating to information, guidance and support are disseminated across each Practice and we will continue to develop integrated 'care communities' to link our services

together. Importantly, we will work with carers from underrepresented and vulnerable groups to ensure that they are recognised, given individualised support and, importantly, help us develop our action plans to develop carer-friendly communities for all.

PRIORITY EIGHT

RECOGNISE AND ASSIST YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG ADULT CARERS AND ENSURE THAT EVERY SCHOOL IN ST. HELENS IS 'YOUNG CARER FRIENDLY'

We will work with the Carers Trust, the Children's Society and the schools in our Borough to deliver the Young Carers in Schools (YCIS) programme. Through this, schools across St Helens will be able to share good practice, provide relevant tools and training and celebrate the great outcomes many young carers achieve.

We want our young carers to be able to focus on their lessons, take part in school activities and feel fully part of their school community.

PRIORITY NINE

IMPROVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, SKILLS, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR CARERS

By promoting better work practices and benefit awareness, we will assist carers in minimising the financial pressure that providing care takes.

To create more carer-friendly workplaces, we will collaborate with employers to enhance working conditions and increase awareness of the requirements of carers.

Through our commitment to more holistic planning and timely access to relevant resources, we will ensure that carers of all ages know how to access education, skills and training. This also encompasses the development of more flexible learning arrangements that are increasingly prominent across education and skills providers.

PRIORITY TEN

ASSESS CARERS QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE THINGS THAT THEY NEED TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS AND HEALTH IN THE TIMES THEY ARE NOT DIRECTLY CARING FOR OTHERS

Carers need a balanced quality of life that includes a life away from the position of being a carer. To ensure that carers and young carers may take regular breaks from their responsibilities, we will improve the variety of respite care options accessible to them and revise the delivery of carers assessments to ensure a more holistic and person-centred approach.

This will incorporate better information, guidance, and training for carers and clear guidance on when and where to seek out specialised assistance. Fundamentally, all the above will be supported through a greater emphasis on co-production and co-design. This means that our future priorities, plans and decisions will be based on what carers need.

2.3. WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Success is determined by how happy and supported carers feel, not by an arbitrary set of numbers or metrics. To this end, we have worked with the carers in our Borough to develop a set of statements that reflect what is truly important. There are two measures of success against each:

- More carers feel that the statement is true for them
- More carers feel strongly that the statement is true for them



3. DELIVERING THIS STRATEGY

Through our vision, priorities and measures of success, we have set out what we want to achieve and an indication of how we will know if we are on the right path. Delivering this, though, takes a holistic approach and one that encompasses a range of provision, partners and people. The following section provides an overview of the key elements of this.

3.1. MEETING RISING DEMAND

By working in partnership across the NHS, voluntary and community sectors, we aim to slow the rising demand for care and support in our Borough. However, people are living longer, population growth continues and people's needs are becoming increasingly complex. This is why our support to carers is so vital in improving the way we can deliver health and care services.

In contrast to being admitted to a long-term residential or nursing care, community-based services are designed to help or enable people to live independently at home.

3.2. CO-PRODUCTION AND CO-DESIGN

The goal of community-based services is to help or empower people to live independently at home as opposed to being admitted to a long-term residential or nursing home. The needs of individuals and their families call for adaptable community services that can meet those specific and varied needs. They must also take into account how they will entice and meet the unique needs of their workforce. Therefore, in many cases, we work to delay or prevent the need for ongoing Adult Social Care services in order to

People and families therefore need adaptable community services that can meet their unique and varied needs. Rather than approaching this under the assumption that social care needs to provide all of this, we will instead focus effort on helping people and communities to support each other. This is a key facet to our wider partnership approach and the recent transition to an Integrated Care System across Cheshire and Merseyside provides us with a stronger platform to do just this.

help people maintain their level of independence. We want to actively engage with and listen to communities as equal partners in order to make a difference. By actively participating in developing strategies for how we may build stronger communities now and in the future, as well as by leveraging local working and existing networks and good practice, we can help people understand their role in maintaining fitness and health and reducing reliance on services.

3.3. ENHANCED INFORMATION AND ADVICE

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3.4. LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICE

Building on what has been successful over the past ten years, the Carers service in St Helens will learn from residents and other Boroughs about what else could be done more effectively.

“ WE WANT TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH AND LISTEN TO COMMUNITIES AS EQUAL PARTNERS IN ORDER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. ”

4. MONITORING, REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Monitoring and evaluating the impacts of this Strategy, and the objectives contained within, is vital in ensuring that our efforts continue to be focused on the cared-for and carer experiences. This, in turn, needs to feed into every commissioning decision that we take.

As such, we are developing an action plan for the whole of Adult Social Care to ensure that we understand progress, tackle any issues that arise and focus on continually improving the services we commission and provide. There are two levels of effectiveness for monitoring this:

LEVEL ONE - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles work to prioritise the needs of the people we support and ensure that the assistance they get will both achieve the desired outcomes and manage any risks:

- **The right people:** those who require assistance are identified and given top priority
- **The right time:** to prevent things from getting worse, to increase resilience, and to encourage independence
- **The best location:** Depending on the need and the most cost efficient solution, at home, in the community, or in a specialised environment
- **The correct support:** Just enough to keep everyone safe while also preventing, minimising, or delaying the need for long-term support, supplied by the appropriate individuals with the appropriate skills
- Improved coordination and cost-effective support may be provided through working more effectively with individuals, their friends and families, as well as in partnership with other organisations.

LEVEL TWO - PERFORMANCE REPORTING

To determine whether services for Carers are achieving the necessary strategic results, the overall organisation and coherence of those services will be tracked and evaluated. Performance indicators (PIs), regular critical appraisals, satisfaction surveys, and the departmental index of complaints will all serve as guidelines for the reporting structure.

To support the above, we will routinely gather and compile data from a range of sources which will include:

- Employing regional and national performance metrics to compare our performance to that of other local authorities and assess the development of certain goals
- Continually evaluating our actions in light of past, present, and projected requirements in strategic and performance management frameworks to ensure that we have enough capacity to meet any changes in service user demand
- In order to accelerate the implementation of innovative thinking that support the essential elements of the vision, we modified our strategy to take advantage of the most recent best practice.



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