

## **CABINET**

<b>DATE</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor S Shreeve, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Katie Brown, Director of Adult Social Services
<b>SUBJECT</b>	NEL Carers Strategy 2023-26 'recognising, valuing and supporting our carers'.
<b>STATUS</b>	Open
<b>FORWARD PLAN REF NO.</b>	CB 06/23/05

### **CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS**

The North East Lincolnshire Carers Strategy 2023-2026 'recognising, valuing, and supporting our carers' [the strategy] will significantly contribute to the Council's aims to build stronger economies and communities. The strategy will do this by supporting the identification of all carers, including hidden/ seldom heard carers. This will ensure as many carers as possible have access to tailored information and advice, carers assessments and the support mechanisms they need. As a result, carers will be able to continue in their caring role (where it is their choice to do so) and to have a life outside of caring in education, training, employment and in leisure pursuits. The strategy has a specific focus on supporting working carers and those in education, to ensure individuals can remain in, and effectively engage in, education and work while combining this with the caring role. Carers play a vital role in supporting their cared for person to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible in their community, often removing or reducing the need for formal care and support. This in turn supports our local health and care system in helping to reduce demand.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Consultation for the strategy commenced with carers and professionals in Carers Week 2022. General carer feedback has been collated since then. Full consultation commenced on Carers Rights Day 2022 with carers, members of the public and professionals. The consultation included face to face events, focus groups, online and paper-based surveys, social media questions and text messaging. The feedback has been collated and summarised (see the strategy appendices). The themes from the consultation have been used to draft the priorities section of the strategy. Statutory requirements and national/ regional best practice have been summarised to set the context of the carers agenda and the achievements we have made to date. The first draft of the strategy has been circulated to ensure we reflected accurately the consultation feedback and facilitate coproduction of the document with carers and professionals. The final draft version is attached for consideration and approval. Once approved the document will be designed and formatted for paper and online circulation taking note of accessibility requirements.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

Approves the Carers Strategy 2023-2026, noting the methods used to coproduce the Carers Strategy and endorsing the core priorities and authorises the Director for Adult Social Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care to so implement and make any reasonable consequential amends as may be necessary.

## **REASONS FOR DECISION**

Cabinet is asked to approve the Carers' Strategy 2023-2026 because:

- Local Authorities and their partners are strongly encouraged to co-produce a local carers' strategy with carers and professionals, accompanied by an action plan.
- The refreshed Carers' Strategy represents the best mechanism for setting out how the Council will discharge its obligations under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.

### **1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES**

- 1.1 There is a national requirement for local authorities and the NHS to support informal carers, (the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014) and a national carers strategy and action plan.
- 1.2 In North East Lincolnshire we have had a dedicated all age carers strategy for over 15 years. Our current strategy was extended to cover the period in which covid-19 was prevalent, to allow the opportunity for true engagement and consultation with carers and professionals. The consultation was conducted between June 2022 and January 2023 through a raft of engagement methods (workshops, focus groups, online and paper-based surveys, feedback, social media and text questions). The findings from the consultation have been summarised into themes and the strategy drafted to reflect the priorities for the next three years.
- 1.3 As can be seen from the consultation, whilst a significant amount has been achieved to date, further work is required to make North East Lincolnshire a carer friendly place to live and work.

### **2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **2.1 Risks**

There are no perceived risks to developing and launching the strategy. However, there may be resource (financial/ staffing) implications to deliver the action plan that underpins the implementation of the strategy. Some of this risk is mitigated by the financial commitments already made to delivering carers support, the existing staffing arrangements and the Carers Partnership that is in place to drive the carers agenda. This includes a small annual budget of £15k to support the

implementation of the strategy, overseen by the Carers Strategic Lead and the Carers Partnership.

## 2.2 Opportunities

By co-producing a new strategy and action plan there will be opportunities to improve the identification, recognition and support to carers, which will undoubtedly support the sustainability of caring situations in NEL, improve carer health and wellbeing and reduce the demand on health and care services.

## 2.3 Impact assessment outcome

The equality impact risk analysis has been considered; the outcome is 'green'. No impact areas were negative, all positive or neutral. A few areas have been identified in the action plan and will be factored into the work.

## 3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

An alternative option would be to decline approval of the NEL Carers Strategy 2023-26, although this option is not advised as the document was coproduced by carers and professionals in NEL directing our priorities for the next 3 years.

## 4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Adoption of the strategy and action plan ensures transparency about the Council's vision and planned activities for supporting our carers and working towards a carer friendly NEL. Demonstrating our commitment to carers will be positive and will have no negative aspects to consider.

## 5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. In agreeing to launch the strategy there will be no financial implications, as resource has already been committed to secure its launch.

5.2. There is already committed resource to deliver carers support services across North East Lincolnshire and a small budget (£15k) to deliver new projects as part of the strategy. The expenditure of the budget to support the strategy will be overseen by the Carers Partnership and the Carers Strategic Lead. Gaps have been identified in carers assessments and support which may have financial implications beyond the £15k budget; where this is identified, the business case would be discussed at the Carers Partnership and escalated as required for decision making.

## 6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

As this is an all-age carer strategy, the vision, priorities and action plan cover parent carers supporting children and/or young people with additional needs and young carers. The work of the strategy will improve the provision of information, advice, and support for those carers. Dedicated work in the action plan will address the gaps identified in supporting parent and young carers.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The strategy will not have a direct impact on climate change and the environment, in either a positive or negative way.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY**

The proposed methods of consultation and engagement of carers and professionals and the development plan for the strategy were discussed and endorsed at the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Carers Strategy should reflect the Council's legal obligations under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 and shape the Council's approach for 2023-2026.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct HR implications.

## **12. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

All wards across North East Lincolnshire have carers, therefore the strategy will positively support the identification, recognition and support to carers across each ward. Some wards do have a higher proportion of carers and therefore may receive targeted efforts to identify hidden/ seldom heard carers.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Care Act 2014 - [Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/18)

The Children and Families Act - [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6)

The National Carers Strategy - [The national carers strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674242/national-carers-strategy.pdf)

## **14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

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**Councillor S Shreeve**  
**Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care**

**INSERT PICTURE**

# ***North East Lincolnshire*** **Carers' Strategy 2023-2026**

***Recognising, valuing, and supporting our carers***

**INSERT PICTURE**

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## 1. Definitions - a quick note on language

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This document will refer to both **carers** and **care workers**.

A **carer** is someone of any age who looks after a child, relative, partner or friend in need of help because they have an illness, disability, frailty, mental health condition or substance misuse problem. The care provided may be personal, practical, emotional, financial, or supervisory and is unpaid.

It is important to distinguish this role from paid care workers who are employed to meet care needs, by an organisation or by an individual.

The term “carer” includes:

- **Adult carers:** Adults caring for other adults aged 18 and over. This includes adults caring for their adult children.
- **Parent carers:** Parents/ guardians caring for a child with additional needs under the age of 18.
- **Kinship carers:** Adults who care for a child under the age of 18 with additional needs of a friend or relative (not a parent or guardian)
- **Young carers:** Children and young people under the age of 18 who support a family member or friend.
- **Hidden carers:** carers who do not recognise themselves as carers
- **Seldom heard carers:** carers who are unknown to services and are less likely to seek support, for example:
  - Carers from minority ethnic backgrounds
  - Carers who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
  - Carers with mental health concerns including those with dementia
  - Carers who support someone who misuses drugs or alcohol
  - Male carers.

**INSERT PICTURE**

## 2. Acknowledgements

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**We are grateful to the following people, services and organisations that have helped us to write this strategy:**

Carers in the community (via surveys, social media, consultation events, peer support and activity groups)

General members of the public

The North East Lincolnshire (NEL) community and voluntary sector

The Carers' Voice

The NEL Carers' Support Service

The NEL Carers' Partnership

The NEL Health and Care Partnership

NEL Council

The Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (NEL Place)

The Regional Carers' Network



**North East Lincolnshire  
Carers Partnership**



### 3. Foreword

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#### Foreword

Picture

Cllr Margaret Cracknell  
Portfolio Holder for Children and  
Education

Picture

Cllr Stan Shreeve  
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for  
Health Wellbeing and Adult Social Care

We recognise that carers play a vital role in North East Lincolnshire, in caring for their loved ones. This care is often invisible, but without it, individuals and communities would be worse off. The NHS, social care and community services could be overwhelmed.

We are committed to working with our carers and partners to make North East Lincolnshire a healthy and vibrant place for carers to live, learn and work. We seek to create a place where carers are recognised, valued, and supported, able to continue caring as much as they want to and to have a life outside of caring.

Our all-age Carers' Strategy has been developed with input from carers and a range of professionals working across health, care, and the wider community. The feedback has identified six priority areas for improvement, which has informed our three-year action plan.

We will use this action plan, along with ongoing input from carers in the community, to continue building a carer friendly North East Lincolnshire, in which carers get prompt access to the help they need.

Picture of the carers voice

#### The Carers' Voice

The Carers' Voice have helped co-produce this strategy in partnership with the wider carer community, professionals and members of the public in North East Lincolnshire (NEL). The Carers' Voice members agree that the themes identified in consultation have been reflected in the priority areas in the strategy. As a voice for Carers, we are supportive of the strategy document. We feel that the strategy is an accurate depiction of the difficult position of Carers in NEL at this time, and we are optimistic that actions outlined in the strategy, when they are completed, will make a positive difference.

The Carers' Voice are hopeful that we will continue to work in co-production with key stakeholders, and that together we will make meaningful progress, improving the position of Carers in our area. We will continue to advocate for Carers and ensure those integral to the implementation and success of the carers' strategy are held accountable by Carers.

As Carers, we want to be recognised for the valuable contribution we make to our local economy, communities and health and social care services. We also want to be supported to stay healthy, both mentally and physically, ensuring we can provide the care we want or choose to provide. We believe the successful implementation of this strategy will be a big step towards achieving these aims.

We look forward to the NEL partners working together as one, to robustly implement this strategy, thereby allowing every Carer to be recognised, feel supported, acknowledged and valued in their community.

Picture of Helen Kenyon

Helen Kenyon, North East Lincolnshire Place Director, Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

In North East Lincolnshire we recognise the essential part that carers play in supporting friends, family and loved ones. We have a long-standing tradition of good engagement with carers to further the carers agenda and to ensure we are providing fitting and appropriate support and services for our caring population. The consultation with and involvement of carers as part of the development of this carer's strategy bears testimony to this.

As a carer myself, and in my role as Place Director, I would like to acknowledge and thank the carers that have given their time and energy to co-produce this document.

Achieving our vision as set out in this strategy will require a continuation of the excellent partnership working already established between all parties in NEL, a partnership with carers; colleagues in health; social care; education; and the business community. Together we can make caring in NEL a truly inclusive partnership.

Picture of Katie Brown

Katie Brown, Director of Adult Services, North East Lincolnshire Council

We are delighted to introduce our NEL Carers Strategy 2023 – 2026. It is crucially important that carers are identified at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are recognised and respected as partners in care, and to allow access to advice and support that is responsive and appropriate to their needs and circumstances. Taking on a caring role should not mean people have to face financial hardship, social exclusion or give up work to care. We therefore want to do everything we can to enable carers to live well.

Picture of Janice Spencer

Janice Spencer, Director of Childrens Services, North East Lincolnshire Council

North East Lincolnshire Children's Services value the contribution that carers of all ages make to ensuring their loved ones are supported to have the best health and wellbeing that they can. The whole council has a bold ambition to support carers, and our particular focus in Children's Services is on young carers and parent carers.

Young carers make a vital contribution helping to care for parents, siblings, or other relations both physically and emotionally. Across our partnership – schools, health, the third sector, the Local Authority and beyond – we will make sure that young carers are recognised, valued, and supported to live the lives they want to lead, and have access to the right help, in the right place at the right time if they need it. This is not a 'one size fits all' approach, and the most important thing is that young carers can speak to someone they know and trust when they have worries for themselves or their loved ones.

In addition, a fundamental element of supporting our children and young people is supporting their parents/guardians, particularly those who have additional responsibilities through being a carer of a child with additional needs. We will work with parent carers to ensure they are empowered to be the best parents/guardians and carers possible, while also having the opportunity to engage in work (if they choose to do so) and to have time to focus on their own interests and engage in wider family life.

Finally, I would like to thank all young carers and parent carers in North East Lincolnshire – be proud of what you do and let us know your stories.

#### 4. The vision for carers in North East Lincolnshire (NEL)

In NEL we are working to achieve the following vision for carers.....

*“Carers of all ages in North East Lincolnshire are recognised for the vital contribution they make, and have a strong voice that influences improvement to support and services for carers. They are respected as partners in care and can access information, advice and support when they need it, and in the way that they choose. Carers are not expected to provide care, but if they choose to do so, they are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing and to have a life outside of their caring role, in work, education, training or leisure.”*

Over the next 3 years, the Carers’ Partnership will work with the carer community, health and care workforce and wider system partners to increase the identification of carers, improve access to information, drive improvements around support and services for carers and improve routes for feedback on services that impact carers. With this in mind, we have developed the following six priorities:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 1</b> <b>Identification, recognition &amp; provision of information</b></p> <p>We will ensure carers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>• Recognised for the vital role they play.</li> <li>• Provided with up to date, timely, relevant, and accurate information throughout their caring journey.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 2</b> <b>Workforce- culture &amp; practice</b></p> <p>We will ensure carers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by a skilled workforce that is educated, compassionate and knowledgeable about carers.</li> <li>• Recognised as expert care partners by health and care professionals.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 3</b> <b>Access to assessments &amp; support</b></p> <p>We will ensure carers are appropriately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offered/ referred to prevention and wellbeing services.</li> <li>• Informed of their right to a carers’ needs assessment.</li> <li>• Offered/ referred for a carers’ needs assessment where they provide or intend to provide care to someone else.</li> <li>• Supported through a carers’ needs assessment and the development of a meaningful carers’ support plan, where the carer’s needs and wishes have been explored and how they are to be met is clearly stated.</li> <li>• Provided with breaks, direct payments, and support where they meet eligibility criteria.</li> <li>• Supported appropriately through key carer transitions.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 4</b> <b>Carer education, training &amp; employment</b></p> <p>We will ensure carers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported to engage in work, education, and training opportunities alongside their caring role, if that’s what the carer wants.</li> <li>• Recognised in education settings / the workplace and supported to succeed in these settings.</li> <li>• Supported to work with their employer to build carer friendly working practices.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 5</b> <b>Tackling carer inequalities</b></p> <p>We will ensure carers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported and empowered to understand and exercise their rights and choices.</li> <li>• Given fair and consistent access to the help they need.</li> <li>• Confident that the support they access is culturally appropriate and meets their diverse needs.</li> <li>• Supported to explore contingencies that make use of their strengths, resources and available support.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority 6</b> <b>Carer led</b></p> <p>We will ensure carers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included and engaged in the design, delivery and monitoring of carer and non-carer support services and the work of the Carers’ Partnership.</li> <li>• Able to live and work in a carer friendly NEL.</li> </ul>

## 5. Understanding caring in North East Lincolnshire (NEL)

According to the 2021 census, there are 156,970 people in NEL (2021 census); of those, 14,057 (9%) are providing care to another person. A staggering 35% of these carers provide 50+ hours of care per week. NEL has the second highest percentage increase in the number of people providing 20-49 hours of care per week in England/ Wales.

The table below shows the proportion of carers in relation to people living in each ward in NEL. The ward with the most carers is Haverstoe, closely followed by Waltham (over 1 in 10 people living in each ward is a carer).

North East Lincolnshire ward	% of carers	North East Lincolnshire ward	% of carers
Croft Baker	8.7	Scartho	8.8
East Marsh	8.4	Sidney Sussex	8.4
Freshney	9.2	South	9.4
Haverstoe	10.3	Waltham	10.1
Heneage	8.7	West Marsh	8.2
Humberston and New Waltham	9.6	Wolds	9.3
Immingham	8.8	Yarborough	8.1
Park	8.9		

An estimated 4,500 carers have been identified across NEL, leaving approximately 9,500 carers still to be identified (according to 2021 census data). Of the 4,500 carers identified, 2,722 are registered with the NEL Carers' Support Service (2,251 adult carers, 457 parent carers and 14 young carers). Currently the young carers team have 170 young carers registered and 227 families with parent carers are registered with children's disability services and children's Continuing Healthcare. All other known carers are registered via their GP surgery and wider carers' support services. Based on Carers UK research into the contribution carers make to the local economy, it is estimated that in NEL, our carers save the health and care system £272 million per year. It is worth noting that roughly 12,900 carers are combining work and care in NEL.

The personal social services survey of adult carers in NEL (2021/2022) had 553 carer responses. The survey gives us some of the most up to date information we have locally on carers known to adult social services. Over half of all respondents (52%) cared for over 100 hours per week. As a result, many carers reported adverse effects on their physical health and wellbeing (80% reported feeling tired, 49% feeling depressed and 37% reported feeling the physical strain because of caring). Over a third of respondents said caring had caused financial difficulties to some extent in the last 12 months. However, 70% of carers reported that they found it fairly easy/ easy to find information and advice about support, services and benefits available to them, 75% of respondents were satisfied with the support and services they received and 68% of respondents felt they were included or consulted in discussions about the support or services for the cared for person.

The Carers' Support Service conducts a survey of carers accessing their support every year. Their 2021/22 survey corroborated the findings of the social services survey. Over 40% of Carers rated their physical and mental health as poor, however a year later, their 2022/23 survey shows that of 1,284 Carers accessing support, 59% of Carers rated their physical and mental health as good, and 33% rated their mental and physical health as OK, highlighting what we can surmise was the impact of Covid-19 on Carers in 2021/22 and the positive impact accessing support has had on carers a year on.

National carer related facts and figures can be found in Appendix 1 for comparison.

**The greatest challenge for NEL is the number of unidentified carers.** Using local reports and research (including the joint strategic needs assessments, adult services re-ablement review, the recent SEND re-inspection, peer reviews and wider consultation) it is clear that there is still work to do to deliver on the carer vision in NEL. Most significantly, we are not providing carers with enough opportunities to identify themselves as carers and come forward for support. As a result, many carers receive support too late in their caring role, or unfortunately not at all, so may be experiencing unnecessary carer burden. Significant effort must be made to support the identification of carers of all ages, to ensure we have the best chance of providing advice, information, and support at the right time. A significant element of this lies in building the positive perception of the carer "label", including how it is viewed within the carer population itself.

## 6. How carers are supported in North East Lincolnshire (NEL)

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Over the last 15 years the NEL Carers' Partnership has worked to establish a range of carers' support and services to identify, advise and support carers to maintain their caring role as well as to have a life outside of caring. Services on offer include (definitions are included at Appendix two):

- Information and Advice
- Specialist Advice
- Peer Support
- Befriending
- Activity Groups/ Outings
- Training
- Advocacy
- Holistic Therapies
- Counselling
- Carers' Emergency Alert Card
- Innovation Fund & Individual Carer Grants
- 1:1 Key Worker support
- Carers' needs assessments
- Carers' Direct Payments
- Carer Breaks – sitting and respite services
- Having a carers' voice – via the Carers' Voice/ Carers' Partnership.

More about the information, advice and services available to carers of any age can be found in the carers' guide (available from the NEL Carers' Centre and on its [webpage](#)) or from the NEL Carers' Support Service by calling 01472 242277, visiting the offices at The Old Waterworks Offices, 1 Town Hall Square, Grimsby.

## 7. Themes from the consultation

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In keeping with the NEL commitment – 'Talking, Listening and Working Together' we have tried to work with carers, professionals and members of the public to understand the needs and wishes of local carers, what is and isn't working with regards to carers' support and what we need to do to further improve our support to carers moving forward. We consulted extensively between November 2022 and January 2023. The feedback has been analysed and a summary of the key themes are below. A full summary of the results can be found in Appendix four).

Key themes from the consultation:

- **Carers need to be supported to identify themselves** as carers at the most appropriate stage of their caring journey and at the earliest opportunity.
- **Information for carers needs to be offered at the right time**, in the **right format** and **targeted** to the carer's needs.
- **Carers need to be recognised by professionals** (particularly in acute and primary care) as expert care partners, and engaged with.
- **There needs to be improved access to support for carers**, with regard to:
  - A timely response when help is sought.
  - A clear and easy system to navigate to get information and support.
  - Improved referral and signposting from professionals.
- **Carers want improved access to a timely carer needs assessment** in which the needs and wellbeing of carers is the primary focus, with recognition that the assessment process is itself a support mechanism for the carer.
- **Carers are more concerned than ever about their financial position.** They want specialist advice, information, and support to gain access to benefits, grants, discounts, and other mechanisms for financial support/ initiatives to support the cost of living.
- **Carers need professionals to provide a well thought out and joined-up offer** of support for them and those they care for, regardless of the number of organisations or cared for persons involved, or whether the carer/ cared for person live across area boundaries.

- **Carers want the exchange of information to be smoother and simpler** and where possible for that information to be shared with all relevant parties, so they only have to share their information and that of the cared for person once.
- **There needs to be better out of hours support**, to help carers:
  - at times of crisis,
  - when they work, and can only access support in the evenings/ weekends.
- Many carers and professionals felt **carers' support and services were not visible enough** and there wasn't enough awareness of the services and support available.
- Carers and professionals thought that **carers breaks needed to be available** to more carers, to be reliable, and flexible to meet a varied range of carer circumstances.
- While some carers said they had all the help they needed from their employer to support caring alongside work, **many carers felt their employer needed to be much more carer aware** and offer carer friendly policies and flexible working arrangements.
- **Young carers felt they needed to be acknowledged and supported** within education settings and in children and young people's services.
- **Carers seek flexibility and choice** in the support options available. For example, some carers may only be available when their cared for person is occupied, such as at school or day care. Flexibility may help carers manage competing family timetables and caring responsibilities.
- **Carers expressed concern about the pressures in health and social care**, funding shortages and staffing capacity issues and how this could be a barrier to accessing carer support.
- **Carers would welcome oversight of carer support solutions** elsewhere to ensure we can harness best practice and further improve our carers' offer locally.
- **Carers asked that locally we support national campaigns and initiatives**, to advocate on behalf of carers (e.g. a review of carers' allowance and the unpaid carers' leave bill).

## 8. Priorities for North East Lincolnshire's (NEL) carers' agenda

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It is nationally recognised that supporting carers helps reduce the cared for person's need for health and care services. It promotes the independence of families and vulnerable people and their ability to live in the community as they would wish. It makes sense that we continue to support carers now and into the future.

Utilising national requirements (see appendix three), best practice, local carers' needs and consultation feedback (see appendix four) the following priority areas for action have been identified:

### Priority 1 Identification, Recognition, and provision of Information

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#### Current position in NEL

The Carers' Partnership has worked hard to deliver dedicated programmes to identify seldom heard carers (men, young carers, minority ethnic groups, LGBTQ) along with general campaigns to identify anyone who provides support to another person. Key national annual events have been supported locally including Carers' Week and Carers' Rights Day to identify and raise the profile of carers in our community. This has led to the identification and registration of 3,421 new carers at our NEL Carers' Support Service in the last 5 years.

Articulating the current number of identified carers across NEL is difficult, as carers can register with different services, and one combined register is not available. However, work has been undertaken to collate the numbers of carers registered across health, social care and community organisations to estimate the number of individual carers currently identified and being actively supported; we believe this to be around 4,500 carers in total. The 2021 census showed that 14,057 people in NEL identified they were a carer (we know this is an under representation of the actual number); therefore, at best we have only identified around 30% of our carers in NEL (at least 9,557 yet to identify).

We know that the success of identifying hidden carers and recognising them is variable across NEL. We have pockets of very good practice, where we have dedicated carers' workers or carers' champions. However, there are areas for improvement, particularly in primary care and in our children, young people and adult social care services. One area we recently targeted as part of our work to identify and recognise carers is

carers of those discharging from hospital. A dedicated carers' worker has been working in the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital since January 2023. In the first 4 months of the worker starting over 140 new carers were identified, and many more already known carers were supported during the difficult/ uncertain time when their cared for person was in hospital. This work has shown a 47% increase in the identification of hidden carers compared to those identified prior to establishing the carers' worker.

The consultation has shown that some carers find the advice and information they need, while others are 'left floundering' and without the information they need to make informed decisions. Although the Carers' Guide has been designed and circulated widely across NEL, the NEL Carers' Support Service has relaunched its website and LiveWell features a dedicated section of carers' information, carers still report accessing it can be difficult. This is due to not knowing where to get the information, the dispersed nature of the information and its format.

More than ever before, we have seen an increased need for information on how to gain access to benefits, grants, discounts and other mechanisms of financial support and initiatives to support carers with the general cost of living. This will be considered when designing future information provision.

#### ***Next steps - what we need to do.....***

We will continue our work to identify the vast number of hidden carers across NEL and encourage them to be registered with the most appropriate support and services for them e.g., the NEL Carers' Support Service, young carers' services, children and family and adult social care services, and their GP.

Supported by partnership working the timeliness, relevance, quality, and accessibility of information to carers of all ages will be improved across organisations and sectors. We will increase the visibility of the support on offer to carers in NEL, enabling more carers to access that support.

Further support will be provided to professionals to identify and recognise carers (see priority 2).

In addition to identification, more work is needed to recognise the valuable role carers play, not only in providing care to the cared for person but also to the health and care system (in reducing the cared for person's needs for care and support) and wider economy. Work is required to showcase the vital role carers play and build a positive perception of carers and caring.

#### ***We are committed to working together to ensure carers are:***

- Identified at the earliest opportunity.
- Recognised for the vital role they play.
- Provided with up to date, timely, relevant and accurate information throughout their caring journey.

## **Priority 2 Workforce - culture and practice**

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### **Current position in NEL**

The NEL Carers' Support Service has provided 1,244 professionals with Carer Awareness Training via their rolling annual training programme in the last 5 years. Carer Awareness training has become part of the mandatory training offer in some organisations, for example NAViGO. Targeted awareness raising/ education/ training sessions are also routinely available for key groups/ staff teams. One such group is Focus Independent Adult Social Work ('Focus'); all teams at Focus have had targeted training on statutory carer duties, identification and recognition of carers and referral routes into appropriate support and services.

Carers' Champions have been identified across health and social care and many of the local community and voluntary sector organisations across NEL. The NEL Carers' Support Service is also part of the induction training for our social care workforce at Focus.

We have launched a range of carer animation DVDs and videos to raise the profile of carers and carers' support that can be used to enhance carers' awareness training and provide an online carer training resource for professionals.

The Health and Care Partnership is committed to identifying, recognising, and supporting carers. Consultation has shown that we need to encourage and develop ways for our health and care workforce to better support carers in a joined-up way, and ensure professionals feel able to advise carers. This should

mean that carers only share their details once and get access to all the information and support they need from the initial contact (in other words 'making every contact count').

Despite the Carers' Partnership's workforce actions to date, we are still only reaching a small number of the professionals across health and social care annually. As a result, carers are still reporting that professionals are not always clear about/ do not mention the carer support and services available. This was confirmed by professionals who spoke about a lack of certainty regarding support available to carers and how to identify and signpost carers. In addition, there have been examples of carers' concerns being dismissed by staff, of carers being expected to take on new or enhanced carer roles and/ or not being recognised as a carer/ expert care partner. In particular, the consultation highlighted that staff in primary and secondary care need further help to identify and support carers.

#### ***Next steps - what we need to do.....***

Dedicated actions will be taken to improve the culture and practice of our workforce in our own organisations and wider across NEL to identify and support carers. To do this, opportunities for making carers' awareness training mandatory for all new staff across health and social care will be explored, along with the delivery of on-going refresher training, so our workforce has a basic understanding of carers, caring and the support available.

As part of the work on staff culture, we will encourage professionals to value carers and proactively identify and support carers to access the help they need. Professionals should also be aware of and genuinely value the unique viewpoint and knowledge carers bring to decision making for those they care for, and should want to actively include them appropriately.

Advanced training on carers, carers' needs and assessments, including roles and responsibilities will be targeted at our social care assessors to ensure we are meeting our statutory duties for children, young people, and adult carers.

Methods of training and awareness delivery will be reviewed, looking at face-to-face, online training and self-directed learning to aid maximum benefit and workforce coverage.

The 'carer champion' network will be expanded and strengthened, ensuring nominated individuals across organisations and services take the lead in being carer experts, nurturing and fostering a positive carer culture, continuing to raise the profile of carers, reinforcing our statutory requirements and the support available.

Carers groups for adults, parents and young carers will be supported to create carer case studies to demonstrate the need to identify and support carers as well as showcase carers as expert care partners.

#### ***We are committed to working together to ensure carers are:***

- Supported by a skilled workforce that is educated, compassionate and knowledgeable about carers.
- Recognised as expert care partners by health and care professionals.

### **Priority 3 Access to assessments and support**

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#### **Current position in NEL**

As a health and care system we have worked hard to ensure there's a robust range of universal prevention and wellbeing services available to carers of all ages across NEL, as we recognise the importance of supporting carers. In addition, we have promoted carers' needs assessments, particularly those of adult carers (either as standalone assessments or combined with the cared for person). 1,438 adult carers of adults have had a carers' needs assessment/ review (separately/ jointly with the cared for person) in 2022/23. However, we know that we can and should be reaching more carers to have their needs assessed.

The young carers' team have also been offering assessments to young people with caring responsibilities and support for many years. In 2022, focused efforts were put into shortening waiting times for young carers, to ensure they received faster support and allocation to a worker. Initially 64 young people were waiting for a service – focused duty calls, completion of initial carers' assessment screening tool and check-ins were completed whilst they waited for the service, and the number waiting is now 18. There are currently 170 young carers being supported by the service.

Parent carers' assessments have historically been embedded in the children and young people's needs assessment. Parent carers worked with the local authority to coproduce a parent carer needs assessment some years back; however, this assessment was never enacted in practice.

Although we have ways to identify and assess carers, the consultation showed we are not providing enough opportunities and encouragement for carers to have their needs assessed. There also needs to be an option for a stand-alone parent carer needs assessment, should this be required, as legislation states 'Local Authorities have a duty to provide an assessment to a carer of a disabled child aged under 18 if it appears that the carer has needs, or the carer requests an assessment' (Children and Families Act 2014).

Transition for young carers to adult services is also an area of concern. There is a recognised lack of planning for carers entering adulthood, especially in relation to future planning and support of non-carer goals.

Carers have also said that they felt 'front door' access (Single Point of Access and Family Information Service) was too fixated on keeping individuals out of formal services, rather than on identifying and encouraging carers to seek support. A number of those who did access a carers' needs assessment stated they did not feel that staff had the time to do the assessments fully and as a result had not fully considered their needs as a carer. There was also a cohort of carers who shared they had multiple caring roles which made assessing assessment and support more difficult, often needing to duplicate their story and navigate many systems. These carers asked that joint carers assessments between services be considered and a holistic view of all of their needs taken (e.g. focus independent adult social work and NAViGO).

Since the last strategy, the NEL Carers' Support Service has provided parent and adult carers with:

- 7,260 specialist benefits advice/ support appointments, resulting in almost £6 million worth of benefits support being awarded.
- 6,897 hours of holistic therapies.
- 5,768 hours of counselling.
- 2,552 befriending sessions.
- 538 carers training sessions.
- £95,225 carers' innovation fund and individual carer grant payments via the Carers' Support Service.
- 71 computer tablets loaned to support isolated carers during lockdown and beyond.
- Access to the Bennetts suite, which provides support to the cared for person (adult) so the carer can access carers support and services. 106 carers have access the service so far.
- Over 1,300 carer activities, hobby and interest groups based on carer needs/ wishes. This includes the launch of 'the shed' carer woodwork group.

The young carers' team and the NEL Carers' Support Service have provided dedicated support to children and young people who care, with the delivery of 27 young carer activity groups, residentials, 'drop-in' sessions in secondary schools, training and social activities.

In addition to the support offered via the NEL Carers' Support Service, adult carers have accessed the following since the last strategy:

- 377 carers emergency alert cards and carers' emergency plans (for adult carers)
- 10,922 commissioned carer breaks for adult carers supporting adults (sitting and respite)
- 632 direct payments for adult carers of adults.

Dedicated work has been undertaken to support specific groups of carers including enhanced support for carers of those affected by substance misuse, carers of those currently in hospital and working carers. Targeted efforts have also been undertaken to support carers who are at different stages of their caring journey and to support carers to plan for contingencies and future life planning.

70 children and young people have accessed the short breaks service in the last year which gives the parents and guardians a break and 36 direct payments have been allocated for parent carers.

### ***Next steps – what we need to do.....***

The carers' strategic and operational leads will work with social workers and Continuing Health Care Teams across children, young people and adult services to ensure mechanisms are in place to actively seek out carers of all ages and encourage them to take up carers' needs assessments. In addition, the principle social workers across children and adult services will foster a strengths-based approach to needs assessment that values and supports our carers.

Children and young people services will work with parent carers to look at the opportunities for parent carer needs assessment.

Relationships between organisations to promote unified working in NEL and across local authority boundaries will be strengthened, to ensure the carer's needs are identified and met appropriately. This includes working with educational establishments, young/ adult carer supported groups, employers and other stakeholders to support well planned transitions for young carers.

A multi-organisational plan will be created to better promote the services available to carers to ensure carers know about them.

Existing carers' support and services will continue to be reviewed and adjusted to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose, with a specific focus on out of hours and weekend provision, to ensure carers can be appropriately supported at a time convenient to them.

Greater recognition of the barriers to accessing support are needed, and mitigations put in place to address these issues (i.e., working carers, lack of replacement support for the cared for to facilitate carer access to support, ease and flexibility of access, inconsistency/ unreliability of carers' breaks).

Support known carers to undertake life and contingency planning, and to understand and exercise their rights and options and those of the cared for person.

***We are committed to working together to ensure carers are:***

- Offered/ referred to prevention and wellbeing services.
- Informed of their right to a carers' needs assessment.
- Offered/ referred for a carers' needs assessment where they provide or intend to provide care to someone else.
- Supported through a carers' needs assessment and the development of a meaningful carers' support plan, where their needs and wishes have been explored and how they are to be met is clearly stated.
- Provided with breaks, direct payments, and support where they meet eligibility criteria.
- Supported appropriately through key carer transitions.

## **Priority 4 Carer education, training, and employment**

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### **Current position in NEL**

Actions to support carers to combine caring with education, work and training have been a feature of our carers' action plans for some time. Over 100 businesses have received carer awareness raising sessions/ training, and of those 62 individuals/ organisations have signed up for the employers for carers/ Carers' UK initiative. Where an employer has engaged and actively become carer aware and established carer friendly working practices, the benefits have been seen for both carers (able to maintain work and caring) and the employer (reduced sickness/ absence/ greater productivity/ employee retention).

Continued work with local employers and the Job Centre is required to ensure that carers can maintain their employment if they choose to do so, or access new roles which support caring alongside work. We also need to continue to develop the carers' award/ charter accreditation that gives employers a set standard to meet to support working carers and carers who are customers.

The NEL Carers' Support Service has significantly widened the carers training and workshops offer to include wellbeing and stress management, back care, first aid, legal matters, scams awareness, utilising IT, coping with change, understanding dementia, yoga, tai chi, and art classes. However, carers in consultation discussed how they would like a wider range of training/ learning options, which were also more flexible (online/ face to face – including evenings and weekends) to fit around their caring role.

Young carers report a mixed picture in relation to the support they receive through schools and wider health and care services. Some young carers are supported well at school – they have dedicated staff they can seek out for support, have carers' champions and supportive practices for them as a carer and a young person. However, others suggested there is much more that can be done to help them balance their caring role with school. The Carers' Partnership is working hard to roll out training for staff, to support the adoption of young carer champions in schools, and to help schools build in mechanisms of support.

Our best efforts have encouraged some carer friendly education and employment practices, however, much more is still required to make learning and working in NEL more accessible to carers.

***Next steps – what we need to do.....***

A carers' award/ charter accreditation will be launched for businesses (an award that recognises when employers have reached a set standard in relation to supporting working carers and carers who are customers). This will help establish ongoing training, embed carer policies and procedures and the idea of supporting carers to continue caring while working.

The carers' training and learning offer will be further developed to improve the range, volume, and accessibility of the training, both in terms of the delivery methods and the timings.

The Job Centre and other providers of employment opportunities/ support will be encouraged to promote carer friendly practices that help carers into employment.

The young carers' team will continue their efforts to engage and proactively work with schools and further education settings to ensure they have carer champions, policies, procedures and working practices in place supportive to young carers. The focus will be on encouraging the identification of young carers and offering support to ensure young people continue to maintain attendance and educational achievement while caring and are supported to have good physical and mental health as well as good overall wellbeing. The young carers' team will also support national and regional initiatives such as the Young Carers in Schools award.

***We are committed to working together to ensure carers are:***

- Supported to engage in work, education, and training opportunities alongside their caring role, if that's what the carer wants.
- Recognised in education settings / the workplace and supported to succeed in these settings.
- Supported to work with their employer to build carer friendly working practices.

## **Priority 5 Tackling carer inequalities**

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### ***Current position in NEL***

Many carers care for a significant amount of time across the week. As a result, carers cannot easily engage in activities outside of caring, for example, to work, to attend school, to access health and care services for themselves or take part in social activities. Carers suffer from several inequalities. Research suggests they are more likely to be in financial hardship, have poorer physical and mental health, and less likely to be in full time work or education (and to have lower results when they are) compared to those without caring responsibilities. When carers are unrecognised and unsupported, the impact on carers can be even greater. Further, inequalities are compounded if the carer is from a recognised underrepresented group (ethnic minority, LGBTQ+, disability, gender etc.).

Many carers reported that current services are not always culturally sensitive, accepting, accessible (such as the environment or timings) or supportive to carers' needs. One service highlighted as having barriers to carers access is primary care. The reasons given were the inflexibility with appointment times, length of appointment and the appointment booking systems. While carers accepted that services are extremely stretched, having some flexibility to support carers would not only improve their health and wellbeing but also reduce missed appointments.

Progress has been made to offer carers access to support and services during evenings and weekends (for example, the Carers' Support Service are open on Thursday evenings and Saturdays until 2pm) to support those who juggle significant weekday daytime demands. However, carers still report that they have limited access to the full range of support available. When services are recommissioned/ renegotiated, the range of support and hours of operation will need to be considered to widen access.

Recent years have seen a much higher strain on finances for everyone. However the problem for carers is more acute because they are often further disadvantaged through their caring role (i.e. they are less able to work, have reduced hours or work in a junior/ lesser paid role) and have less of a financial 'buffer' than non-carers. It is important that support to access the full range of available benefits, grants, initiatives and

discounts is given, and that we add our voice to lobbying for paid carers' leave and for a higher rate of carers' allowance.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, as demand for services increase, those with more complex needs are living longer and at home, and paid workforce recruitment and retention challenges persist, the role carers play in supporting the cared for person is likely to increase. Coupled with the increased challenges carers face financially, in work/ education and in having a social life, this makes it more important than ever before to consider carers, their needs and address their inequalities. This will ensure carers are supported to continue to care (where it is their choice to do so) and to have a life outside of caring, to secure the sustainability of the caring role and support the health and care system.

#### ***Next steps – what we need to do.....***

Linked to priority three, we need to review and adjust carers' support and services to make sure they are inclusive and culturally sensitive. We will also need to continue to develop and promote the advice, support, and advocacy services around carer finances.

The NEL Carers Partnership must act as a collaborative partner to challenge the national position regarding carers, to ensure better carer opportunities (i.e. carers' leave bill) and support (i.e. carers' allowance increases) are accessible locally.

The NEL Carers Partnership will also inspire NEL businesses to expand the financial incentives available to carers (i.e. discounts/freebies, gym memberships, etc) and provide carer friendly environments and support.

We must encourage primary care to develop carer friendly approaches which offer greater flexibility and an inclusive model/ offer for carers. This will ensure carers can benefit from health and care initiatives to maintain their own health. Collectively, we must improve promotion of the primary care offer to carers.

We will ensure that when designing and delivering carers support and services that they are inclusive and culturally sensitive.

#### ***We are committed to working together to ensure carers are:***

- Supported and empowered to understand and exercise their rights and choices.
- Supported to explore contingencies that make use of their strengths, resources and available support.
- Given fair and consistent access to the help they need.
- Confident that the support they access is culturally appropriate and meets their diverse needs.

## **Priority 6 Carer Led**

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### ***Current position in NEL***

In NEL, there are established routes to gathering carer views, working with carers and including carers in the design, procurement and on-going monitoring of services. Carers are also included on many boards and committees. Examples of carer inclusion, engagement and coproduction include:

- The retendering of the NEL Carers' Support Service
- The delivery of the carers' emergency alert card service
- The production of the carers' guide
- The recent review of the respite charging policy
- The development of the autism strategy
- The development of the dementia strategy
- The hospital planning group and discharge project work
- the recruitment of the chief executive at Focus Independent Adult Social Work
- the recruitment of the Council's Director of Adult Services
- The development of Live Well
- The SEND inspection (feedback from parent carers was provided)
- The SEND newsletter (production and publishing)
- The local children's offer
- The shape of the young carers' offer
- Representation on the board of Focus, Navigo, Care Plus Group, and the Carers' Partnership.

The NEL Carers' Partnership meets quarterly to report and update on work that has been undertaken by its members to advance actions on the NEL Carers' Strategy Action Plan. Members are accountable to each other, the Health and Care Partnership and carer representatives.

The Carers' Forum has relaunched as the 'Carers' Voice' which meets monthly to deliver dedicated carer projects, listen to guest speakers, engage with consultations or informal feedback sessions and act as a conduit between carers and the health and care system.

Carers state they want to be involved and included and have a voice in the design, delivery, and monitoring of all aspects of carers' support and services. Some were not aware of the opportunities on offer, or have not been engaged with. Carers also have a lot of knowledge about the services of those they care for, and should be given the opportunity to be involved in designing/ developing these. More work is needed to promote and widen opportunities for carers to get involved, and to reduce the barriers to participation. We aim to encourage and embed the inclusion of carers in all aspects of the carers' agenda moving forward to continue to improve the reach of the carers' voice.

Local carers, particularly those who are actively engaged, have said they would like information on best practice from across the region, enabling them to explore opportunities to further improve our local carers' offer. Carers would also like support to raise their voice on regional and national platforms by contributing to campaigns and initiatives.

***Next steps – what we need to do.....***

We will work with carers to identify and remove the barriers to carers' engagement. Our aim is to ensure the carers' voice is heard by involving them in all aspects of decision making about carers support and services, including project work, procurement and wider panels, committees and boards.

We will continue to work with the Carers' Voice and the other carers' forums/ groups to promote carer led projects and to seek carer input across the health, care and voluntary sector system. This must be linked with clear and visible feedback opportunities, so that carers know where to look for these.

Carers' operational and strategic leads will ensure there is a way for regional best practice to be fed into carer related forums (such as the Carers' Voice and Carers' Partnership) and provide performance related information. This will enable us to benchmark ourselves against our regional comparators, and draw on regional strengths in carer work to innovate within NEL.

***We are committed to working together to ensure carers are:***

- Included and engaged in the design, delivery and monitoring of carer and non-carer support services and the work of the Carers' Partnership.
- Able to live and work in a carer friendly NEL.

## **9. North East Lincolnshire's Action Plan 2023 – 2026**

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To deliver on our vision and priority areas for action, everyone will need to work together in partnership and 'buy in' to the culture and transformation required. The three-year carers' action plan below has been created to ensure the priority areas for action are addressed.

The Carers' Partnership will translate the three-year action plan into annual plans, detailing actions, milestones, and responsibilities. The measurements for success will be agreed and the plan will be reviewed each year to capture progress, and reflect changes to national and local priorities and carers' needs.

As a result of the carers' strategy and three year action plan, all carers will:

- Feel valued for the contribution they make.
- Be recognised as 'expert partners' in care.
- Have better access to information and advice.
- Be better supported to remain in work, education or take part in training and leisure pursuits.
- Be better supported to maintain their own health and wellbeing.
- Have more confidence in and access to a range of quality services and support that meets their individual needs and preferences.
- Be identified and appropriately assessed.

In addition:

- Young carers and siblings will be supported to have the same life chances as their non-carer peers.

**As a result, NEL will be a carer friendly place to live and work/ learn.**

Action	By whom	By when		
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>Priority 1 Identification, recognition, and provision of information</b>				
Increase the number of carers being identified or self-identifying each reporting period across NEL, including seldom heard carers. Improve the support offered at identification to encourage registration with key support services – the Carers' Support Service, children and adult services and primary care.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Increase the number of carers registered with the Carers' Support Service each quarter by 200 carers.	NEL Carers' Support Service	✓	✓	✓
Ensure carers can access the information they need, in a way that works for them, including referral to support and assessment.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Work to change the culture in NEL to ensure carers are recognised, valued, and supported as expert care partners.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Build the positive perception of the 'carer' label, including amongst our carer population.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
<b>Priority 2 Workforce- culture and practice</b>				
Work with our workforce to ensure that identifying and supporting carers is embedded in policies, procedures, and practices (and is consistent).	All organisations in NEL	✓	✓	✓
Work to encourage 'buy in' regarding the value and importance of supporting carers and treating them as expert care partners across the entirety of our health and care workforce.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	✓
Develop new and innovative options to train and influence our workforce and their practice to identify and support carers. Monitor the effectiveness of this.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	
Improve the sharing of information amongst teams to ensure our workforce is aware of all support options for carers.	Carers' Partnership	✓		
<b>Priority 3 Access to assessments and support</b>				
Ensure that all carers providing or intending to provide care are offered the opportunity for a carers' needs assessment, and that the process is flexible and tailored to allow carers' full involvement.	Focus Independent Adult Social Work Care Plus Group Navigo NELC	✓	✓	✓
Develop a range of carers' performance indicators to monitor the delivery of carers' needs assessments and the delivery of support to ensure it is happening, is effective, meeting carers' needs and achieving carer outcomes.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	✓
Strengthen and build on the relationships between organisations to promote proper joined up working in NEL or across boundaries with other authorities, to ensure the carer's full set of needs are identified and met appropriately.	Focus Independent Adult Social Work Care Plus Group Navigo NELC	✓	✓	✓
Work to develop the out of hours and weekend support offer, to ensure carers can be appropriately supported at a time suitable to them.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	
Work to develop the young carer offer, including scoping other areas of best practice, to ensure carers are offered a suite of activities and training that is relevant to their needs and accessible (e.g. offered in the school setting, etc).	Young carers	✓	✓	
Create a multi-organisational plan to support and build on the ongoing promotion of services available to carers.	Carers' Partnership	✓		
Develop the carers' breaks offer to ensure that carers of all ages can access an appropriate break.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	
Work regionally to share best practice and adopt new concepts for carer support that have shown themselves beneficial in other comparable areas.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	✓
Improve the carers' support offer to include more joined up working between relevant children's and adults' services, especially for complex and mental health conditions and where there are known transitional points.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓		

Support known carers to undertake life and contingency planning, and to understand and exercise their rights and options and those of the cared for person.	Carers' Strategic & Operational Leads	✓	✓	✓
<b>Priority 4 Carer education, training, and employment</b>				
Produce a carers' charter/ award accreditation that ensures participating businesses in NEL are providing an approved and consistent baseline level of support to their working carers and carer clients.	Carers' Partnership	✓		
Continue to work with current employment support services in NEL to ensure carers' needs are embedded in their processes and practice.	Carers' Partnership	✓		
Develop education, training, and information opportunities for carers in line with their needs.	NEL Carers' Support Service Young Carers Lead	✓		
Continue to promote carers' awareness training to organisations and professional groups, through a programme that covers planned induction and refresher sessions.	NEL Carers' Support Service	✓		
Develop a flexible out of hours training/ education offer.	Carers' Partnership	✓		
Develop relationships with schools to ensure progression of young carer support in education, including the adoption of the Young Carers in Schools award.	Young Carers' Lead	✓	✓	
Work with carers to explore the barriers to education, training and employment and create responsive plans to manage and mitigate these via ongoing support projects.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	
<b>Priority 5 Tackling carer inequalities</b>				
Continue to develop the advice, support, and advocacy services around carer finances and to promote them	NEL Carers' Support Service	✓		
Act as a collaborative partner to challenge the national position regarding carers, to ensure better carer opportunities (i.e. carers' leave bill) and support (i.e. carers' allowance increases) are accessible locally	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Work with organisations and businesses to develop environments that support carers (safe spaces, pathways, and transport, etc)	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Support NEL businesses to expand the available financial incentives available to carers (e.g. discounts/freebies, gym memberships, etc).	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Work with acute and primary care to develop a better model for carers, to ensure carers can benefit from health and care initiatives and are supported to maintain their own health.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Work to ensure services and support are inclusive and culturally sensitive.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
<b>Priority 6 Carer led</b>				
Encourage/ include carer participation in panels, service planning, project work and strategy discussions to ensure ongoing co-production, and work to reduce barriers to carer involvement	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Continue to work with the Carers' Voice to promote carer led projects and to seek carer input across the system	NEL Carers' Support Service Carers' Operational Lead	✓		
Ensure the inclusion of relevant forums and carer groups in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation processes of services.	Carers' Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Ensure there are clear and visible feedback opportunities, and that carers know where to look for these.	NEL Carers' Support Service	✓		
Create a mechanism for feeding regional best practice into carer related forums locally to bring about innovation and improvement.	Carers' Operational Lead	✓	✓	✓

## 11. Appendices

### Appendix 1: National carer information

#### Key national carer related facts

- 5 million people in the UK are providing unpaid care – roughly one in five adults (2021 Census)
- Every year, 4.3 million people became unpaid carers (12,000 people per day (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022)).
- 3 in 5 adults can expect to become a carer at some point (Carers UK 2022).
- According to Carers UK 1 in 8 adult carers self-identify as LGBT.
- 41% of Carers are men.
- 1.5 million carers provide 50+ hours of care per week or more (2021 Census).
- Carers save the economy £132 billion per year, an average of £19,336 per carer (Carers UK 2019).
- 1 in 7 adults in the UK manage work and a care role (Carers UK 2019).
- As many as one in five children and young people are young carers; this is a total of around 166,000 in England and Wales (2021 census).
- 23% of young carers in the UK said that their caring role had stopped them making friends (Action for Children 2021).
- 66% of carers said they needed more support to be able to look after their own health and wellbeing and 50% of carers said they needed more breaks or general time away from their caring role (state of caring 2021).
- According to Mind, 35% of carers in England have a mental health condition. Roughly 1 in 4 carers with severe mental health conditions are not receiving any support from mental health services.
- 18% of carers are in or have been in debt because of caring (state of caring 2021).
- 72% of working carers worry about continuing to juggle work and care (Carers UK 2019).
- 23% of working carers are at risk of reducing their hours or leaving work if they don't have access to affordable care (Carers UK 2021).

### Appendix 2: Carers' support

<p><b>Peer Support groups</b> Carers come together to learn from one another &amp; support one another.</p>	<p><b>Workshops &amp; Training</b> provide opportunities that enable carers to manage &amp; maintain their wellbeing, their caring role &amp; build their knowledge &amp; understanding of conditions, services &amp; support.</p>	<p><b>Activity Groups &amp; outings</b> Activities that carers can do together &amp; give them a structured break.</p>	<p><b>Specialist Advice</b> Advice &amp; support with benefits, housing, health &amp; social care &amp; employment.</p>
<p><b>Holistic Therapies</b> A range of therapies (e.g. body massage) to give carers a break &amp; time to themselves</p>	<p><b>Counselling</b> Enables carers to work through difficult emotional situations enabling them to improve &amp; manage their mental wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Befriending</b> Gives carers a chance to talk to someone impartial &amp; non-judgemental outside of their caring role. Befrienders offer a listening ear &amp; can also attend groups etc. with carers who don't have confidence to attend on their own.</p>	<p><b>Carers' Emergency Alert Card</b> An identity card is connected to an emergency plan. It gives carers piece of mind. Carers carry the card with them &amp; in the event of an emergency that prevents the carer from caring, the emergency plan is activated.</p>

<p><b>Advocacy</b> Advocacy supports carers to have their voice heard, usually when they need support to challenge a decision or make sure the person they care for gets the support they need.</p>	<p><b>1:1 Key Worker Support</b> Key workers work with carers on a one-to-one basis usually when they are experiencing a particularly difficult time with their caring role. Support includes practical, solution focussed &amp; emotional support including referring on to other appropriate services.</p>	<p><b>Innovation Fund &amp; Individual Carer Grants</b> The innovation fund &amp; grants help to meet the needs of carers through the provision of funding, that wouldn't be met by other means.</p>	<p><b>Carer Needs Assessment</b> A needs assessment identifies the needs of carers &amp; explores how best to meet those needs.</p>
<p><b>Carer Direct Payments</b> Direct payments are a vehicle for meeting need. They put the carer in control of sourcing their own support to meet their needs. Often this will be to enable them to have a carer break.</p>	<p><b>Carer Breaks</b> Carer breaks are provided in several ways, including sitting services, respite, day opportunities for the cared for and via the Carers' Support Service through the Bennett Suite (support for carers of adults).</p>	<p><b>Carers' Voice</b> The Carers' Voice brings carers together to be involved in the planning, design, implementation, evaluation &amp; development of services &amp; support.</p>	<p><b>Carers' Partnership</b> The Carers' Partnership is a group of professionals &amp; carers representing the health, social care, community &amp; third sectors, who work together to implement the NEL Carers' Strategy.</p>

### Appendix 3: Regional and national carers' agenda and relevant legislation

#### Regional Carers' Network – the local context within Yorkshire and the Humber

For many years there has been a strong regional carers' network, which aims to bring carers' leads together to discuss urgent and relevant regional carer related issues and to share best practice. A regional tool has been developed to enable organisations in the region to measure the strength of their support offer for carers; this tool offers areas in the region a baseline so that they can identify and discuss regional strengths and weaknesses in the carers' offer and highlight best practice. The tool focuses on the below key areas:

- Awareness and culture
- Identification and recognition
- Information and advice
- Better conversations
- Support and services
- Carers as expert care partners.

The regional network has reported that since Covid-19 restrictions ended, the below have been highlighted as regional trends:

- Fuel poverty has worsened
- Provider failure has worsened
- There is a clear increased need to support working carers
- There is a lack of access to breaks
- The need for digital resources has decreased
- There is an increased need for substance misuse and mental health services.

#### National Carers strategies:

There have been a raft of national carers' strategies, the first of which, 'Strategy for Carers', was published in 1999. This was superseded by 'Carers at the heart of 21<sup>st</sup>-century families and communities' which launched in 2008, setting out a vision that by 2018 carers would be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities. Support would be based on individuals' needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring. In 2010, "Recognised, Valued and Supported: next steps for the carers' strategy" was also launched, to set out the next 4 years of actions to support the carers' strategy.

A refresh of The National Carers' Strategy has been anticipated for a few years. The national focus has been on the following aims:

- Carers are identified at the right time
- Carers are provided with appropriate advice and information throughout their caring journey
- Carers needs are identified and responded to appropriately
- Carers are supported in their caring role and have a life outside of caring and beyond it
- Carers are recognised as expert care partners and are involved in care and support planning for the cared for person
- Carers are involved in service design, delivery, and monitoring.

## **Legislation relating to carers**

### **The Care Act 2014**

The Care Act 2014 covers carers aged 18 and over caring for someone aged 18 and over, and transition to adulthood. It puts carers on an equal legal footing with individuals needing care and support. The Act places duties on local authorities to:

- support carers' health and wellbeing.
- prevent, reduce, or delay carers' need for support.
- provide information and advice relating to the local carers' support offer.
- provide independent advocacy for carers.
- inform carers of their right to a carers' needs assessment (assessments must establish the carer's needs for support, the sustainability of the caring role, the carer's future needs for support, and if the carer is able and willing to continue. It must consider the carer's life beyond their caring role; work, education, training, social, and recreation).
- ensure eligible carers (Care Act factsheets – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))) are given a support plan which includes a personal budget to meet their needs.
- carry out a transition assessment for young carers and for adult carers of a young person when it can be seen what the carer's needs for support will be after the young person turns 18.
- collaborate, cooperate, and integrate with other public authorities, such as the NHS.

### **Children and Families Act 2014**

The Children and Families Act 2014 covers carers aged under 18 (young carers) and adult carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (parent carers). It gives carers the right to an assessment and to have their eligible needs met.

#### **Young carers**

Young carers have a right to an assessment where the young carer or young carer's parent asks for one, or where the Local Authority sees the young carer has needs (i.e. the young carer or their parent doesn't have to ask). Local authorities must take 'reasonable steps' to identify young carers in their area who have support needs. This might include asking schools, or young carers' support services, if they know of anyone who has support needs. Local authorities also have a role in preventing future need and to consider if a caring role could have a negative impact on the young carer's wellbeing in future. The assessment needs to consider whether it is appropriate for the young carer to provide care, consider the young carer's needs for support in their own right, and look at what the young carer needs for their own education, work, health, hobbies, or activities. The local authority must ask the young carer and their parent for their views during the assessment.

#### **Parent carers**

Local Authorities have a duty to provide an assessment to an adult carer of a child with special educational needs or disabilities if it appears that the carer has needs, or the carer requests an assessment. The assessment must look at whether the carer has needs for support, what those needs are, the wellbeing of the carer, whether it is appropriate for the carer to continue to provide care, and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child cared for and any other child for whom the carer has responsibility. Any services to be provided for carers can be included in a child's Education Health and Care plan if the child has one.

## Appendix 4: consultation results

In keeping with the NEL commitment – Talking, Listening and Working Together – co-production has been at the heart of developing this strategy. Discussions were held with carers caring for someone living in NEL regarding their lived experiences of caring. Discussions were also held with the wider public and with professionals regarding all things ‘carer’ and ‘caring’. We wanted to know how we could make NEL a more carer friendly place. Carers and professionals helped create the questions and discussion topics that were used during consultation. The formal consultation phase ran from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 and included:

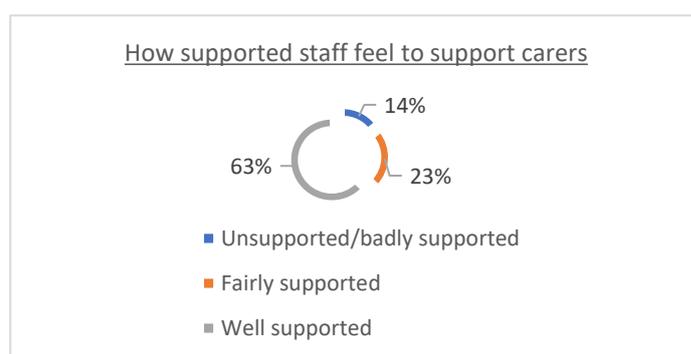
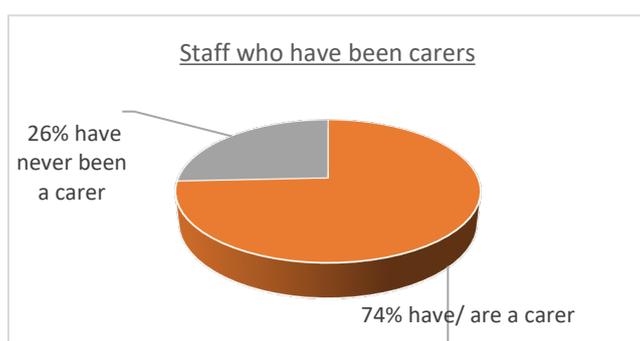
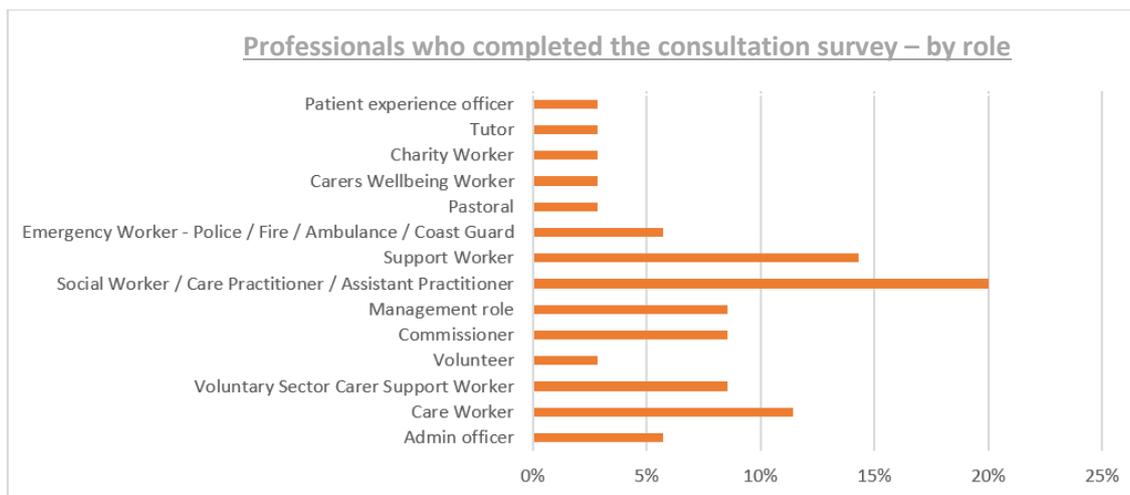
- Two face-to-face consultation events with adult carers of all ages – 20 in attendance.
- A young carers face-to-face event – 17 in attendance.
- 17 focus group/ discussion sessions at a range of carer groups/ activities.
- 8 questions during the consultation period via social media.
- A New Year’s Day question via text to all registered carers – 137 responses.
- A carers’ survey via survey monkey, with paper copies distributed to key carer venues – 226 responses.
- A professionals’ survey for carers via survey monkey – 40 responses.

A) We asked carers to think of the one thing that came to mind when they thought of their caring role; carers said:



B) Quotes from the carers and professionals who took part in the consultation:

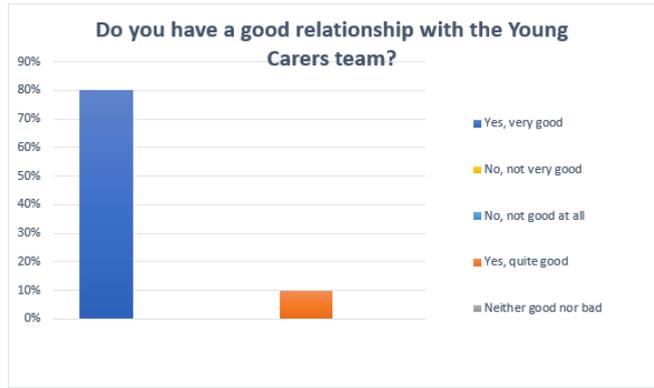
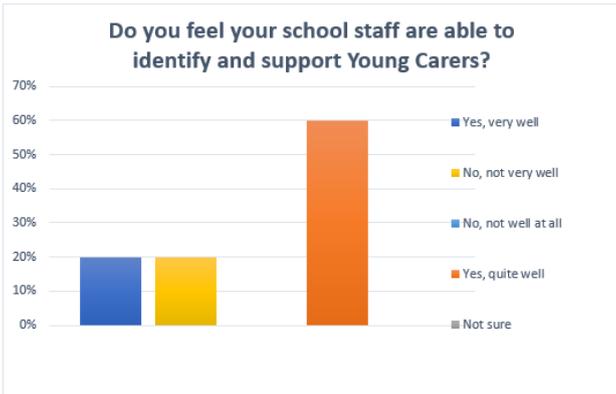
### C) Professional survey responses



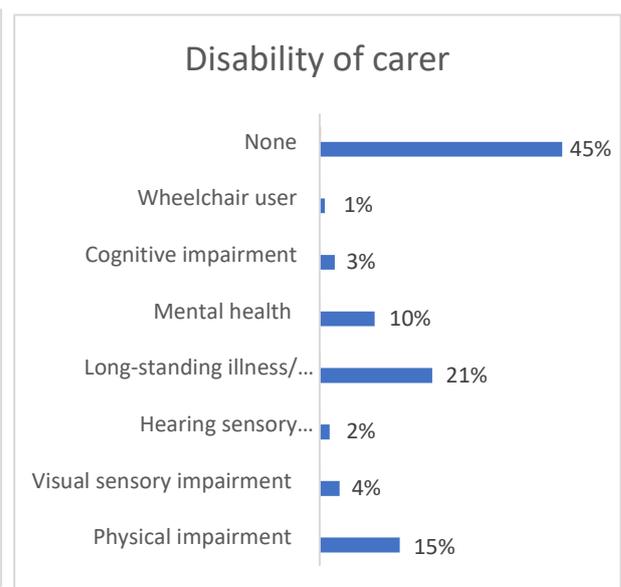
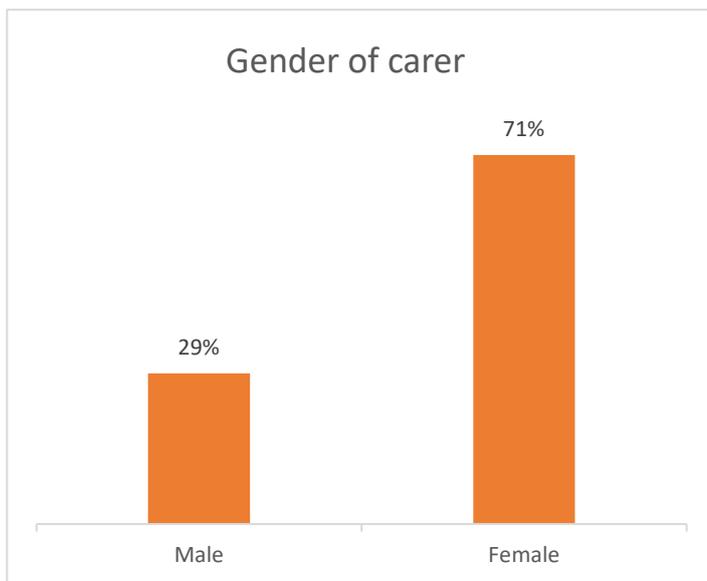
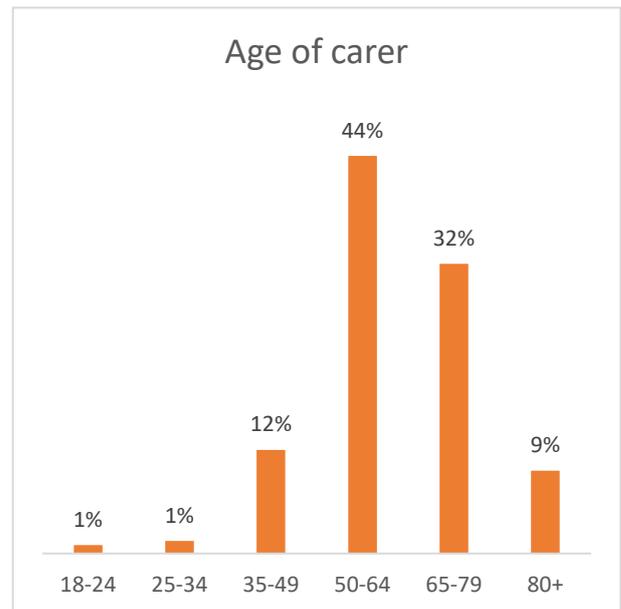
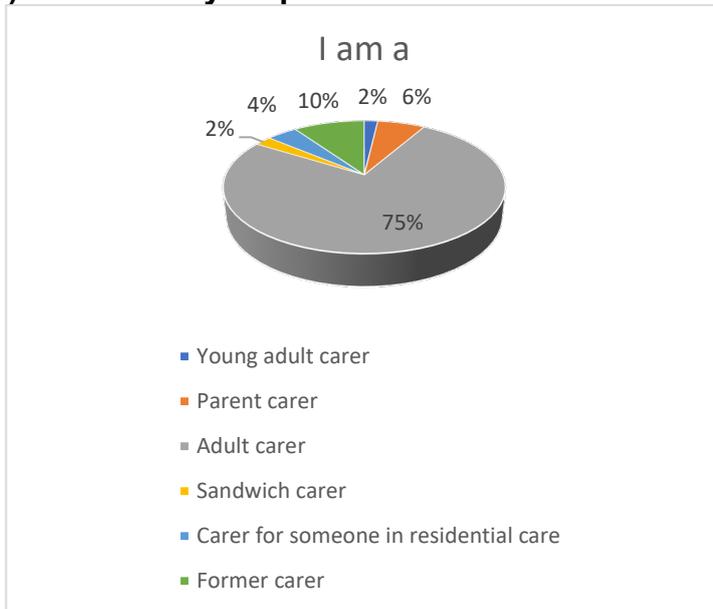
<b>What'd help you [as a professional] support carers</b>	<b>Count</b>
Refresher/ training on support available for external and working carers	7
Better tie in between partners on projects	5
Better uptake of staff feedback/ suggestions by organisation/ better buy in	4
Wider range of hours/ days support is available on	4
More unusual options for support	3
Resources – more staff or reduced time/ pressure constraints	3
Streamline processes for carers (consistent, easy access to support and info)	3
Better access to best practice	2
Carers sits/ respite options (e.g. LD)	2
Wider recognition of what a carer is and proactive referral	2
More training on mental health and counselling skills	1

<b>What gaps are there in NEL carer provision?</b>	<b>Count</b>
Issues with carer sits or respite (availability/ skills of staff, limited offer)	8
Visibility/ awareness of the support on offer is lacking	5
No support at the weekends/ out of hours	5
Reliable support agencies needed	4
Better carer assessments are needed	3
Lack of identification of carers esp. in hospital and acute settings	3
Staff levels vs volume of work needs correcting	3
Online information needs a filtering option	2
GPs are not proactive in supporting carers (e.g. with information)	2
Refresher training for staff needed	1
Lack of info for carers of those with learning disabilities	1
Wider offer for young carers needed	1
More support needed for carers with or of those with mental health issues	1

## D) Professional survey responses –specific to young carers



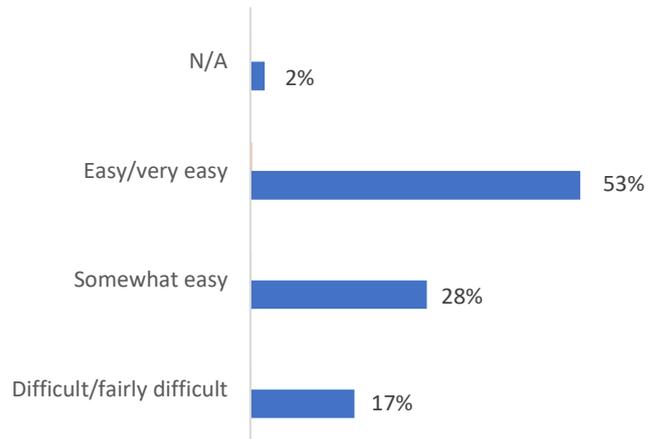
## E) Carer survey responses



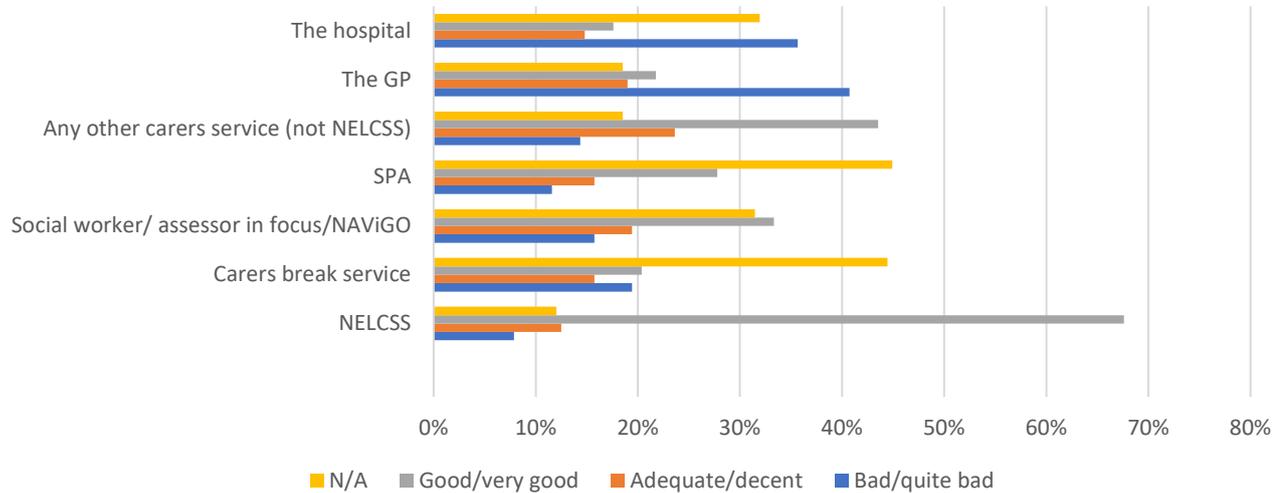
### Survey responses by ward



### Ease of getting information for carers



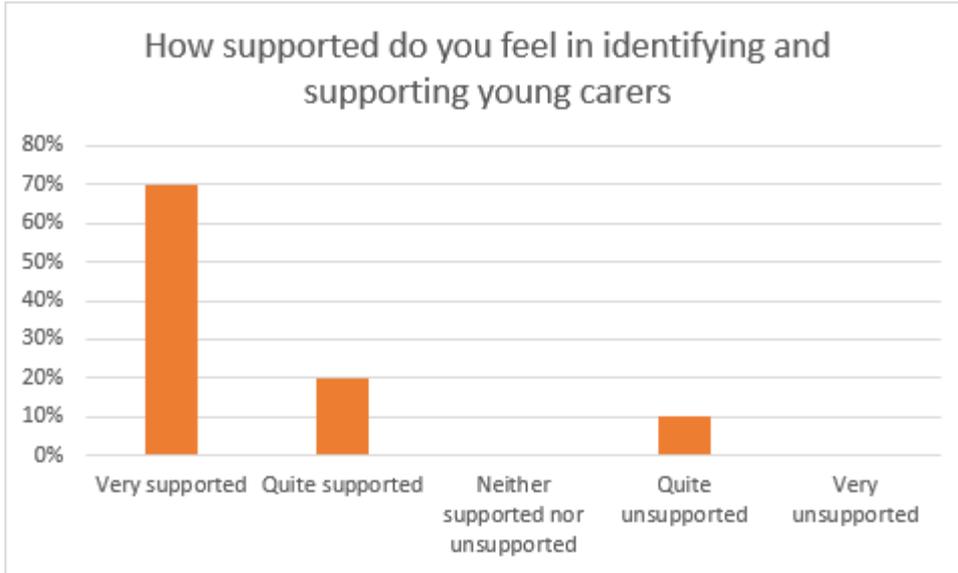
### Carer support in NEL



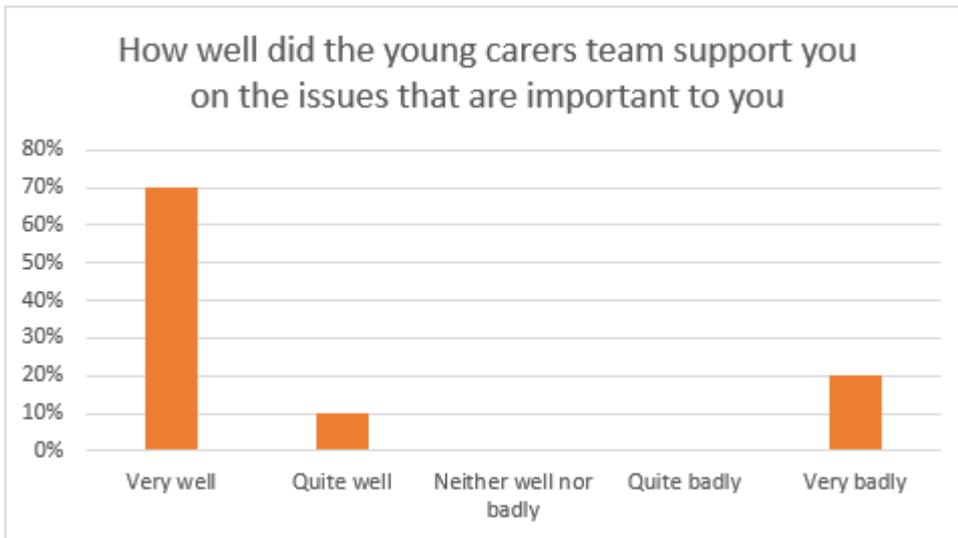
What gaps are there in NEL carer provision?	Count
Acute/ hospital identification/ recognition of carer role	23
Visibility/ awareness of the support on offer is lacking	17
Proper joined up response to needs (between orgs, across boundaries, etc)	14
Staff (non-acute/hospital) do not identify/ engage with me as a carer	14
Clearer ways to access information when needed (e.g. filtering online, or offered in more places like GP)	13
A single point of contact, that you can see face to face	11
Simplify the process to access help (e.g.. less forms, red tape, jargon etc)	10
No carers support at the weekends/out of hours	9
More accessible or better day services/ carer sits /respite (i.e. to allow carers to work)	8
Sharing of carer status should be possible between professional organisations	8
Higher rate of carers' allowance/ more financial support	8
Timely response when help is sought	7
Better carer assessments are needed i.e. focused on carers, not cash	4
Help with gardening/ house cleaning/ transport	4
Emotional mental health support is not offered/ widely available	3
Better support from employer/ buy in from management	3
Support within appointments (e.g. note taking to help the carer remember)	2
Housing support	1

## Young carer survey responses

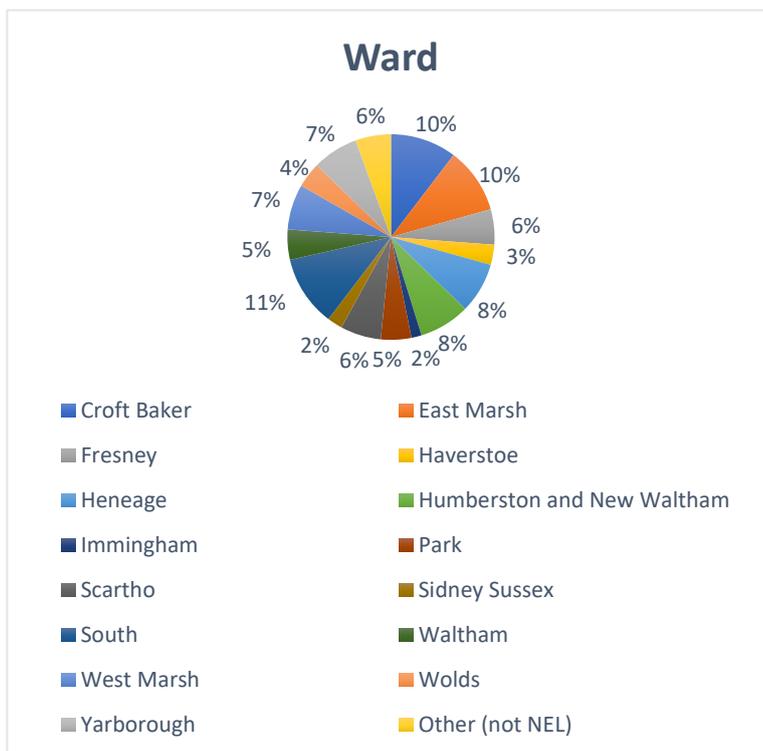
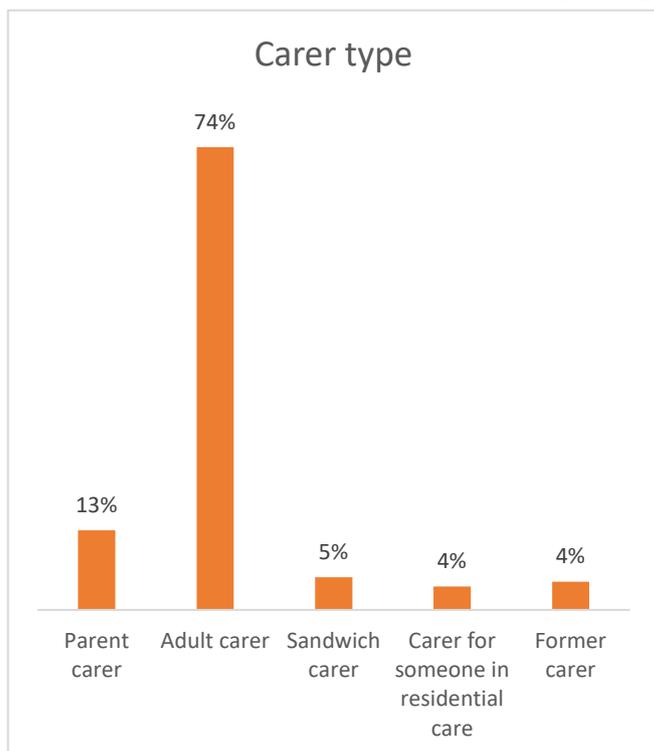
### Professionals:



### Young Carers:



## Social media- New Year's Day targeted question



What gaps are there in NEL carer provision for carers?	Count
Advocacy for carers' finances (lower age/ pensioners, more allowance, paid like a formal carer, discounts, etc)	20
Visibility/awareness of the support on offer is lacking	16
Improve access to support - better identification, simpler system (e.g. clearer where to go, how to get info), appropriate signposting	12
Respite - remain free, yearly, specialist e.g. learning disability	8
Make the services and information more joined up	6
Telephone/ face to face advice/ support more available	6
More free activities/ courses for unpaid carers i.e. free access to leisure centres, keep fit classes, mental health classes, etc	5
Further relaxation options for carers	5
Information/ help/ training/ advice on specialist situations, i.e. school leavers with additional needs, respite for those with learning disabilities, self-funders, etc	4
Housing support (social landlords, reduced council tax, adaptations, etc)	4
More acknowledgement of being a carer from government	3
Better access to GPs/ medical professionals	3
More support through transitions, e.g., classes	3
Better pay/ treatment/ recruitment of care workers by their employers	3
Support in evenings and weekends to help promote family life and manage loneliness	3
Drop-in sessions across a range of locations - safe, can chat, share, nap	3
Difficult to get through to Focus/ mental health services	2
Support with non-carer jobs, e.g., repairing the house (at low cost), gardening	2
More online training availability/ options needed	2
Better/ cheaper public transport, taxi, and dial a ride option	2
Increased capability to get physiotherapy for carers and their charges.	2
Recognition as a carer by medical professionals	2
Support (befriending/ peer) for carers with children and adults with autism ADHD	2
Support options that are speedier in time limited situations	1
More day centres and clubs which help all carers	1
Someone to take the person I am caring for out	1
Support to return to work/ advance career while being a carer	1
Support at home should be free to carers	1
A dementia cafe in the Bennett suite monthly, with dementia friendly options	1
Wait times to access some welfare services e.g. reiki/ massage can be long	1
Better pavements and dropped kerbs to make wheelchair travel easier	1