



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2019

CWM TAF CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

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

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve for submission to Welsh Government the Annual Report for 2018/19 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 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- 2.2 Notes the Annual Report was due in Welsh Government at the end of May 2019. However, in line with previous practice which has been acceptable to Welsh Government, as the timeline of Cabinets in Merthyr Tydfil and 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 Although the Carers Measure has been repealed, the requirement for an Annual report has been continued for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 as part of the conditions of transitional funding from WG in place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 2020.

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 Member and senior officer representatives from across Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cwm Taf Morgannwg 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 2018/19, 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 2019/20.

4.5 Key areas of work have included:

- 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 April 2018 with a focus on Young Carers and Young Adult carers;
- Working with partners to deliver the annual Action Plan;
- Continued 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 are 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 2019/20 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 2019/20 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 2019/20:

- 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:

4.13 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.

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 Department of Work and Pensions 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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CWM TAF CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Background Papers:

Cwm Taf Carers Strategy

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TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

**Cwm Taf Carers
Strategy
Annual Report
2018 - 2019**

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Cwm Taf Carers Annual Report 2018 – 2019

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 2016 (Wales). 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 2018/19 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.

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.

DRAFT

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 Cwm Taf 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 overseen 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 2018/19.

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.

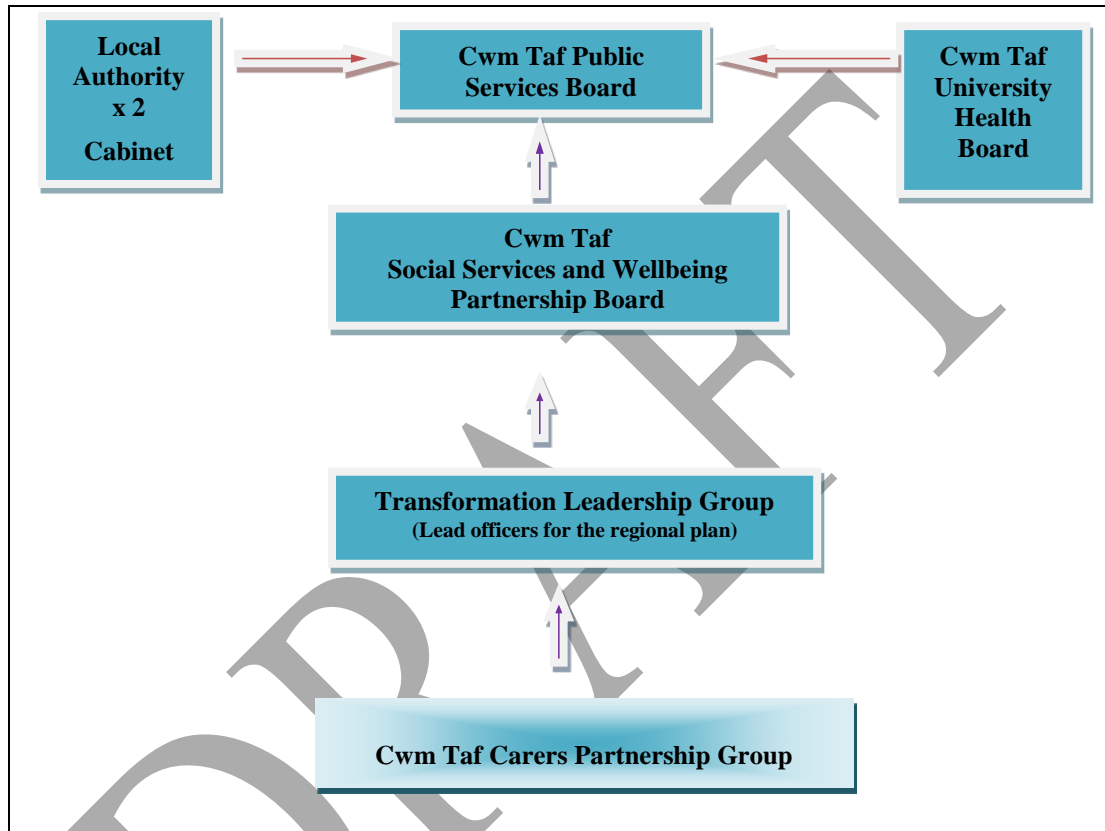
Objectives

- 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 2018/19

Throughout 2018-19, 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 2018/19, 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 Action for Children, Barnardos and Age Connects Morgannwg.
- A network of Carers Champions in settings across the health sector.
- In Merthyr, services to support Carers were commissioned from third sector organisations.

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.

Unfortunately, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council are not in the position to reappoint to their Carers Co-ordinator post. However, it is anticipated that this will be completed in 2019.

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 2017/18, 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 were reported to the Partnership Board. An Action Plan has been devised as part of the implementation of the Regional Plan.

2018/19 has seen slow progress with both Local Authorities using this opportunity to redesign their structures.

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.

Next steps?

- Implementation of appropriate actions from the Carers Review.
- Action plan for 2019-20 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.

It should be noted links have been made with ABMU Health Board and Bridgend County Borough Council in preparation for the merger from 1st April 2019 to Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

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. Information was disseminated across GP surgeries and Carers Champions.

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 Carers Support Project has been working with RCT Councils Equality and Diversity Team in the development of a Staff Disability and Carers Forum. The aim of the Forum 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. The Forum has met and is now established.

The Cwm Taf University Health Board's Carers Co-ordinator has staff several information stalls across the hospital settings to raise the profile of Carers with patients and staff. Also, highlighting the Carers policy for Staff Carers.

The Annual Carers Champion Conference

Following the success of the previous Carers Champion conferences, the fifth annual conference took place in April 2018 with over 80 people attending. The conference acts as a platform for celebrating the success of the Carers Champions, along with highlighting some key achievements gained through 2017-18.

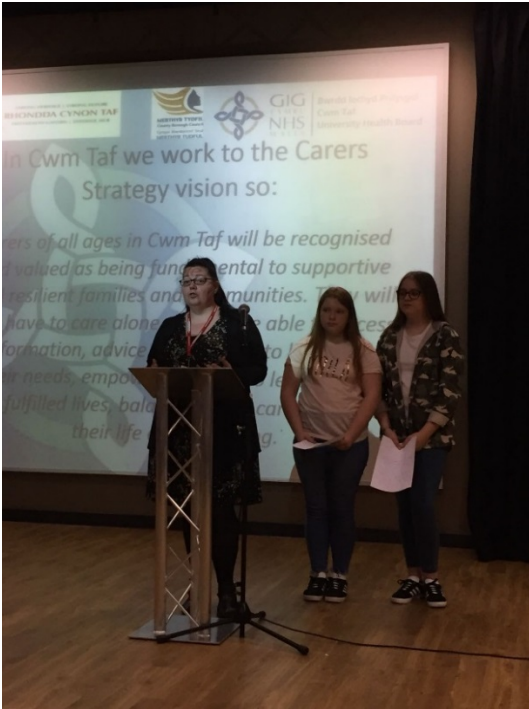
The Carers Champions conference enables the sharing of information with staff attending through a range of information stands, networking and presentations. Information is then cascaded to other staff through the Champion networks.

The theme was Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, so the conference was held in Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw Campus. Two Young Carers and a Young Adult Carer spoke about their own life experience which set the scene for the conference. There were a range of speakers highlighting the work and good practice from across Cwm Taf. This included presentations from Professor Vanessa Webb on the impact of caring has on a young person's education the Director of Community Services in RCT, Claire Williams, RCTCBC on services available and Alison Lagier from Cwm Taf University Health Board on the impact GP Support Officers are providing for Carers in GP surgeries in Merthyr Tydfil. Coleg y Cymoedd have a Carers Champion who also spoke about the support they offer their students who are Carers.

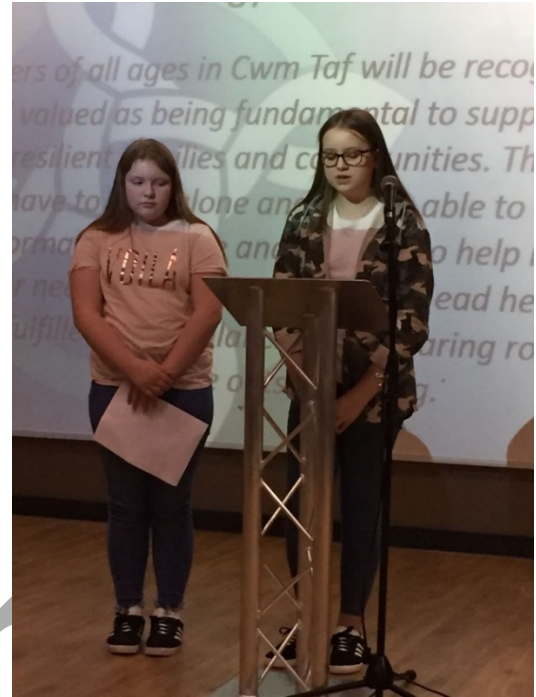
Photographs of the Conference



Councillor Geraint Hopkins opening the Carers Champion Conference



Trudy Fisher and Young Carers from Action for Children



Keira Phillips and Caitlyn Homer-Hughes



Lucy Childs, Young Adult Carer



Laura Wilson, Coleg y Cymoedd Carers Champion

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive through the evaluation forms received. Attendees felt motivated to raise awareness of Young Carers and Young Adult Carers within their own organisation/service areas. Many felt motivated to become Carers Champions and engage further with Carers services offered across Cwm Taf.

21 information stalls attended the conference – they were situated in the heart of the college to engage with students as well as conference attendees. Stall holders were overwhelmed with the interest from the students. The stands from the various organisations reported excellent take up of information and resources. The conference offered many networking and joint working opportunities, for example with Communities for Work, Department of Work and Pensions and the College themselves.

The Conference is still commented on – from people being visibly moved by the young Carers testimonies and the impact caring has on a young person. The feelings expressed and comments provided described people as being inspired, informed and motivated.

Cwm Taf Carers Co-ordinator

Cwm Taf University Health Board was successful in appointing a Cwm Taf Carers Co-ordinator on a 6 month contract with the focus of engaging GP practices to undertake Agored Supporting Carers Unit and ensuring a Carers Champion is appointed to each GP practice along with engaging Health Board staff in raising awareness of Carers. The Carers Co-ordinator has achieved excellent results in a short period of time.

The Carers Co-ordinator has designed and distributed Carer booklets to GP Practices which has a registration form enabling a Carer to complete and hand to their Carer Champion. This has encouraged Carers to self-identify and engage with their GP surgery.

One GP surgery in Pontyclun had 57 Carers registered in their system in September 2018. Following the Carers Co-ordinator involvement, they now have 147 Carers registered.

In addition to the work plan, the Carers Co-ordinator has also attended public events (50+ Forum Information Event, Health & Wellbeing Month, Information Stalls), produced promotional materials and merchandise and attended Senior Nurse meetings to discuss the role of a Carer and will be organising the annual conference. The Carers Co-ordinator has also attended Nurse Induction sessions for all new nurses joining Cwm Taf University Health Board.

There is a dedicated Carer page on the Cwm Taf University Health Board intranet for staff to keep upto date with information.

With confirmation of funding for 2019/20 from Welsh Government, this post has been extended to the 31st March 2020.

AGORED Supporting Carers Training Unit

Since we appointed the Carers Co-ordinator in September 2018, 46 people have expressed interest in undertaking the Agored Supporting Carers Unit which now includes staff from the Wards including Health Care Support Workers. Other organisations, such as DWP, have also expressed an interest

in taking part. 2 people have already completed the Agored Supporting Carers Unit with 23 in progress. 6 people are confirmed to start in January/February 2019. These numbers will increase as when Carer Champions are identified they are given the option of completing the Agored unit.

An example of promotional material for the Carer Aware training is given here:

Carer Aware Training Course

A Carer is someone of any age, who provides unpaid support to family, friends or neighbour who would not be able to manage without this help. This could be caring for someone who is ill, frail, disabled or has a mental health or substance misuse illness.



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To support the delivery of enhanced rights to Carers under the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, Welsh Government, in partnership with stakeholders' established three national priorities:

- Supporting life alongside caring
- Identifying and recognising Carers
- Providing information, advice and assistance to Carers

The Carer Awareness Agored training course is a tool which staff can access to develop their awareness of Carers and how they can be supported within the community.

By identifying Carers in the community you are able to signpost Carers for information, support and refer to local Carer information services should the Carer wish.

The Carer Awareness Agored course is available to all Cwm Taf UHB staff

The course is fully funded and support will be given at every stage

If you would like to enrol on the course please contact me on 01443 744824 or email cerys.gamble@wales.nhs.uk



Hospital Discharge Service

We have worked with RCTCBC, MTCBC, Interlink and VAMT to enable a Carers Hospital Discharge Project to be piloted in Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Prince Charles Hospital, Ysbyty Cwm Cynon and Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda. Citizen's Advice Merthyr Tydfil and Hafal will offer a service to Carers – staff, patient or visitor – to give the right information at the right time to support them in their caring role.

This new service is to commence March 2019.

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 UHB staff and with partner organisations. DWP, Citizens Advice, Drink Wise Age Well and Communities for Work, all putting staff forward to become Carers Champions.

The Cwm Taf Carers Co-ordinator has worked to reinvigorate and recruit Carers Champions on the Wards.



Carer Champion

A Carer Champion is a volunteer member of staff who acts as a key contact for Carer information in the department where they work. The Carer Champions are a network of staff members located around Cwm Taf UHB who are leaders on Carer issues. Many teams have a designated Carer Champion, who is the link to gather Carer information to cascade to their team and to also share with Carers.

If you are interested or can nominate a Carer champion or require further information please contact Cerys Gamble 01443 744847
Cerys.gamble@wales.nhs.uk



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.

The Carers Co-ordinator has designed a poster for each GP surgery to use to inform patients who their Carers Champion is.



RCT Young Carers Service

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.

To give an idea of the Bronze award, the following is expected to be addressed:

- Posters and leaflets displayed around the school giving information on the support available to young Carers internally as well as information on external support such as RCT Young Carers Service phone number and email;
- All staff within the school should be made aware that a child is a Carer. This does not mean that specific information on their caring role is shared – just

that the teacher may need to offer flexibility with attendance and homework submissions;

- All staff within the school will have had some guidance and training on how to recognise young Carers and the role that a young Carer might have to take on at home;
- Carers Rights Day, Young Carers Awareness Day etc are all Carers events that you can expect to see advertised and celebrated in the school and;
- Young Carers are encouraged to 'get together' in school to discuss any concerns or issues they are having or just to have a chat with others who may be experiencing the same sort of issues as themselves.

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. These Carers Champions held Young Carer Awareness Day event which focused on mental health. The aim was to continue identifying young Carers and raising awareness of the vital role that they play in supporting their ill and disabled family members.

Following the success of the work in Secondary Schools, the Young Carers Service have created a unit of work which is designed to raise awareness within primary schools of young Carers issues. This was piloted with a select group of primary schools and is now being rolled out to all primary schools within RCT.

11 primary schools have now successfully completed the award and several more have agreed to participate in the scheme before the end of the academic year.

This network participated in Young Carers Day on the 21st January 2019 by putting on information stalls, assemblies etc to raise awareness. The Young Carers Project publicised this on their social media channels.

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

2018 saw a 30% increase in referrals from schools and college campuses during the first 3 quarters which is a result of how successful the rollout of the Schools Award has been. The Award has been highlighted as good practice among Local Authorities and has received positive feedback from Estyn.

RCT Carers Support Project (CSP) has had 628 new adult Carers registering with the Project during 2018/19 this is an increase of 16% compared to the previous year. The CSP are currently supporting just under 1,500 adult Carers in RCT. The young Carers Service has continued to see an increase in the number of referrals received for an assessment – 103 received during 2018/19. In addition 30 sibling referrals have been received into the service.

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.

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 145 training sessions, workshops and events to adult Carers, which resulted in 2383 Carer attendances. This equates to a 17% increase in the number of events provided compared to the previous year.

Sessions can include the Carers and the cared for, in some instances.

RCT Carers Support Project

From the 1st March 2019, the RCT Carers Support Project became an all age service. Young Carers assessments will be undertaken within the new Information, Advice and Assistance Team with a dedicated assessment worker for young Carers and siblings.

The Carers Support Workers within the RCT Carers Support Project will maintain a responsibility for the rollout of the Schools Award as well as engaging with other services and the Action for Children Service will be co-located within the project to facilitate closer, more responsive working.

The changes and the focus given to Carer's Services will go a long way to improving the sustainability of support to Carers of all ages.

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Taking part in raising awareness events with Job Centre Plus.

Next Steps?

- Continue to provide training to all CTUHB staff, 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.
- 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.
- Continuation of the RCT Disability and Carers Staff Forum.
- 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 other staff groups to take part.

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 newly reviewed Cwm Taf Carers A-Z Guide (which is also available in Welsh) continues to be distributed widely across Cwm Taf. Through partnership, Interlink RCT updated this valuable resource for dissemination 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 2018/19, RCT CSP provided Carers Packs to 639 *new* Carers, an increase of 13% of Carers packs sent compared to 2017/18.

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.

Following on from the success of the leaflet promoting the Carers Champions in GP surgeries and Health Promotion Champions in local Pharmacies, the Cwm Taf Carers Co-ordinator has designed a leaflet to raise awareness of what

a Carer is. The aim of this leaflet is for information purposes and to start a conversation with people who might be unaware they are a Carer.



**Do you look after someone?
Then you could be 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 281463
Or Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 01685 724500
(ask for Adult Duty)
Or Cwm Taf University Health Board 01443 744825

Get in touch...

GIG
GIG
NHS
WALLS
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

Carers Support Project
prosiect cymrad y cyhoeddiwr

Merthyr Tydfil
Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Council

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. Sessions were held in October 2018 and March 2019.

They aim to provide information in a group environment where Carers are able to share their experiences and find out more about:

- What is dementia
- Supporting a person with dementia
- Local services
- Legal and Financial affairs
- Looking after yourself

Carers Project RCT

The Carers Project RCT has continued to provide:

- Timely information for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers;
- Young 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;
- Pause and play coffee mornings (parent Carers) meet monthly to share knowledge, idea's and expertise with other parent Carers or just come along for a hot drink and good conversation;
- CSP Counselling Service;
- Chatterbox, a monthly meeting for Carers to come together share experiences and gain information and advice;
- Cares Cwtch is an informal friendly group for individuals who care for a family member, friend or neighbour. Their monthly evening meeting is an opportunity for a classic 'night in' with other Carers with plenty of films and games, as well as a different takeaway each month;
- 'Recharge' is a new project which provides a 40 minute holistic therapy session on a one to one basis with a qualified therapist to a Carer who is registered with the Carers Project;
- Carers Mental Health Forum targeted to those Carers caring for someone with a mental illness;
- Carers Emergency Card Support Service;
- Carers News;
- Carers Connects is a therapeutic peer support group facilitated by the Projects Counsellor on a monthly basis. It , allows Carers to share experiences and provide guidance and support. Carers can discuss their concerns or just listen to other Carers;
- Diabetes Workshop to give Carers an opportunity to develop information provided by Diabetes Support;
- The RCT Past Carers Group is an informal group offering companionship and friendship to individuals whose caring roles have ended. The group meets once a month and arranges a number of gatherings throughout the month. The groups offers support, laughter and a great way to meet new friends;
- Partnership Working with Safeguarding;
- Carers Legal Clinics are provided for Carers in RCT;
- An up to date website provision or Carers and;
- A dedicated CSP Facebook and Twitter page.

Upper Rhondda, Taf, Cynon and Merthyr Tydfil Dementia Support Groups

Replicating the good practice of Carers and the cared for coming together, additional Dementia Groups have now been set up in Rhydyfelin and Pontypridd Library. Some of the groups have extra activities helpful to provide

more meaningful activities for Carers attending their sessions. Activity sessions see Carers interacting with each other and stimulate discussion.

Upper Rhondda run various sessions, for example a Knit and Knatter group in Ysbyty George Thomas to engage the community including Carers.

A cognitive stimulation therapy group has also been set up for Carers to attend in the Taf area.

Rhondda and Taf have set up a short term loan service for memory aids/telecare for Carers to use through the Dementia Team. This new project is very exciting and will benefit Carers who will not have to make a purchase until they have used that equipment and know that it will aid the cared for.

In March 2019, two memory café's for the patients and Carers were set up in Merthyr Tydfil and Cynon. The Dementia Advisors have worked extensively with all of their patients and Carers, which totals as over 250 people and also putting out posters in the local area. They will meet once a month and will give the Carers respite from their role in a supported environment and give them that peer support which has proven to be invaluable. The patient's and Carers have been heavily involved in what they would like the outcome to be and in the first session to find out what they would like from the group. Activities have been purchased for both the Carers and patient's to be part of the sessions. Dementia Advisors have linked with other agencies to provide relevant information to give to people and advice.

Merthyr Tydfil and Cynon have also set up two new Carer groups in March where twenty to thirty people are invited to each session.

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 benefits Carer and professionals in attaining information quickly.
- 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?

- Disseminate the newly reviewed A-Z guide, 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
- 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.

Community Capacity Grant

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.

£10,000 has been allocated to the Young Carers Group in RCT through the Community Capacity Grant.

A digital story will be produced to document how the Young Carers benefited from some of their projects.

Merthyr Tydfil Young Carers Residential

Merthyr Tydfil Young Carers in May 2018 had the opportunity to engage in a residential stay. This was delivered via PGL Travel Ltd which is the UK's leading outdoor education provider, delivering inspirational learning through adventure. This was significant for those that attended as many young carers do not have the same opportunities as their peers to have a 'holiday'. They engaged in a number of activities including archery, raft racing and abseiling; all of which are designed to build young people's resilience and confidence.

Twenty seven young carers participated in the residential. On the final day those who attended gave feedback on their experience of attending the residential, these are some of the many positive comments shared:

- I have got to learn more about other people.
- I have enjoyed everything, it was my first time away from home.
- It was my first time away from home, never even had a sleepover. Raft building was amazing.

- Its stopped me being afraid of heights. It's helped me feel more confident leaving my nan alone.
- I have made new friends.
- I feel more confident.

RCT CSP Adult Carer Residential 'Weekend on the Wye'

Following the success of the 'Spring Awakening' Residential for adult Carers during March 2018 another Carers residential was held on the 8th-10th March 2019.

The residential was attended by 12 adult Carers, ranging from 26 to 64 years of age. All of the Carers who attended had extensive caring roles, ranging from caring for their children, to their parents, parent-in-laws 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 above all to socialise, spend time with other Carers and make new friends. A quarter of the group hadn't spent a night away from the person they care for in more than 5 years.

The Carers who attended were given a pre and post evaluation to complete.

Aims for the residential:

- To support life alongside caring, ensuring that carers have reasonable breaks from their caring role, enabling them to maintain their capacity to care;
- To limit the isolation and social exclusion that can sometimes be felt as a result of caring commitments;
- To provide Carers with the opportunity to meet other Carers and share experiences;
- To reduce the stress and anxiety of Carers;
- To provide Carers with skills transferable to their daily lives;
- To support Carers to have a life beyond their caring role and;
- To provide Carers with 'me time' to relax and take time away from their caring role

Activities provided:

Country Walks
Spa Day
Canoeing
Social Opportunities

The Activity Overview:

Country Walks

Some of the Carers participated in River walks where they shared their stories, experiences and had some fun along the way.

"I had a brilliant time. Amazing. Thank you"

Spa Day

This is something that was specifically requested by many Carers at the 2018 residential. The spa day provided Carers with some 'me time'. It supported them to relax, get to know each other and above all prioritise their own health and wellbeing.

"I loved it and made a lot of new friends"

Canoeing

Canoeing proved to be a new experience for most of the Carers present. Canoeing provides an inclusive experience, with low impact exercise and suited Carers of all ages and abilities. Carers were buddied up in two man canoes, which encouraged bonding and teamwork. Recognised benefits of canoeing include offering the opportunity to increase social opportunities and make friends, whilst providing a good aerobic work-out and helping to increase fitness.

"I have had the most wonderful time and it was fantastic. Thank you sooo much :-)"

Social Opportunities

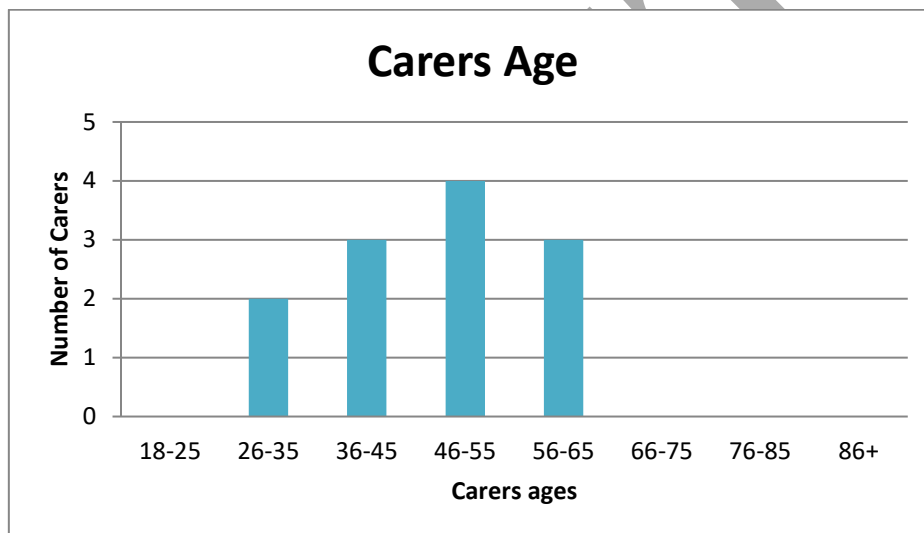
Feedback from the previous residential had requested more time to socialise. This residential provided lots of opportunities for Carers to relax, talk with other Carers, have some 'me time' and generally relax away from the pressures and demands of their everyday life.

The World Shrinks: Carer Loneliness, a research report by Carers UK as part of the Jo Cox Loneliness Commission showed that more than 8 in 10 (81%) surveyed unpaid carers described themselves as "lonely or socially isolated" due to their caring responsibilities. Carers who had felt lonely or isolated were almost twice as likely to report worsened mental (77%) and physical (67%) health.

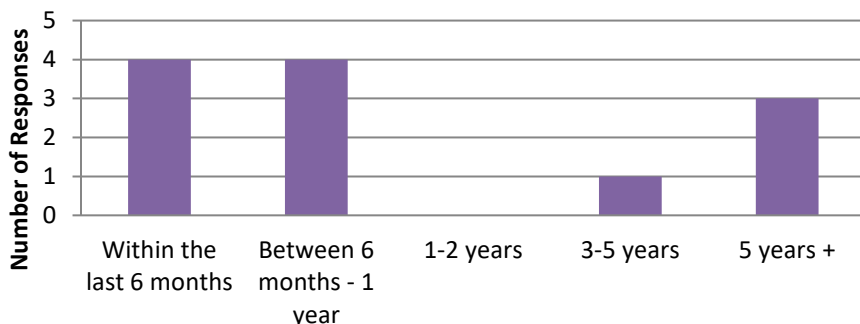


“Had a wonderful time, met some lovely people, learned new things to help at home, had some fun and was lovely to have a break from home”

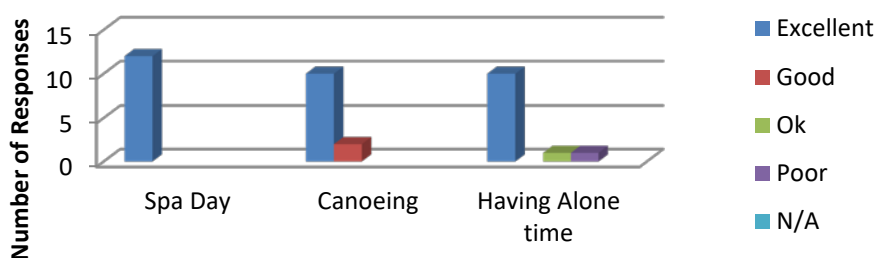
Adult Carers Residential Evaluation Feedback



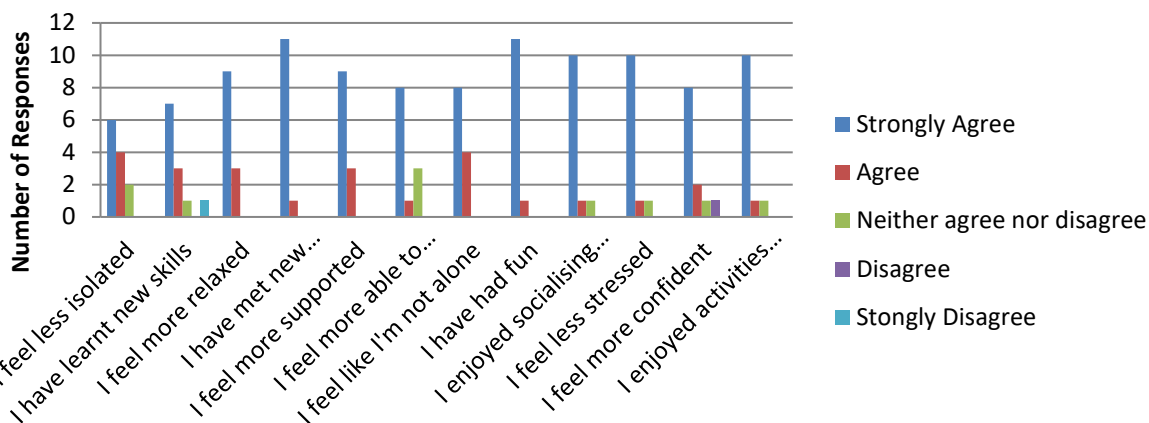
When was the last time you were able to spend the night away, without the person you care for?

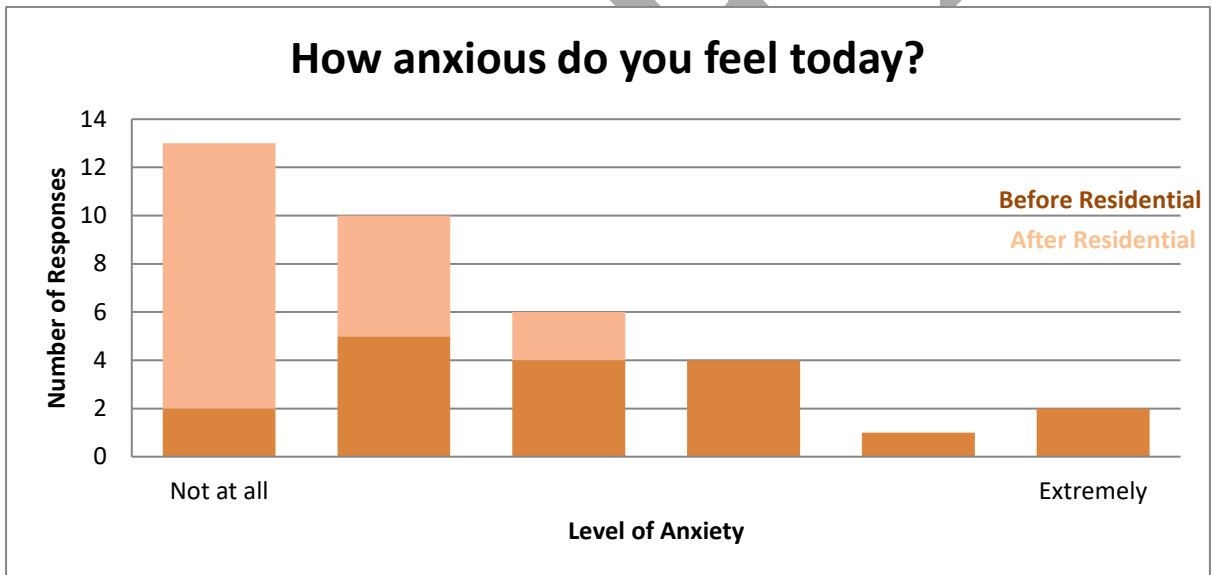
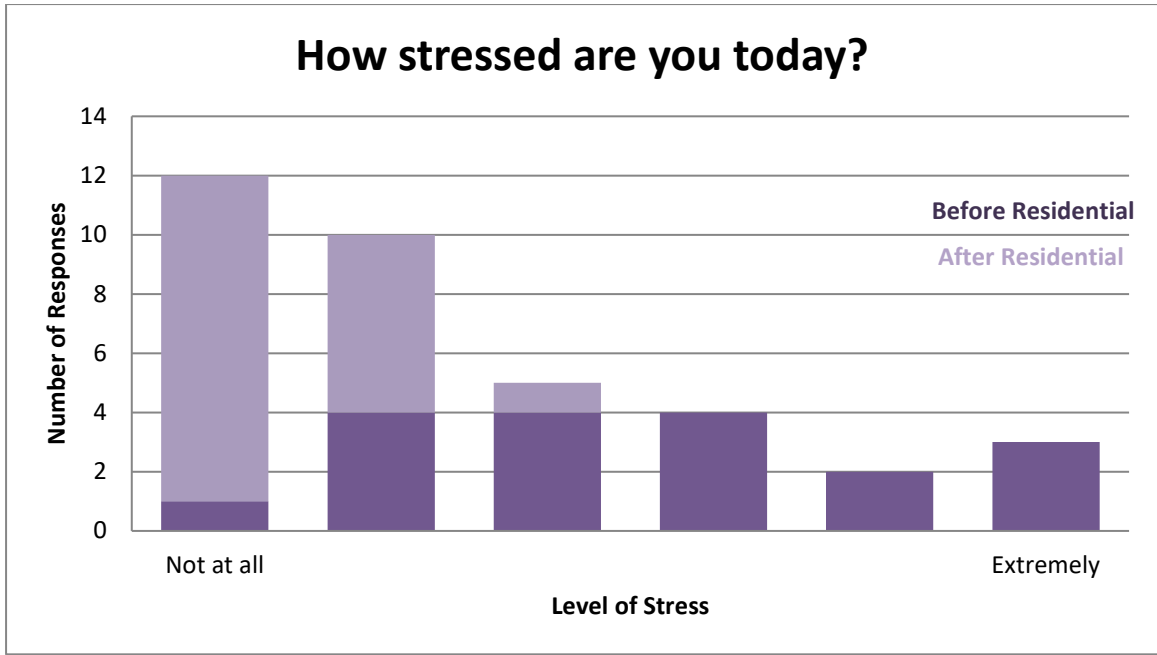


Please rate the activities provided

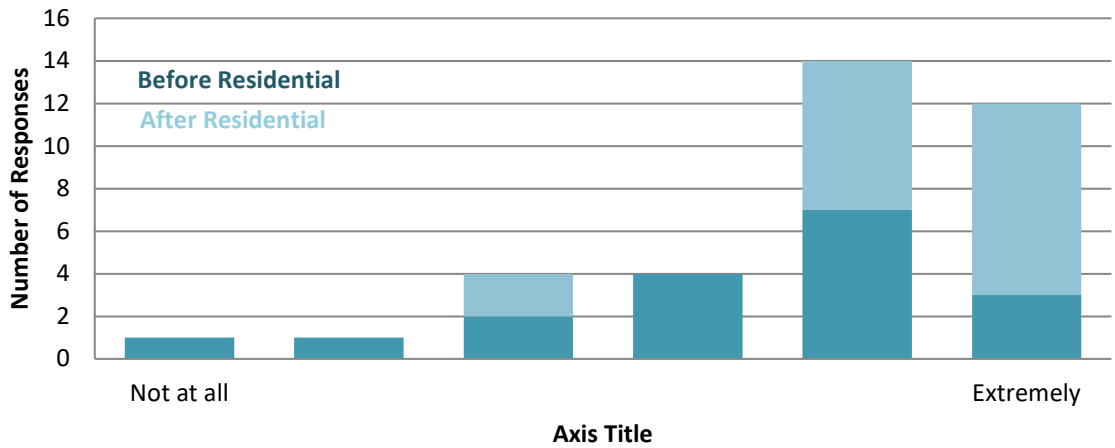


How much do you agree with the statement below?

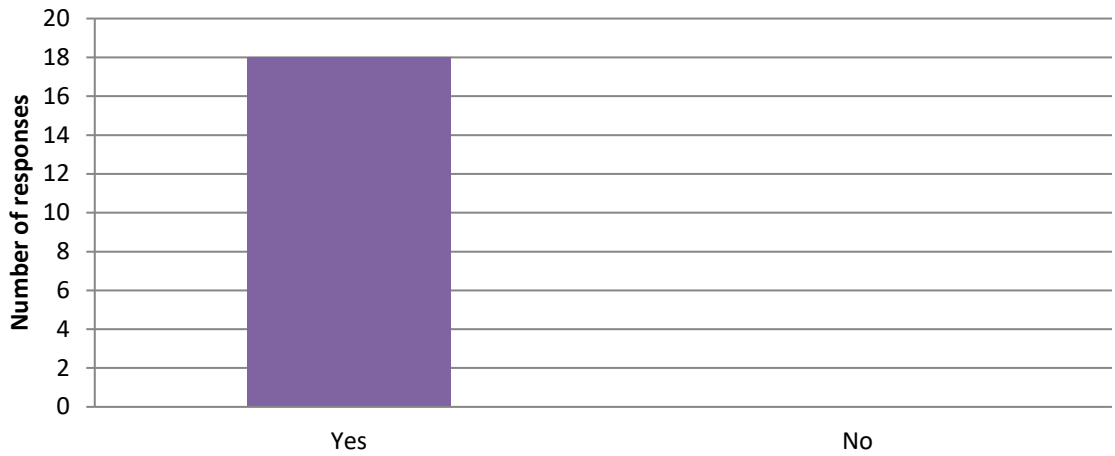




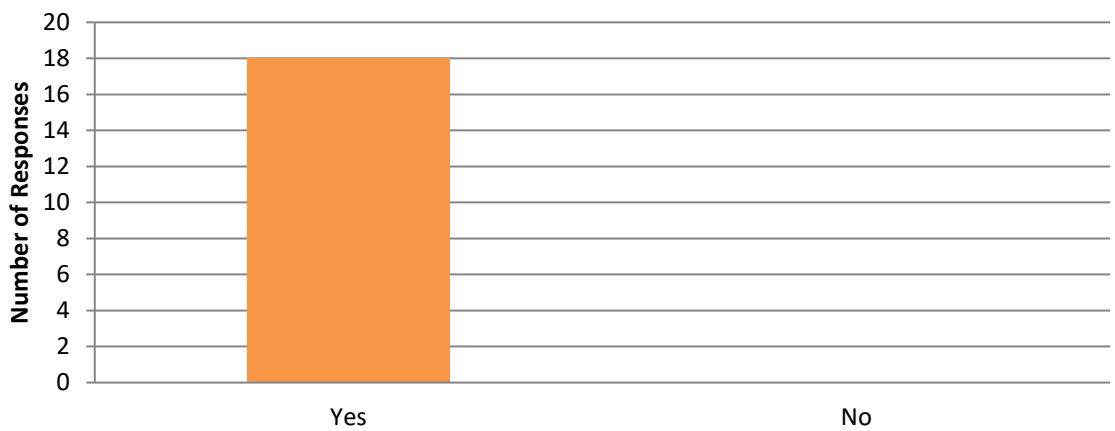
How happy are you today?



Would you like to attend another residential?



Would you recommend residentials like this to other Carers?





“Started as strangers, ended as friends”

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 Dementia Support Groups are building in 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 and Carers are able to be sign posted to groups within their own area where they live.
- Community Co-ordinators provide information at events where Carers attend.
- In addition, in 2018/19 the Community Capacity Grant included Cares specifically. This is addition to the ICF remit (Which expanded in 2017/18 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.

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.

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.

Promotional materials for staff, patients and relatives in relation to John's Campaign within the hospital have been designed.

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.

Next Steps?

- The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Statement of Intent for Carers will be written in partnership with RCTCBC, MTCBC, CTMUHB and Bridgend County Borough Council, following the end of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy.
- 2019/20 will involve new partnerships to continue the excellent work with Carers seen across the new region.
- An Annual Carers Champion Conference will continue with input from Carers.
- Carers will continue to be involved in the delivery of Carers Champion training.
- Carers will be consulted regarding local Carers support delivery where appropriate.

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 Coordinator 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 Coordinator 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 Provider Network

Interlink and VAMT were commissioned to organise 4 meetings of the Carers Provider Network. The launch meeting was a great success with Carers and third sector organisations attending.

Carers Rights Day

The Carers Co-ordinator staffed an information stand in Prince Charles Hospital and distributed Carers Rights Day posters to all GP practices across Cwm Taf. An example of the poster follows:



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

Carers Rights Day 30th November 2018

Do you look after someone? Then you could be 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, mental health or 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 support that could be available to you please ask for the Carer champion at you GP surgery



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. Carers Clinics are being piloted in Llantrisant, Porth and Tonyandy Job Centres.

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, along with Direct Payment and Carers Rights Workshops.

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 have provide bespoke stress control and mindfulness courses for Carers.

CARERS TRUST

We widely distributed the 700 copies of the Carers Trust excellent publication 'A Carers Guide to Dementia for unpaid Carers of all ages'. Senior Nurses across all hospital sites, including the Dementia Advisors in Cwm Taf. The link to this publication that has been extensively used across Cwm Taf is:

https://carers.org/sites/default/files/media/a_carers_guide_to_dementia_english_language_version.pdf

Impact made

- 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, to enable best practice to be shared and successful initiatives across Wales to be discussed.
- Attendance to the Health Board roundtable hosted by Carers Trust has proven to be invaluable.
- 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 partnership working to utilise community provision and expand support services available for Carers and other partners.
- Further expand links with Job Centres to identify and provide bespoke support to Carers across Cwm Taf.

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

Adult Carer Related Data-2018/19

Number of assessments of need for support for carers undertaken during the year	246
Of those, the number that led to a support plan	84
Number of carer assessments that were refused by carers during the year	706
Number of care and support plans and support plans that were reviewed during the year	4,286
Of those, the number of plans that were reviewed within agreed timescales	2,128
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	1180
Of those, the number of reviews undertaken	1170

Young Carer Related Data-2018/19

Number of assessments of need for support for young carers undertaken during the year	71
Of those, the number that led to a support plan	43
Number of care and support plans and support plans that were reviewed during the year	4,038
Of those, the number of plans that were reviewed within agreed timescales	3,435
Number of requests for repeat assessment of need for care & support and need for support made by a child, young carer or person with parental responsibility during the year	45
Of those, the number of repeat assessments undertaken	36
Of those, the number of repeat assessments that led to a care & support plan or support plan	2

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Number of assessments of need for support for young carers undertaken during the year	24
Of those, the number of assessments that led to a support plan	24
Number of care and support plans and support plans for young carers that were reviewed during the year	156
Of those, the number of plans that were reviewed within agreed timescales	156

6. Looking Forward

Throughout 2018-19, 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, 2017/18 and 2018/19 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 recently restructured the Carers Support Project. Cwm Taf University Health has appointed a Carers Coordinator on secondment.

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.

We look forward in 2019/20 to working in new partnerships as Cwm Taf Morgannwg.