



# West Sussex Joint Commitment to Family and Friend Carers 2021- 2026

This strategy has been developed in partnership by  
West Sussex County Council and NHS West Sussex  
Clinical Commissioning Group



## Foreword

*With more people than ever before caring for their relatives, friends and neighbours, a system-wide coordinated response to identify and support carers of all ages is vital. This is important, not only for the health and wellbeing of the carer, but also for their family and friends whose own health depends on their carer keeping well and providing the best possible assistance.*

*Unpaid family and friend carers, both adult and children, are often the ones holding families and communities together and giving the right support at the right time during a person's caring journey can make a huge difference. The County Council and the local NHS are resolved to make West Sussex a county that values carers and does not take them for granted. This strategy sets out how we will support and encourage carers to be more proactive about their own wellbeing and, together with partners, we aim to build carer resilience and make the right interventions when carers are most in need.*

*We hope you will find this strategy informative and of interest. We firmly believe that the more we engage and plan together in respect of family and friend carers, the better outcomes we will deliver not only for carers of all ages but also for their loved ones.*



Amanda Jupp  
Cabinet Member for Adults  
West Sussex County Council



Dr Laura Hill  
Clinical Chair  
West Sussex CCG

## Introduction

This is West Sussex's latest joint carer strategy. It builds on the significant progress made over recent years in identifying and improving the experience and outcomes of many family and friends carers.

This document is a public commitment that sets out a clear direction of travel for how organisations will work together to identify and support family and friend carers across the county. The primary audience for the West Sussex Joint Commitment to Family and Friend Carers is the Health & Wellbeing Board, political leaders, officers, commissioners and providers responsible for its delivery. Care has been taken however to make the strategy as accessible as possible for residents.

The coronavirus pandemic has created challenges, with its fast-moving consequences for organisations and carers but nevertheless a robust engagement process has occurred to help identify priorities. The setting out of our broad ambitions and goals for the next five years will enable us and all of our partners to develop more detailed plans beneath it.

We are incredibly grateful that over 1,000 carers, 132 young carers, and almost 200 stakeholders have shared their experiences of what caring is like. Thank you also to the many health and social care staff and other professionals who have contributed their views and opinions to the policy review.

Finally, an acknowledgment to the charity Carers Support West Sussex and WSCC Young Carers (Family) Team who worked with

carers by way of surveys and focus groups to help inform the new strategy.

## Where are we now?

In 2020, a review of the Joint Commitment to Family and Friend Carers 2015-2020 took place. These are just a few of the achievements that were identified as part of the review:

More carers are being reached than ever before.

- Between 250 and 300 new adult carers are being registered every month with Carers Support West Sussex. Registrations have increased by over 65% in the past five years. Over 29,000 carers are now registered with a net increase of 11% year on year.
- More young carers are receiving a service than before with referrals over last five years increasing by over 80%.

More carers are being assessed.

- In a typical month around 80 full statutory adult carer assessments are completed and over 200 lighter touch statutory assessments are achieved.
- Young carers statutory assessments are routinely carried out for all young carers identified and referred for additional support
- Carers of all ages are being supported in all areas of the county, as demonstrated by carer density mapping.

A 'Think Family' perspective is more routinely being taken by practitioners on illness, disability or frailty.

- Carer Support Workers are now based alongside NHS staff in every acute and community hospital.
- New resources for schools, to help identify and support young carers, have been developed by the Young Carers (Family) Team and rolled out to all Primary and Secondary Schools.
- More young carers than ever before are receiving a service than before with referrals over the last five years increasing by over 80%. New resources for schools, to support young carers have been rolled out.
- The Carers Health Team, delivered by specialist trained health care professionals, has been recognized by NICE as an example of best practice.

We are innovating.

- The carer service offer has been regularly reviewed and improved. A Carer Discount Card was launched in February 2020, which is saving carers and young carers money, and encouraging socialisation. 5, 000 cards have been issued to date.

We are leading by example.

- WSCC is striving to be a carer friendly employer and has:
  - ✓ A policy covering carers who are Local Authority employees and their managers responsibilities.
  - ✓ A workplace carers network for employees who are carers.
  - ✓ Carer passports in operation.

There is, however, more to do.

During 2020 and as part of the engagement with professional stakeholders, carer and young carers, the issues below were identified as the **top challenges** carers may have (or likely to have) experienced in West Sussex. It aligns closely with national research conclusions.

- The negative impact of caring on physical health and mental health (including loneliness and isolation) being one of the single biggest issues expressed by carers of all ages.
- More carers experiencing financial hardship.
- Identification of carers, young carers, and recognition of carers' expertise by healthcare services being generally seen as haphazard or poor.
- Back-up for carers and suitable respite becoming more critical.
- The increased need for isolated and stressed carers of all ages to come together for peer support and social activities.
- Recognition and support for young carers in educational establishments being inconsistent and the need for social activities for this isolated and stressed cohort is increasingly clear.

In addition to the local engagement work, secondary analysis was undertaken by reviewing existing data and information (i.e. surveys and reports) to enable a broader understanding of carer related issues, both locally and nationally.

These included:

- West Sussex Joint Commitment to Carers 2015 – 2020
- NHS England, Commitment to Carers, 2014
- Carers UK: Carers Week 2020 Research Report, June 2020
- Carers UK: Caring Behind Closed Doors 2020
- Analysis of Covid-19 Public and Key Stakeholder Survey (Sussex NHS) 2020
- Age and Digital Exclusion – GP Map 2020
- Public Health Update: BAME communities
- Carers UK State of Caring 2019
- Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) 2018-19
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Carers 2011
- (Pan) Sussex Carers Partnership Engagement Report 2021

This strategy is also based on the following legislation and relevant national policy and guidance:

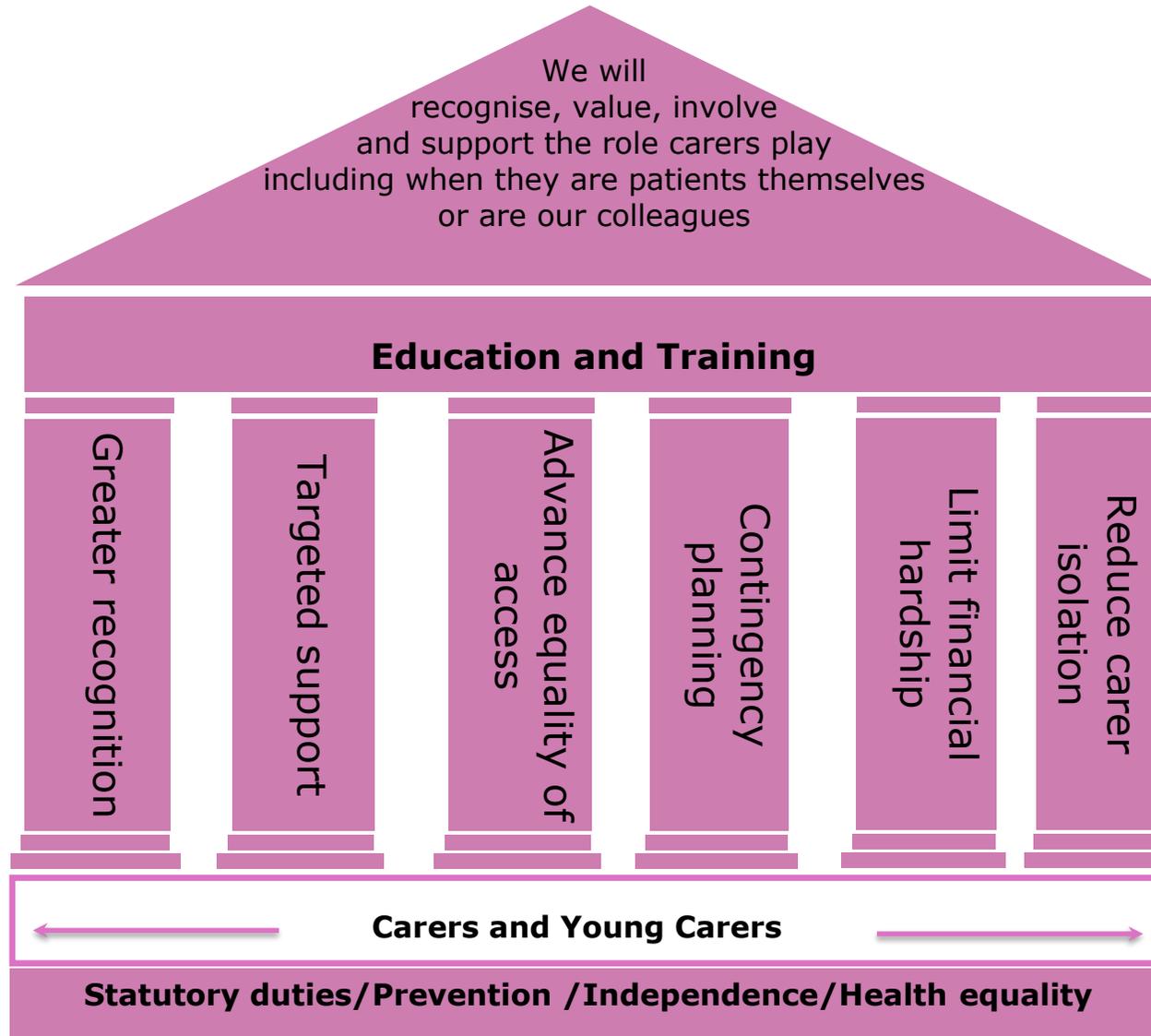
- The Care Act 2014 sections 6 & 7.
- The NHS Act 2006 section 82.
- Children Act 1989 section 27
- Children Act 2004 section 10
- Children and Families Act 2014
- NHS Constitution and NHS Long Term Plan
- The Long-Term Plan for the NHS
- NICE Supporting Adult Carers guidelines



## Our priorities for the future

The West Sussex Joint Commitment to Family and Friend Carers 2021-2026 states the main priority elements for health and social care over the next five years, in the support of adult carers and young carers. It lets local people, and organisations, know how our approach will be developing and is an invitation to join us in our efforts. **There are to be six priority areas:**





***'I feel totally cut out of the (service) planning but relied upon to keep home life stable and the person I care for'.***

Carer Survey Respondent

### **Carers will benefit from greater recognition and support.**

We will:

- Improve how health & social care identifies unpaid carers, of all ages, and strengthen support for them to address their individual physical and mental health needs. We will do this through introducing best-practice Quality Markers for primary care, developed with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), that highlight best practice in carer identification and support
- Roll out 'top tips' for general practice (G.P.'s) for young carers which includes access to preventive health and social prescribing, and timely referral to local support services.
- Monitor and support good practice by educational establishments to identify and support young carers.
- Review and improve the training offer for professionals relating to carer and young carer identification and best practice.
- Through consultation, support a greater number of professionals to recognise and support young carers.

- Encourage the national adoption of Carer's Passports, which identify someone as a carer and enable staff to involve them in a patient's care. These will be complemented by developments to electronic health records that allow people to share their caring status with healthcare professionals wherever they present.

***'I'm very young and try to do my best'*** Young Carer Survey Respondent

### **We will better target resources to support carers at each stage of the caring journey in order to best prevent carer breakdown and enable best care.**

We will:

- Work together (GP's, Health and Social Care staff, educational staff etc.) and network partners (local and national) to better support carers from the initial point of identification as a carer to life after caring.
- Produce Young Carer guidance and resources for GP Practices to help identify and then support the health needs of Young Carers.
- Maintain high quality assessment/support planning and review case worker capacity in order to better target intervention before carer breakdown/crisis.

***'Accessing information about services that would be appropriate for my family members based on our religious belief and cultural needs'.*** Carer Survey Respondent

**We will continue to identify and support carers from vulnerable communities.**

Carers from a minority background (3% of carer survey respondents) want simple, inclusive and appropriate support so they may access timely information and guidance. Our challenge is to support carers close to where they live and where they access services they need, in a manner that works for them.

We will

- Work with Carers, communities and our partners to support carers in the geographical, cultural and faith-based communities they live and work by working with those communities and people that have the most influence over carer support.
- Provide specialist services that meet the needs of all carers whatever their caring circumstances.

**We will ensure that more adult carers understand the out-of-hours options that are available to them and have appropriate back-up support in place for when they need it.**

We will:

- Review and relaunch the West Sussex Carer Emergency Contact Card Scheme and 1,000's more carers, of all ages, will benefit from contingency planning conversations. More carers will benefit from similar conversations with the NHS and have their plans included in Summary Care Records, so that professionals know when and how to call those plans into action when they are needed.

**We will try and limit financial hardship as a result of caring**

We will:

- Pilot a dedicated benefits adviser role, so that adult carers can be better supported with information and benefits guidance to ensure they are receiving the benefits they are entitled to (i.e. Carers Allowance, Personal Independence Payment).
- Continue to support working carers through influencing local employers and offer increased support to carers wanting to return to work or re-train.
- Continue to support families where there is a young carer to maximise their incomes.

***'I don't get to play with my friends and we don't have money to do hobbies'.*** Young Carer Survey Respondent

***'As a carer I need time away from the person that I care for as they live in my house. Affordability is an issue here'.*** Stakeholder Respondent

## **We will limit carer and young carer isolation**

We will:

- Ensure that 1,000's of adult carers are helped to become digitally connected.
- Maintain some carer peer support groups that enable on-line connection for those unable to travel or leave their loved one, to attend face to face carer support groups.
- Ensure that more carers of all ages benefit from Technology Enabled Care.
- Review adult carer respite provision with a particular focus on coverage and affordability.
- Develop social opportunities and group provision for young carers missing out on childhood opportunities because of caring responsibilities

## **MONITORING DELIVERY AND IMPACT ACROSS THE PATHWAY**

West Sussex County Council and the NHS plan to monitor the progress being made with the goals set out above. The Carers Strategic Partnership Group will lead on the delivery of the strategy, review progress, identify gaps and work together to find solutions.



This multi-partnership strategic group, chaired by the Joint Commissioner for Carers, will report to The Health and Wellbeing Board.

It is vital that we assess whether our efforts are making a demonstrable difference to the experience of carers and young carers. We will therefore actively involve carers of all ages in helping us achieve the aspirations set out.

### **To get involved, or find out more, contact either:**

Carer Support West Sussex at [info@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:info@carerssupport.org.uk) (Carer Response Line on 0300 028 8888) or the Joint Commissioner for Carers at

[CarerCommissioning@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:CarerCommissioning@westsussex.gov.uk)

