

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

27 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

A REPORT ON SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS AND ADULT CARERS

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform the Committee of the requirements of the Carers Charter in Wales and the related areas of focus that can support unpaid carers to maintain their well-being.
- Describe the work that is taking place within Bridgend County Borough to support unpaid carers to enable the Committee to consider how well the Council, and partners, support young carers and adult carers.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

3.1 The Charter for Unpaid Carers sets out the rights of unpaid carers, both adult carers and young carers, under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

- 3.2 The Charter aims to raise the awareness of the rights of carers amongst both carers themselves and professionals involved in the design and delivery of services and support for carers in exercising their rights.
- 3.3 The Charter for Unpaid Carers is aligned to the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) including:
- Giving people voice and control in their own lives.
 - Increasing preventative support services in the community to help people as early as possible.
 - Promoting the well-being of people with care and support needs and also carers.
 - Encouraging people to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.
- 3.4 The legislation embeds a number of new rights for unpaid carers, including:
- The right to well-being.
 - The right to have information, advice and assistance.
 - The right to an assessment.
 - The right for carers to have their voice heard and have control over decisions about your support.
 - The right to advocacy.
- 3.5 The Charter for Unpaid Carers aligns also to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly the aim of embedding a preventative approach, a more joined up approach to service design and delivery and consideration of the longer-term impacts of actions.
- 3.6 The Charter describes how the principles might look in practice including involving unpaid carers in co-producing approaches that impact on them. A focus on community based preventative support and recognising that carers should be supported to look after their health and well-being is identified. The importance of offering appropriate information, advice and assistance is seen as a vital first step in a preventative approach and connecting people to support via carers' services or health partners. The need for advocacy is also important.
- 3.7 The Charter highlights the statutory duty for local authorities to offer and undertake a carer's needs assessment to identify the support that might be needed to enable an unpaid carer to continue in their caring role should they wish to do so. Direct Payments are identified as one approach that can help to improve choice, control and independence for people in this context.
- 3.8 The impact of health crises which result in hospitalisation and subsequent hospital discharge is identified as a stressful and uncertain time for unpaid carers and the need for additional support. The promotion of a carer's assessment should be highlighted at each opportunity to provide the unpaid carer with supportive arrangements where required.

- 3.9 The opportunities to support unpaid carers to access differing forms of education, learning and training is also a focus of the Charter and for education and employment to be a consideration within a carer's assessment.
- 3.10 Financial security is also an identified concern for many unpaid carers and the need for improved access to specific financial and benefits advice for carers is identified.
- 3.11 The Council has supported the development of a regional statement of intent alongside Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, and Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Councils. A definition of an unpaid carer has also been developed as shown below:

“A carer is someone who cares and supports someone who wouldn't be able to manage without their help. Unpaid carers who look after family, friends or neighbours are not the same as paid care workers or staff employed by Health, Social Services, voluntary or private agencies.”

- 3.12 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg statement of intent supports delivery against four national priorities for carers:

- Supporting a life alongside caring.
- Identifying and valuing unpaid carers.
- Providing information, advice and assistance.
- Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace.

- 3.13 The vision for carers in Cwm Taf Morgannwg states:

“Carers of all ages in Cwm Taf Morgannwg will be recognised and valued as being fundamental to supportive and resilient families and communities. They will not have to care alone and will be able to access information, advice and support to help meet their needs, empowering them to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, balancing their caring role and their life outside caring”.

- 3.14 There is a stated aim across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region to embed good practice in relation to:

- The legal rights of a carer.
- The rights to a carers' needs assessment.
- The benefits and financial help available.
- Learning new skills to help in the caring role.
- Balancing employment and caring.
- Planning for emergencies.

- 3.15 The statement of intent for carers is accompanied by 5 aims:

Aim 1 – Identifying carers of all ages and recognising their contributions.

Aim 2 – Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice and assistance to carers of all ages.

Aim 3 - Providing support, services and training to meet the needs of carers of all ages.

Aim 4 – Giving carers of all ages a voice with more choice and control over their lives.

Aim 5 – Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of carers of all ages.

4 Current situation/proposal

4.1 Adult Social Care

4.1.1 The focus has been on pre-emptive early intervention supporting carers' well-being and ensuring that there is accessible advice, information and assistance within our communities for carers. In the 2011 Census, there were 18,000 people who identified as unpaid carers in Bridgend County Borough. It is likely, even at that time, that the actual figure would have been higher; this is because people often do not identify themselves as carers, but as family members.

4.1.2 A carer's needs assessment, provides an opportunity to have a 'what matters' conversation with a social work member of staff and an opportunity to discuss and explore, for example:

- What support and help might assist the carer to look after the person that they are caring for.
- To focus on how much of their time is spent caring.
- To consider how their caring role affects their life and well-being.
- Explore their feelings and choice about caring.
- To provide advice and information about financial support.
- To consider whether the carer wishes to work, access training or undertake further education.

This is not an exhaustive list, it will very much depend on what is 'important' to the carer at that time, however assessment does provide an opportunity to identify what support would be required to maintain the carer's own well-being.

4.1.3 In 2021/22 there were 362 contacts made directly to adult social care services on behalf of carers; the majority of referrals came from carers themselves, social workers and third sector organisations. Of these, 31% of carers were provided with advice and assistance. 140 referrals resulted in a full carer needs assessment being completed, with 18% of carers receiving a plan of support specifically to meet their well-being outcomes.

4.1.4 At the end of February 2023, there has been a 37% increase in the number of people having a full carer's needs assessment when compared to the previous year; however the numbers of people whose needs have been met by a plan of support has reduced. The challenge in securing care and support will have impacted on the ability to directly

deliver support to people and their carers and there has been an increased reliance on universal and community support carers.

4.1.5 Focusing on carers has been a priority for adult services through the Continuous Improvement Group. This group comprises team managers and senior social work practitioners in Adult Social Care. A task and finish group has been developed to ensure there are consistent approaches to offering and recording carers' assessments, as well as providing information advice and assistance to carers within the County Borough.

4.2 Young Carers

4.2.1 There have been 77 young carers assessments conducted since April 2022. There were 27 instances where no additional support was needed or wanted, 50 carers assessments resulted in additional support.

4.2.2 The coordination of support for young carers is based within the Safeguarding and Family Support Service within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The service is able to connect young carers into a range of internal and external support. A range of partners who have signposted to the young carers service have included Action for Children, Barnardo's, BCBC Early Help and the Young Carers in Schools project.

4.2.3 A specific support programme for young carers is being operated by Whitehead Ross and being funded via Welsh Government grant funding. This programme supports referrals via the Young Carers Coordinator following a carer's assessment with a short-term intervention programme.

4.2.4 The interventions can include activities such as well-being, arts and activities and also one to one support sessions. A maximum of 18 young carers are supported over eight-week periods providing a break from caring, lifestyle support and well-being interventions. On completion of the programmes, any residual needs are reviewed and connections to broader opportunities explored.

4.2.5 Since 2020, the Prevention and Wellbeing Service based within the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate has supported a number of programmes and activities for young carers. This has included the launch of the National Young Carers card that has been supported by Welsh Government, developing a young carer-led network and also supporting community-based engagement opportunities:

- 170 young carers have taken part in a series of young carers "You are valued" days to support friendship groups. This has been developed working in partnership with local schools and have included activities and events identified as important by young carers including outdoor opportunities and have enabled young carers to build friendships and connections to other young carers. Building on this approach there have been 11 awareness raising events to increase the range of partners supporting young carers and to enhance understanding of needs.
- Young adult carers are supporting the development of the Young Carers Network which has attracted 70 participants. Young carers have been involved in the

development of advocacy resources and creating promotional campaigns. Young carer ambassador roles are developing.

- The Young Carers Network has been engaging with primary and secondary schools, Bridgend Carers Centre, Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd Bridgend Inclusive Network Group, Bridgend College and the Council. There will be opportunities to expand this approach going forward and with the support of young carers.
- The Network has to date helped to distribute 280 young carers' identity cards and the Council has been developing partnership working with 8 local businesses to add value to the card. Prior to the Welsh Government launch of a National young carers card scheme, Bridgend had historically operated a similar scheme although young carers identified the need to improve awareness and benefits available.

4.3 Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service

- 4.3.1 Since 2019, the Council has commissioned the Carers Wellbeing Service delivered by the Care Collective (formerly Carers Trust South East Wales) to support unpaid carers to maintain their well-being and have a life beyond caring. In addition, the service has aimed to provide practical support within communities and to share information and advice. This has supported four posts whose purpose has been to support unpaid carers who have been actively supporting people in communities.
- 4.3.2 By the end of March 2022, the service had supported 4,750 beneficiaries with non-statutory support. This approach has been successful in helping to identify those who previously might not have identified as unpaid carers with 37% previously not known to services.
- 4.3.3 This partnership approach conducted 990 'what matters' conversations and was able to share information and connect people to community support in the majority of instances. This lower level support has helped to reduce demand where appropriate but has also been able to escalate the need for a carers assessment where circumstances have suggested this would be required.
- 4.3.4 For much of this period, services and support have needed to be delivered flexibly and creatively through the pandemic and in line with national restrictions. The information that unpaid carers have been sharing indicates that the pandemic has been a particularly challenging period.
- 4.3.5 From April 2023, the Council has commissioned a new carer's well-being service. A requirement of the new well-being service provider is that they will work with the Council to collaborate with other services, building on existing provision, to enhance the delivery of support for carers. The provider will work with carers who are undertaking their caring role without the support of statutory organisations, as well as those who are caring for people who receive care and support from the Council.

4.4 Halo

- 4.4.1 Through the Healthy Living Partnership and use of Social Care Recovery investment,

Halo Leisure has supported unpaid carers. The Carers Wellbeing and Respite programme has worked with unpaid carers and community partners to create a six-week intervention programme focused on improving wellbeing, knowledge and confidence.

4.4.2 Information sessions have been integrated into programmes recognising the value of information and advice and reducing the need for escalation in many cases. These information sharing approaches have involved BAVO, Care and Repair, Alzheimer's and Carers Trust.

4.4.3 There have been some very positive results recorded from the approach developed including 80% of carers reporting increased physical activity, 100% were confident to manage their nutrition, 100% felt able to manage their wellbeing and 87% felt more knowledgeable about their rights and entitlements:

"I have met some lovely people.... all unpaid carers themselves, who understand what I am going through and felt great support from speaking to them".(Participant-carer wellbeing programme)

4.4.4 The Feel Good for Life programme has been supporting people with a cognitive impairment or dementia and their unpaid carers and Halo have more recently secured 5 years of National Lottery investment to sustain and expand opportunities. 100 unpaid carers are regularly supported in addition to those who are cared for. The programme is operated in partnership with Awen and including physical and creative activity.

4.4.5 Digital approaches have been successfully developed including loan equipment and training with weekly streamed opportunities to help carers to remain connected. This became particularly important during the pandemic but remote access to activities and social connections has continued. The Feel Good for Life programme will have engaged with Digital Communities Wales to help carers develop digital skills and confidence to use the devices that Halo have made available. The programme won a UK Active award for its innovative approach:

"You have no idea how much this session means to us and the effort you put into it. It gives us something to look forward to every week". (Participant-Feel Good for Life)

4.4.6 Beyond this, carers have been supported via free access to leisure opportunities when accompanying the cared for person and cost-effective access arrangements to transition into broader opportunities. Young carers have also been supported with a range of low cost and no-cost leisure opportunities.

4.5 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

4.5.1 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board has a lead officer in place to support unpaid carers with partners. This post-holder can connect unpaid carers known to Health services into Social Services and Wellbeing, into the Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service or broader third sector and commissioned programmes.

- 4.5.2 The role coordinates the development and distribution of A-Z guides for unpaid carers also including hospital discharge guides. This recognises the importance of advice and information at what is recognised as potentially being a challenging time for unpaid carers in relation to admission and discharge.
- 4.5.3 There are also leaflets produced to be distributed via GP surgeries encouraging all unpaid carers to register with their GP to maximise the support that is available.
- 4.5.4 This role also has an important role in having a weekly presence at the Princess of Wales Hospital supporting staff and visitors and raising awareness of what unpaid carers can access.
- 4.5.5 The role coordinates a “carers champion network” across the region including third sector representation, with regular meetings to discuss areas of good practice and challenges being faced. The Council has its own Lead Officer for Carers who would engage in this Network.
- 4.5.6 Via the Welsh Government’s carers’ funding allocation to Regional Programme Boards, there are also two commissioned support services that are of regional benefit to carers across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area.
- 4.5.7 The Cab4Carers project is managed by Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) Merthyr Tydfil with a specific focus on unpaid carers and areas including benefits, debt, housing and employment, supported by a CAB4Carers advisor. The Health Board is developing the presence of this service further for the Princess of Wales Hospital.
- 4.5.8 There is also commissioned support via Marie Curie Cymru to develop a new volunteer-led helper service and to support carers to take a break. If successful there may be opportunities to consider scaling up such a volunteer led approach.

4.6 Awen

- 4.6.1 Through the Council’s cultural partnership with Awen, it has also been possible to co-produce activities and opportunities that support unpaid carers of all ages:
- The Hynt scheme is a national programme providing free access for people requiring a carer to attend a visit or performance and 265 tickets have been issued since restrictions have eased. There are opportunities to raise further awareness of the Hynt scheme amongst unpaid carers.
 - Awen have supported a carers’ respite project including parent carers, siblings and families with over 320 beneficiaries and including outdoor opportunities and family refreshments. This has involved a co-production approach with other third sector organisations and a joint development of new approaches.
 - Relaxed cinema screenings have been offered supporting carers and cared for with 135 carers supported in an accessible setting and sensory theatre opportunities have also been progressed. This recognises that whilst integrated opportunities are important wherever possible there can be a need for more a bespoke provision also.

- The Doorbell Dances programmes have also seen home based visits to unpaid carers in Porthcawl, Bryntirion, Caerau, Maesteg, Pencoed and other locations. This involves entertainment being delivered to the doorstep of identified carers who have faced challenges and Awen report how well these have been received.
- The Voices of Experience programme has worked alongside unpaid carers to capture their stories and to promote the value of unpaid carers during Carers Week. This assists in connecting unpaid carers to creative and cultural activity and the creation of advocacy resources also.
- Beyond core library service provision, the 'books on wheels' scheme has supported the more vulnerable with home delivery of resources including books, DVDs and audiobooks. This allows those who are more housebound or facing restrictions due to caring responsibilities to receive resources at home and for them to be regularly updated.
- Over the past year Awen have operated an iPad loan scheme which has helped unpaid carers to keep in touch with family, arrange home deliveries or read, in addition to the ICT access readily available in library settings.
- Libraries are rebuilding a vibrant programme of group activities including Knit and Natter, Bore Coffi, craft afternoons and supporting the Feel Good for Life programme.
- E-resources are available twenty-four hours a day and include books, audio, magazines plus family history resources. The trend towards an increased demand for digital resources began during the pandemic and has continued. More people are aware of what resources are available in this manner.
- Awen also support the Reading Well national book recommendation scheme providing information and advice, advice for relatives and carers, and the related resources are endorsed by Health professionals.
- More recently, Awen have offered the Warm Welcome scheme in libraries and cultural venues providing activities and warm space availability as support to combat the cost of living crisis for the more vulnerable.

4.7 Wales Co-Operative Centre/ Cwmpas

- 4.7.1 The Council has, since 2020, been working collaboratively with the Wales Co-operative Centre (now known as Cwmpas) on a "Connecting Carers" programme that has intended to identify common interests and needs amongst unpaid carers and to develop more collaborative approaches.
- 4.7.2 This work has involved developing a collaborative network with partners who could support the development of more carer-friendly communities. The focus has included people living with cognitive impairment, parent carers of children living with disabilities and older adults.
- 4.7.3 The partners involved have included third sector organisations, Adult Learning, Awen, Halo, Health and have explored how carer wellbeing can be supported.

- 4.7.4 Digital approaches have been taken forward in community centres and third sector venues with an aim of building skills and confidence and streaming of group wellbeing activities. Six venues have been equipped to date.
- 4.7.5 Early activities have included streaming of exercise programmes as part of the Super Agers programme and mental wellbeing and anxiety management. This approach has the potential for unpaid carers to attend an activity closer to home and also to remain engaged with activities if they are facing challenges such as time or transport.
- 4.7.6 The next phase of development will work with unpaid carers on developing additional resources that are deemed important to unpaid carers and to work with partners to develop group opportunities and streamed activities.

4.8 BAVO

- 4.8.1 Since the development of a partnership approach between the Council and BAVO, the Building Resilient Communities approach has secured investment that has supported unpaid carers and other vulnerable individuals within communities. During the pandemic in particular over 5000 people were supported within the third sector and local communities as opposed to receiving a service.
- 4.8.2 There is now a role within BAVO that connects directly to the Council's Common Access Point and can ensure that the third sector and community opportunities are well placed to support unpaid carers. This can include support for statutory services to reduce their demand or to escalate concerns that are identified in a community setting.
- 4.8.3 Supported by the Regional Investment Fund, there is a county-wide network of community navigators in place that can support both carer and cared for closer to home and at the earliest opportunity. This forms part of a cross-sector preventative approach to de-escalating needs of more formal support. The funding currently focuses on older adults, learning disabilities and carers but may be expanded going forward.
- 4.8.4 The Council also employs Local Community Co-ordinators (LCCs) in the North of the County Borough to support people with more complexity and as an interface with social care services also. These roles are professionally qualified and able to operate as an interface between statutory services and alternative models of support. There is a plan to complete whole county coverage of LCCs in the near future.
- 4.8.5 BAVO have also helped to facilitate a carer-friendly network of community partners who can collaborate, share learning and insight, and help co-create the supportive opportunities carers need. This has enabled a number of new projects and approaches that are potentially able to be scaled up to be trialled.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions.. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The wellbeing goals identified within the Act have been considered in the preparation of this report.

- **Long Term:** Unpaid carers can be anticipated to have a long-term place in how the needs of vulnerable individuals can be sustainably met in community settings.
- **Prevention:** Supporting the resilience and wellbeing of unpaid carers will be integral to the ability to provide required support and prevent needs escalating.
- **Integration:** The need for a cohesive cross-sector approach is identified in the inherent interface between Health, social care and third sector to appropriately support unpaid carers.
- **Collaboration:** There is a particular need to co-produce and design services, support and opportunities with partners and stakeholders who can offer learning and insight.
- **Involvement:** The need to ensure that unpaid carers have voice, choice and involvement in things that can impact on their wellbeing is required in approach.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There is a clear focus on investing in preventative approaches that can de-escalate the need for statutory services by using community-based and preventative approaches and potential cost avoidance or demand management.

8.2 The Bridgend Carer Wellbeing Service has a contract in place for 2023-2025 funded by the Adult Social Care core budget with the potential to extend it by an additional two years. This is valued at £119k per annum.

8.3 A number of the programmes and interventions identified are supported by external investment and their potential for longer term sustainability will need to be reviewed.

8.4 The use of Direct Payments based approaches in line with a new Direct Payment strategy as a more flexible approach to meeting needs may present some opportunities.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note the requirements of the Carers Charter in Wales and the related areas of focus that can support unpaid carers to maintain their wellbeing.
- Note the work that is taking place within Bridgend to support unpaid carers and scrutinise how well the Council, and partners, support young carers and adult carers.

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