



CABINET – 25 NOVEMBER 2022

**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND CARERS
STRATEGY 2022-2025**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS OF
ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to receive the outcome of the consultation exercise and approve the joint Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022-2025, and the associated Leicestershire action plan.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) The outcome of the consultation exercise be noted;
 - b) The joint Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Carers Strategy 2022-2025, which is attached as an Appendix A to this report, be approved;
 - c) The Leicestershire Carers Strategy Action Plan, attached as Appendix B, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The LLR Carers Strategy 2022-2025 is a joint Strategy which has been developed by Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, Rutland Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) across the LLR area.
4. The document is a refreshed version of the LLR Joint Carers Strategy 2018–2021 “Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Carers”. The aim of the refresh was to make the Strategy clearer and more accessible.
5. The formal joint consultation, undertaken alongside the partner Councils and the ICB, gave assurance that the Strategy reflected priorities from a carer perspective and supported the development of the more detailed action plan for Leicestershire.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. Partner organisations across LLR have met to discuss the collective findings from the joint consultation and agree final amendments to the Strategy and action plans, which will now be progressed through the respective organisational governance processes. It is anticipated that partner organisations' governance processes will be completed by 14 December 2022.
7. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 5 September 2022, and its comments are included at paragraph 40-44 below.
8. This Cabinet report will be sent to members of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any comments received will be submitted to the Cabinet meeting.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. The relevant policy framework includes:
 - a) National legislation and guidance:
 - The Care Act 2014;
 - The Children and Families Act 2014;
 - The White Paper - People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform - December 2021.
 - b) County Council policies/strategies:
 - Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020–2024;
 - Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032;
 - SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023;
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS);
 - Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-2026.
10. The LLR Joint Carers Strategy 2018–2021 “Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Carers” set out eight key strategic priorities relating to unpaid carers of all ages, and was developed jointly by Leicestershire County, Leicester City and Rutland Councils and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs now the ICB) across the LLR area.
11. On 27 May 2022, the Cabinet approved a formal joint consultation, alongside the partner Councils and the CCGs (subsequently the ICB), on a refresh of the priorities and actions identified for supporting unpaid carers. This commenced during the week beginning 6 June 2022, National Carers' Week.

Resource Implications

12. Existing Council officer resources from several departments will be required to ensure that the action plan is delivered for Leicestershire.
13. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. None.

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PART B

Background

15. The LLR Joint Carers Strategy defines a carer as, “anyone who supports and cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend living with a disability, long-term illness, substance misuse or a mental health need, who would not manage without their help”. The Strategy seeks to ensure for that:

‘Carers, of all ages across LLR will be identified early, and feel valued and respected. They will be offered appropriate support wherever possible to enable them to continue their caring role and maintain their own health and wellbeing’.

16. The LLR Joint Carers Strategy 2021–2025 sets out eight strategic priorities relating to unpaid carers of all ages.
17. The priorities were built upon the feedback of carers across the LLR area for the LLR Joint Carers Strategy 2018–2021 ‘Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Carers’ and reflect both the national and local requirements of carers:
- a) **Carer Identification** - Identifying and recognising carers early and building awareness of caring and its diversity.
 - b) **Carers are valued and involved** - Valuing and acknowledging the support carers provide and incorporating carer voice in the way services are delivered and developed.
 - c) **Carers are Informed** - Ensuring carers receive easily accessible, appropriate information, advice and signposting.
 - d) **Carer friendly communities** - Raising awareness of caring, reducing carer isolation and supporting carers to access a broad range of services within their local communities.
 - e) **Carers have a life alongside caring** - Supporting the health, education, employment and financial wellbeing of carers.
 - f) **Care with confidence** - Using technology and equipment to support carers in their caring role and developing ways of enhancing the self-management of long-term conditions.
 - g) **Carers can access the right support at the right time** - Ensuring that organisations work together to improve the way services and systems work for carers

- h) **Supporting young carers** - Working with education and health services to continue to raise awareness of young carers and improve the support available to them.
18. An engagement exercise undertaken across LLR during the summer of 2021 demonstrated that Leicestershire carers continue to identify with the priorities contained in the 2018-2021 Strategy and agreed they should remain unchanged for the most part.
 19. Only one of the priorities received a minor adjustment: Priority 6, "*Carers and the impact of technology products and the living space*". With the wealth of technology available, all organisations were keen to retain this priority, retitled as "*Care with Confidence*", based around using technology and skills to support carers.
 20. Each partner organisation is responsible for their individual supporting action plans for delivery of the Strategy priorities. Each reviewed its Plan as part of the refresh of the Strategy.
 21. Leicestershire's plan was used to drive improvements across the County Council including:
 - Training sessions for staff working with carers;
 - Online carers' assessment application system;
 - Dedicated carers' team within the Customer Service Centre.
 22. There have also been a number of collective achievements from the 2018-2021 Strategy including:
 - Launch of the Carer's Passport across the LLR area;
 - Quality markers introduced in GP surgeries, asking six questions about aspects of health and wellbeing that carers have identified as important;
 - Staff training around carer awareness, across a range of organisations;
 - Information for carers reviewed and updated, including web pages and booklets;
 - Increase in the numbers of people identified as carers on carers registers;
 - An LLR carers group working with Sortified Community Interest Company (a social enterprise and consultancy) promoting carer engagement in service development.
 23. Ongoing challenges which have been addressed within the Strategy refresh are:
 - Continuing to raise awareness of the issues faced by carers and promoting early identification of carers;
 - Ensuring information is updated regularly;
 - Involving carers at a strategic level in service planning and design.

Consultation

24. There were eight weeks of public consultation on the draft refreshed Strategy, from 6 June to 31 July 2022. Each partner organisation hosted its own consultations and reported back to its individual organisation on the findings.
25. The consultation sought the views of carers, people who use social care services, stakeholders, partners and the general public via:
 - an online consultation;
 - a public event held at Leicester City Football Club on 13 July 2022;
 - feedback via the commissioned carers' service;
 - the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group;
 - council officer attendance at meetings regarding the Strategy refresh.
26. The consultation was promoted in advance of and during the consultation period to stakeholders and partners including:
 - Carers, people using services, and the public;
 - Leicester City Council;
 - Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CCGs (which from 1 July 2022 became the ICB);
 - Rutland Council;
 - Healthwatch;
 - Voluntary Action South Leicestershire;
 - Lightbulb (home support service);
 - Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership Board;
 - Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service;
 - Leicestershire County Council's services, including adult social care commissioning and operational teams, Children and Family Services, and Public Health.
27. Strategic partners from across the LLR area met to discuss collective findings and to agree subsequent amendments that needed to be made to the Strategy.
28. The consultation responses informed the refreshed Strategy. Specific partner consultation findings were used to build on the individual action plans across the Partnership.

Overview of Consultation Findings for Leicestershire

29. Responses to the consultation were provided in a variety of ways. There was a total of 45 online Leicestershire responses and alongside this a further 26 responses to the easy read online version of the consultation. 33 (73%) of the respondents to the online consultation were carers, with 16% of these (7 people) in receipt of some form of carers service, i.e. receiving a carers personal budget, attending a carers group or receiving other specific support for carers.

30. People who attended the public event on 13 July 2022 had the opportunity to give their feedback directly to officers at the event or to complete the online consultation. Feedback was also received from groups that met to discuss the draft Strategy, including Together We Care support groups provided by the Carers Centre Leicestershire and Rutland.
31. Comments gathered from group feedback and online responses echoed similar themes and showed that overall respondents felt the draft Strategy reflected carer issues.
32. The consultation also identified the priorities which respondents felt were fairly or very important, namely:
 - Carers feel valued and involved;
 - Carers are informed;
 - Carers can access the right support at the right time;
 - Carers have a life alongside caring;
 - Supporting young carers.
33. Some of the general comments received during the consultation are paraphrased below and reflect the range of issues that arose through the consultation, particularly in relation to young carers:
 - Carers need flexible solutions to meet their individual needs;
 - Some carers feel required to be a carer because they are unable to secure appropriate support for their loved ones;
 - More resources are required for providing carers with support alongside them in the community, and people who can help carers to access services;
 - Some lack of confidence about whether the Strategy will deliver change and improvement;
 - More education about, and awareness of, young carers in schools and public life is needed;
 - There needs to be better identification of young carers and help for them, including time away from family and responsibilities;
 - Schools are not recognising young carers at an early stage.
 - Carer's Passports are useful in facilitating the recognition of carers in hospital settings.
34. The easy read respondents in particular emphasised there needed to be more support from schoolteachers and a greater understanding of their caring duties.
35. Comments received from group consultations highlighted the importance of ongoing engagement with carers, as well as involvement in the development of the strategy. Group comments also identified carer stress as an important issue and highlighted the negative impact of the complex care processes carers need to use to access care and support.

36. Respondents to the online and easy read consultation were asked to provide some monitoring information to help the department ascertain how representative the overall responses were. A number chose not to provide their gender identity; of those that did 85% (29) of online respondents and 57% (13) of the easy read respondents were female. This is higher than the local caring figures, with census data from 2011 showing around 57% of identified Leicestershire carers are women.
37. Only 15% (5) of the online and 22% (5) of the easy read respondents identified themselves as male.
38. Of the 35 respondents who provided their age the majority were over 55 years of age (21 responses). No responses were provided by adults under 30. From the easy read respondents, the majority 78% (18) were under the age of 15 and 17% (4) were aged between 15-24.
39. A number of online respondents also chose not to provide information on their ethnic group. Those who did (35) indicated their ethnic group as white. This represented 78% of the online respondents. All 25 easy read respondents provided their ethnic group: 79% (19) indicated their ethnic group as white. The remaining 21% (5) were either Asian or Asian British or another ethnic group.

Comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

40. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 5 September 2022 and offered a number of comments.
41. Given the amount of engagement that had been undertaken locally, it was commented that responses to the consultation had been disappointingly low overall. In response to a suggestion for messages for carers to be included in information packs handed out by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to various Health Trusts, officers confirmed that the idea would be considered in terms of future engagement. Whilst the consultation had had a fair amount of coverage throughout the VCS, the findings from the consultation received so far had highlighted the need to do more to get information and advice out to carers more widely, particularly where Primary Care was concerned. It was expected that once the new contract for the Carers Support Service (currently run by Voluntary Action South Leicestershire) was in place, further engagement work would be undertaken with the aim of bringing in different types of funding for the County to progress such actions.
42. A Member commented that it was difficult to draw meaningful outcomes from the consultation with such a low response and suggested that engaging with people face to face might be best to gain a better response rate in future. The Director confirmed that face to face events had been held and that further information on the outcomes of these events would be included in this report,

which presents the full outcomes of the consultation. An overview of how consultation feedback was captured is described in paragraph 29.

43. Regarding the identification of carers and holding the NHS to account for its responsibilities to progress the aims of the joint Strategy, officers confirmed that GPs were responsible for ensuring that carers were identified and included on the designated register. Past feedback had confirmed that GP surgeries/Primary Care services were the most suitable place for publicising information and advice for carers. However, as part of the Strategy refresh, consideration had been given to this approach and recent feedback had highlighted the need for the Department to perhaps widen the information it made available at other venues such as libraries which could prove useful.
44. In noting the update, the Committee urged officers to find as many ways as possible to get the messages for carers out more widely through existing contracts and partnerships. This feedback has been reflected in this report and that Council's action plan for the delivery of the Strategy.

Conclusion

- 45 Subject to the Cabinet and respective partner organisations' approval, it is intended to launch the Strategy in December 2022.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

46. A comprehensive Equalities and Human Rights Impact screening assessment has been conducted and approved by the Adults and Communities Departmental Equalities Group. The Strategy was noted to have a positive impact on carers and all of the protected characteristics. The screening assessment will be reviewed post-production of the final consultation summary report to ensure it remains reflective of responses.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet: 16 October 2018 – LLR Carers Strategy 2018 -2021
<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5184&Ver=4>

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2018-22
<https://bit.ly/3Pe6nh5>

Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-24
<https://bit.ly/3swoTal>

People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper
<https://bit.ly/3w7FfsE>

Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032
<https://bit.ly/3L8nbTe>

SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023

<https://bit.ly/3N8CJli>

Leicestershire County Council Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021

<https://bit.ly/39Pzw1L>

Report to the Cabinet: 27 May 2022 – Draft joint Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022-2025

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6744&Ver=4>

Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 June 2022 – Consultation on Draft Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Carers Strategy 2022 – 2025

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6840&Ver=4>

Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2022 – Initial Consultation Findings on Draft Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Carers Strategy 2022 – 2025

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6841&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A - Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022-2025

Appendix B – Leicestershire Carers Strategy Action plan