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National Strategy for Unpaid Carers 2026

Draft

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National Strategy for Unpaid Carers

Introduction

This draft National Strategy outlines eight key priorities and actions to support unpaid carers in Wales:

- 1. Recognition and awareness:** Increase public and professional recognition of unpaid carers through accessible information, targeted outreach to Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and other marginalised groups, and e-learning for people in a range of professional roles.
- 2. Access to services:** Ensure unpaid carers understand their rights and, where appropriate, receive timely, quality assessments of their needs and support plans.
- 3. Young carers:** Promote recognition and support for young carers within education and community settings, including access to identity cards. Regular assessments to ensure they are not taking on too much. Promotion of improved mental health and educational experience and outcomes.
- 4. Financial hardship:** Provide unpaid carers with information to maximise income and promote benefit uptake.
- 5. Paid employment:** Support for unpaid carers to remain in, or return to, paid employment via promotion of employment rights, carer-friendly workplaces and inclusive employment pathways for carers.
- 6. Replacement care (respite) and breaks from caring:** Improve access to suitable respite options, including short breaks, working with local authorities to identify gaps and co-produce improvements with unpaid carers.
- 7. Mental health and wellbeing:** Enhance carers' mental health support through local review of support groups, carer-informed generic services, and increased professional awareness.
- 8. Carers and care planning:** Recognise unpaid carers as partners with local authorities and health boards in the assessment, care planning, and hospital discharge for those they care for.

These priorities are the result of comprehensive engagement with unpaid carers and representative organisations across Wales. We spoke to a wide range of unpaid carers and stakeholder organisations over the summer 2025. These are listed at Appendix 1. We are extremely grateful for their contributions.

While young carers are a specific priority, all priorities in this strategy apply to young carers.

Terminology

The term 'unpaid carer' is used throughout this document and is the term used by Welsh Government and commonly across the sector. The term seeks to distinguish unpaid carers from paid social care workers. We appreciate some people in a caring role do not recognise this term and this relates to our first key priority. The definition of a carer in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 is 'a person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child', and where the

person is not contracted to provide care or doing so as voluntary work. We also use the term 'carer' as a shorthand for "unpaid carer" in this document, where we are confident the meaning is clear.

We use the term 'replacement care (respite)' throughout this document to refer to arrangements to allow the unpaid carer to undertake other tasks and/or have a break from the caring role. We have included 'respite' as this is a commonly used term, but we believe it has a negative connotation and wish to promote use of 'replacement care'.

Welsh Government currently uses the terms 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic people' and 'ethnic minorities'. We appreciate there are other terms in use.

Themes arising

This section outlines the key themes arising from speaking with groups of unpaid carers and interviews and written submissions from representative organisations. We also met with a range of professionals working in health, social care, research and policy. The contributions reflect diverse experiences and have directly led to the identification of these eight key priorities.

Identification and recognition

Unpaid carers reported feeling valued when professionals acknowledged their expertise in their caring roles. Some people considered there was growing public awareness of unpaid carers, but many highlighted that carers often remain unidentified and under-recognised. A significant number do not self-identify as unpaid carers, particularly in communities where caring is viewed as a familial responsibility. This was reported to be especially common among older individuals, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, and those caring for partners or children.

There are often missed opportunities in health, education, and social care settings, where carers were present during appointments or involved in care planning but were not proactively identified or offered support. There is no consistent recording mechanism for identifying carers across Welsh public services. Recognition often occurs at times of crisis rather than through routine or preventative engagement. Unpaid carers told us lack of acknowledgement from professionals and systems contributed to feelings of invisibility and emotional stress, reinforcing a sense of isolation.

Many people suggested national and local awareness campaigns to improve understanding of what it means to be a carer and to promote available support. Some queried the availability of relevant training for professionals and others in the community they may encounter.

Access to services

Some people we spoke to described timely, flexible, and person-centred support from their local authority and third-sector organisations. Others found access to support services fragmented and inconsistent across Wales. Long waiting times for carers' needs assessments and lack of reviews were common concerns.

Unpaid carers raised the risk of digital exclusion where information is only available online, which represents a barrier to access. We heard that for those without digital access or literacy, the shift to online services contributed to a sense of exclusion and isolation and made them hesitant to seek help.

Unpaid carers from ethnic minority communities, including those from Gypsy, Traveller, and migrant communities often face compounded challenges due to cultural and linguistic barriers. We heard of difficulties in accessing information and services, particularly where materials were unavailable in different language or not presented in a format where digital translation tools could be applied.

Carers who use British Sign Language (BSL) or have-learning disabilities were identified as particularly disadvantaged due to the limited availability of information in BSL and easy-read formats. The absence of support in completing forms and the lack of proactive communication from statutory services were also noted as barriers.

Contributors highlighted the importance of culturally and linguistically inclusive communication strategies and called for the development of consistent information available nationally to ensure that all unpaid carers are adequately informed and supported. Some people described a lack of cultural understanding within services, that sometimes led to inappropriate assessments or support plans. We were told some carers avoid services due to fear of stigma or judgment.

Many unpaid carers told us how important peer support groups are for them. These are seen as safe spaces to share experiences and receive emotional support. There was a concern that too few local peer support groups are available across Wales.

Young Carers

Many young carers feel unrecognised by professionals. They describe challenges in balancing education with caring responsibilities, which means they miss out on revision sessions, extracurricular activities, and social opportunities. Emotional wellbeing was a recurring concern, with many young carers telling us that they experience stress, anxiety, and limited access to mental health support tailored to their needs. Young carers told us they faced barriers to transport, leisure, and essential items due to financial hardship.

Young carers told us they believed their future education and employment opportunities will be constrained by their caring roles. Some referred to their rights under the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the commitments contained in [The Young Carers Covenant - Carers Trust](#) to which Welsh Government is a signatory.

Young carers feel strongly they should be more involved in shaping the policies and services that affect them, including increased recognition within school policies.

Financial hardship

Unpaid carers and their representatives consistently reported financial pressures and hardship, often due to having to give up work or reduce their hours. This affects their household income and has long-term consequences for career progression and their pension.

Carers highlighted their households often have additional expenses such as increased heating bills, transport costs and out of pocket respite care. Some unpaid

carers noted that they were unaware of the benefits or financial support available to them. Some older or Black, Asian and Minority ethnic carers described difficulties in applying for benefits and other financial support, or confusion regarding eligibility. Financial strain has an emotional impact and people described stress, anxiety, and sense of helplessness that came with trying to make ends meet while providing essential care.

Employment

Unpaid carers consistently told us that balancing paid employment with unpaid caring responsibilities presents a significant challenge. Many described having to reduce their working hours, change roles, or leave employment altogether.

Some carers shared examples of employers offering flexible working arrangements, carers leave, and supportive management. These positive experiences were linked to improved wellbeing and the ability to remain in work. Other carers highlighted a lack of understanding and support from employers, a lack of flexibility or adjustments to accommodate caring responsibilities. This led to high levels of stress in trying to juggle to the demands of work and care.

Unpaid carers are disproportionately likely to be female, meaning women are more likely to have their caring responsibilities negatively impact their income, career and occupational pension. Young carers whose education and training is affected by caring responsibilities will carry that disadvantage throughout their working life. Young carers describe difficulties in balancing education and part-time work.

Unpaid carers who have been out of employment for some time may lack confidence and believe their skills are outdated. Some felt that their caring experience was not recognised as valuable by employers.

Replacement care (respite) and short breaks from caring

Replacement care was widely recognised as a critical form of support, yet many described it as inaccessible, unsuitable, or not available. This was viewed as a critical issue and as a major contributor to carer burnout, emotional distress, and loss of employment.

Unpaid carers value the Welsh Government funded Short Breaks Scheme. They were also clear that access to replacement care, including overnight respite, was vital to enable them to live full and balanced lives and attend to routine family and household tasks.

Carers told us they wanted greater availability of replacement care (respite) and for this to be more flexible, better suiting their needs. Some carers described provision as not always suiting the needs of the person they cared for, particularly for people living with dementia or complex conditions.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Unpaid carers describe high levels of emotional stress and anxiety. Many carers feel socially isolated due to lack of time, energy and accessible replacement care (respite). Many carers told us they felt overwhelmed, exhausted and unsupported. They described limited access to mental health services that understand their specific needs.

Carers want greater support to allow them to stay in paid employment, pursue leisure activities and take a break and lessen social isolation. Some carers told us of their concerns regarding their futures and the impact when their caring roles come to an end. They believed there was a need for specific support for 'life after caring'.

Carers and care planning

Unpaid carers described the time and frustration involved in navigating health and social care systems on behalf of those they care for. Waiting times for health or social care assessments of those they care for impacts on unpaid carers as they are often not recognised as unpaid carers until people receive a diagnosis or are provided with a service that may partly alleviate the amount of care they are delivering. A delay until carers can apply for Carers Allowance or other benefits has a direct financial impact.

Unpaid carers are concerned at the reduction of day opportunities, saying this has increased the amount of care they need to provide and their ability to maintain paid employment. Carers want local authorities to give more consideration to the views and needs of unpaid carers, when making decisions that will indirectly impact them.

Some carers say they were not involved in the planning for their cared for person being discharged from hospital, often with higher care needs. Carers did not always feel recognised by professionals in health and social care planning.

Unpaid carers included in other Welsh Government strategies and plans

Unpaid carers are considered and referenced in a range of other Welsh Government strategies, policies and plans. These include but are not limited to

- [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#)
- [Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024](#)
- [NEST self-assessment and implementation tool | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Suicide prevention and self-harm strategy: delivery plan 2025 to 2028](#)
- [Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Draft dementia strategy for Wales 2026 to 2036 | GOV.WALES](#) out for public consultation till 3 April
- [United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\) report](#). This is the Welsh Government's response to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's Concluding Observations Report 2023
- Unpaid carers are a priority area for the Welsh Government [Gender Equality Forum](#)

Welsh Government and NHS Wales [Hospital discharge guidance: January 2025](#)

Priority 1: Identification and recognition

Outcome 1 - Increased recognition and public awareness of unpaid carers and their valuable contribution.

Action

- A public campaign to increase recognition of unpaid carers, delivered through local networks, including highlighting their rights under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Information is accessible, culturally appropriate and available in variety of languages and formats.
- E-learning/ additional information to promote carer awareness is made available to community groups and the public.

By who - Welsh Government and third sector delivery partner in co-production with unpaid carers.

How we will assess impact

- Impact measured against agreed campaign objectives.
- Local network partner reports of new responses/enquiries received.
- Number of people accessing available e-learning/ additional information materials.

Outcome 2 - Increased self-identification by unpaid carers.

Action

- Campaign messaging encourages unpaid carers to self-identify.
- Promotion of schemes such as Investors in Carers and the Young Carers Covenant to promote carer awareness and early identification of those in a caring role.

By Who - Welsh Government and third sector delivery partners.

How we will assess impact

- Increase in the number of new contacts by unpaid carers recorded by Local Authorities.
- Increase in the number of new enquiries to national carers organisations.
- Number of organisations signed up to Investors in Carers and Young Carers Covenant.

Outcome 3 - Unpaid carers are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity.

Action

- Expand access to e-learning on carer awareness to broader range of health, social care and other professionals (eg. housing, police, third sector).
- Carer awareness e-learning for pharmacists will be made available on the Learning@Wales platform.
- Promotion of e-learning resources for education staff on young carers.
- Health Boards leaders ensure their staff have the knowledge and confidence to identify unpaid carers and signpost them to support.
- Health board leaders ensure systems and processes are in place to record details of unpaid carer when person they care for is in hospital.
- Work with GPs to explore opportunities to enhance GP awareness and identification of unpaid carers.
- Staff responding to initial contacts to local authorities have the knowledge and confidence to provide a proactive and consistent response to unpaid carers.

By Who - Welsh Government, Carers Wales, Carers Trust Wales, Health Boards and Local authorities

How we will assess impact

- Available data on numbers of staff in different roles undertaking e-learning.
- Available data on numbers of staff undertaking e-learning.
- Number of health board staff completing Carer Aware e-learning.
- Number of unpaid carers identified within the Welsh Nursing Clinical Record.
- Development of national materials and agreed approach for GPs.
- Available local authority data on contacts and quality assurance.

Priority 2: Access to services

Outcome 1- Unpaid carers understand their rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Action

- Refresh and promote the Welsh Government Carers' Charter.
- National carer organisations deliver regular campaigns to support carers to understand their rights.
- Local third sector organisations to support carers to understand their rights.

By Who - Welsh Government, Carers Wales, Carers Trust Wales and the All Wales Forum, Carers Trust Wales with local carer services and other networks

How we will assess impact

- Increase in number of times web page viewed.
- Number of campaigns led by national carers' organisations.
- Examples of activity by Carers Trust Wales network partners collated provided by Carers Trust Wales.

Outcome 2 - More carers receive a quality and timely carers' needs assessment. This is consistent across Wales and carers understand what to expect.

Action

- Consistent information on the carer's assessment process is available to carers of all ages.
- Leaders in local authorities ensure professionals undertaking assessments are trained using national resources.
- Leaders in local authorities consider means to facilitate re-assessment of carers' needs, where these may have changed.

By Who - Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru) , Local authorities

How we will assess impact

- Local authority data on number of carers' needs assessments undertaken.
- Local authority quality assurance processes and review of complaints.
- Responses of carers surveyed for Carers Wales 'Track the Act' annual report.
- Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities.

Outcome 3 - Unpaid carers receive the support they need.

Action

- Regional Partnership Boards ensure services for carers funded/commissioned align to the Population Needs Assessment.
- Local authorities issue a greater number of Carers Support Plans, which are subject to review.

- Leaders in local authorities ensure professionals advising carers on available support are informed and confident to do so.
- Nationally consistent information on
- Support Plans and types of support is made available to unpaid carers.

By Who

Regional Partnership Boards, Local authorities, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru)

How we will assess impact

- Available data on social media reach.
- Young carer involvement evidenced within documents and planning processes.
- Local authority data on number of young carers' needs assessments undertaken and young carers on Carers' Support Plans.
- Local authority quality assurance processes and review of complaints.
- Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities.
- School Health Research Survey (SHRN) data on young carer wellbeing and educational achievement, or alternative means of data collection to be identified.

Priority 3: Young Carers

Outcome 1 - Young carers know their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) and are aware of the commitment of Welsh Government as a signatory to the Young Carer's Covenant.

Action

- Young carer specific messaging on social media to raise awareness of the Young Carers Covenant.
- Encourage organisations to sign the Young Carers Covenant.

By Who - Government, Young Carers advisory Board and Welsh Carers Trust Wales.

How we will assess impact

- Available data on social media reach.

Outcome 2 – Young carers help shape the services they experience.

Action

- Statutory services consult and engage with young carers in shaping their local policies and services.
- Welsh Government ensure active participation of young carers in national policy that affects them.

By Who - Local authorities, health boards, education and Welsh Government.

How we will assess impact

- Young carer involvement evidenced within documents and planning processes.

Outcome 3 – Local authorities are assured young carers, of who they are aware, are not providing levels of care to the detriment of their wellbeing, development and education.

Action

- Leaders in Local authorities ensure assessments of young carers are undertaken as appropriate and there are
- Systems in place to facilitate re-assessment of young carers, where their caring situation may have changed.
- Leaders in Local authorities ensure that young carers receive the support identified as required and outlined in a Carers' Support Plan, which is subject to regular review.
- Leaders in local authorities ensure appropriate care and support services are in place, such that young carers are not left with inappropriate responsibilities.
- Local authorities in local authorities ensure they receive adequate information from commissioned services to fulfil their statutory duties toward young carers.

By Who - Local authorities

How we will assess impact

- Local authority data on number of young carers' needs assessments undertaken and young carers on Carers' Support Plans.
- Local authority quality assurance processes and review of complaints.
- Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities.
- School Health Research Survey (SHRN) data on young carer wellbeing and educational achievement, or alternative means of data collection to be identified.

Outcome 4- Young carers are recognised and supported within the education system

Action

- Leaders in schools and further education colleges promote a positive culture for young carers and have policies and procedures to encourage self-identification of learners with caring responsibilities.
- Leaders in Education promote uptake of available resources for education staff regarding young carers.
- Leaders in schools and colleges ensure staff are confident in how to raise concerns regarding young carers.
- Nationally consistent information on young carers made available to education staff.
- Ensure availability of national best practice example of school young carer policy.

By Who - Local education authorities and individual educational settings ,Welsh Government and Carers Trust Wales

How we will assess impact

- Identification of agreed sampling approach.
- Request for feedback from sample of schools.

Outcome 5- Better and improved information available on the wellbeing and educational achievement of young carers.

Action

- Identification of means to compare wellbeing and educational progress of young carers with their peers.

By Who- Welsh Government

How we will assess impact

- Identification and embedding of a system for data collection.

Outcome 6 - Young carers have access to Young Carer Identity Cards (YCID cards), are recognised in education and community pharmacies.

Action

- Local authorities continue to promote and deliver YCID schemes.

- Local authorities engage with their schools to promote the YCID card.
- Welsh Government continues to promote recognition of YCID cards by pharmacists via available e-learning.

By Who - Local authorities. Welsh Government

How we will assess impact

- Annual data request by Welsh Government on the number of young carers with a YCID card in each local authority.
- Available data on uptake of e-learning on carer awareness.

Outcome 7 - Young carers have access to appropriate and sufficient mental health and wellbeing support

Action

- Young carers have access to mental health and wellbeing support delivered in accordance with the NEST framework
- Current data around the health and wellbeing of young carers are understood by health and education practitioners to inform approaches.

By Who - Regional Partnership Boards and their partners. Welsh Government and Public Health Wales

How we will assess impact

- Regional Partnership Boards report on mental health and wellbeing support available to young carers through their NEST self-assessment.
- Evidence data has been shared with health and wellbeing leads in education, school nurse network and other communication channels.

Outcome 8 - Increased recognition and engagement with young carers by health and other professionals (eg housing, police, third sector)

Action

- Where appropriate staff should involve young carers in discussions and plans for the cared for person.
- Pharmacies will ensure provision is made to support young carers in collecting prescription medicines on behalf of cared for people, where this is considered safe.

By Who - Health boards and other public sector agencies.

How we will assess impact

- Feedback from young carers gathered by Carers Trust Wales/ the Young Carers Advisory Board.

Outcome 9 - Young carers and young adult carers have similar opportunities for further and higher education, employment and training as their peers

Action

- Expansion of access to information resources on young carers and young adult carers to promote understanding to
 - staff in further and higher education settings.
 - Careers Wales and staff in other relevant roles
 - training providers

By Who- Welsh Government and Carers Trust Wales.

How we will assess impact

- Research required into destination data of school leavers.

Outcome 10 - Young carers can access available financial support.

Action

- Schools/colleges are aware of the application of Educational Maintenance to young carers.
- Young carers access the Carers Support Fund and are provided with additional financial information.

By Who - Welsh Government and Carers Trust Wales

How we will assess impact

- Feedback from young carers accessing EMA.
- Numbers of young carers accessing Carers Support Fund.

Outcome 11 - Young carers access replacement care (respite) and short breaks when they need it.

Action

- Local authorities ensure young carers are not delivering inappropriate amounts of care and provide replacement care (respite) where required.
- Carers Trust Wales and Regional Partnership Boards to promote uptake of Welsh Government Short Breaks Scheme by young carers.

By Who - Local authorities, Carers Trust Wales and Regional Partnership Boards.

How we will assess impact

- Local authority quality assurance processes.
- Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities.
- Numbers of young carers accessing Short Breaks Scheme.

Priority 4: Financial Hardship

Outcome 1- Unpaid carers are aware of benefits and can maximise their income.

Action

- Unpaid carers are an identified group within general income maximisation and benefit information campaigns and services.
- Public sector professionals direct unpaid carers to benefit and income maximisation services.
- Carers services provide information, or direct unpaid carers to benefit and income maximisation services.
- Welsh Government Carers Support Fund continues to deliver benefit and income maximisation advice in addition to financial grants.

By Who - Welsh Government, Health Boards, Local Authorities and other public sector agencies, Carers Wales, Carers Trust Wales, local carers services

How we will assess impact

- Report on unpaid carer poverty from Carers Wales 'State of Caring' report.
- No specific data currently available. To be considered as part of improved recording on early support for carers.
- Available data on support provided.

- Meeting delivery targets for Carers Support Fund and feedback on the value of advice as part of monitoring reports.

Priority 5: Paid Employment

Outcome 1- Unpaid carers feel able to stay in, or return to, paid employment, with assurance regarding support for the person they care for.

Action

- Carers needs assessments address the needs and wishes of the carer regarding paid employment.
- The care and support plan identifies care services required when the unpaid carer is in work. These services are provided.

By Who - Local authorities.

How we will assess impact

- Available data from surveys such as Carers Wales State of Caring Report.
- Local authority quality assurance audits of carers needs assessments and care and support plans.
- Care Inspectorate Wales inspection and assurance activity.

Outcome 2- Employment support organisations are carer informed and take opportunities to promote the employment of unpaid carers.

Action

- Staff in relevant employment support roles are provided with information to raise awareness of unpaid carers; their skill sets and employment rights.
- Carers identified as a specific group in programmes designed to promote return to employment.

By Who - Welsh Government and third sector partners

How we will assess impact

- Surveys such as Carers Wales State of Caring Report.
- Available data from employment support schemes.

Outcome 3- Employers are positive about employing carers and informed about employment rights.

Action

- Promotion of information regarding carers' employment rights to employers and trade unions.
- Consideration of most effective means of promoting 'carer friendly' workplaces via regional or national schemes or programmes.

By Who - Welsh Government, Regional Partnership Boards and third sector partners

How we will assess impact

- Feedback from employers' organisations and trade unions.
- Increase in uptake of regional or national programmes.

Priority 6: Replacement care (respite) and breaks from caring

Outcome 1- Unpaid carers can access breaks from daily caring tasks that meet their needs and those of the person they care for.

Action

- Review of replacement care (respite) at a local authority and regional level.
- Development of additional replacement care (respite) to meet need for shorter breaks and overnight/ holiday provision.
- Nationally consistent information on direct payments and replacement care (respite) made available to unpaid carers.
- Continued commitment to national Short Breaks Scheme to 2029.

By Who - Local authorities and Regional Partnership Boards, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru), Welsh Government

How we will assess impact

- Available local authority data on numbers of carers accessing replacement care (respite).
- Evidence from local authorities or Regional Partnership Boards of increased range and availability of replacement care provision (respite) opportunities.
- Information is produced and distributed to all local authorities.
- Meeting delivery targets and feedback mechanism on impact.

Priority 7: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Outcome 1 - Unpaid carers can manage their mental health and wellbeing.

Action

- Local Health Boards and Local Authorities provide a range of services that can support unpaid carers to manage their mental health and wellbeing.
- National carer organisation provides wellbeing support.
- Identification of opportunities for generic mental wellbeing services to be more 'carer informed'.

By Who- Local Health Boards and Local Authorities, Welsh Government and third sector partner.

How we will assess impact

- National Survey of Wales and Carers' Wales Track the Act data.
- Unpaid carer surveys such as Carers Wales Track the Act.

Outcome 2- Unpaid carers can access support as they transition to a 'life after caring'

Action

- Review of available resources and development of additional materials where required and dissemination.

By Who - Welsh Government and Carers Wales

How we will assess impact

- Evidence of development of resources, where required. Method of evaluation of impact to be developed.

Priority 8: Carers in care planning

Outcome 1 - Unpaid carers are recognised as a partner in the assessment and care planning for people they care for.

Action

- Professionals involve unpaid carers in assessment, care planning and reviews.
- Recognition that the unpaid carer could be a young carer.

By Who - Local authorities

How we will assess impact

- Local authority quality assurance audits of assessments and care plans and complaints.
- Care Inspectorate Wales inspection and assurance activity.

Outcome 2 - Unpaid carers are recognised as a partner in care and treatment planning for people they care for.

Action

- Professionals involve unpaid carers in care and treatment planning and reviews with the consent of patients.
- Health boards ensure staff have clear and consistent understanding of confidentiality and consent, regarding unpaid carers.

By Who - Health boards

How we will assess impact

- Health boards can evidence that audits of the quality of care and treatment plans are undertaken.
- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales inspections.

Outcome 3 - Unpaid carers are proactively involved in the hospital discharge plan for the person they care for and feel supported

Action

- Professionals actively involve unpaid carers in discharge planning, in line with Welsh Government Discharge Guidance.
- Health Board leaders ensure information and support is available for unpaid carers at discharge, maximising impact of Welsh Government funding.
- Health board leaders ensure they have consistent and robust policies and procedures for recording the identity of unpaid carers, and that staff have a shared understanding of patient confidentiality.

By Who - Health boards

How we will assess impact

- Health board quality assurance audits of discharge plans and complaints.

- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales inspection and assurance activity.
- Feedback from unpaid carers about their experience of being involved in hospital discharge planning.
- Reporting information to Welsh government on use of ringfenced funding via the Regional Partnership Boards.
- Consistency of approach within, and across, health boards.

Outcome 4 - Unpaid carers are considered, as appropriate, when decisions are taken about health and social care services.

Action

Statutory partners take the views of unpaid carers into account when taking service and policy decisions about patients and people receiving care and support.

By Who - Health boards and local authorities

How we will assess impact

- Information provided by unpaid carers to Llais and involvement in relevant complaints.
- Impact assessments undertaken.

Appendix 1: Engagement to inform the draft strategy

During the summer of 2025, we spoke to a wide range of unpaid carers and relevant organisations. This was to inform the priorities of the strategy and the actions that are most likely to bring about positive change.

We are very grateful to all those professionals who met with us and provided written information. We are particularly grateful to all the unpaid carers who were able to make the time to speak with us.

We spoke to:

- Group of carers arranged by Carers Wales (Abergavenny)
- Group of carers from All Wales People First
- Group of carers from Carers Outreach Bangor
- Group of carers from Carers Trust North Wales
- Group of carers from Carers Trust West Wales
- Group of carers from Credu (Welshpool)
- Group of carers from Mencap Ynys Mon
- Group of carers from Swansea Carers Centre
- Group of unpaid carer representatives on Regional Partnership Boards
- Group of working carers
- Group of young carers at Eisteddfod
- Group of young carers at Wales Young Carers Festival

We also met and/or received written contributions from following organisations:

- Adferiad
- Age Cymru
- All Wales Forum
- All Wales People First
- Alzheimer's Society
- British Deaf Association
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Carers Officers Learning and Improvement Network (COLIN)
- Carers Trust Wales
- Carers Wales
- Children's Commissioner
- Chinese In Wales Association
- Credu
- Dementia Carers Count
- Downs Syndrome Association
- Gypsy Travellers Wales
- Health board representatives
- Learning Disability Wales
- Llais
- Local authority representatives
- Mencap
- Mind Cymru
- MS Cymru
- Older People's Commissioner
- Parkinson's Association

- Race Equality First
- SNAP Cymru
- Stonewall
- Travelling Ahead
- Unison and Wales TUC
- Women Connect First
- Young Carers Advisory Board
- Young Carers Professional Network

