



**ADULTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 7 SEPTEMBER 2026**

LEICESTERSHIRE CARERS STRATEGY 2026-2030

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Adults and Cultural Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the results of the public consultation on the Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030.
2. The Committee is asked to comment on the proposed Carers Strategy and supporting action plan which will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The Leicestershire County Council Adults and Communities strategy details the ambitions, aims and goals of the department over the next four years (2025 – 2029). It reflects the ambitions of the Council's overall strategic plan.
4. The Care Act (2014) and accompanying statutory guidance set out that where an individual provides or intends to provide care for another adult and it appears that the carer may have any level of needs for support, local authorities must carry out a carer's assessment. The local authority must also identify any children who are involved in providing care.
5. The Children and Families Act (2014) provides young carers and parent carers in England a right to an assessment of their own needs, as well as the cared for person.
6. The Carers Leave Act 2023: gives full-time employees the right to take one week (of up to five days) of unpaid leave per year to allow carers to provide or arrange care for a dependent.
7. NHS 10 Year Health Plan: the latest NHS 10-year plan was published in 2025 and sets out the next 10 years plan (until 2035) how health and care services in England is going to change. There is a focus on prevention services so support can be in place before situations escalate.
8. On 3 December 2025 the Council resolved to formally recognise carers as a group requiring consideration and support, specifically:
 - To ensure carers are consulted and involved in shaping services.
 - To review service delivery to remove barriers for carers.

- Assess future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council to determine the impact of changes on carers.
 - Ensure that these commitments are incorporated into the refresh of the Leicestershire Carers Strategy and any other relevant policies and strategies.
9. In April 2026 the Cabinet agreed to launch a public consultation on the draft strategy.

Background

10. The Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland (LLR) Carers Strategy 2022-2025 outlined the vision of how we work collaboratively with partners including the Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB), Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) and commissioned providers to achieve eight key priorities: carer identification, valuing carers, keeping carers informed, developing carer friendly communities, ensuring carers have a life alongside caring, accessing the right support at the right time and recognising young carers.
11. It is proposed that moving forward, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council will now all have individual carers' strategies, specific to each local authority and the requirements of the respective area.
12. Having a specific Leicestershire Carers Strategy will be reflective of Leicestershire carers' voice and how the council can help carers continue with their caring role. The new strategy will also be aligned with the council's values and priorities.
13. The new Leicestershire Carers' Strategy 2026-2030 will address the areas for improvement to strengthen our support to carers. This will include actions resulting from the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) assessment of Leicestershire County Council published in 2025. which highlighted areas of good practice and also areas where improvements can be made including access to information and advice, support for carers in rural communities and timelines of assessment.
14. The strategy will also include actions to address the recommendations of a Peer Review carried out by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) in May 2026. The review recommended the Council launch a revised strategy, re-energise governance arrangements, plan and work with partners to redesign the offer to carers. The Peer Review final letter and recommendations are appended to this report (Appendix C).

Carers in Leicestershire

15. The Census 2021 data indicates a total of 61,300 of Leicestershire respondents, aged 5 years and above, declaring that they provided unpaid care (9% of population). The highest rate of caring population was among those aged 45 to 64 (15%), followed by those 65 to 84 (11.3%), with women predominating in all but the eldest (aged 85 years and above) group of carers. There is some geographical variation amongst carers in Leicestershire with the highest rate being in Oadby and Wigston (9.8%) and lowest in Harborough (8.3%), unadjusted for age. The rate of employment among carers is slightly higher in Leicestershire compared to the national average, with slightly lower unemployment rate (2% versus 3%).

16. In 2025/2026, 1923 carers assessments were completed in Leicestershire. So far for 2026/2027, 784 have been completed with 16% of these being joint assessments with the cared-for person.
17. There are currently 1,482 carers in receipt of a service from the Council of whom, 1,328 people have a weekly direct payment. A weekly direct payment is a regular amount transferred to the persons payment account to pay for ongoing services, a one-off payment can be up to £250 per year to pay for a larger item such as a washing machine or to put towards several things that will enable the carer to continue caring. The Council does not require a financial contribution toward carer services, and they are not means tested.
18. In addition, around 2,500 carers are supported by the externally commissioned carers service per year.
19. In 2025, a total of 116 young carer assessment referrals were received, with 69 full assessments being completed by the young carer team. In addition, 94 young carers passports were issued and a total of 341 have been issued since the scheme was launched in 2022. The school census data recorded 289 young carers in 2025.

Engagement

20. During the period of October to December 2025, several key engagement activities were undertaken across the County. Carers have been offered a variety of ways to get involved and have their say and help shape the new Leicestershire Carers Strategy.
21. The engagement methods have included face to face group-based engagement and online sessions and surveys.
22. Over 300 adult carers were involved in the development of the draft strategy.
23. The Leicestershire County Council young carers team have also engaged with young carers via the online survey. A total of 19 young carers provided feedback on what is important to them and how they would like to be supported.
24. Over 20 people completed the professionals survey on the carer's strategy. Professionals who participated include - Leicestershire County Council staff, and key partners including Leicestershire Partnership Trust, GP's and local charities who work closely with carers.
25. The engagement activities helped to establish a first draft of the Strategy. Including establishing the following priorities

Priority	Description
Priority one	Carers are recognised, valued, listened to, and supported to continue caring
Priority two	Carers are provided with accurate, timely and relevant information and advice
Priority three	Carers are supported with their wellbeing and access services when needed

26. A report was presented to the Cabinet 24 March 2026 meeting, seeking approval to commence a public consultation on the draft strategy. Cabinet approved the commencement of the public consultation which started in April 2026 and concluded 14 June 2026.
27. Consultation activities included online surveys, online meetings and face to face sessions, engagement with Parent Carers and health partners.

Consultation response

28. The online survey received a total of 160 responses from the following people, some of whom categorised themselves in more than one group:
- Adult carer (122)
 - Parent carer (14)
 - Young carer (5)
 - Sandwich carer (12)
 - Working carer (19)
 - Interested member of the public (5)
 - Professional: health/ social care (5)
 - Other (9) (this includes people who self-identified as previous carers)
29. Of these, 74% thought the draft strategy 'accurately reflected carers issues in Leicestershire' either 'very well' or 'fairly well'. With 18% stating the strategy didn't reflect carers issues 'very well'. The remaining responses stated they didn't know.
30. 94% of responders said that the Priorities detailed in paragraph 26 were 'very important'. Only 5% of responders thought the priorities were the wrong ones.
31. Significant important data was received in free text where responders had kindly taken the time to detail what would make the caring experience better for them. This included areas such as: -
- a) Further respite options
 - b) Focus on young carers
 - c) Better communication between services
 - d) Additional help to understand and apply for benefits
 - e) Further crisis support and;
 - f) Clear information for carers and the cared for person
32. The written responses echoed the in-person and virtual feedback received through carers groups (covering adults, young people and parent carers). The attendance at groups enabled a further 300 carers to have their voices heard and contribute to the consultation. The groups attended were countywide and organised by commissioned services and independent voluntary sector groups. These were often emotional encounters with carers describing the daily experience and how isolating it can feel. Most carers praised the carers groups they attend with many requesting additional groups in local areas and help with transport to the group. Many groups include a place for the cared for person to receive safe support by paid carers so that the unpaid carers can interact with other carers. This model worked incredibly well to reassure the cared for persons and for the carers to feel confident to leave their loved one temporarily.

33. A series of events were held for young people with caring responsibilities and separately for parent carers. Whilst the priorities were relevant to these groups, they expressed a need to have better communication between adults and children services to ensure resilience in the transition of services. Young people specifically asked for better access to respite and to enable schools to identify when young carers are struggling.
34. It has been difficult to engage with groups of people with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 such as sexuality and ethnicity. Around 93% of people who responded to the online survey identified as white with 6% being Asian and 1% Black. Many different approaches were tried to engage with people identifying as an ethnicity other than white. This included contacting Temples, Mosques and Churches in the Leicestershire area and promoting the consultation through VASL to community groups. Rural carers were further contacted through the Rural Council. Other disparities include 71% respondents being female and 52% of respondents being aged over 63. 4% were under 18.
35. In summary, the consultation and engagement activities further highlighted that carers want
- to be recognised and feel valued and appreciated for what they do on a daily basis,
 - they need further respite to enable them to work and have their own fulfilling life away from the caring responsibility,
 - they often feel lonely and isolated and this affects their sense of wellbeing,
 - they need better easy to understand information across the system,
 - they need access to support outside of normal office hours to support working carers and also at times of crisis,
 - the carers budget has not seen increased with inflation and this needs to be considered.
36. Following the closure of the public consultation the feedback has been analysed and incorporated into a revised draft strategy (Appendix A).
37. The priorities remain the same as the previous draft presented to the Cabinet in March 2026. Additions to the strategy include:
- A greater focus on working carers and parent carers and how the needs of these people may differ from other groups of carers
 - Commitments from health partners to ensure the carers voice is heard when the health of the cared for person is being considered
38. The strategy is accompanied by an action plan (Appendix B). The action plan will be the key document to monitor the delivery of this strategy. This action plan includes proposed commissioning intentions.

Resource Implications

39. The Adults and Communities department spent circa £3.5m in 2025/2026 on the provision of direct services to carers. The majority of this spend was delivered via Direct Payments enabling carers to have choice and control over their support. In addition, the Council spends many millions of pounds on services to people drawing on care and support in order to support carers

40. Inclusive of the above spend is the contract with Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) which is commissioned to provide advice and support to carers at an annual cost of £181,260. The existing carers support service that is operated by VASL has been extended until 31 March 2028. Any new commissioned services will be developed to deliver the priorities in the strategy once finalised. It is expected that some procurement will be necessary.
41. The Support at Home service commenced in October 2026 and has acted as a managed service for carers where a direct payment was not wanted or suitable. Support at Home supports people with eligible social care needs who need assistance with non-personal care tasks such as cleaning, grocery shopping and befriending. The service has proved to be very popular amongst carers.
42. The carers resource allocation system (RAS) used during an assessment to establish an indicative support budget has not been updated for many years. It is proposed to include the RAS in any development work resulting from the strategy.
43. There is a specific Carers Team located within the Adults and Cultural Services department to support carers assessments, and this team work closely alongside VASL in relation to completion of assessments.

Key risks

44. There is a risk that without appropriate commissioned services carers may not be able to continue in their caring role. This may lead to financial cost to the Authority. It may also mean a deterioration in the wellbeing of carers and the cared for person as they are forced to live apart.
45. The draft strategy has been written with the support and assistance of carers in Leicestershire; however, a risk remains that a proportional number of carers have not been consulted and this may lead to challenge from carers who have not been consulted.

Timetable for Decisions

46. The strategy will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in September 2026.

Conclusions

47. The Committee are asked to note the results of the consultation, make comment on the consultation responses and the revised draft strategy and supporting action plan.

Background papers

48. CQC Assessment of Leicestershire County Council - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports/leicestershire-0925>
49. Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 6th June 2022
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/g6840/Public%20reports%20pack%20Monday%2006-Jun->

[2022%2014.00%20Adults%20and%20Communities%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committ.pdf?T=10](#)

50. Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd March 2026
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=8355&Ver=4>

51. Cabinet –24th March 2026
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8305&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

52. A copy of this report will be circulated to all members of the County Council

Equality Implications

53. An equalities impact assessment has been conducted for the carers strategy. The EIA has been approved by the Adults and Communities Departmental Equality Group.

Human Rights Implications

54. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

55. A health impact assessment has been conducted on the draft strategy.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Carers Strategy for Leicestershire 2026-2030

Appendix B - Leicestershire Carers Strategy 2026-2030 DRAFT Action Plan

Appendix C – EM ADASS Peer Review Letter

Links to Key documents

- [The Care Act \(2014\)](#)
- [Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#)
- [The Carers Leave Act 2023:](#)
- [NHS 10 Year Health Plan](#)
- [NHS Commitment to Carers 2014](#)
- [Council's overall strategic plan.](#)

Officer(s) to Contact

Inderjit Lahel, Assistant Director Strategic Services
Inderjit.lahel@leics.gov.uk

Natalie Smith, Head of Service – Commissioning and Quality
Natalie.X.Smith@leics.gov.uk

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