



SUPPORTING CARERS IN DENBIGHSHIRE

**A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT
2008 – 2011**

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

DENBIGHSHIRE CARERS STRATEGY 2008-2011

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Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to summarise the main points and actions of the new Denbighshire Carers Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to improve and develop sustainable and appropriate services and support to known Carers, and to reach out and identify those Carers who are 'hidden' from services.

Carers provide care for someone with an illness or disability or someone who is elderly and cannot manage on their own without support. The care they provide is unpaid. Carers may be caring for someone who:

- Has a learning disability
- Has a physical and/or sensory impairment
- Has a long term medical condition
- Has a mental health condition
- Has a drug or alcohol dependency
- Is an older person

The Strategy reflects a commitment by social care, health and voluntary sector partners to improve the services offered to Carers, and sets out the key actions for supporting Carers over the next three years.

As a Local Authority we must work within certain guidelines, and have a range of duties that we are required to meet. The Welsh Assembly Government usually defines these. In addition there are priorities and targets that are set at a local level, which are based on the needs of the local population. These all help to shape the development of services for Carers in Denbighshire. The main Strategy document includes a summary of some of the most significant policy documents.

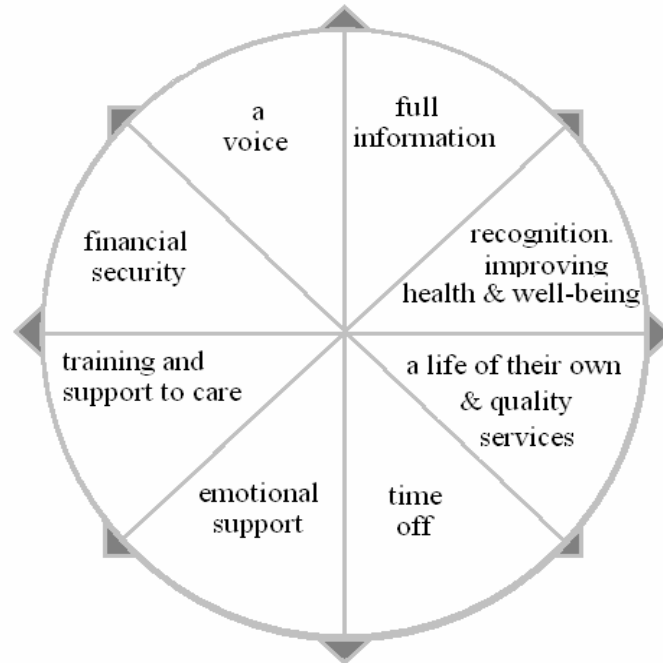
Involving Carers in the development of the Strategy

For the purpose of developing the Strategy, we have pulled together information about the services that we currently have for Carers, and how these services are funded.

We have involved Carers, and people who work with Carers in this process, and asked them how well these services work, how they could be improved, and what other services should be considered for Carers. We did this by inviting Carers to a special consultation event, asking them to complete a questionnaire, and meeting with young Carers.

The Carers Compass

In Denbighshire we would like to plan and improve services that will help Carers to achieve the same outcomes as those set within the Carers Compass. The Compass was developed by The Kings Fund in 1998, and has been used by several local authorities to help them to plan services for Carers.



The Compass sets out eight key outcomes for Carers which are shown in the compass diagram. They are:

- **Full Information:** To ensure that Carers are aware of how to access services and support, and that they receive timely information, and are fully informed on the nature of the illness or impairment of the person they care for.
- **Recognition, Health and Well Being:** To ensure that Carers are recognised, and have their own needs, including health needs, taken into account by practitioners and staff in health and social services.
- **A life of their own, with quality services for the Carer and the person they care for:** To ensure that Carers are supported to achieve a more fulfilled life, including access to leisure, employment and life long learning opportunities, by providing flexible, quality alternative care for the cared for person.
- **Time off:** To ensure that Carers have access to a range of breaks and opportunities to take time off from their caring role.

- **Emotional Support:** To ensure that Carers have access to a range of services where they are listened to.
- **Training and Support to Care:** To ensure that Carers have access to a range of training opportunities that enable them to develop the practical skills required to carry out their caring responsibilities.
- **Financial security:** To ensure that Carers are aware of benefits that are available to assist them, and that they can be signposted to agencies that can offer advice.
- **A voice:** To ensure that Carers contribute to the shaping and development of local services through forums, events and groups

The Denbighshire Carers Strategy has arrived at a number of priorities against each outcome, and these priorities have been influenced by Carers living in Denbighshire.

How many Carers are there in Denbighshire?

According to the 2001 Census, there are an estimated 10,659 Carers, in Denbighshire, including approximately 2,000 young Carers. Approximately 2,762 Carers care for over 50 hours a week.

In addition, national research tells us that an estimated 3,950 people in Denbighshire take on a caring role each year, although they do not always receive information and support immediately.

It is difficult to be certain how many of these Carers currently receive support and services in Denbighshire, particularly as under current legislation services for Carers cannot involve any personal care of the cared for person. Therefore the outcome of a Carer's Assessment will not infrequently result in an increase in the community care services provided for the cared for person, but invariably provide Carers with a break from their caring role. Based on information provided by the voluntary organisations who support Carers and from social services records, an estimated 2,000 receive support. This falls massively short of the estimated number of Carers in the County.

The Impact of Caring

It is a well researched fact that caring can have an impact on the health of Carers. Carers' poor physical and mental ill-health can be attributed to lack of information, support, concerns over finance, and the general stresses and strains of caring. It is therefore vital that we consider the health implications for Carers, and give due regard to services that promote and improve the health and well being of Carers.

However, it must also be acknowledged that caring responsibilities can also bring with them their own rewards and satisfaction for the Carer. Carers often

take pride in the skills and knowledge they have acquired through their experience of caring, and they must be recognised and valued for this.

How do we currently support Carers?

As previously stated, defining services for Carers can be difficult as services provided for the cared for person such as personal care, day care and respite services should also benefit the Carer. The majority of these services are provided by social services.

Other services that are provided to Carers include information provision, advice and signposting services, Carer support groups, emotional support, Carers Assessments, 'one off' grants, holistic therapies and training opportunities. The majority of this support is provided by the voluntary sector by organisations such as the North Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS), the Alheimers Society, Hafal and NCH Young Carers. Many of these services receive funding from Denbighshire Social Services, although it must be acknowledged that voluntary organisations receive funding from other sources to support these services.

A Strategy for Improvement

In order to arrive at the key actions for the Strategy, we have looked at what Carers have said they need, and the services that they feel should be either improved or developed for Carers.

It is important to state that many Carers were very complimentary of the services that they receive, in particular the services provided by the voluntary sector.

The Carers Strategy highlights points that have been made repeatedly by Carers, and those working with Carers. We have set these out using the eight areas of the Carers Compass, and have listed a number of key actions against each of the eight areas.

In relation to young Carers and parent Carers, Children's Services and Adult Social Care will establish a separate working group to develop a Joint Action Plan to take forward the key actions in regard to these two groups of Carers.

In brief, the key actions identified in the Strategy are:

- 1. Full Information:** We will:
 - Improve the provision of information for Carers, in particularly in hospitals, and improve the provision of information on specific conditions to Carers. We will also promote Carers issues more widely with the public, and consider the development of a Denbighshire Carers website.

2. Recognition and Health and Well Being: We will

- Encourage health professionals, including GPs to be more proactive in identifying Carers and referring them on to other services.
- Review the process for carrying out Carers Assessments for adult Carers, and will also consider creating a dedicated post to carry out Carers Assessments.
- Work with the Children and Young People's Service to develop more support for Young Carers, and raise awareness of young Carers with schools and colleges.
- We will develop a Carers Emergency Scheme to include a Carers Emergency Card and an emergency plan.

3. A Life of their Own with quality services for the Carer and the person cared for We will :

- Consider the options for improving the availability of more flexible short term breaks, and look at how we can improve the provision of alternative care in emergency situations.
- Ensure there is a consistent level of support for Carers within primary care.
- Submit a proposal to the European Convergence Fund to support Carers into employment, including Young Adult Carers.
- Work with our partners in education to assist Carers in accessing life long learning opportunities.

4. Time Off We will:

- Promote the use of Telecare technology to assist Carers in their caring role.
- Develop a more consistent approach for providing Carers with services following a Carers Assessment.
- Review spend against the Adult Social Care Carers budget to create capacity for new Carers, and consider one-off direct payments for Carers.

5. Emotional Support We will

- Consider the options for developing a dedicated telephone line for Carers to provide support and access to professional advice.
- Link in with the new Denbighshire Children and Young People's Single Plan to consider how support for Young Carers can be developed.
- Look at opportunities for the voluntary sector to work jointly to address rurality issues, and improve service provision in South Denbighshire.

6. Training and Support to Care We will:

- Ensure that Carers have access to a range of regular and timely training opportunities that help them to develop practical skills for their caring roles, and will work with our partners in education to assist Carers to access life long learning opportunities.

7. Financial Security We will:

- Work closer with the Welfare Rights Unit and other advice agencies to increase Carers' awareness of benefits entitlements, and supporting Carers to maintain financial security.

8. A voice for Carers We will:

- Continue to promote the involvement of Carers in planning and developing local services through forums, events and groups, ensuring representation across all Carer groups. We will also consider ways of involving Carers who have difficulties in becoming involved in this way.
- Ensure that Carers receive feedback when they have been consulted, and develop a broader range of feedback systems.
- Ensure that all social care and health services planning groups have a Carer representative on them.

Implementing and Monitoring the Strategy

The real success of the Strategy will be measured by the difference it makes to the lives of Carers in Denbighshire. The membership of the current Denbighshire Carers Strategy Group will be strengthened to ensure consistent representation across the voluntary and statutory sectors, and Carers will be encouraged to share their views on the progress of the Strategy via forums and planning groups across all service user groups. The Carers Strategy Group will have responsibility for developing the Strategy Action Plan, and for monitoring the progress of the action plan against the Carers Compass' outcomes for Carers.