Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

# National Strategy for Unpaid Carers







# Contents


Ministerial foreword 3

Our priorities and outcomes 4

Terminology 5

Themes arising 6

- Identification and recognition 6
- Access to services 6
- Young carers 7
- Financial hardship 7
- Employment 8
- Respite 8
- Mental health and emotional well-being 8
- Carers and care planning 9

How consultation has shaped this strategy 10

Unpaid carers included in other Welsh Government strategies and plans 11

Governance 12

Actions 13

Priority 1: Identification and recognition 13

Priority 2: Access to services 16

Priority 3: Young carers 20

Priority 4: Financial well-being and paid employment 25

Priority 5: Respite 27

Priority 6: Mental health and well-being 28

Priority 7: Carers in care planning 30


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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

# Ministerial foreword

**Foreword by Mabon Ap Gwynfor, Cabinet Minister for Health and Care and Delyth Jewell, Deputy Minister for Social Care, Mental Health and Women's Health.**

Unpaid carers are the backbone of care in our communities across Wales. Every day, they provide essential care and support to relatives, friends and neighbours, and try to balance this with their employment, education, family life, health and well-being. Their contribution is extraordinary, but we must never take it for granted.

Unpaid carers are central to our ambition for a stronger social care system. Our Programme for Government places prevention, partnership and high-quality, person-centred support at its heart. It makes clear that unpaid carers must receive the recognition, practical help and services they need, and that no one should be disadvantaged because of the care they provide.

We are very pleased to introduce the new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers. Developed through 18 months of genuine collaboration with unpaid carers and their representatives, its seven priority areas reflect what carers have said matters most.

The listening process began in summer 2025, when our officials' sought conversations with unpaid carers, young carers and carers' organisations all over Wales. This was followed by a public consultation in February 2026, which received 130 responses and shaped the final strategy. We strengthened the focus on older carers, carers in rural communities and carers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

We have worked closely with local authorities and health boards to understand more about their challenges and opportunities for improvement, to ensure the actions in this strategy will make a real difference to unpaid carers.

We have also carefully considered the recommendations of the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry on support for unpaid carers and included actions in this strategy that align with our response to those recommendations.

We have a clear vision: a Wales where unpaid carers are recognised, valued and respected across public services and within our communities. We will fund public campaigns to help people recognise when they are undertaking a caring role and how to access the information and support they need.

Recognition means treating unpaid carers as equal partners in care. We will strengthen their role in care, treatment and discharge planning, ensure their voices shape services and their well-being and right to a balanced life are prioritised alongside the needs of those they care for. The rights of carers under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 must be upheld in full.

Delivering this ambition will require sustained partnership across the Welsh Government, public services and the third sector. We appreciate the constructive challenge brought by Carers Wales, Carers Trust Wales and Wales Carers Alliance.

The Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers' will oversee delivery of the strategy. Unpaid carers are part of every area of public life, and we will establish ministerial working arrangements to ensure carers are considered across all aspects of the Welsh Government.

This is an ambitious strategy, and there is much to do. By working with unpaid carers and our social partners, we are confident we can deliver lasting improvements in how unpaid carers are recognised, valued and supported.

**Diolch**

# Our priorities and outcomes

The overarching aim of this strategy is to improve the lives of unpaid carers of all ages by ensuring they are recognised and supported and can maintain their well-being and life opportunities alongside their caring role.

The Strategy sets out seven key priority areas for improving he recognition and support of unpaid carers in Wales. For each priority, it identifies the overall outcome we want to achieve, the actions we need to take collectively and how we will assess their impact.

## Priority 1: Identification and recognition

**Overall outcome:** Unpaid carers from all backgrounds are identified and recognised, particularly those who are less likely to self-identify or seek support.

## Priority 2: Access to services

**Overall outcome:** Unpaid carers have consistent access to clear, timely and inclusive information, advice and support across Wales.

## Priority 3: Young carers

**Overall outcome:** Young carers are identified early and supported across education, health and community settings to protect their rights, well-being and future opportunities and prevent inappropriate caring responsibilities.

## Priority 4: Financial well-being and paid employment

**Overall outcome:** Unpaid carers have access to financial, education and employment support to balance caring with work and secure their financial future.

## Priority 5: Respite

**Overall outcome:** Unpaid carers have access to flexible, reliable respite that supports their wel-being and caring role.

## Priority 6: Mental health and well-being

**Overall outcome:** Unpaid carers have access to timely, carer-informed mental health and well-being support, including preventative, peer and transition support.

## Priority 7: Carers in care planning

**Overall outcome:** Unpaid carers are involved in care planning and decisions, with clear information, appropriate consent and support through changing needs, discharge, end of life and bereavement.

Young carers and older carers may face particular disadvantages. Young carers are identified as a specific priority because caring responsibilities can have a distinct impact during childhood and the transition to adulthood. However, all seven priorities apply equally to young carers.

Older carers may also face particular challenges relating to their health, well-being, financial security and social connections. Although older carers are not identified as a separate priority group, their needs and experiences are reflected throughout the strategy.

# Terminology

The term ‘unpaid carer’ is used throughout this document and is the term currently used by the 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 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a carer as ‘a person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child’, and where the person is not paid to provide care or doing so as voluntary work. We use the term ‘carer’ as a shorthand for “unpaid carer” in this document, where we are confident the meaning is clear.

For the purposes of this strategy, references to older people generally relate to people aged 60 and over, reflecting the age specified in the legislation establishing the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales.

The age of a young carer is not defined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Act, but a child in the Act is considered a person up to (but not including) the age of 18.

A young adult carer is also not defined but is referred to in Codes of Practice as a person between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Local authorities may use their own discretion; the importance is ensuring young carers are supported during transitions.

We use the term ‘respite’ throughout this document to refer to arrangements to allow the unpaid carer to undertake other tasks and/or have a break from their caring responsibilities. Respite can be provided through replacement care arrangements.

The Welsh Government uses the terms ‘Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people’ and ‘ethnic minorities’, while recognising that terminology continues to evolve and that other terms are also in use.



# Themes arising

This section outlines the key themes arising from our engagement with unpaid carers and interviews and written submissions from representative organisations in the summer of 2025. We also met 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 the seven key priorities within this strategy.

## 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 single 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 said lack of acknowledgement from professionals and systems contributed to feelings of invisibility and stress, contributing to 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 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. 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 well-being 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 the 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

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

Carers highlighted their households often have additional expenses such as increased heating bills, transport costs and out of pocket expenses for respite care. Some unpaid carers noted that they were unaware of the benefits or financial support available to them. Some older carers and carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities described difficulties applying for benefits and other financial support, as well as confusion about 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 accessing their rights to flexible working arrangements, unpaid carers leave, and supportive management. These positive experiences were linked to improved well-being and the ability to remain in work. Other carers highlighted a lack of understanding and support from employers, and 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 the incomes, careers and occupational pensions of women are more likely to be negatively affected by caring responsibilities. Young carers whose education and training is affected by caring responsibilities may 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.

## Respite

Respite was widely recognised as a critical form of support, yet many described it as inaccessible, unsuitable, or not available when they needed it. 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. Many were also clear that access to respite, 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 respite and for this to be more flexible. 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 well-being

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

## 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 or services for those they care for affect unpaid carers. Waiting for a diagnosis can delay a carer applying for Carers Allowance or other benefits and has a direct financial impact.

Unpaid carers are concerned at the availability of day opportunities, saying this impacts on 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 affect 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.

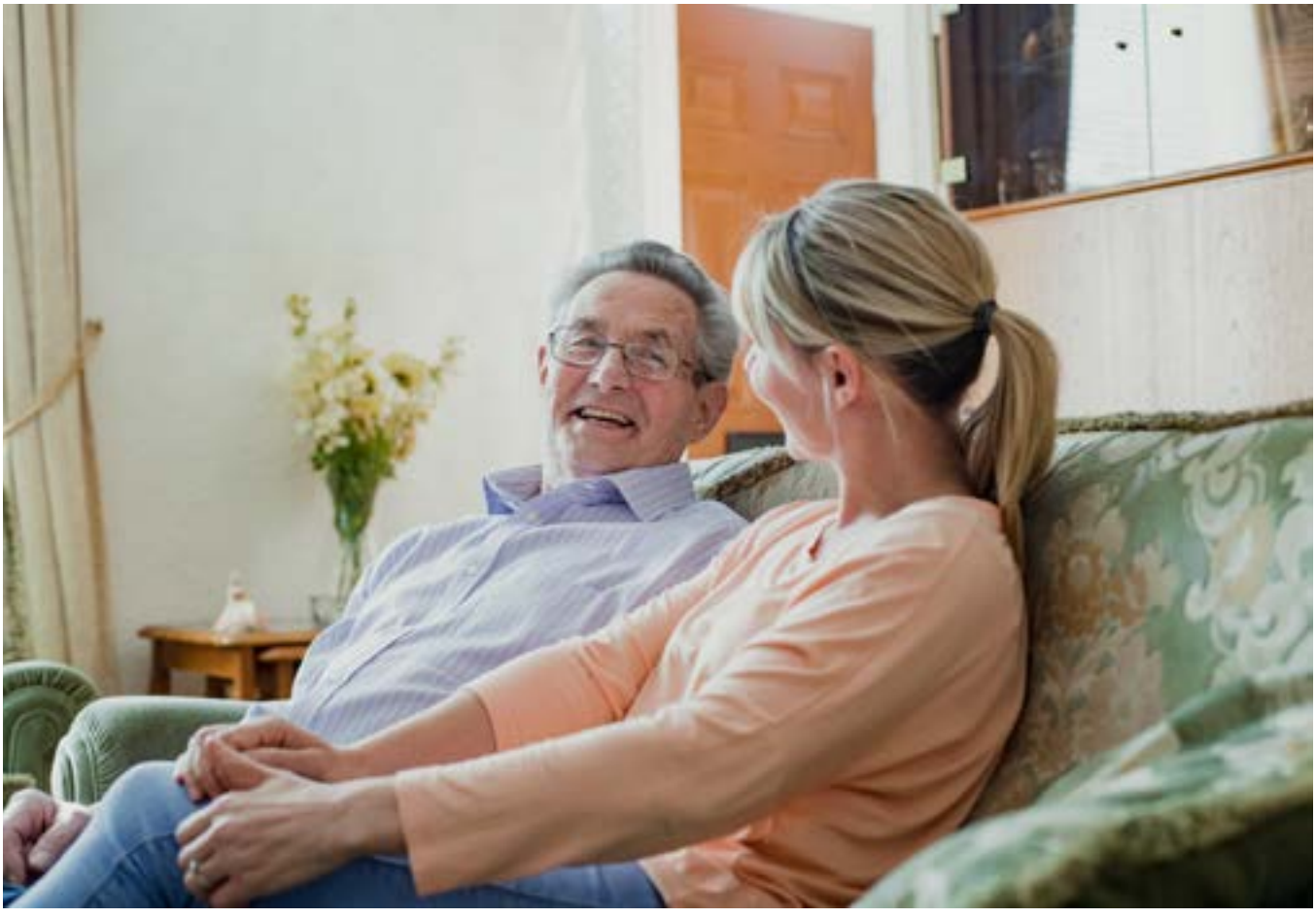


# How consultation has shaped this strategy

The public consultation in February 2026 received 130 responses. The consultation responses confirmed that the original eight priorities reflected the key issues affecting unpaid carers in Wales and showed strong support for the areas they covered. The original priorities of financial hardship and paid employment were merged into a single priority of financial well-being and paid employment, resulting in seven priorities overall.

We published a report summarising what people told us. The final strategy gives greater prominence to older carers, carers living in rural areas and carers from ethnic minority communities.

Respondents were clear that the strategy's success regarding improved outcomes for unpaid carers will depend on how it is implemented. Across all priorities, we will promote evidence-informed approaches to supporting unpaid carers. Policy, practice and delivery will be shaped by the best available evidence and data, alongside carers' lived experience.



# Unpaid carers included in other Welsh Government strategies and plans

This strategy is focussed on areas of improvement in the recognition and support of unpaid carers. We fully recognise the importance to unpaid carers of improvement in social care, health and anti-poverty interventions. 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 well-being strategy 2025 to 2035
  www.gov.wales/mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2025-2035

- Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024
  www.gov.wales/child-poverty-strategy-wales-2024-html

- NEST self-assessment and implementation tool | GOV.WALES
  www.gov.wales/nest-self-assessment-and-implementation-tool

- Suicide prevention and self-harm strategy: delivery plan 2025 to 2028
  www.gov.wales/understanding-suicide-prevention-and-self-harm-strategy

- Draft dementia strategy for Wales 2026 to 2036 | GOV.WALES
  www.gov.wales/draft-dementia-strategy-wales-2026-2036

- The Welsh Government's Response to the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) report
  www.gov.wales/united-nations-convention-rights-child-welsh-government-response-2024

- Gender Equality Forum
  www.gov.wales/gender-equality-forum

- The Welsh Government Hospital Discharge Guidance
  www.gov.wales/hospital-discharge-guidance

- The Quality Statement for Stroke
  www.gov.wales/quality-statement-stroke-2026

# Governance

We will establish ministerial working arrangements to ensure a cross-government approach to improving the recognition and support for unpaid carers. The Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers is independently chaired and comprises unpaid carers and representatives from carers' organisations, health boards, local authorities, inspectorates and a range of others involved in how unpaid carers are recognised and supported. The Ministerial Advisory Group has a role in overseeing the progress of the strategy and the Deputy Minister will report on the ministerial working arrangements. The minutes of the Ministerial Advisory Group are published.

This intention is for this strategy to remain in place until 2031, with a review undertaken in 2030 to consider if a new strategy should be developed.

The strategy does not include details of Welsh Government funding, as this is not fixed for the duration of the strategy document. We will publish a Delivery Plan for the period December 2026 to March 2028, and further delivery plans will be produced annually. Delivery plans will provide further detail on actions to be undertaken, timeframe for completion and how their impact will be assessed. We will assess progress using national and local evidence, including carer surveys and lived – experience. Where necessary, we will work with our social care partners to agree additional measures that demonstrate whether these actions are improving outcomes for unpaid carers.

We will publish an interim Annual Report on the progress of the strategy in June 2027 and annually thereafter. The Deputy Minister will make an annual statement to the Senedd on the progress of the strategy, the first of these will be in June 2027.



# Actions

In this section we set out our action plans for each of the priority areas. The tables highlight the outcomes we wish to achieve, the actions we'll take, who has responsibility for these and how we will gather information to assess impact.

## Priority 1: Identification and recognition

Unpaid carers from all backgrounds should be recognised through targeted, accessible awareness, training and local identification, particularly those less likely to self-identify or seek support.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Increased recognition and public awareness of unpaid carers will result in more carers accessing information and support. | Deliver an accessible and culturally appropriate public campaign in a variety of languages and formats, working through local networks to increase recognition of unpaid carers and awareness of their rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. | Welsh Government, and third sector delivery partners in co-production with unpaid carers. | Evidence from local authorities of increased contacts from unpaid carers seeking information and support.<br><br>Evidence of increase in the number of new contacts to local and national carer organisations.<br><br>Impact measured against agreed campaign objectives.<br><br>Number of people accessing e-learning/additional information materials. |
| | | E-learning/additional information to promote carer awareness is made available to community groups and the public. | | |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Health, social care, education and public sector professionals have greater awareness of the needs of unpaid carers' so they are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity. | Public sector leaders ensure their staff have the knowledge and confidence to identify unpaid carers and signpost them to support. | Local authorities, and statutory partners. | Welsh Government health and social care workforce survey on staff confidence. |
| | | Continued availability of e-learning materials for health and social care staff on carer awareness. | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | Available data on numbers of staff in different roles undertaking e learning and feedback on value of training. |
| | | Expansion of access to e learning on carer awareness to broader range of health, social care and other professionals (e.g. housing, police, health visitors, allied health professionals and third sector). | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | Available data on numbers of staff in different roles undertaking e learning. |
| | | Carer awareness e learning will continue to be made available for pharmacists on the Learning @ Wales platform. | Welsh Government. | Numbers accessing e learning and potential survey feedback from pharmacists. |
| | | Health board leaders ensure systems and processes are in place to record details of unpaid carer when person they care for is in hospital. | Health boards. | Audit of number and completeness of recording of unpaid carers within the Welsh Nursing Clinical Record. |
| | | Health boards promote the identification of unpaid carers and ensure carers can access information, advice and support throughout their interaction with hospital services. | Health boards. | Evidence of local arrangements to identify and support unpaid carers in hospitals and feedback from carers on their experience of recognition and support. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Improved approaches to support the identification and signposting of unpaid carers in primary care settings. | Work with primary care partners to consider approaches that support consistent identification and signposting of unpaid carers. | Welsh Government and local health boards, primary care partners. | Evidence of improved and greater consistency of approach to identification and signposting of carers across health board areas. |
| | | Work to enhance consistent identification, recording and signposting of unpaid carers within General Practice. | | Insight from Healthcare Inspectorate Wales assurance activity. |
| | | Work with primary care partners to ensure they are able to access professional training and awareness raising. | | Evidence of availability and uptake of e-learning resource. |

## Priority 2: Access to services

Unpaid carers should have consistent access to clear, timely and inclusive information, advice and support across Wales.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Unpaid carers understand their rights under the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014. | Refresh and promote the Welsh Government Carers' Charter. | Welsh Government. | Increase in web page views and reports from user feedback measure. |
| | | Review existing legislation, Codes of Practice and guidance relating to unpaid carers and consider whether changes are required to strengthen their rights. | Welsh Government. | Completion of the review and action agreed. |
| | | Communication on carers' rights arising from review of legislation and action taken. | | Feedback from carers regarding communication from the Welsh Government regarding availability and clarity of information. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | More carers receive a high quality and timely carers' needs assessment. This is consistent across Wales and carers understand what to expect. | Consistent information on the carer's assessment process is available to carers of all ages.<br><br>Local authorities ensure professionals undertaking assessments are trained using national resources.<br><br>Local authorities consider means to facilitate re-assessment of carers' needs, where these may have changed. | Local authorities. | Information is produced and distributed to all local authorities in Wales and guidance for practitioners is available on the Social Care Wales website.<br><br>Local authority data on number of carers' needs assessments undertaken.<br><br>Local authority quality assurance processes regarding timeliness and quality of assessments. |
| | | | | Responses of carers surveyed for Carers Wales 'Track the Act' annual report.<br><br>Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Unpaid carers receive the support they need. | Regional Partnership Boards will ensure Population Needs Assessments identify the support needs of unpaid carers, including young carers and carers living in rural communities. Commissioning decisions are informed by this evidence and used to improve equitable access to support across Wales. | Regional Partnership Boards. | Regional Partnership Boards can evidence a direct link between services commissioned and the needs of unpaid carers recorded in the Population Needs Assessment. |
| | | Local authorities issue a greater number of Carers Support Plans, which are subject to review. | Local authorities. | Local authority data and local authority quality assurance processes. |
| | | Nationally consistent information on Support Plans and types of support is made available to unpaid carers. | Local authorities. | Evidence that consistent information is available. |
| | | Consistent approach to the content of support plans and how it is recorded. | Local authorities. | Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities.<br><br>Responses of carers surveyed for Carers Wales 'Track the Act' annual report. |
| | | Local authorities to ensure a consistent approach to promoting use of Direct Payments for unpaid carers with eligible support needs.<br><br>Local authorities to provide clear information for carers on use of Direct Payments. | Local authorities. | Review by Welsh Government of consistency of approach and availability of information to unpaid carers. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | Unpaid carers have access to training they need to support them in their caring role, specifically in relation to dementia care, palliative care and end of life care. | Ensure training is available and, where necessary, further training opportunities are developed, in co-production with unpaid carers. | Local authorities and third sector partners. | Feedback from carers on training attended.<br><br>Evidence of numbers of carers attending local authority training. |
| 5. | Unpaid carers are meaningfully involved in shaping, commissioning and reviewing support and services at local, regional and national levels. | Public bodies review and identify opportunities to strengthen arrangements for the coproduction of services for unpaid carers. | Welsh Government, Regional Partnership Boards, local health boards, local authorities and primary care partners. | Feedback and examples from carers on participation in shaping and commissioning of services.<br><br>Evidence of co-production and service improvements informed by unpaid carers from annual reports of Directors of Social Services annual reports. |
| | | Strengthen unpaid carer representation and co-production on Regional Partnership Boards to ensure that the voice of unpaid carers influences decisions. | Welsh Government, Regional Partnership Boards. | Feedback from unpaid carer representatives on support and participation in the activity of Regional Partnership Boards. |
| | | Continued support for unpaid carer representatives on Regional Partnership Boards. | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | |

## Priority 3: Young carers

Young carers should be identified early and supported across education, health and community settings to protect their rights, well-being and future opportunities and prevent inappropriate caring responsibilities.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Young carers understand their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) and can access clear, relevant information about the support, advice and services available to them. | Work with young carers to develop and promote clear, accessible and youth-friendly information about young carers' rights, the Young Carers Covenant, and how to access assessments, and local services. | Welsh Government, Young Carers Advisory Board, local authorities and third sector partners. | Information is produced, distributed and feedback received on its accessibility and usefulness. |
| | | Develop a Welsh Government Carers Charter for Young Carers. | | Young carers charter is published, numbers accessing are measured and feedback sought. |
| | | Deliver targeted communications and awareness-raising activity to increase understanding of young carers' rights and entitlements. | Welsh Government, and third sector partners. | Available data on social media reach.<br>Evidence that information is co-produced, accessible and youth friendly.<br>Feedback from young carers via the Young Carers Advisory Board. |
| | | Encourage organisations across Wales to sign and actively promote the Young Carers Covenant. | Welsh Government, Young Carers Advisory Board third sector partners. | Increase in number of signatories across Wales, resulting in more organisations actively aligned with young carers' rights. |
| | | Review of local authority websites and other local authority information for young carers to ensure this is accurate, accessible and fully informative. | Local authorities in partnership with young carers. | Confirmation of reviews and changes made, feedback by young carers involved. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Young carers help shape policy and the services they experience. | Statutory services consult and engage with young carers in shaping their local policies and services. | Regional Partnership Boards and local authorities. | Evidence from Regional Partnership Boards and local authorities. |
| | | The Welsh Government ensures active participation of young carers in national policy that affects them. | Welsh Government. | Evidence of consultation through the Young Carers Advisory Board.<br><br>Feedback through the Ministerial Advisory Group on good practice. |
| 3. | Local authorities are assured young carers, of whom they are aware, are not providing levels of care to the detriment of their well-being, development and education. | 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.<br><br>Local authorities ensure they receive information from commissioned services to fulfil their statutory duties toward young carers. | Local authorities. | Local authority data on number of young carers' needs assessments undertaken and young carers on Carers' Support Plans.<br><br>Local authority quality assurance processes evidence that care and support services for family members are in place, such that young carers are not left with inappropriate responsibilities.<br><br>Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | Young carers and young adult carers are recognised, understood and supported throughout education, enabling them to have the same opportunities as their peers to participate, progress and succeed in further and higher education, training and employment. | 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.<br><br>Leaders in schools and colleges ensure staff are confident in how to raise concerns regarding young carers.<br><br>Leaders in Education promote uptake of available resources for education staff to support awareness of young carers and to better equip staff to respond and support young carers with their well-being and education. | Welsh Government, local education authorities and individual educational settings. | Data on young carer well-being and educational achievement, or alternative means of data collection to be identified.<br><br>Feedback from young carers via the Young Carers Advisory Board.<br><br>Examples of good practice shared via the Ministerial Advisory Group. |
| 5. | Improve understanding of young carers through data analysis, research and consideration of longer-term approaches to data collection. | Development of a means to compare well-being and educational progress of young carers with their peers.<br><br>Improve understanding of young carers' educational, training and employment experiences, including exploring destination data for school leavers. | Welsh Government. | Improved information on the well-being and educational achievement of young carers.<br><br>The number of young carers compared to their peers.<br><br>Evidence that young carers and young adult carers have similar opportunities for further and higher education, employment and training as their peers. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | Young carers have access to Young Carer Identity Cards (YCID cards), which are recognised by health and other professionals. | Local authorities continue to deliver YCID card schemes and engage with their schools, local carer services/commissioned services to promote the YCID card. | Local authorities and third sector. | Annual Welsh Government local authority data request on their card schemes including their understanding of recognition within schools and health services.<br><br>Engagement with young carers to obtain information on their experience of YCID cards in their areas. |
| 7. | Young carers have access to appropriate and sufficient mental health and well-being support. | Young carers have access to mental health and well-being support delivered in accordance with the NEST framework. | Regional Partnership Boards and their partners. | Regional Partnership Boards report on mental health and well-being support available to young carers through their NEST self-assessment. |
| | | Regional Partnership Boards include data around the health and well-being of young carers in their Population Needs Assessment to inform local, regional and national actions. | Regional Partnership Boards. | Population needs assessment includes data and information about the health and well-being needs of young carers. |
| | | Local authorities ensure they deliver or commission sufficient, suitable support services for young carers based on need rather than fixed time limits. | Local authorities. | Findings from Care Inspectorate Wales inspection and assurance work with local authorities.<br><br>Feedback from the Young Carer Advisory Board and engagement with young carers. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | Young carers are aware of how to access financial support. | Local authorities and the third sector ensure young carers are accessing financial support as appropriate.<br><br>Delivery organisations for Carers Support Fund to ensure young carers can access the scheme.<br><br>Schools/colleges are aware of extenuating circumstances of young carers receiving Educational Maintenance Allowance and make necessary allowances. | Local authorities and third sector.<br><br>Third sector partners.<br><br>Local education authorities and individual educational settings. | Feedback from young carers via the Young Carers Advisory Board.<br><br>Numbers of young carers accessing Carers Support Fund.<br><br>Feedback from Young Carers Advisory Board and young carer engagement. |
| 9. | Young carers access to respite and short breaks when they need it. | Local authorities to ensure young carers are provide with respite where required.<br><br>The Welsh Government Short Breaks Scheme is promoted to young carers. | Welsh Government, local authorities, third sector partners. | Findings of Care Inspectorate Wales in their inspection and assurance work with local authorities.<br><br>Numbers of young carers accessing Short Breaks Scheme. |

# Priority 4: Financial well-being and paid employment

Financial well-being and paid employment – Unpaid carers should have access to financial, education and employment support to balance caring with work and secure their financial future.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Unpaid carers are recognised, supported to access further and higher education. | Local authorities to consider carers educational commitments when conducting Carers Needs Assessments. | Local authorities. | Local authority quality assurance audits. |
| 2. | Unpaid carers are aware of benefits and can maximise their income. | Unpaid carers are an identified group within income maximisation and benefit information campaigns and services and are supported through general cost of living and anti-poverty measures. | Welsh Government. | Measures used to evidence impact of benefit information campaigns in and anti-poverty measures. |
| | | Unpaid carers are signposted to income maximisation services at key transition points. | Health boards, local authorities, third sector partners. | Consideration of available data on advice, benefit uptake and support provided. |
| | | Benefit and income maximisation advice is provided through the Carers Support Fund. | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | Delivery data and feedback on the value of advice. |
| | | Continued consideration of opportunities for additional funding support to unpaid carers. | Welsh Government. | Measures to evaluate impact would be determined. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Unpaid carers who wish to work are supported and feel able to remain in, return to or progress in paid employment. | Ensure carers' needs assessments consider carers' employment needs and wishes, and care and support plans identify the services needed when carers are at work. | Local authorities. | Local authority quality assurance of carers' needs assessments.<br><br>Care Inspectorate Wales assurance activity and available employment programme data.<br><br>Available third sector survey data. |
| | | Provide employment support services with information about unpaid carers, the skills developed through caring and carers' employment rights. | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | Feedback from employment support services that staff more informed and aware of carers. |
| | | Unpaid carers are identified as a priority group in programmes supporting people to enter or return to employment. | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | Evidence from programmes on their success indicators on carers entering employment. |
| 4. | Promote carer-informed practice among employers and encourage them to develop and maintain carer friendly workplaces. | Promote carers' employment rights to workers, the public and trade unions.<br><br>Promote carers' employment rights and the benefits of employing unpaid carers among employers.<br><br>Provide employers with information to support them to be aware of carers' employment rights and enable them to develop a positive approach to unpaid carers in their employ.<br><br>Welsh Government will consider effectiveness of employer schemes to promote good practice in employing unpaid carers. | Welsh Government, and third sector partners. | Reach and engagement data for employment-rights communications, including the number of trade unions and partner organisations sharing information.<br><br>Feedback from unpaid carers' showing increased awareness of their employment rights.<br><br>Number of employers accessing or promoting and employer feedback. |

## Priority 5: Respite

Unpaid carers should have access to flexible, reliable respite that supports their well-being and caring role.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Unpaid carers have equitable access to sufficient, flexible and high-quality respite that meets their needs and those of the person they care for, and which is culturally appropriate. | Development of a national respite action plan to improve access to respite including emergency, overnight, and dementia appropriate. | Welsh Government with Regional Partnership Boards. | Evidence that the action plan results in local authorities providing increased range and number of respite opportunities. |
| | | Assess and address gaps in respite provision, ensuring flexible and equitable access, including those in rural communities, people with complex needs, and children and young people with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. | Local authorities, and Regional Partnership Boards. | Evidence from local authorities of increased respite opportunities across a broader range of options.<br>Care Inspectorate Wales inspection and assurance activity.<br>Feedback from unpaid carers from surveys and other means. |
| | | Continue investment in the National Short Breaks Scheme until 2029. | Welsh Government. | Short Breaks Scheme bi-annual reports evidence delivery targets met and mechanisms in place to assess impact. |
| | | Unpaid carers are involved in reviewing and improving provision, including assessing its impact on carers' well-being and ability to continue caring. | Local authorities and Regional Partnership Boards. | Local authorities to provide evidence of co-production with unpaid carers, including examples of changes made to respite provision in response to carers' feedback. |
| 2. | Unpaid carers are more aware of respite provision and how to access it. | Ensure clear and accessible information about respite is available to unpaid carers, including how they can request respite. | Local authorities. | Local authorities can evidence how information is made available to unpaid carers and respite is accessed. |

## Priority 6: Mental health and well-being

Unpaid carers should have access to timely, carer-informed mental health and well-being support, including preventative, peer and transition support.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Unpaid carers can access appropriate support to maintain their mental health and well-being, including early intervention and crisis support. | Strengthen mental health services through the implementation of same-day access and early intervention approaches to ensure people, including unpaid carers, can access timely support. | Health boards. | Feedback from unpaid carers from surveys and other means. |
| | | National carer organisations and local carers services provide emotional well-being support for unpaid carers, tailored to different caring circumstances and life stages. | Welsh Government, local authorities, and third sector. | |
| 2. | Unpaid carers receive appropriate information and support when their caring role changes or ends, including following bereavement. | Review existing resources, where gaps are identified, develop new resources, promote and disseminate. | Welsh Government and third sector partners. | Evidence of development of resources, where required. Method of evaluation of impact to be developed.<br><br>Survey data and feedback from unpaid carers/those who have received resources. |
| | | Improve awareness of bereavement support and develop consistent information and signposting for carers whose caring role has ended following the death of the person they cared for. | Health boards and third sector partners. | Evidence of information resources being developed and promoted, and feedback from former carers on the accessibility and usefulness of support. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | More unpaid carers who may be at risk of suicide are identified and supported. | Strengthen recognition of unpaid carers within suicide and self-harm prevention activity.<br><br>Welsh Government will seek to continuously improve our understanding of suicide and self-harm risk in unpaid carers through research and evidence.<br><br>Suicide risk and prevention is included in carer aware e-learning for health and social care professionals and third sector agencies working with unpaid carers. | Welsh Government. | Development of content and effective distribution and promotion.<br><br>Potential for information arising from data on suicide.<br><br>Evidence of use of e-learning materials. |
| | | Professionals undertaking carers needs assessments consider the risk of suicide. | Local authorities. | Local authority quality assurance audits. |

## Priority 7: Carers in care planning

Unpaid carers should be involved in care planning and decisions, with clear information, appropriate consent and support through changing needs, discharge, end of life and bereavement.

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Unpaid carers, including young carers where appropriate, are identified early and recognised as partners in assessment, care planning, healthcare and treatment planning, and at key transition points, enabling them to participate meaningfully in decisions about the people they care for. | Professionals involve unpaid carers in assessment, care planning and reviews. | Local authorities. | Local authority quality assurance audits.<br>Care Inspectorate Wales inspection and assurance activity.<br>Information from Llais about carers experiences. |
| | | Health professionals involve unpaid carers in care and treatment planning and reviews with the consent of patients. | Health boards. | Health boards quality assurance audits.<br>Insight from Healthcare Inspectorate Wales' assurance activity.<br>Information from Llais about issues arising from confidentiality and consent. |
| | | Health boards ensure staff have clear and consistent understanding of confidentiality and consent, regarding the sharing of information with unpaid carers. | | |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Unpaid carers are proactively involved in the hospital discharge plan for the person they care for and feel supported. | Professionals actively involve unpaid carers in discharge planning, in line with Welsh Government Discharge Guidance. | Health boards. | Health board quality assurance audits of discharge plans and complaints.<br><br>Insight from Healthcare Inspectorate Wales' assurance activity. |
| | | Welsh Government to further strengthen responsibility to consult carers in hospital discharge guidance and to ensure the carer is willing and able. | Welsh Government and health boards. | Feedback from unpaid carers about their experience of being involved in hospital discharge planning. |
| | | Health Board leaders ensure information and support are available for unpaid carers at discharge, maximising impact of Welsh Government funding. | Health boards. | Reporting information to Welsh government on use of ringfenced funding via the Regional Partnership Boards. |
| 3. | Unpaid carers feel valued and are equal partners in care when decisions are taken about health and social care services which affect them. | Statutory partners take the views of unpaid carers into account when taking service and policy decisions about patients and people receiving care and support. | Health boards and local authorities. | Information provided by unpaid carers to Llais and involvement in relevant complaints.<br><br>Impact assessments undertaken demonstrate consultation with unpaid carers. |

| | Outcome | Actions | By whom | How we will assess impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | Unpaid carers are recognised as partners in planning care for people approaching the end of life and receive appropriate support through bereavement. | Carers are offered information about support, their rights, bereavement services and what to expect as care needs change and after death.<br><br>Statutory partners and providers ensure unpaid carers are involved, where appropriate, in advance care planning, palliative and end of life care coordination. | Health boards, local authorities and commissioned providers. | Evidence from local audits, service reviews and unpaid carer feedback. |