

## DEEP DIVE UPDATE: SUPPORT FOR CARERS

To: Adults Committee

Meeting Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020

From: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director: People & Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Key decision: No

Outcome: To provide Adults Committee with an update on work that has taken place to support carers within Cambridgeshire, and outcomes resulting from this

Recommendation: Adults Committee is being asked to consider and provide feedback on the outcome of initiatives to identify and support carers across Cambridgeshire

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 Most of us will be a carer at some point in our lives. The Care Act 2014 defines a carer as someone who helps another person, usually a relative or friend, in their day-to-day life. This is not the same as someone who provides care professionally or through a voluntary organisation.
- 1.2 Carers are a valuable asset to our society but providing care can have an impact on carers in terms of their own health, education, ability to remain employed, relationships and social life. The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to take a preventative approach to providing support to a wider group of carers than previously acknowledged. It also introduced the right of carers to have a statutory assessment to identify their need for support and where those needs meet the national eligibility criteria, to receive support to meet those needs from the local authority.
- 1.3 Estimates from the 2011 census data indicate there are currently over 60,000 carers in Cambridgeshire and nearly 20,000 in Peterborough. Although most are adults there are approximately 4,208 carers in Cambridgeshire and 1,900 in Peterborough who are under the age of 25.
- 1.4 Research tells us that the number of family and unpaid carers who provide care and regular support to another individual will increase substantially over the next ten to fifteen years because people are living longer. This means that there will be an increase in the number of people who are carers and that on average they will be undertaking caring roles for longer periods of time. The physical and mental health conditions associated with the ageing process means that family and unpaid carers will need a range of support to enable them to feel valued and manage their caring responsibilities alongside enjoying their own lives.
- 1.5 A preventative approach is therefore key to local and national strategy to supporting carers, and forms a central part and outcome of the Adults Positive Challenge Programme. The vision for the programme is that by 2023 local people will drive the delivery of care, health and wellbeing in their neighbourhoods, delivering a financially sustainable service which will enable a neighbourhood approach which supports more people to live independent and fulfilling lives for longer. The programme recognises the important roles carers play and is proactively putting in place approaches which enable early identification of needs of carers and how the council and commissioned services can maximise the physical and mental wellbeing of carers. This has proven critical to our success in supporting carers throughout the recent pandemic.
- 1.6 With this in mind, this report will aim to provide Adults Committee with a deep dive into the approach taken across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to improving access, awareness and provision of support to carers, with an overview of outcomes achieved to date and plans to build upon these positive developments moving forward.

# 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Carers have always been placed at the heart of the Adults Positive Challenge Programme and the workstream has delivered key outcomes with considerable success to date. This

year the work stream has focused on achieving three key priorities:

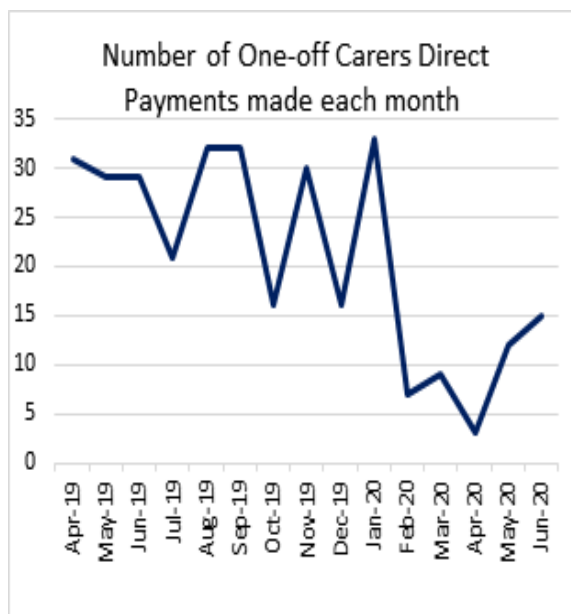
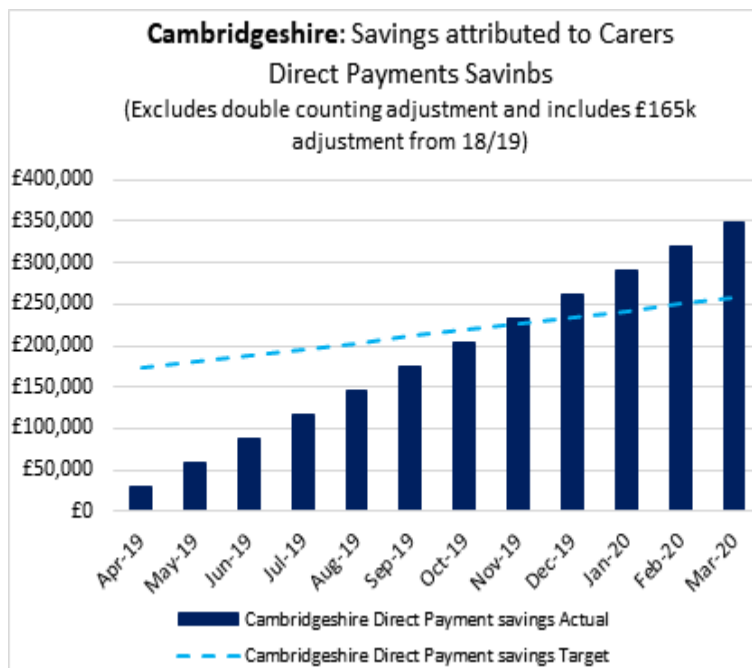
- Prevention and Early Intervention: Ensuring carers are identified early, meaningful conversations are carried out and carers are prevented from reaching crisis point and breakdown.
- Ensuring carers have access to information, tools and support to enable them to manage their health and wellbeing and support them to maintain their caring role e.g. through a “one stop shop” information offer from the new provider.
- Carers can balance their caring roles and maintain their desired quality of life.

- 2.2 In doing so, all developments have aimed to improve outcomes for carers, minimise the demand on statutory services and reduce the cost of crisis services by ensuring that carers receive the right support at the right time to enable them to sustain their caring role. This has included consideration of identifying those individuals who do not necessarily relate to the label of carer but undertake the role.
- 2.3 In October 2019, an update to Adults Committee was provided which outlined the following:
- The progress of workshops aimed at strengthening the conversations practitioners had with carers and the positive feedback received
  - Associated work to improve person centred, holistic care planning practices which saw a move away from standardised, one-off direct payments to support which is tailored to the needs of that carers circumstances and preferences
  - The outcome of the 2018/19 carers survey which identified key areas of improvement including overall satisfaction of carers, ease of accessing information and the impact of feeling isolated.
- 2.4 Since this update, a considerable amount of progress has been made, with positive feedback and outcomes evidenced. This is set out in more detail below.

## **2.5 Strengths Based Conversations**

- 2.5.1 The use of strengths based conversations and developing the way that conversations with carers are used to recognise the issues that matter to them most has been fundamental to the success of this work stream within Cambridgeshire. Improved practice within this area has been delivered through a series of workshops which were delivered to all operational staff. The workshops built on and developed their knowledge and skills in having meaningful and purposeful conversations with carers, directing them towards appropriate support to help them manage their health and wellbeing and enabling carers to maintain their caring role.
- 2.5.2 Through this approach, the council has successfully moved towards a more flexible, outcomes based model which tailors advice, information and support to the needs, aspirations and preferences of each individual. This has become embedded as part of normal practice, and assured through an ongoing programme of over 350 reviews. Whilst one-off direct payments are still used wherever appropriate to do so, other options have also been explored.
- 2.5.3 As the two graphs and feedback below demonstrate, this has not only resulted in better outcomes for carers and the people they care for, but also a financial saving for the council. In fact, many carers tell us that access to good information and advice alongside ongoing support for the people they care for has proven to be more supportive than the one off

direct payment had been.



*"I felt that I was the one that mattered as all other contact with other groups/agencies were focused solely on my husband whom I care for."*

*"The advice and help I received... helped me to see that it wasn't wrong of me to want time for myself. Discussed ways of helping me cope with being full time carer to my wife and still manage to enjoy life whilst not having to feel depressed and alone but also be refreshed - ready for the challenges ahead."*

*“A carer's role is not one that I have chosen, so it was good to just have someone on my side who actually listened and pointed me in the right direction.”*

*“I felt having gone through the process that I was not on my own and that help was only a phone call away. I found the whole process informative and helpful. It also put my own mind at rest and I was not on my own. Thank you.”*

*“I felt listened to and as if I mattered.”*

*“I no longer feel that I am coping with my husband's dementia myself. I had no idea that there was any support out there... I now have access to a range of support groups thanks to my assessment.”*

## **2.6 Quality and Practice Audits**

- 2.6.1 Strengthening the conversation with carers is part of the Quality and Practice managerial audit programme across operational teams in adult social care. Through the audit we are measuring practice against the outcomes we want to achieve for carers. The audit results have shown an improved performance across key areas in the last few months as we see these changes in practice becoming embedded to ensure a good outcomes for carers.
- 2.6.2 The audit process has shown that identification of carers has improved over the last few months (stats are January to July 2020)
- 76% to 80% of cases identified the carer appropriately.
  - The voice of carer was recorded in 65% of cases which is up from 57%.
  - Evidence that the outcomes the carer wants to achieve are discussed are up from 56% to 60%.
- 2.6.3 While there is still improvements to make the audits are showing evidence of practice with carers which is identifying them, listening to and working towards achieving the outcomes they want. The improvements will continue to be monitored at the Practice Governance Board and the Carers Operational Group, both of which are chaired by the Principal Social Worker.

## **2.7 Sharing Best Practice and Raising Awareness**

- 2.7.1 Various methods have also been utilised to ensure best practice across both our operational teams and commissioned services. These methods are shared with the aim of ensuring continuous improvement.
- 2.7.2 A Carers Brochure has been designed to highlight good practice to adult social care practitioners throughout Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Carers Brochure includes feedback from carers who have received a service from us, be that an assessment, supported self-assessment or signposting, or purely a supportive conversation.
- 2.7.3 During Carers Week Laura Green, Manager of the Carers Team in Cambridgeshire, appeared on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to inform listeners about the actions that Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is taking to highlight the needs of carers, and to promote the services that we can offer. There were also articles in the local press highlighting carers as a high priority.

2.7.4 On a weekly basis we run a carers huddle, this is a virtual meeting where practitioners come to discuss cases they are working with and seek guidance from their peers and managers. Practitioners also share their own knowledge and provide suggestions and guidance to best support carers. The carers huddle has become very popular with practitioners and is regularly attended by the Carers Team so that they can offer guidance as the experts in their field.

## 2.8 Commissioned Support Services

- 2.8.1 Following a procurement exercise the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough All Age Carers Service has been commissioned to provide a range of support to carers. The new service, which began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2020, is being delivered by Caring Together (adult carers), Centre 33 (young carers) and Making Space (adult carers of people with mental health needs).
- 2.8.2 The procurement and service offer has been developed in line with the expressed needs of carers and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough All Age Carers Strategy. Working in an aligned way the providers will ensure that carers support is offered consistently across the county but with emphasis on local needs and ease of access. By bringing together providers under the All Age Carers Service this will help to manage smoother transitions between children and adults services as well as providing similar models of support and ensuring that we can act on any carer needs identified across the service.
- 2.8.3 The services will provide a range of support activities under the Thrive Model which aims to increase the early identification of carers, provide support to help carers maintain their caring role and to prevent carer breakdown.

### **Thrive Model**

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- 2.8.4 Caring Together and Making Space, who will be working with adult carers, will liaise closely with the council's Adult Early Help team who will provide statutory Carer Assessments where required. Assessments for Young Carers will be carried out by Centre 33 across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 2.8.5 To support carers who are unable to carry out their caring role due to an emergency, the provision of 'What if' support has been extended from 24 hours to 72 hours. By registering for this element of service a carer can have peace of mind that in an emergency the provider will step in to the carers' role for up to 72 hours to enable either the carer to resume their caring role or for a longer term support package to be put into place for the cared for person.
- 2.8.6 The service aims to achieve a range of outcomes, which will be monitored during the lifetime of the contract to ensure that all providers are achieving key areas such as:
- Carers are being identified at an early stage
  - Carers across the county are able to access the service easily and without barriers
  - Carers are able to access information, advice and signposting at times and in ways which are suitable for their needs
  - Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised service they need to support them in their caring role
  - Carers own health and wellbeing is a priority
  - Carers can enjoy life alongside their caring role and will be offered a range of options to enable them to have time away from caring. Personal care will be provided to the cared for person where necessary
  - Carers are fully consulted and are able to influence and improve the services that are available to them
  - Carers are reassured that there is an agreed plan in place for when they can no longer maintain a caring role.
- 2.8.7 By providing a higher level of preventative support and additional support for those people with complex needs the new All Age Carers Service aims to meet a number of outcomes which will ensure that carers feel they are recognised, valued and supported.

## 2.9 COVID-19 Response

- 2.9.1 The pandemic has had a significant impact on informal family carers. In absence of access to their usual support networks and services many carers have provided increased practical care and support and have experienced increased worry and anxiety linked to their caring role. The council recognised this impact from the outset and, in response, put in a place an approach to ensure all carers known to adult social care were contacted and additional support provision was commissioning
- 2.9.2 The aim of this contacting informal family carers was to check that they were coping, provide preventative advice and connect them to sources of support where it was needed. Within Cambridgeshire, 1743 carers were identified. Of these, it was established 33% were already in contact and being supported by existing teams. To ensure proactive contact was made with as many carers as possible more than 30 staff across the council were redeployed to work with the Countywide Community Hub and the Carers Support Team to contact these individuals. This enabled the council to reach 85% (966) of remaining carers.

2.9.3 Whilst 79% of those contacted did not require any additional support, were grateful for being contacted and made aware of sources of help should this be required in the future. Feedback included below emphasises the positive impact this approach had on the experience of carers during this challenging time:

*"I was so surprised when the council got in touch - I just wasn't aware that help was out there. I was so relieved when I received a phone call. Straight away I felt they had me covered and I can tell you, having that reassurance was an enormous weight off my mind. At the minute my mother and my husband and I are coping OK, but just knowing someone is there on the end of a phone should things go wrong – that means so much and it really helps me sleep at night. The service is just fantastic and I can tell people are working hard and that they care. It's helping me stay positive. That and thinking about my grandchildren and giving them all massive hugs when this is over, even if they do find it embarrassing."*

2.9.4 11% of those contacted were provided with additional support and 41% of onward referrals were for help via the COVID-19 hub eg help with shopping and medication collection or wellbeing calls to address isolation. Other types of support offered included help to address health concerns, finance and contingency planning. The Carers Support Team made follow up contact with a further 66 carers in response to individual need.

2.9.5 The council's commissioned service, provided by Caring Together, also extended the reach of their What-If service throughout the duration of the peak pandemic period. The contracted service for adult carers in Cambridgeshire provided emergency support for up to 24 hours where an informal caring arrangement breaks down. This was extended to provide support for up to 72 hours and the scope of who could register for the service was increased to cover Young Carers and Carers in Peterborough. The extended timeframe (up to 72 hours) for support forms part of the newly commissioned All Age Carers Service and from the 1<sup>st</sup> August will be in place for all activations of What If plans.

## **2.10 Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)**

2.10.1 In October 2019, Adults Committee was updated on the outcome of the Survey of Adult Carers in England. Unfortunately COVID-19 has resulted in a delay in the national survey of carers in England by a year meaning the council is unable to benchmark the results from this year against outcomes presented to Adults Committee in 2019 to evidence the impact of the programme on a wider scale.

2.10.2 However, the evidence we have collated which has been presented throughout this report provides a positive indication of impact. Carers UK who produce the national survey, have also produced [a report](#) into the impact of COVID-19 in carers

2.10.3 Many of their recommendations mirror activities currently in progress and being addressed within the Adults Positive Challenge Programme and work is ongoing to process the learning as a result of this project and to implement positive change.

2.10.4 Examples include:

- Increasing awareness and recognition of unpaid carers
- High priority given to providing carer information and advice
- Ensuring that the impact of reduced services on carers and their families is monitored in terms of carers' health and wellbeing and ability to care to avoid burn-out



- Carrying out contingency planning with carers
- Ensuring systems to access food and medication
- Supporting access to personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Supporting carers balancing work and caring
- Ensuring the creative use of technology enabled care (TEC) to support carers
- Support for carers emotional and mental wellbeing including bereavement support
- Income maximisation to address the financial impact of caring during the pandemic

## 2.11 Next Steps

2.11.1 This report seeks to demonstrate the significant success the council has had in improving practice alongside access to and development of provision to support carers across Cambridgeshire. We also recognise that further opportunities exist and this work continues. The workstream will therefore seek to work towards the following within the coming year:

- Finalise and embed the workforce development offer in relation to carers to ensure continuous improvement in practice
- Expand the 'strengthening conversation' approach work associated with carers across all areas including areas delegated to the NHS such as Occupational Therapy and Mental Health as well as Primary Care Networks and Social Prescribers
- A mapping and review of information, advice and guidance available to carers across the wider community and independent sector prior to accessing statutory adult social care services to understand opportunities to maximise the use of these and prevent the escalation of need
- Further mobilisation and embedding of the All Age Carers Contract to ensure the approach taken by providers aligns to the priorities of the council and any new opportunities arising are undertaken
- Improved mechanisms for feedback from carers and a means to ensure feedback is utilised to influence change moving forward
- Review, in detail, the learning arising from COVID-19 to assess any additional opportunities to improve support for carers. At present, the need to consider overnight support for carers, the use of volunteers and digital resilience have been identified.

## 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

### 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.9.

### 3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraphs 1.4, 1.5, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.9.

### 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

There is no significant implications in this category.

### 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

There is no significant implications in this category.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraphs 2.5.3.

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The council has awarded contracts referenced in section 2.8 were in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the council's contract rules.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There is no significant implications within this category.

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There is no significant implications within this category.

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraphs 2.5.3, 2.7, 2.9 and 2.10.

### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There is no significant implications within this category.

### 4.7 Public Health Implications

There is no significant implications within this category.

## 5. Source documents

### 5.1 Source documents

None