



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

17TH JULY 2018

CWM TAF CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR G HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON

AUTHOR: Nicola Davies, Head of Health and Wellbeing (Cwm Taf UHB)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve for submission to Welsh Government the Annual Report for 2017/18 in relation to Carers.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet

- 2.1. Notes the contents of this report and that the Annual report is also being submitted for approval by the Cabinet in Merthyr Tydfil and the Cwm Taf University Health Board.
- 2.2 Notes the Annual Report was due in Welsh Government at the end of June 2018. However, in line with previous practice which has been acceptable to Welsh Government, as the timeline of Cabinets in Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councils and UHB Board meetings did not neatly fit, a draft report will be submitted, with the final version sent to Welsh Government following approval by all three partners.
- 2.3 Approves the Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to Welsh Government.
- 2.4 Notes that work relating to Carers is being taken forward as part of the Regional Plan for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, specifically through implementation of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy 2016-19 approved by partners in July 2016.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Prior to the implementation of the SSWB Act, UHBs were given a lead role under the Welsh Government's Carers Measure to work with partners including Local Authorities, Third Sector and importantly, Carers themselves. We were required to submit an Annual Report to Welsh Government to provide an overview of the activities undertaken as part of the implementation of the Carers Measure. Although the Carers Measure has been repealed, the requirement for an Annual report has been continued for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 as part of the conditions of transitional funding from WG in place until March 2019.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As part of the Regional Work programme of the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board, a new Cwm Taf Carers Strategy was developed in 2016 to replace the separate plans of partner organisations. Working with partners across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil, including Carers themselves, the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy 2016-2019 covers Carers of all ages.
- 4.2 Having reviewed our current services, building on the progress made, implementing the Carers Measure from 2012-2015 and taking into account the requirements of the SSWB Act as well as the views expressed during engagement and consultation with Carers and staff, we developed the following Vision:

Carers of all ages in Cwm Taf 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.

- 4.3 A Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group has been established with Members and senior officer representatives from across Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cwm Taf University Health Board and the Third Sector. The Carers Partnership Group will monitor the implementation of the Strategy and promote the integration of services for Carers, as required by Part 9 of the SSWB Act.
- 4.4 Throughout 2017/18, Cwm Taf UHB, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have

built upon the success of the previous year and continued to work collaboratively together and with other partners in improving recognition of Carers and providing appropriate information and support. The Annual Report provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made to date and looks ahead to the challenges and opportunities we will face in 2018/19.

4.5 Key areas of work have included:

- The continued recruitment and support of Carers Champions throughout Health and Social Care and the third sector, ensuring Caring Awareness is embedded into various departments and organisations.
- The provision of Carer Aware training (both via e learning and face to face) to further expand the knowledge of both Carers Champions and staff throughout the Cwm Taf region.
- The sharing of best practice at an annual Carers Champion Conference held in May 2018 with a focus on Young Carers and Young Adult carers.
- Working with partners to deliver the annual Action Plan.
- Continue with the Cwm Taf Partnership Group to oversee implementation of the Strategy, reporting to the SSWB Partnership Board.

4.6 In 2017/18, a piece of research on 'The Development of a Cwm Taf Regional Integrated Service Model for Carers' was carried out by exploring the national and local context, good practice from across the UK, interviewing key stakeholders and reviewing the commissioning needs of the Cwm Taf region. The Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care was appointed to assist the Partnership to:

- Review the existing model of services for Carers
- Identify the most effective options for a regional integrated service model for Carers
- Complete a detailed option appraisal with clear recommendations for the consideration of the Partnership Board. Reference should specifically be made to Young Carers, Adult Carers and Respite services.
- Support the development of an outline implementation plan to pursue the agreed service option for the region

The findings from the Review were reported to TLG and the Regional Partnership Board. Actions are being taken forward through the Regional Plan.

4.7 The Cwm Taf Carers Strategy has identified priority areas for investment going forward under the following 5 aims. A detailed Action Plan was developed for 2017/18 and the plan for 2018/19 is being finalised.

4.8 The Aims for the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy are:

- *Aim 1:* Identifying Carers of all ages and recognising their contributions
- *Aim 2:* Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice & assistance to Carers of all ages
- *Aim 3:* Providing support, services & training to meet the needs of Carers of all ages
- *Aim 4:* Giving Carers of all ages a voice, with more choice & control over their lives
- *Aim 5:* Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of Carers of all ages

4.9 Welsh Government has 3 National Priorities for 2018/19 that we also have to implement alongside the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy:

- Supporting life alongside caring – all Carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring.
- Identifying and recognising Carers – fundamental to the success of delivering improved outcomes for Carers is the need to improve Carer's recognition of their role and to ensure they can access the necessary support.
- Providing information, advice and assistance – it is important that Carers receive the appropriate information and advice where and when they need it.

4.10 Funding was previously available from Welsh Government to deliver the Carers Measure - whilst the funding came to the UHB (because under the Measure, Health Boards were given the lead for implementation) the funding was used in partnership.

4.11 Welsh Government is providing transitional funding of £1million per annum for Wales in 2018/19 (£111K for Cwm Taf) to protect and build on progress to date and to support the expansion of Carers rights on the implementation of the SSWB Act. Funding will be provided on the understanding that we work in partnership to implement the Act by:--

- Strengthening the partnership approach at a local level.

- Creating opportunities to enable third sector to fully participate in the delivery.
- Setting out how we intend to plan and deliver the increased responsibilities for health and the new responsibilities for local authorities.
- Ensuring this transitional funding is used as the means to embed the practice of mainstreaming Carers' needs, so it is common practice.

4.12 Welsh Government has stipulated, with regards to the Carers allocation for 2018/19:

- In relation to Identification and Recognition:

It is expected that you work with partners to implement a scheme which supports GP practices to develop their Carer awareness and ways of working to support Carers.

In Cwm Taf, we are implementing an accreditation scheme with Agored Cymru in GP practices. Work will continue with Carers champions in primary care to roll out this programme.

- In relation to Information, Advice and Assistance:

Discharge from hospital has been identified as an area where support for Carers needs to be improved. There is a need to improve IAA provided to all Carers following discharge from hospital of someone who is cared for. This includes involving Carers in developing any discharge plans.

The Review undertaken by WiHSC identified good practice in Bridgend in relation to an inreach service provided by the Third Sector to support carers with discharge arrangements and signposting to other information and support available. Proposals for a similar service to be piloted in Cwm Taf will be discussed at the Carers Partnership Board on 18th June.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no foreseen equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The multi agency Cwm Taf Carers Partnership has led the implementation and monitoring of the Carers Strategy. It has representatives from the Health Board, both Local Authorities, Third

Sector and Carers. The work also involves a range of other partners including Schools, University of South Wales and Job Centre Plus.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. The Cwm Taf Carers Partnership oversees the use of the Welsh Government transitional funding, reporting to the SSWB Transformation Leadership Group and the SSWB Partnership Board.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016 and is intended to transform the way services are delivered. It repeals the majority of community care legislation including the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.
- 8.2 The new Act provides a definition of a carer as “a person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child” and removes the requirement that carers must be providing a “substantial amount of care on a regular basis.” The Act includes new rights for carers and new duties on local authorities.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL’S CORPORATE PLAN & OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 9.1 The work to implement the Carers Strategy has complemented the Council's priorities to promote independence and positive lives for everyone including Carers of all ages.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

- Children and young people Scrutiny Committee
- Health and wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers:

Cwm Taf Carers Strategy

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**Cwm Taf Carers
Strategy
Annual Report
2017 - 2018**

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Cwm Taf Carers Annual Report 2017 – 2018

Foreword

The Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board have committed to a range of strategic intentions across the region in line with the Social Services and Well-being Act. This has included the development of a Cwm Taf Carers Strategy and the establishment of a Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group.

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by partners working with Carers in 2017/18 to help us achieve the Vision we have set out for Cwm Taf.

Carers of all ages in Cwm Taf 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.

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1. Cwm Taf Carers: An Overview

We recognise that there is no typical Carer. Carers of all ages, whether Young Carers, Sibling Carers, Young Adult Carers, Parent Carers of children with a disability, working age or older Carers, look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide can be physical, emotional or social. Carers are individuals who may not see themselves as Carers, but consider themselves above all a parent, wife, husband, partner, son, daughter, friend or neighbour.

People living in Cwm Taf have lower life expectancy and live with a higher burden of ill health for longer than elsewhere in Wales. There are areas of significant deprivation which also impacts on health and well-being. By 2039, the population in Cwm Taf is expected to rise from 295,865 to 304,543 but within this figure the numbers aged over 65 years and over will grow significantly, with the biggest increase being seen in those aged 85 years and over. We are likely to see a rise in the number of people living with a range of chronic conditions such as heart and respiratory disease, as well as cancer and dementia. Over 40% of people aged 75 and over in Cwm Taf live alone.

All of these things will have an impact on the need people have for care of some kind, much of which will be provided by informal Carers who may be family, friends or neighbours.

The 2011 Census provides information about Carers but must be treated with some caution as it is based on people “self-reporting” that they are Carers and answering the census questions accordingly. From our engagement, people do not always recognise themselves as Carers and the true level of informal caring is probably higher. Census data for Cwm Taf tells us that:

- Nearly 13% of the population in Cwm Taf (29,640 Carers in RCT and 7,427 in Merthyr Tydfil) were providing care to a family member, friend or neighbour; This is slightly higher than the all Wales figure of 12% and higher than the England and Wales figure of 10%;
- 57% of Carers in Cwm Taf are female and 43% are male;
- The majority of Carers locally are over the age of 50, with the largest group of people (34%) aged 50-64;
- The number of Carers over the age of 65 is increasing more rapidly than the general Carer population. There has been a 32% increase since 2001. With an ageing population, this is likely to increase further over the coming years;
- There were 3263 young and young adult Carers under the age of 25, an increase of 19% since 2001;

- 11,752 Carers in Cwm Taf (32%) provide over 50 hours of care per week. This has increased from the 2001 Census. This highlights that Cwm Taf Carers are providing substantial levels of care, which is frequently not recognised or valued and which can often impact on the health of the Carer themselves.
- Census data in 2011 for Cwm Taf Carers showed that 35% of Carers rated their health as fair, bad or very bad.

The Carers UK State of Caring 2017 report, link below:

<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/state-of-caring-report-2017>

found that 78% of Carers said that they feel more stressed because of their role and 72% said caring has made them feel more anxious. 46% suffered depression as a result of their caring role.

Carers' circumstances vary enormously, as can the type and amount of support they give. Caring can be a gradual process as over time someone becomes more frail and needs more support or it can happen suddenly, for example if someone has an accident or a health problem like a stroke. Young Carers often have adult caring responsibilities while having the legal status of children. Whilst it is also rewarding, caring can be both physically tiring and emotionally stressful. Carers often feel isolated, unsupported and alone, with poorer health, less financial security and fewer opportunities to participate in day to day life outside caring. This information reinforces the importance of supporting Carers in their caring role.

2. Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

During 2016 – 2017, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB) came into force with an emphasis on wellbeing. Key principles embedded within the Act included:

- Ensuring adults and children who need care and support and Carers (including young Carers) have a voice, more control over their lives and are at the heart of decision making;
- Working in partnership, including the integration of services across health and social care with a focus on the delivery of preventative approaches, based on building strengths and promoting independence and;
- The provision of appropriate advice, information and assistance, strengths based and person centred assessment, inclusive of young people and Carers.

Under this Act, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Local Authorities and the University Health Board have carried out and published a Population Assessment. The population assessment covers the following groups of people:

- Carers;
- Children and young people;
- Learning disability;
- Mental health;
- Older people;
- Physical disability and sensory impairment and;
- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Population Assessment Briefing Documents can be accessed by the link below.

<http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales/cwm-taf-population-assessment>

Population Assessment

Undertaking this assessment has given an opportunity to revisit and build on what we know about Carers, both in terms of data and the things that Carers say are important to them, as summarised in the box below. It has reaffirmed and refined the key areas to focus on, to meet Carers' needs for care and support. The headlines from the assessment:

- The higher levels in Cwm Taf of poor physical and mental health, chronic illnesses and disabilities, together with an ageing population, have an impact on the need for informal care and the number of Carers locally.
- Carers need to be recognised and valued for their caring role. Carers want to be listened to and have more control over their lives but “one size does not fit all.”

- Carers must be able to find the information and support they need easily and quickly to help them sustain their caring role.
- Carers want to participate in and stay connected to a life alongside caring.
- Carers and service providers must work together with more effective communication and coordination between services, seeing the person and not the problem.

The findings from the Population Assessment also link to other common themes. The things which affect Carers do not stand in isolation. As individuals, they may also be service users in their own right (for example, as an older person, someone with a sensory impairment or a mental health issue) and their needs will have been the focus of other sections in the Population Assessment.

Similarly, the care and support issues facing the person they are caring for will be addressed in other sections of the Assessment under the specific themes. As the headlines have illustrated, it is really important to recognise the overlaps and see people “in the round”, taking a holistic approach to what both Carers and the cared for person need, avoiding working in silos and ensuring our responses and plans are joined up.

Some of the key issues faced by those covered by the other themes of the Population Assessment as well as Carers are:

- Information and advice;
- Being listened to and understood;
- Preventative services;
- Community connectedness and resilience and;
- Co-ordination and working together.

A common message from Carers and other population groups is that services must work together more effectively, both within individual organisations and across agencies, particularly where people have multiple or complex needs. This is important not just for health and social care but also other areas like housing, leisure and transport if needs are going to be met fully.

The Cwm Taf Carers Strategy and its associated Action Plan highlights what we need to do to address the findings of the Population Assessment for Carers. The Social Services & Wellbeing Partnership Board must also produce an Area Plan in response to the Population Assessment as a whole. This was published in April 2018 and can be found here.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Partnerships/Workingwithothers/Relateddocs/CwmTafSSWBREGIONALPLANMarch27th2018.pdf>

It is called the Cwm Taf SSWB Regional Plan 2018 – 2023 and contains a section on Carers.

3. Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group

The Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group which was established in 2016 and will oversee the implementation of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy 2016-19 across Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf, including the development and delivery of an annual Action Plan.

The Group has met quarterly throughout 2017/18.

Principles

The following principles have been used by the Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group to inform its work:

- We will promote and support effective communication across the partnership;
- We will make sure that users of our services, particularly Carers, are able to influence the work of the partnership;
- We will focus on what matters to the people and communities of Cwm Taf;
- We will promote and develop solutions towards preventing problems occurring or getting worse for people in Cwm Taf;
- We will promote and support collaboration and integration;
- We will make sure that we strike a balance between short term needs and longer term goals;
- We will listen to, understand and respect individual organisational views and the views of other parties;
- We will conduct business with transparency and openness and;
- We will fully utilise the wide range of skills, knowledge and experience which are available to the Group.

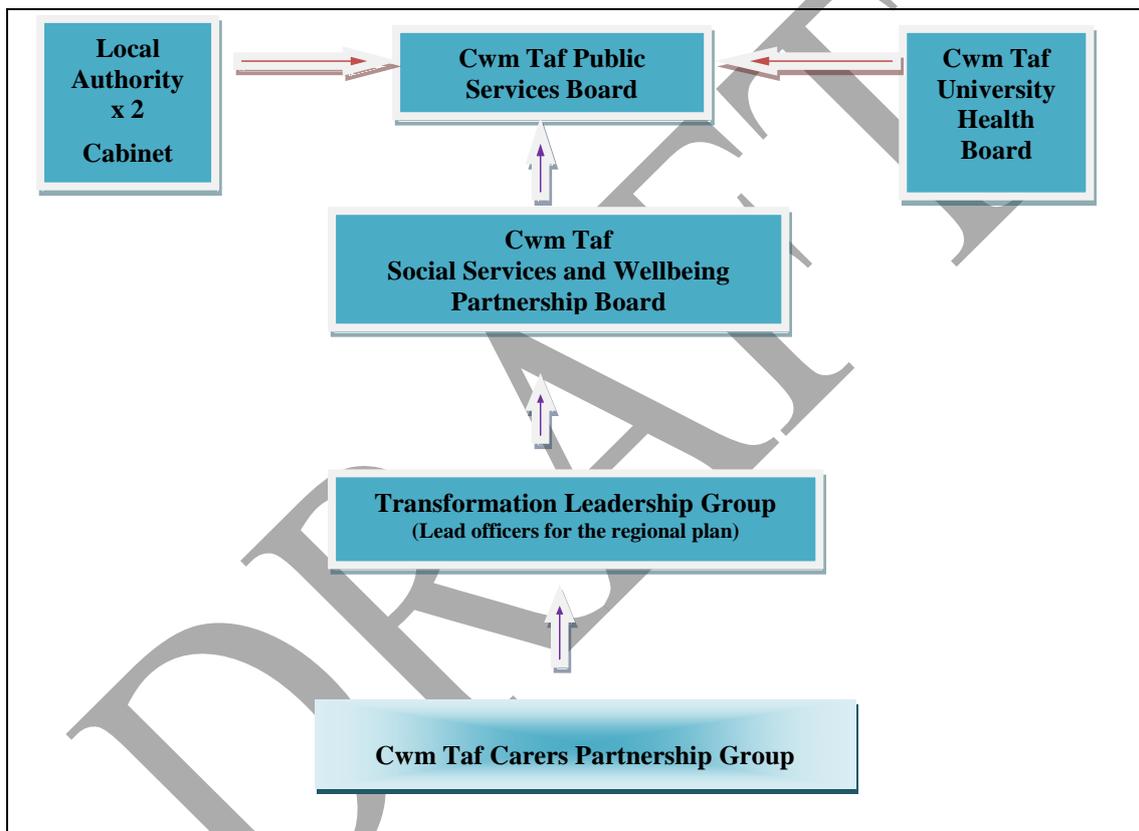
Objectives

- To develop and oversee delivery of an annual Action Plan for the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy 2016–19 to ensure its effective implementation.
- To ensure delivery of the Action Plan and Strategy are monitored and reviewed against agreed and understood outcomes and performance indicators.
- To actively engage Carers, young Carers and Carers organisations in the planning of services so that their needs are met across Cwm Taf
- To ensure that Carers are consulted on the commissioning and delivery of local services that affect Carers or the person cared for.
- To ensure appropriate use of funding allocated by Welsh Government to support delivery of services for Carers.

- To report regularly to the SSWB Partnership Board on progress, key issues and exceptions, escalating any barriers to progress for resolution
- To produce an annual report on progress for the SSWB Partnership Board and as required by Welsh Government
- To appoint task and finish groups as needed to undertake any specific pieces of work.
- To review and action as appropriate any requirements from the refreshed Welsh Government Carers Strategy.

REPORTING

The following reporting and governance arrangements are in place:



In effect the Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group will report through the Transformation Leadership Group to the Cwm Taf SSWB Partnership Board. Individual organisations will also report into their appropriate governing bodies, providing information and updates on progress and gaining endorsement where this is required.

Membership

The Group membership includes Carer Representatives as well as Senior Representation of Officers and members from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cwm Taf Health Board, Education, Jobcentre Plus, Voluntary and Private Sectors.

Other representatives may be invited or co-opted to the Group to express their views, contribute to particular agenda items or provide an advisory role. Membership will be reviewed annually.

4. Key areas of work in 2017/18

Throughout 2017-18, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf University Health Board have built upon the success of the previous year and continued to work collaboratively in improving support, information and recognition of Carers.

During 2017/18, current services for Carers in Cwm Taf are provided by a range of organisations in the statutory and Third Sector. As well as accessing general services like GPs in primary care available to everyone, there are also specific services to support Carers, including young Carers and young adult Carers. These include:

- In RCT, a Carers Support Project run by the Local Authority.
- Services commissioned from the Third Sector including Crossroads Care, Barnardos and Age Connects Morgannwg.
- A network of over 400 Carers Champions in settings across health, social care, education, housing, leisure, Job Centres and in the voluntary sector.

Again, we have faced a number of challenges throughout the year, particularly in relation to staff capacity in both the UHB and the two local Authorities as a result of vacant staff posts (two of which were as a result of uncertainty about future WG funding arrangements.) Nevertheless, as this Annual report demonstrates, we have continued to address the needs of Carers locally and to improve outcomes for them and their families.

4.1. Cwm Taf Regional Integrated Model for Carers Review

In light of the SSWB Act, the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board commissioned consultants from the Welsh Institute of Health and Social Care (WIHSC) to carry out a review of a Cwm Taf Regional Integrated Model for Carers.

By exploring the National and local context best/good practice from across the UK, interviewing key stakeholders and reviewing the commissioning needs of the Region, WIHSC:

- Identified the most effective commissioning options including the development of an integrated commissioning service;
- Completed a detailed option appraisal with clear recommendations for the consideration of the Partnership Board;
- Supported the development of an outline implementation plan to pursue the agreed commissioning service option for the region.

Core messages from the Review were:

- There is good practice across Cwm Taf and some superb staff. Services are probably at least punching their weight when measured against the resources available. However, services do not consistently meet the desired standards in terms of quantity, quality and equity across the region.
- Carers are regarded as “everyone’s business” which is encouraging in terms of commitment but this can also mean “nobody’s business” when tested against clarity of accountability for improvement. Carers’ services lack clear and visible leadership.
- There are examples of collaborative partnership working and strategies and plans display a good understanding of Carers’ needs and priorities. However, this is not universally embedded in everyday practice and words and intentions are not matched by actions.
- Carers do not have a central point of accessing services and find it difficult to navigate the system. Establishing clearer pathways for Carers would be a major shift in their profile and enable statutory responsibilities to be fully met.
- Short term funding has had a negative effect on commissioning effective services and has stifled innovation and continuity of service. Third sector services can cease to exist at short notice leaving Carers unsupported.

Specific areas were highlighted within a “blueprint offer”:

1. Identifying Carers;
2. Giving good advice and assistance;
3. Assessing Carers’ needs;
4. Seeing people as resources;
5. Providing respite and breaks;
6. Enabling Carers to play a full part in society;
7. Working in partnership and collaboration.

The findings from the Review have been reported to the Partnership Board. Actions will be taken forward as part of the implementation of the Regional Plan.

4.2. Cwm Taf Carers Strategy

The Cwm Taf Carers Strategy 2016 – 2019 was officially launched in 2016. The development of a Cwm Taf wide Carers Strategy replaced the existing previous plans:

- RCT Carers Strategy 2012-2014
- RCT Young Carers Strategy 2010-2013
- Merthyr Tydfil Carers Strategy 2012-2017
- Cwm Taf Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012-2015.

Cwm Taf recognises the importance of Carers getting their voices heard and that both Carers and service users are engaged and consulted to ensure that their needs are being met. It is essential that Carers are recognised as key

partners in care and that their invaluable perspective is taken into account when developing future services.

Our Vision Statement is:

Carers of all ages in Cwm Taf 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.

We continue to underpin our Vision, with the identified principles and approach to service delivery which reflect what Carers say is important to them and which are also consistent with the approach taken in other relevant Cwm Taf plans, for example, the Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People and the Statement of Intent for Learning Disabilities:

- ***Recognition and Respect***

Carers tell us that too often there is a lack of recognition and value of how much they do. Professionals and people in wider society do not always understand and appreciate the in-depth knowledge Carers have of the needs of the person they are caring for, the relationship they have with them and how difficult it can sometimes be juggling a range of demands.

- ***Working together***

One of the main messages from Carers was that we need to listen to their views and experiences and include them effectively in decision making. Proactive, two way communication and involvement is vital.

- ***Integration of services***

There needs to be better coordination at every level between the Carer and all the organisations they come into contact with. Services need to be joined up and targeted more appropriately so they deliver the best possible outcomes for the Carer, the person they care for and also make best use of our resources.

- ***Accessibility***

Factors such as the timeliness of a response and access/ transport to services will be a key consideration in the way we commission and provide services.

- ***Tackling isolation***

A greater focus is needed on tackling the isolation and social exclusion that can sometimes be felt as a result of caring commitments. The effects of limited choice, freedom and opportunity or the lack of understanding and

discrimination faced by Carers may be different depending on their age and therefore specific needs, for example, Young Carers will need to balance caring with their need to access activities with their peers outside of their caring role, they will also require support and understanding of their caring role inside of school in order that they have maximum opportunities to achieve their potential and aspirations. A range of support is needed to enable all Carers to balance caring with activities outside their caring role.

- **Focus on actions and outcomes**

We must ensure that there are direct and positive benefits for Carers as a result of the new Strategy. We must deliver change and improved outcomes in the areas they have identified as important to them.

Implementation and Delivery

To achieve the Vision set out in the Strategy requires a multi-agency and partnership approach. A cross section of agencies are committed to the delivery of the Strategy. Each has a role to play enabling Carers and the cared for to live as independently as possible and maintain a good quality of life.

Annual Action Plans

The Cwm Taf Carers Strategy is not a fixed and final plan but a framework which sets out what will be taken forward over the next three years. Annual Action plans are developed which detail key actions, lead responsibilities, timescales, resource implications and performance measures, which will focus on the outcomes we want to achieve.

Outcomes we want to achieve and monitoring progress

The success of this Strategy and the benefits it delivers will be reviewed regularly. It will be a partnership plan and a variety of staff within a wide range of sectors will be responsible for working in collaboration to implement it effectively.

An annual report on progress will be reported to the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board, as well as the individual organisations i.e. the two Local Authorities, the Health Board and Welsh Government.

Copies of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy, an easy read version and welsh translated documents will be available on partner websites and the link is:

<http://cwmtaf.wales/how-we-work/plans-and-reports/cwm-taf-carers-strategy-2016-2019/>

Impact made

- Collaborative working helps to secure support for Carers, whilst making best use of a wide range of knowledge, expertise and support services.

- Young Carers designed the Young Carers version of the Carers Strategy themselves. This has been reproduced in 2017/18 following its popularity.

Next steps?

- Implementation of appropriate actions from the Carers Review.
- Action plan for 2018-19 will direct our future work, strengthening the partnership approach across the Cwm Taf Region, whilst also addressing priorities from WG.
- The implementation of the SSWB Act plan, as it relates to Carers, ensuring Carers needs are recognised and mainstreamed.

The following sections look at progress made under each aim of the Strategy.

4.2.1 Aim 1. Identifying Carers of all ages and recognising their contributions

Raising Awareness of Carers

Carers information has featured on a page of the 50+ Information Calendar, which is widely distributed across Cwm Taf.

Local Carers Projects raise awareness of Carers through various means and staff attended local community events regularly to raise awareness of Carers throughout the Cwm Taf region. For example, the Big Bite (Wellbeing Zone) a 2 day event with over 13,000 members of the general public attending, Community First events, Housing Association Tenant events and third sector information events.

Also attending the Mental Health week events as well as the 'It Makes Sense' Event celebrating sensory awareness month in Cwm Taf. This was a partnership event between Health Services, third Sector and people that have or support others with sensory loss.

Carers Champions were encouraged to sign up to Carers Wales/UK campaigns in supporting Carers Week and Carers Rights Day Events. Numerous events were held across Cwm Taf, including:

- Information Stalls in Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda, Ysbyty Cwm Cynon, Prince Charles Hospital, Kier Hardie Health Park and Dewi Sant Health Park.
- Carers Information on television screens across GP surgeries and health board buildings.

Both RCT Carers Project and Merthyr Tydfil's Carers Strategy Network have continued to develop close links with the Third Sector Integrated Care Fund Community Coordinators across the region. Referrals to Carers services have been received from the Coordinators and the Coordinators information resource has been utilised to support Carers across the region.

RCT CSP has been working with RCT Councils Equality and Diversity Team in the development of a Staff Disability and Carers Network. The aim of the Network is to bring together staff with disabilities and those who are Carers in sharing experience, highlighting and addressing the barriers they may face at work and supporting them in their working role. It is hoped that the network will meet periodically whilst keeping in touch via a dedicated email network. An official launch date is currently being discussed.

The Annual Carers Champion Conference

Following the success of the previous Carers Champion conferences, the fourth annual conference took place in May 2017 with 70 people attending. The conference acts as a platform for celebrating the success of the Carers Champions, along with highlighting some key achievements gained through 2016-17.

The Carers Champions conference enables the sharing of information with staff attending through a range of information stands, networking and presentations. Information is then cascaded to other staff through the Champion networks.

The theme was Dementia as it coincided with Dementia Awareness Week. There were a range of speakers highlighting the work and good practice of champions from across Cwm Taf in relation to Dementia. This included speeches from the Director of Community Services in RCT, a Carer giving her own life experience and a Dementia Advisor from Cwm Taf University Health Board.





The feedback was overwhelmingly positive through the evaluation forms received. Attendees felt motivated to share what they had learnt with colleagues in their organisations and able to signpost their clients appropriately. They felt more aware of young Carers, especially after hearing the accounts of their lives and watching the digital story they have produced.

People felt they had received good information from all the stand holders. The stands from the various organisations reported good take up of information and resources, the conference offered many networking opportunities. The feelings expressed and comments provided described people as being inspired, informed and motivated. This can only help to improve the outcomes for Carers.

Improved Identification and recognition of Carers

The recruiting of Carers Champions, and the variety of Carer Aware training available, has helped to improve the identification and recognition of Carers amongst Health Promotion staff.

GP Surgeries continue recording Carers on information systems, which can assist them in ensuring the Carer is supported appropriately. Along with this, local Carers services continue to receive referrals from Primary care.

In RCT, since 2015, the RCT Young Carers Service has been working with Secondary Schools in the Borough to implement the Young Carers School Award. The award was developed by the service after young carers told staff that they didn't feel that teachers in their school understood their issues, so the award ensures that school staff are aware of how to identify young carers, they learn about the difficulties that they face, consider how to provide additional support to young carers in their school and publicise the support that is available to young carers outside of the school environment.

The award consists of 3 levels; Bronze, Silver and Gold, with each level consisting of a set of standards which progressively increase the support and

guidance that young carers are offered in school. We are currently working with Carers Trust to ensure that all our schools are also recognised through their Young Carers in Schools Wales Programme.

The driving force behind implementing the award is the Carers Champion at each school. All 17 Secondary schools in RCT now have Carers Champions in place who are actively offering support to young carers.

The award is already having a significant impact on young carers school lives with one young carer commenting that "she now feels far more confident to discuss her caring role with her teachers, because she now knows that they understand".

Due to the positive feedback received from the secondary schools, they have begun piloting a new award for Primary Schools. This has involved working with Year 6 teachers to develop a unit of work based around young carers that culminates in the year 6 classes sharing what they have learnt to the rest of the school through a class assembly. The 6 Primary schools involved in the pilot will shortly be providing feedback before we continue to roll out the award to more schools.

Whilst they were developing the Schools Award, discussions with the Carers Champion in The Aberdare college campus about possibly adapting the award to make it relevant for the college campuses has been had.

In July 2017, Bryncelynog Comprehensive School was the first school in RCT to secure the Silver status for the support it gives pupils who are young Carers.

Funding was allocated for Schools Awards Packs and for a Carers Project officer to attend PSE lessons in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

RCT Carers Support Project (CSP) has had 571 new adult Carers registering with the Project during 2016/17, this is an increase of 68% compared to the previous year. The CSP are currently supporting just under 3,000 adult Carers in RCT. The young Carers Service has continued to see an increase in the number of referrals received for an assessment – 106 received during 2017/18.

RCT Carers Support Project (CSP) continues to work with a variety of Council Teams/departments and third sector organisation in promoting the recognition and support available to Carers.

Cwm Taf Social Care Award Ceremony took place in November 2017. The theme of the ceremony was 'Getting your voices heard'. The CSP supported 2 Carers, an adult Carer and young Carer, to attend the event. They were able to relay their experience of their caring role and the support they have received during their journey, to a wide range of social care professionals, thus getting their voices heard and raising the profile of Carers.

Young Carers & Young Adult Carers Recognition Evening

To coincide with Young Carer Awareness Day, the Young Carers Service held a recognition event at Rhondda Heritage Park Hotel. Nearly 200 guests enjoyed an evening of celebration while awards were presented to all the young people to recognise their personal achievements and caring roles. During the evening, some young people demonstrated their musical and sporting talents on stage, a young carer read out a moving poem he had written about caring for his Mum and the young carers choir performed a number of songs.

Cllr Tina Leyshon, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Welsh Government Minister for Children and Social Care attended the event, along with many representatives from the partner agencies that the service works closely with.



Recruitment of Carers Champions across the Partnership area

As in previous years, Carers champions have been recruited widely across the Cwm Taf region. This has included health settings, such as hospital wards, GP surgeries and pharmacies.

Training to meet the needs of staff across the Partnership area

The Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager for Cwm Taf has delivered Carer Awareness training to the Health Promotion champions in each Pharmacy in Cwm Taf as part of their staff training. Similar sessions have also been held as part of the Nurse Induction in Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

An 'Are you a Carer?' training leaflet has been produced, with a copy being provided in all staff training sessions across RCT, MT and UHB. Further increasing identification and raising awareness of the support available to Carers across Cwm Taf.

GP Support Officers (GPSO)

In Merthyr Tydfil Primary Care Cluster they have GPSO's who engage, signpost, offer advice and work with patients to influence cultural and behavioural change for service users within a Primary Care setting. They advise/assess service users and address social issues and offer support in correlation with the social services and wellbeing act. They promote independence and enable service users to take responsibility for their own

health and wellbeing. GPSO's support the reduction of attendance within general practice for non-medical intervention.

GPSO's, during consultations, have often identified Carers who have not identified themselves as a Carers (they are a family member that feel it is their duty to look after their relatives). This cohort of service users were not claiming carers allowance or receiving any support from any groups, such as Alzheimer's or Stroke Society.

GPSO's have been able to support these Carers by identifying what is causing stress and putting some extra support and ensuring the correct financial assistance are put in place. They also ensure links with the relevant agencies and particularly ensuring the required adaptations are made at home.

Responsive training for Carers as identified through engagement with Carers

RCT Carers Support Project has provided a total of 124 training sessions, workshops and events to adult Carers, which resulted in 2269 Carer attendances. This equates to nearly double the amount of sessions provided during 2016-17 with an additional 1,000 Carer attendances.

Your Wellbeing Matters/Listening Project

This project collects people's stories and experiences about wellbeing, mental health and the support people have received locally. This project has been promoted across RCT and includes Carers stories. This project will enable us to shape and target projects in the future.

Impact made

- Cwm Taf UHB participated in Carers Week, which further raises awareness of Carers amongst health professionals and members of the public in contact with Health services.
- Health professionals through awareness-raising have developed knowledge regarding support services available to Carers. They are now able to signpost appropriately, which enables a more efficient access to services.
- Raising awareness of Carers has also helped to increase Carer recognition and enable individuals to recognise themselves as Carers and therefore receive appropriate information, advice and support.
- An increased number of Carers being referred to RCT CSP, which further ensures Carers are being identified, recognised and supported in their caring roles.
- Working Carers feel supported in their employment, with their employers better understanding their needs.
- Developing links with the third sector has encouraged more appropriate signposting, where relevant, to Carers across Cwm Taf allowing them

to gain the support and information needed to support them in their caring roles.

- Carers attended the Cwm Taf Social Care Award ceremony allowing them to relay their experiences of their caring role and raise the recognition of Carers.
- The Carers Champion Conference recognises the valuable work carried out by Carers Champions, increases awareness of the rights of Carers and provides a platform for networking and sharing knowledge, experience and best practice across sectors.
- Carers are recognised as partners in care and recorded on appropriate systems.
- Carers are now increasingly recognised and supported more effectively by Primary Care Services and in Education.
- Consistent Carer referrals has resulted in more Carers been made aware of their rights and support available.
- There has been an increase in the provision of workshops, training and events for Carer, further supporting them in their caring role
- There are clearly identified Carers Champions, acting as a single point of access for GPs and other Primary Care staff.
- Cwm Taf has been influential in ensuring Carers are placed on the agenda within Higher Education settings. Raising awareness of Carers at this stage will allow for early intervention and potential prevention of Carer breakdown.
- Carers Awareness continues to be included on the nursing and social work course syllabus, thus further developing students understanding of Carers and enabling them to be more Carer Aware when entering their chosen professions.
- Improved relationships with Further Education staff and improved networks.
- Taking part in raising awareness events with Job Centre Plus.
- Enabling Carers to have a voice through Carer involvement in training.
- Collaborative working enabling co production and reciprocal working.

Next Steps?

- Continue to provide training to all pharmacies, to cascade information and to network with other champions.
- Continued support for key Carer events, for example, during Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.
- Ongoing attendance at partnership events to raise awareness and profile of Carers.
- Continued promotion of Carers and support services available, should help encourage further referrals ensuring the needs of Carers of met.
- Continued work with Carers in identifying the types of support needed and the facilitating of workshops, training and events to meet those needs identified.
- Continued identification of Champions across Health and Social Care.
- Sustained support for identified Champions in order to ensure they are kept up to date with Carer information and are able to support Carers appropriately.
- Official launch of the RCT Disability and Carers Staff Network.

- Link in with the Social Care Award Ceremony to ensure Carers have a presence at future planned Ceremonies.
- An Annual Carers Champion Conference.
- Carers in their own right are now a beneficiary group for the Integrated Care Fund to enable projects specifically for Carers.
- The continued provision of training to Carers Champions and Health and Social Care staff to ensure their continued professional development.
- Carers of all ages will continue to be identified across the region to ensure they are supported in an effective and timely manner.
- Ways of identifying and supporting Carers of all ages are mainstreamed as part of everyday practice.
- Roll out of Agored Accreditation for Carers Champions in GP Practices and consideration of whether the scheme or something similar could be used for other staff groups.
- RCTCBC have set up training sessions with Jobcentre Plus to raise awareness about support available for Carers.

4.2.2. Aim 2. Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice & assistance to Carers of all ages

Relevant, timely and up to date information to Carers

Carers information is consistently reviewed in order to ensure it is relevant and up to date. The Cwm Taf Carers A-Z Guide (which is also available in Welsh) continues to be distributed widely across Cwm Taf.

Both the UHB and Local Authority websites are continually updated to ensure accuracy and accessibility of information provided to Carers. Carers literature is reviewed consistently and any updated information made available to Carers across Cwm Taf.

In 2017/18, RCT CSP provided Carers Packs to 565 *new* Carers, an increase of 200 Carers packs compared to 2016/17.

Within RCT and MT, Carers email distribution lists are utilised to target information and to keep Carers up to date with changes and news topics that may be of interest to them. Carers Newsletters in both MT and RCT Carers Services are sent to registered Carers, Carers Champions and distributed widely across Cwm Taf. Social media is also utilised to target a varying demographic of Carer.

As part of the implementation of the SSWB Act, both LA's have established Information, Advice and Assistance services together with the use of an online resource DEWIS. Both Local Authorities and the UHB have contributed to the production of the Carers section on Dewis Cymru. This ensures quality information is available from a network of social care, health and third sector organisations across Wales, supplemented by local information relevant to Cwm Taf.

Appropriate information for staff

RCT CSP ensures information in relation to the Project and support services available to Carers are disseminated amongst all Social Care Teams, to ensure they are kept up to date with provision available.

Working with SCDWP (Social Care Workforce Development Partnership) who provide training across Cwm Taf, we have agreement to include Carers information leaflets on all training courses. A leaflet has been designed and printed.

A variety of information is provided to staff across Cwm Taf in various formats and is also an important aspect of staff training activities.

Are you a Carer?

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid (except for carers allowance), for their partner, family member or friend who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. A Carer can be anyone of any age.

If you support someone who would not be able to manage without your help, you are a Carer, even if you don't think of yourself that way.

To find out more about the support that could be available to you please call:
 Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project 01443 668813
 Or Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 01685 724500 (ask for Adult Duty)
 Or Cwm Taf University Health Board 01443 744825

Get in touch...

Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project
 CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

Logos: GIG NHS, Rhondda Cynon Taf University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Following on from the success of the new leaflet, Carers Champions in GP surgeries and Health Promotion Champions in local Pharmacies, have had their new leaflets. The aim of these leaflets is for information purposes and to start a conversation with people who might be unaware they are a Carer.

Are you a Carer?
 If so, ask to speak to the Carer Champion in your G.P. surgery

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid (except for carers allowance), for their partner, family member or friend who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. A Carer can be anyone of any age. If you support someone who would not be able to manage without your help, you are a Carer, even if you don't think of yourself that way.

To find out what support, help and advice you can receive please register with your G.P. as a Carer.
To find out more about the support that could be available to you please call:
 Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project 01443 668813
 Or Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 01685 724500 (ask for Adult Duty)
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Get in touch...

Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Support Project
 CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

Logos: GIG NHS, Rhondda Cynon Taf University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Are you a Carer?
 If so, ask to speak to the Health Promotion Champion in your Pharmacy

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid (except for carers allowance), for their partner, family member or friend who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. A Carer can be anyone of any age. If you support someone who would not be able to manage without your help, you are a Carer, even if you don't think of yourself that way.

To find out more about the support that could be available to you please call:
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Get in touch...

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 carersupportproject@rctcbc.gov.uk

Logos: GIG NHS, Rhondda Cynon Taf University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf.

All partners continue to raise awareness of the Advocacy support available in Cwm Taf to alleviate stress and impact on Carers.

The Carers Information & Support Programme (CrISP)

CrISP is run by the Alzheimer's Society working in partnership with RCT Carers Support Project. The sessions, which generally run twice per year, are designed to educate and support Carers and families of people with Dementia about how to cope with day to day life and how to plan for the future. A session was held in RCT in March 2018 with 9 families being supported.

They aim to provide information in a group environment where Carers are able to share their experiences and find out about local and national services that may be of help.

CrISP1 is a 2 day course for early to moderate stage dementia. It is only open to those who are caring for or had diagnosis. The modules on day 1 are around supporting a person with dementia, understanding dementia, coping with change, Carers looking after themselves, finance & legal, service that offer support and specialised teams.

Day 2 has speakers from the Memory Team, Age Connects Morgannwg around benefits advice, a solicitor around power of attorney etc., and a counsellor from the Carers Project in Rhondda Cynon Taf on the emotional impact and a Social Worker on the Carer Assessment.

GP/Hospital Television Screens

Information has been provided for timely and relevant Carer specific information to be displayed on screen in GP surgeries and also in Royal Glamorgan Hospital A&E department.

Carers Project RCT

The Carers Project RCT has continued to provide:

- Timely information for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers
- Young Carer and Young Adult Carer Assessments
- A dedicated Parent Carers worker supporting Parent who have children aged 0-25 with additional needs
- Max Card is available to Parent Carers of children with additional needs under the age of 19
- CSP Counselling Service
- Counselling Peer Support Group
- Chatterbox, a monthly meeting for Carers to come together share experiences and gain information and advice
- Carers Mental Health Forum targeted to those Carers caring for someone with a mental illness
- Carers Emergency Card Support Service
- Carers News

- Partnership Working with Safeguarding
- Carers Legal Clinics provided monthly for Carers in RCT
- An up to date website provision for Carers
- A dedicated CSP Facebook page

Upper Rhondda Support Group

The Upper Rhondda Support Group, which is held in St Matthews Church Hall, Treorchy was funded to purchase equipment for their Carers Support Group. Their equipment was limited so extra equipment was helpful to provide more meaningful activities for Carers attending their sessions. Activity sessions see Carers interacting with each other and stimulate discussion.

Impact made

- Carers are more informed as a result of the increase in information provision, which helps them to find out easily about how to access support available to them in their caring role.
- Staff and the general public are more informed of Carers and their rights.
- The A-Z helps to address any gaps in information provision.
- Dewis Cymru allows Carers and professionals to have up to date access to information at the appropriate time. Dewis Cymru acts as a support resource for both professionals and Carers accessing information.
- Staff are kept up to date with the latest Carer developments.
- Staff are able to signpost Carers to appropriate support services.
- CrISP enables Carers a safe environment to discuss issues and receive support, whilst increasing Carers knowledge around dementia and providing support following diagnosis
- RCT CSP counselling service provides one to one bespoke support to Carers
- Carers Groups like Chatterbox, the Carers Mental Health Forum and the Peer Support Group provide a support network for Carers across RCT
- Schemes such as the Max Card and discounted access to leisure Services help support the Carer maintain a life outside their caring role, whilst support their wellbeing
- The Carers News and Facebook page provided an invaluable information resource for Carers, informing them of their rights and support available to them

What next?

- Annual review of the A-Z guide as part of an ongoing review and updating of information provision to Carers, particularly in relation to the new Information, Advice and Assistance services in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil as part of the SSWB Act.
- Ongoing promotion of RCT's Carers Support Project and Merthyr Tydfil's Carers Network to encourage increased referrals and information provision.
- Ongoing provision of training and incorporation of Carer Awareness in general staff training.

- Regarding Advocacy, CTUHB, RCTCBC and MTCBC are working together to explore options of rolling out a Service Level Agreement to a Cwm Taf wide provision entitled the 'Independent Advocacy Service for Adults & Carers 50 years of age and over'.
- CrISP to continue in 2017/18
- Promote these sessions across Cwm Taf
- Assess the demand to provide CrISP 2, which looks at moderate to advanced dementia.
- Ongoing provision of up to date and timely information via various channels including, Carers News, Facebook, websites and attendance at community events
- Ongoing provision of Carers Groups across RCT
- Develop an evening support group for Carers, ensuring working Carers needs are accounted for
- Maintaining and developing new initiatives for Carers across RCT

4.2.3. Aim 3. Providing support, services & training to meet the needs of Carers of all ages

Flexible working policies for employees

RCT Council continues to work towards Carer Friendly Guidance for its staff. The development of the Disability and Carers Network will help support and direct this work.

Respite Care

As a result of the Respite Audit carried out in May 2017, both Local Authorities are looking to develop and commission a wider range of preventative services to promote health and wellbeing, early intervention and minimise the escalation of crises.

Promote help available within the community – combating loneliness and isolation including befriending

Strong links continue to be made with the ICF Community Co-ordinators. There are new posts in the form of 6 General Practice Support Officers (GPSO) who are based in Merthyr Tydfil across 9 GP Practices and a Community Co-ordinator based in the Rhondda Cluster:

- based in the local area;
- provide information, advice and signpost to local community groups, activities and services;
- build strong relationships with communities, agencies and services (specifically for those over 65);
- support people to live their own lives within their communities and;

- raise community and statutory awareness of voluntary sector services.

£22,000 has been allocated to the Third Sector for groups to submit bids relating to Carers.

The Grant Scheme is an opportunity to test out pilot projects and is for one financial year only. It is an opportunity for innovative ideas for new projects which can be introduced across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. Applications will need to comply with the following criteria:

- Combat the impact of loneliness and isolation
- Prevent unnecessary access to statutory services
- Support hospital discharge
- Support beneficiary groups to maintain their health, wellbeing and independence.

A digital story has been produced to document how Carers benefited from some of these projects.

RCT CSP Adult Carer Residential

Following the success of the Carers Project Young Carer residential, Adult Carers had requested the same. WG funding enabled this to happen. The Carers Project RCT organised an Adult Carer Residential 'Spring Awakening' in Dare Valley Park, Aberdare from the 23rd to 24th March 2018.

The residential was attended by 18 adult Carers, ranging from 21 to 84 years of age. All of the Carers who attended had extensive caring roles, ranging from caring for their children, to their parents and partners. The residential provided an inclusive environment for all Carers regardless of their age, caring role or physical ability.

Carers reported that the main reasons they decided to join the residential was to relax, get more time for themselves and to socialise and spend time with other Carers. A third of the group hadn't spent a night away from the person they care for in 5 years.

The aims for the residential was to:

- Support life alongside caring, ensuring that Carers have reasonable breaks from their caring role, enabling them to maintain their capacity to care;
- Limit the isolation and social exclusion that can sometimes be felt as a result of caring commitments;
- Provide Carers with the opportunity to meet other Carers and share their experiences;
- Reduce the stress and anxiety of Carers;
- Provide Carers with skills transferable to their daily lives;
- Support Carers to have a life beyond their caring role;

- Provide Carers with ‘me time’ to relax and take time away from their caring role.

Activities provided were:

• Team building	• Laughter workshop	• Mindfulness
• Country walk	• Movie/games night	• Archery
• Laser shooting	• Indian head massage	

The residential received really positive testimonies:

“A really good experience with such, warm, caring people, both organisers and other Carers on the course”

“Fantastic time. Don’t want to leave”

“Fantastic. Really enjoyed myself. Hopefully we can do this again”

“I don’t need alone time because I’ve made so many friends”

“I can’t remember the last time I had a full night sleep”

“Absolutely outstanding. It truly gave us the opportunity to relax and de-stress and have down time”

“The best time of my life. I feel like me again”

“I thoroughly enjoyed the ‘Spring Awakening’. It was lovely to meet other Carers and share our experiences, in a relaxed and positive atmosphere – well done for organising this for us”

The Carers Project RCT has also continued with providing and supporting numerous projects such as:

- CSP Counselling: Peer Support Group, Service Workshops
- Carers Mental Health Forum
- Chatterbox
- Carers Emergency Card
- Carers Discounted Access to Leisure
- Carers Legal Clinic
- Max Card
- CrISP Course
- Rolling programme of training, workshops and events
- Carers Creative Writing Group
- Carers Legal Clinic
- Past Carers Group

The Llantrisant Dementia Support Group

Cwm Taf University Health Board continues to support the Llantrisant Dementia Support Group who continue to meet. This group has a focus on dementia support. There is pastoral support seeking to increase their awareness of Dementia and looks to involve the wider community. This work also provides the opportunity for the memory assessment service to expand out into the community providing 2 way support, as shown in the diagram.

Stroke Group for Carers

Relatives/carers of stroke survivors report increased levels of depression. They can also experience high levels of carer burden, anxiety and loneliness. Assistant Psychologist and Consultant Clinical Psychologist have continued to run a Carers Stroke Group for Carers to come together who are looking after someone who has had a stroke.

This 6 week programme brings Carers together for a half day session and a speaker to inform of them of what to expect, for example speech and language therapist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist. This enables:

- Families are supported by therapists to understand the person's needs and difficulties and how best to support them;
- Families are provided with education around the nature of the person's stroke and how best to support them;
- They are able to access psychology services in order to help with adjustment and emotional needs associated with the stroke;
- Signposting to other services to support with any other needs e.g. financial, social and to maintain physical and mental wellbeing.
- An opportunity for carers to chat and share experiences with each other.

These sessions are facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist and an Assistant Psychologist.

The structure of group was for 6 weeks, two hour sessions per week were held. Each session focused on sharing emotional experiences and developing strategies to improve physical and mental well-being. As well as providing advice and support around from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Future prospects:

- In future we hope to expand the programme and recruit further people to the group. The method of recruitment has been changed to an 'opt-in' system whereby individuals will be provided with information about the programme. The opt in letter provides information on how to contact the team to register a place should they wish to attend. It is hoped that this will maximise attendance at each group; ideally groups will run once sufficient numbers have been recruited, this will be more cost effective in terms of venue hire and staff costs.

- We also hope to run the programme in several different locations within the Health Board (north and south of Health Board) to provide an equitable service and to support those who are limited due to travelling.

Impact made

- The Llantrisant Dementia Support Group meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month. Café 50 in Pontyclun is now also up and running and starting to build with new members. Covers alternate weeks to Llantrisant;
- The Upper Rhondda Dementia Support Group members include people living with Dementia, Carers and family members. There are between 16 - 28 members and growing. Dedication of the volunteers that attend the Group;
- Past Carers also attend the Dementia Support Group where they used to attend with their loved one;
- Group members have taken ownership of the Group. The Group is informal and flexible.
- Continued provision of schemes to support Carers such as the Carers Emergency Card, Discounted access to leisure services, Carers legal clinic, Carers Counselling Service and Peer Support Groups
- Research around peer-support and psychoeducational groups, as in the Stroke Group for Carers shows:
 - Research shows that peer support can:
 - Improve or maintain psychological, physical well-being.
 - Increase confidence, empowerment, acceptance of condition
 - Reduce loneliness.
 - Peer support can lead to improvements in mental health by promoting belief in recovery, increased self-esteem and social inclusion.
- The Stroke Group has received positive feedback from families and carers. Carers say that the group is often the only chance they have to do something alone and it's helpful to chat with other people who are experiencing similar things.
- They also report that the information they receive is helpful, and it eases their anxieties knowing that they can come and chat with a therapist every week if needed. Signposting other services has also been helpful to them, particularly as they come to the end of their programme.

Next Steps?

- Community Co-ordinators continue to map groups relevant to older people so Carers are able to be sign posted to groups within their own area.
- Community Co-ordinators provide information at events where Carers attend.
- In addition, in 2017/18 the ICF remit has now expanded to support additional beneficiary groups and/or their families and Carers. They are:
 - Older people (aged 50+)
 - People with learning disabilities

- Children with complex needs
- Carers
- Continued provision and development of schemes which support Carers in their caring role and that help them to maintain a life outside caring.
- To provide safe and welcoming groups for people living with dementia and their loved ones across Cwm Taf. Supported by the Community, Peers and the Memory Service.
- To increase awareness and understanding of Dementia within communities by utilising the expertise and resources within that community.
- We have continued to fund the Stroke Group to develop the service for Carers further. They will incorporate mindfulness, relaxation, yoga etc. into the sessions each week.
- RCT will review their current Carers Support Project and provision to Carers.
- Our Valley LIFE project is being developed. This is outlined below:

Our **Valley LIFE project** is about making sure people with dementia, their carers and families receive timely support to improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

4.2.4 Aim 4. Giving Carers of all ages a voice, with more choice & control over their lives

Ensuring Carers have a voice

Carer representatives are members of the Carers Partnership Group. They are involved in the implementation of the Carers Strategy.

Carers play a pivotal role in the delivery of University student training and Carer Champion Training, by sharing their stories of being a Carer and their experiences of Health and Social Care Services. Carers of all ages are also involved in the delivery of the annual Carers Champion Conference.

During the Summer 2016, we worked with Carers of all ages across Cwm Taf in developing a DVD featuring the life of Carers. This was led, produced and performed by Carers themselves. The DVD contains different elements that can be used according to the audience and can be used to raise awareness of the issues that Carers face and to highlight the support available locally. In 2017/18 welsh translation subtitles have been added for the DVD to be used. The Carers Film was launched at the Young Carers Recognition evening in January 2018.

RCT CSP has been working with RCT Councils Equality and Diversity Team in the development of a Staff Disability and Carers Network. It is hoped as the Network grows members can have a voice and be engaged with in the

development and reviewing of staff policies that affect individuals with a disability and those who are Carers.

RCT CSP works with Carers in ensuring they are of grants available to assist them in their caring role. In particular, several Carers were supported with the Carers Trust grant applications. Continuous work by local Young Carers Project is carried out, ensuring Young Carers have a voice in service delivery and the designing of services to meet their needs.

The Cwm Taf Social Services & Wellbeing Citizen Panel has Carer representation which will be renewed every 2 years.

John's Campaign

Cwm Taf University Health Board has signed up to 'John's Campaign'. This campaign is about the right of people with dementia to be supported by their family Carers when they stay in hospital.

The campaign believes that Carers should not just be allowed but should be welcomed, and that a collaboration between the patients and all connected with them is crucial to their health and their well-being.

John's Campaign applies to all hospital settings: acute, community, mental health and its principles could extend to all other caring institutions where people are living away from those closest to them.

Impact made

- Carers have shared their knowledge and experiences whilst being members of the Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group and have provided direction for the implementation of the Action Plan.
- Students and professionals report that Carer involvement in the training they receive is a powerful learning tool and is the most beneficial part of the training process.
- Carers DVD's have been produced for groups, professionals and Carers to use with welsh subtitles.
- Development of a Staff Disability and Carers Network to provide a Forum for engagement
- Promotion of grants available to Carers ensure Carers have financial assistance to support them in their caring role
- JOHNS CAMPAIGN: Cwm Taf Carers Co-ordinator has met with Senior Nurses to start this way of working in our hospital settings.
- A leaflet has been designed to inform patients and their Carers of this new approach.
- This approach can make a less stressful stay in hospital.
- This campaign gives a choice to the Carer and the cared for.

Next Steps?

- Carers will continue to be involved in the implementation of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy, providing direction at each stage.

- An Annual Carers Champion Conference will continue with input from Carers.
- University workshops are ongoing and Carers will be involved in training delivery to ensure maximum impact of all training provided.
- Carers will continue to be involved in the delivery of Carers Champion training.
- Carers will be consulted regarding local Carers support delivery where appropriate.
- Official launch of the Staff Disability and Carers Network
- Continual promotion of grants available to Carers

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

Collaboration

Details of the Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group are referenced in section 3, but this work builds on a strong history of collaboration and regional working across the statutory and non statutory sector in RCT and MT.

With Carer and third sector representation on the Cwm Taf Carers Partnership group, this strengthens our partnership approach at a local level.

COLIN

Cwm Taf continues to be represented at the COLIN meetings with a representative from RCTCBC and/or CTUHB attending. RCT's Carers Support Project Officer is a member of the 'Alternative Approaches to Carer breaks' sub group, whose aim is to produce a short guidance paper to share with the COLIN on alternative and innovative approaches to Carers breaks.

Carers Officers Network

RCT Carers Support Project Officer attends the Carers Officers Network hosted by Carers Wales. This provides a forum to share best practice, discuss new WG legislation and the sharing of information and new initiatives for Carers.

Carers Rights Day

For Carers Rights Day 2017 RCT CSP worked closely with RCT's Equality and Diversity Team in holding a joint event promoting the rights of Carers and individuals with a disability. Over 20 organisations attended the event promoting the support services available to Carers. Benefit and council tax workshops took place and a variety of health and wellbeing activities were made available throughout the day.

Job Centres

RCT CSP has developed close working links with Job Centres in RCT. The Project has attended a number of information days organised by the Job Centre to promote the identification and recognition of Carers. A Carers Clinic is being piloted and is proving popular in Tonypany Job Centre. A Carers Clinic in Llantrisant Job Centre has been arranged to commence in June 2018.

All Wales Parent and Carer Forum

RCT CSP has worked with the All Wales Parent and Carer Forum in providing two way support and referrals to the Project. The Forum provided a session on how the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act will affect Parent Carers.

Valleys Steps

RCT CSP has continues to strengthen its relationship with Valleys Steps. The CSP has included their information and course dates in their Carers News. Valleys Steps also attended Chatterbox (CSP Coffee Morning) and provided a Mindfulness Session at their Adult Carers 'Spring Awakening' Residential.

HAPI Project

RCT CSP has made links with the HAPI Project in organising bespoke training to meet the needs of Carers. The first session, Managing Anxiety, has been arranged for July 2018.

Impact made

- Terms of Reference has been reviewed by the Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group.
- The Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group will oversee the implementation of the Action Plan for the Carers Strategy.
- Attendance at local and National Carers Forums, such as the COLIN and Carers Officers Network, enable best practice to be shared and successful initiatives across Wales to be discussed.
- Linking in with community organisations help strengthen provision available to Carers as well as promoting the needs of Carers and Carers Services
- Work with the Job Centres has resulted in the identification and subsequent support to Carers who may not have otherwise received the support available

Next Steps?

- The Cwm Taf Carers Partnership Group will continue to meet for the duration of the Carers Strategy.
- Continued attendance at National Carers Forums
- Continued partnership working to utilise community provision and expand support services available for Carers

- Further expand links with Job Centres to identify and provide bespoke support to Carers in RCT

5. Performance Monitoring

Under the SSWB Act there are specific Performance Indicators for Carers which RCTCBC and MTCBC are required to report on annually. Information currently available is presented below:

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Number of assessments of need for support for carers undertaken during the year	206
Of those, the number that led to a support plan	39
Number of carer assessments that were refused by carers during the year	671
Number of care and support plans and support plans that were reviewed during the year	4,013
Of those, the number of plans that were reviewed within agreed timescales	2,316
Number of requests for review of care and support plans and support plans for carers before agreed timescales made by an adult during the year	124
Of those, the number of reviews undertaken	62

Number of assessments of need for support for young carers undertaken during the year	103
Of those, the number that led to a support plan	57
Number of requests for repeat assessment of need for care and support and need for support made by a child, young carer or person with parental responsibility during the year	237
Of those, the number of repeat assessments undertaken	217
Of those, the number of repeat assessments that led to a care and support plan or support plan	91

Number of care and support plans and support plans for young carers that were reviewed during the year	4,399
Of those, the number that were reviewed within agreed timescales	3,871

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

The percentage of carers of adults who were offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right during the year	51.1%
The percentage of carers of adults who had an assessment or review of their needs in their own right during the year	50.6%
The percentage of carers of adults who were assessed or re-assessed in their own right during the year who were provided with a service	77.7%

Number of assessments of need for support for young carers undertaken during the year	40
Of those, the number of assessments that led to a support plan	39

Number of care and support plans and support plans for young carers that were reviewed during the year	116
Of those, the number of plans that were reviewed within agreed timescales	115

6. Looking Forward

Throughout 2017-18, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, RCT CBC and Cwm Taf UHB have sustained the success of the previous year and continued to work collaboratively in improving support, information and recognition of Carers. This Annual Report has highlighted the key areas of work and provided examples of the progress made.

The Cwm Taf Carers Strategy will continue the work already achieved under the Carers Measure and improve services further as we implement the requirements of the SSWB Act.

The transitional funding to support Carers provided by Welsh Government for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to support the implementation of the SSWB Act is very welcome as there had been concerns regarding the loss of momentum and the lack of resources available to achieve identified actions. Merthyr CBC has had no Carers Coordinator in post since March 2017 and RCT has had no Carers Coordinator in post since March 2016. The Carers Coordinator has left Cwm Taf University Health due to the uncertainty of funding.

Partners are working together to maximise the impact of the funding and agree the use of the allocation for 2018/19 following the Cwm Taf Regional Integrated Model for Carers Review (page 8).

It is essential to prevent any negative impact on Carers services and support and ensure the continued development and raising awareness of Carers throughout the region, meeting the increased responsibilities for partners under the SSWB Act.