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Solihull Carers' Strategy 2022-2027



Foreword

Welcome to the Solihull Carers' Strategy 2022-27.

Carers in Solihull play a huge role in our community. At least 1 in 10 of our residents provides support to a family member or friend, giving them essential support to enable them to live a good life. Carers can be any age, and so can those that they support.

In Solihull, we want to champion the role of carers of all ages and demonstrate our support to them in their caring role, and also for carers as individuals.

We know that carers offer a lot of their time and energy to provide the support that they do; we want carers to be able to live a good life alongside their caring role.

We have worked with carers to set out a vision through this strategy of how we aim to improve the lives of carers in Solihull, and an action plan to show how we will deliver the changes needed.

We hope that by working together across the Integrated Care System we will be able to strengthen and improve our support to carers, and by doing so improve their lives and the lives of the people they care for.

Cllr Diccico / Cllr Gough / Cllr Grinsell / Lisa Stalley-Green

Introduction



We understand carers in Solihull face significant challenges and supporting carers of all ages is a priority for the Council



We recognise the difficulties that many faced and continue to face as we emerge from the pandemic



We have worked with carers to understand the support we can give to improve their lives



This strategy sets out how we are going to make changes in order to improve our support to carers of all ages

Solihull carers' vision for the future:

We worked together with carers in Solihull to create a vision for the future, that all carers are able to:

- Recognise that they are performing a caring role;
- Carry on caring if they choose to;
- Have access to good quality information and advice when they need it;
- Live a life of their own alongside being a carer, and after the caring role is over;
- Be able to thrive in work or education alongside their caring role;
- Be supported to remain physically and mentally well;
- Feel safe doing their caring role

Young Carers Promise 2019

In addition to our vision for the future, we continue to honour the Young Carers Promise we made in 2019.

- Help you to care
- See you and listen to you
- Make sure you are safe
- Provide opportunities for family time
- Make sure you can be children and young people first
- Support you in education and/or work
- Help you to be healthy and happy

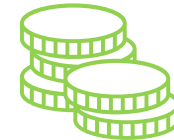
What do we mean by carers?

A carer is anyone who provides unpaid* support to a family member, child of any age, or friend who needs help because of illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem, or addiction. There are young carers, parent carers, and adult carers, and the support they provide may be:

Emotional support (for example listening to worries / concerns, supporting a person to manage their mental wellbeing)



Supporting with financial tasks – helping a person make their bill payments, access cash, manage their money, and make purchases



Supporting with household tasks – for example cooking, cleaning, and minor repairs



Supporting with personal care – washing, bathing, supporting the person to use the toilet or manage their continence



Supporting a child with additional needs, to be included and have the same chances to live their best life

What support can carers access?

All carers are entitled to a carers assessment. This is done by the Council or the Carers Trust, and they will advise what support is available for you, and if you are eligible for funding from the Council.

If you are caring for an adult and are entitled to Council-funded support you may be offered services such as respite (replacement) care for your loved one, or even one-off payments for you to spend on your own wellbeing.

All carers can approach the Carers Trust Solihull, funded by the Council and ICB, and can access support groups, training and a whole range of activities for carers of all ages.

If you are caring for a child with a disability, there are carers services that can provide support for you or offer your child short break activities, without the need for a social care assessment.

If you are a young carer, you may be offered a range of activities and support following your assessment, including liaison with your school so that they are aware of the impact that your caring responsibilities has on you.

Sometimes caring relationships can become difficult, with risks of abuse and neglect. Solihull safeguarding teams can provide support to keep you and the person you care for safe.

Why do we need a strategy?

The law places a duty on the Council to support everyone in Solihull that is a carer, from young carers, parent carers, and those caring for another adult.

This duty includes supporting carers' wellbeing as well as access to information, advice and assessments. We work to statutory timescales for providing assessments and services.

This strategy sets out how we will meet our duty and develop our offer to carers.

This is a joint strategy between the Council and the NHS, working closely with our delivery partner- Carers Trust Solihull.

It shows our commitment to working in partnership with carers

What this strategy does

Describes what we know about carers in Solihull.

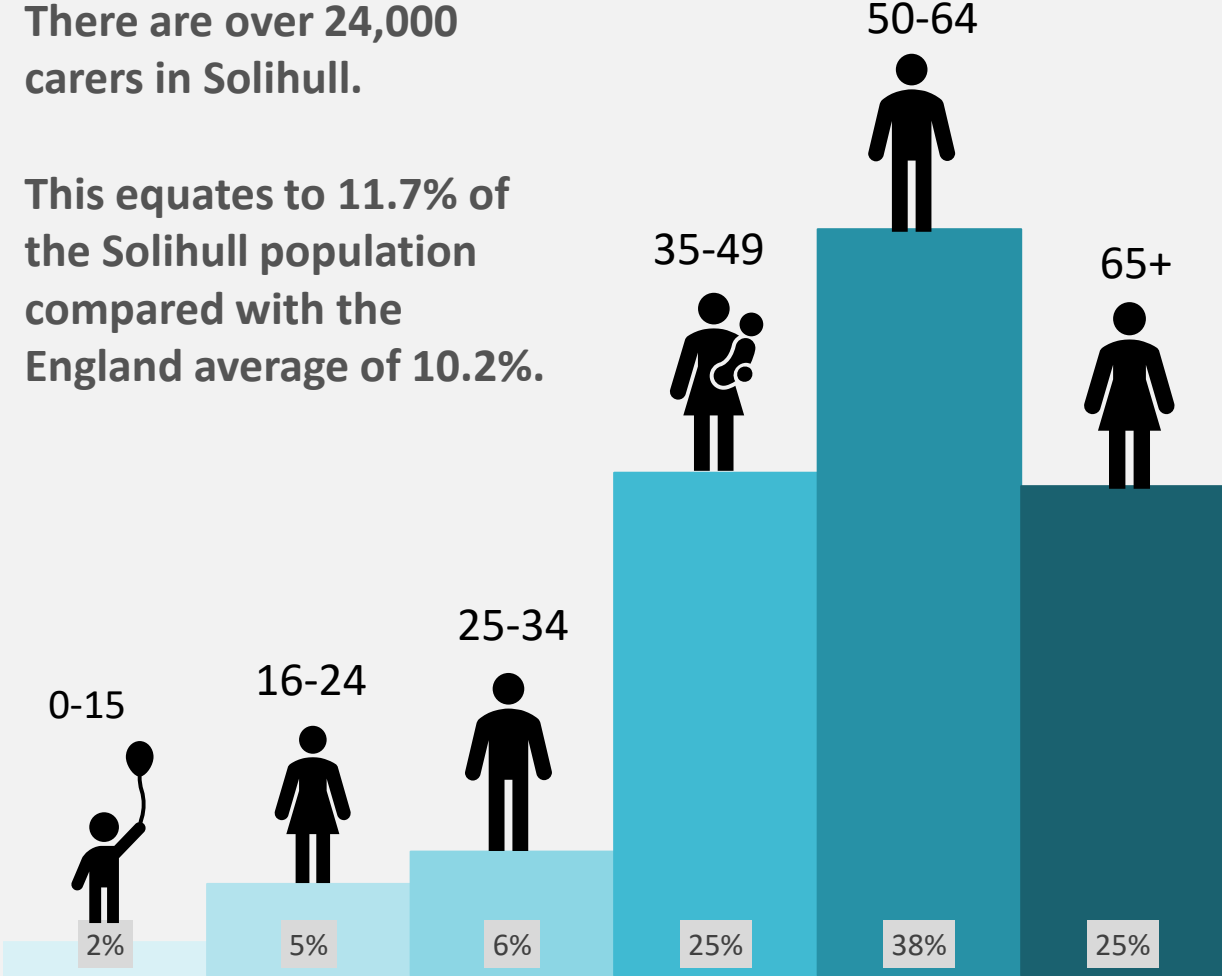
Explains what carers in Solihull have told us is important.

Plans out what changes we will make to improve our support to carers.

Number of carers in Solihull

There are over 24,000 carers in Solihull.

This equates to 11.7% of the Solihull population compared with the England average of 10.2%.



Data from 2011 Census

Carers in Solihull

Data from 2011 Census



The caring population of Solihull is 58% female and 42% male. 13% of women in the Borough provide unpaid care compared with 10% of men.



63% of carers have a disability or long term condition, compared with 51% of non-carers. 6% of carers in Solihull say their health is either 'bad' or 'very bad'.



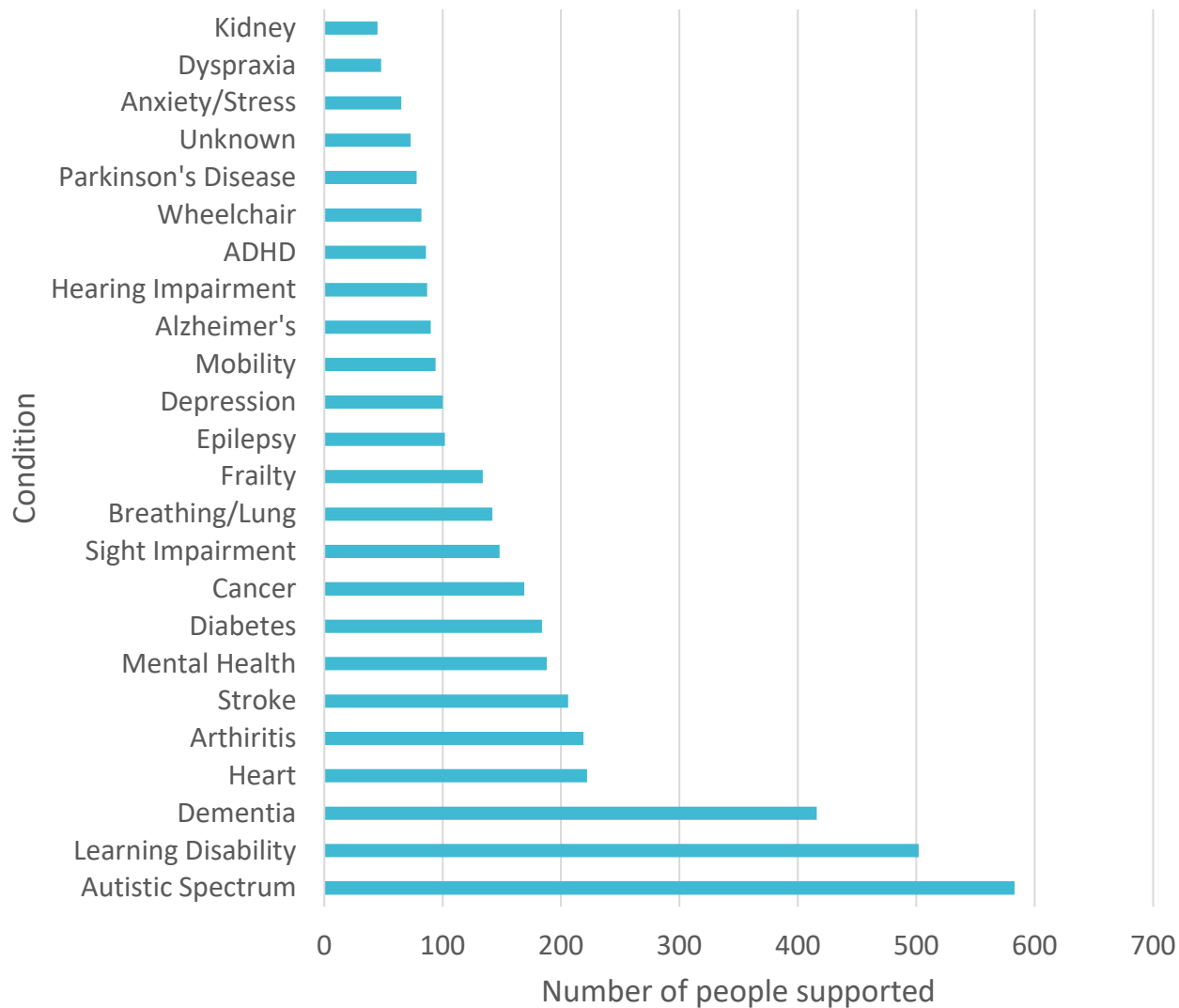
Fewer people from ethnic minorities report themselves as carers (8%) than the general population of Solihull (12%), however this could be due to people under-reporting their caring role and is something we need to understand further.



A disproportionate number of people providing 50 hours or more of care per week live in the most deprived areas of Solihull. In 2016, 8,400 carers were known to be in full time employment and 4,700 in part time employment in Solihull.

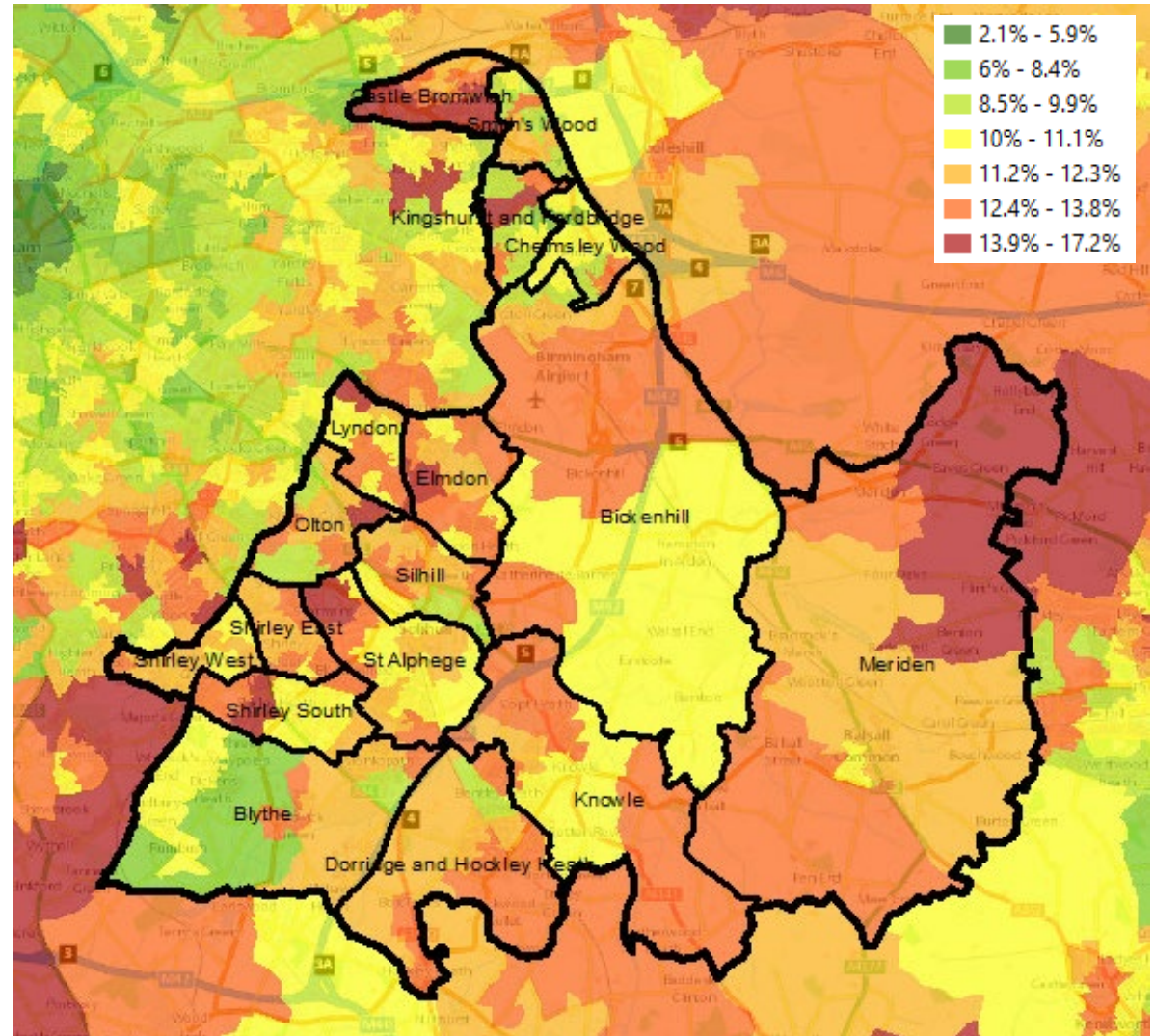
Conditions of people that are Cared for

Carers Trust Solihull surveyed carers in 2018 to ask about the condition of the people they care for. These are the top 50% most common conditions given.



Map of Solihull carers*

This map shows the proportion of the population in Solihull who are carers. The darker the colour, the more carers live there. This is important for us to know so we can understand any other issues, such as access to transport and resources for carers in Solihull.



*Taken from 2011 census data

Future demand

In Solihull, the number of carers is set to grow, meaning there will be increased need for carers support.

For older people, we estimate there will be an increase in the population of around 20%* by 2040 and so the number of carers will also increase by 20%. However within that increase, the oldest age groups will grow the quickest, with the over 90s likely to grow over 60%, which will mean we have many older carers, who are likely to have their own health issues

For younger and parent carers, we know that people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities are now living longer, thanks to advances in health care, therefore we expect the number of young and parent carers to increase in line with the population. We also expect an increase due to improved awareness and more parents identifying themselves as carers.

The data we use to understand our carer population and future demand is the census data, which was last published in 2011, so it is now out of date. The 2021 census data will be released shortly, and we will use this to better understand the numbers of carers in Solihull and help us make sure our services are sufficient and appropriate for the different age groups of carers.

What carers told us....

We held a series of events to talk to carers in Solihull and ask them about their priorities and the impact of caring during the pandemic.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the wellbeing of carers as they coped with lockdowns, service restrictions and lengthy isolation.

Young carers found improved access to the online peer support, activities, and Carers Trust contact.

Flexible working arrangements made balancing work and caring less problematic for some.

Some services' efforts were commended for keeping in contact: Carers Trust Solihull and Alzheimer's Society.

Carers need access to flexible respite.

Carers' own mental and physical health is affected by caring responsibilities.

Families often have complex caring arrangements- with people being both carer and cared for.

People who cease to be carers need help as they move on.

Carers' Survey 2021

In 2021, a national carers survey of adults carried out. The responses here from Solihull carers mirror the national picture of challenges and downward trends.

54% of people found information and advice easy to find compared with 67% in the previous survey. Nationally, this was 58% this year, down from 65% in the previous survey.

86% of people found the information and advice received helpful compared to 90% in the previous survey.

63% of respondents felt they were sufficiently involved or consulted in discussions about the services provided for the people they cared for, down from 69% in the previous survey.

89% of Solihull respondents lack time spent doing things they enjoy, 84% control over their daily lives, 75% social contact, and 74% encouragement and support.

93% of Solihull respondents say that their health was affected by their caring role in the previous 12 months, this is similar to the last survey.

41% of those who say that they feel socially isolated have developed a health condition in the last 12 months.

What we have done so far: The Carers' Delivery Plan

To support carers during the pandemic the Council created a Carers' Delivery Plan to be clear about what help we could give to carers during the period of uncertainty. The delivery plan focused on the actions listed here:

Providing appropriate access to respite options for carers.

Reviewing bereavement support, in partnership with the Carers Board.

Increasing access to training to support carers, e.g., moving and handling.

Promoting carers services to those who may not realise that they are carers.

Promoting carers assessments and direct payments.

Improving the information and advice offer for carers.

How we will make improvements

Through listening to carers, we have collected their feedback and developed 'priorities for action'.

For each priority we will have a plan of activities which will help improve the lives of carers.

This plan will show what we will do, who will lead the work, and when we aim to complete it.

Priorities for action

These are the areas we will work on with our partners. By doing so we aim to improve the support available to carers and achieve our vision.



Identification

Not enough people understand what a carer is, and many don't realise they are a carer. We need to help identify as many carers as possible



Information

Some carers told us that they can't find the information they need to support them. We need to provide information that reaches **all** carers.



Respite/Short Breaks

Fewer people had respite care for their loved ones during the pandemic, and many say they need more respite care (short breaks). We need to increase access and availability.



Wellbeing

Carers have been through an intensely stressful period. As we emerge from the pandemic, we must support all carers' mental and physical health.



Digital

Many of our carers don't have the digital skills or equipment that could help them. We need to ensure all carers, from under 16s to over-80s can benefit from technology.

Our plan: what we will do differently



We have set out an outline delivery plan to deliver our vision and make improvements in our priority areas.



This plan shows what we and our partners will do to improve the lives of carers in Solihull.



We will work with young, adult and parent carers to make improvements to information and services



We will review the plan annually. We have a clear plan for the next two years, but will review our progress and refresh the plan for the last three years of the strategy



We will use this plan to measure our progress.

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Identification	Timetable of Events	Develop timetable of all carers events to allow for targeted communications	Ongoing each year			
	Engagement with GPs and Pharmacies	Including re-instating in person sessions in GP surgeries with Carer's Trust				
	Establish good engagement and communication	Establish timetable and plan for engaging and sharing information with schools for young carers				
	Council Carers Forum		Council employee carers forum lead to work in partnership with Council colleagues to establish relationships with NHS carers forums and determine where there are opportunities to connect and collaborate			
	Review and update communications	Review Solihull Council (SMBC) Carer Friendly Employer status and update communications				
	Encourage engagement of wellbeing support		Target larger employers to share information on wellbeing support for workers, including use of existing Business Forums			
	Promotion of Mobilise Pilot	Promotion and utilisation of Mobilise- an online service to support identification of Carers				
	Engagement with Carers	Understand the gaps in carers receiving information and advice, and use these findings to inform further communications		Link with local community groups and voluntary organisations to ensure the best prospect of identifying and engaging with as many carers as possible		
	Link with Solihull Community Housing (SCH) on identification routes	Ensuring appropriate referral routes, raising awareness of available services and establishing an SCH Carer champion				
	Maximise opportunities to identify carers health & wellbeing needs and lifestyle risk	increase identification, screening, brief advice, signposting or referral to services for carers to access support for health & wellbeing needs - strengthening pathways and recognising carers as a key target group for lifestyle support				

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Information	Introduce new Carers Lead Officer role	Introduction of a Council Carers Lead Officer role in Adult Social Care				
	Ensure up-to-date information on SMBC webpages	Solihull Council (SMBC) Webpages refreshed with up-to-date information, advice and signposting				
	Refreshed and up-to-date Carers Trust webpages	Webpages updated with fresh advice and signposting and a view to look at relaunching information cards or other similar means of information for carers				
	Carers included in Faith Forum	Carers to be included as one of priorities for the Faith Forum		Ongoing Annually		
	Linking with the Financial Inclusion, and Winter & Wellbeing Council groups	Inclusion of carers as a priority area				
	Links with foodbanks	Provide points of contact for carers and raise awareness of services available and how to refer				
	Solihull Community Housing to review all information	Ensure consistency of information to support tenants from all Solihull Community Housing workers,		Establish further links and networks with carers		
	Utilise health settings to provide information	Provide information to raise awareness (leaflet)				

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Information	Review assessment and re-assessment forms in conjunction with Carers Trust		Ensure it is the best and most efficient way to ask questions			
	Arrange for articles in Summer and Winter 'here to help booklets'	Summer edition - (family focus, young carers) Winter edition – (70+ households)				
	Employment & Skills team to produce leaflets for carers	To consider different versions based on varying circumstances to offer support to residents to use their transferable skills; consider volunteering, caring, work in NHS. For young carers , additional careers advice based on their circumstances				
	Employment and skills teams to give talks at carers groups	Outreach team to attend support groups (as deemed appropriate) to talk about opportunities to get help from employment and skills team. - Direct referral route for young carers to risk of NEET programme				
	Provide easily accessible information and advice on health & wellbeing for carers	Raise awareness of services available, how to access and how to refer				
	Extend bereavement project	Carers Trust to extend 'Time to Talk' bereavement project and review outcomes				
	Explore support for younger carers	Explore options for bereavement support for young carers				
	Bereavement services process	Review process mapping recently completed by Bereavement Services and identify further action				

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Respite/Short Breaks	Additional overnight respite provision	SMBC to commission and offer additional overnight respite provision				
	Respite Offer Document	Development of a clear Respite Offer document for people accessing Adult Social Care				
	Raise awareness of developments within Day Services	Ensure carers are aware of developments within Day Services (as part of the SMBC Adults' Day Opportunities Strategy)				
	Explore community options for respite		Including drop-in sessions – linking with faith network, accessible venues and, training for volunteers.			
	Ensure good communication and take up of respite for young carers	Ensure communication and good level of take up of respite for young carers delivered by the Carers Trust				
	Ensure parent carers have up-to-date information	Ensure parent carers are aware of the short breaks offer				
	Emergency respite	Emergency community response to support when carers go into hospital DRAFT COPY FOR ENGAGEMENT				

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Wellbeing	Promotion of one-off payments for carers		Promotion of the one-off direct payment available to adult carers following a Carers Assessment.			
	Ensure a clear link between parent carer assessment and disabled child's social care assessment and support plan	Review existing arrangements for parent carer support and how this links to their child's care plan if they are in receipt of support from children's social work, agree timescales for identified actions.				
	Explore use of Disabled Facilities Grant(DFG) for carers		Explore use of DFG for carers for making adaptations to homes.			
	Carers Trust to ensure they are supporting carers needs	Carers Trust to work with Schools to ensure they are proactively supporting the needs of carers				
	Ensure wellbeing courses are being utilised		Maximisation of take up of relaxation and wellbeing courses from Carers Trust – Communicating information on courses			
	Young carers to be given priority and benefits	Free access to Holiday Activity & Food Programme (HAFP) activities and events				
	-Promote ways for carers to access information, advice or support for their own health & wellbeing needs	Support and increase options for carers so they can maintain their own well-being and those they care for				
	Cost of Living	Ensure carers have access to cost of living support inc. hardship funds, insulation, energy saving support				

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Digital	Learning from recent digital projects	Learning to be pooled from the Carers Trust digital pilots to set future priorities				
	Link with SMBC Prevention offer		Link with SMBC Prevention offer to prevent people from needing social care			
	Link with SMBC corporate Digital Strategy	Understand how carers use services so we can be more digitally inclusive	Link with corporate Digital Strategy to ensure carers are considered			
	Explore Digital skills to signpost to community	Explore Digital skills to signpost to community				
	Expand Technology Enabled Care (TEC) offer		Include carers and their cared for and offer drop-in sessions for carers to come and demo TEC	Virtual House Tour to be added to SMBC webpages		
	Online Self-Serve	Implementation of online Carer and Self-Assessments and Financial Assessments.				
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How we will measure progress

We will measure progress on our action plan through a number of ways:

- For adults we will use the results of the national carers survey which tells us about carers wellbeing and how easy it is to find information.
- For young carers and parent carers we will utilise the proposed surveys to monitor the Additional Needs Strategy to measure and understand impact. We will also measure the numbers of carers accessing assessments and support, as well as seeking feedback from carers.
- We will also monitor when the actions in the plan are completed, and will use measures such as numbers of people using respite, attending courses, or accessing holiday clubs.

Useful links

- [Solihull Council website](#)
- [Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board \(ICB\)](#)
- [Carers Trust Solihull website](#)
- [Solihull Parent Carer Voice](#)
- [Carers UK website](#)
- [Age UK Solihull website](#)
- [GOV UK Carers Benefits](#)
- [Community Advice Hubs in Solihull](#)