

Carer friendly Wiltshire

All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy

2024-2028

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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce our joint Wiltshire All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy.

We recognise caring is an important part of life and it is unpaid carers - daughters, sons, partners parents, or friends, who often hold families together and fill the gaps in support that statutory services are not always able to provide.

This strategy has been developed following the Covid-19 pandemic, which brought the important role and experience of unpaid carers of all ages to the forefront. We understand that some unpaid carers would have struggled to manage additional hours of care during this time, and many would have felt the impact of increased anxiety, isolation, loss, and loneliness.

We hope that this All Age Unpaid Carers Strategy will help us to build on the achievements of the last joint strategy and will present some real opportunities for us to reaffirm our recognition and appreciation of the vitally important role that unpaid Wiltshire carers make to the cared for person and our communities .

We are committed to making Wiltshire Carer Friendly and we will do our best to ensure that support for carers in Wiltshire continues to develop and improve.

This strategy sets out some important priorities:

- ♦ Early identification and recognition of unpaid carers.
- ♦ Improved information and advice.
- ♦ The need for systems and services that work for unpaid carers.
- ♦ Improved health and wellbeing of unpaid carers
- ♦ Young unpaid carers having the same recognition and priority as adult unpaid carers, as well as access to information and support services

We want to thank our voluntary sector partners for helping to facilitate our engagement with unpaid carers of all ages .



Cllr. Jane Davies
Cabinet Member for Adult
Social Care, SEND and
Inclusion
Wiltshire Council

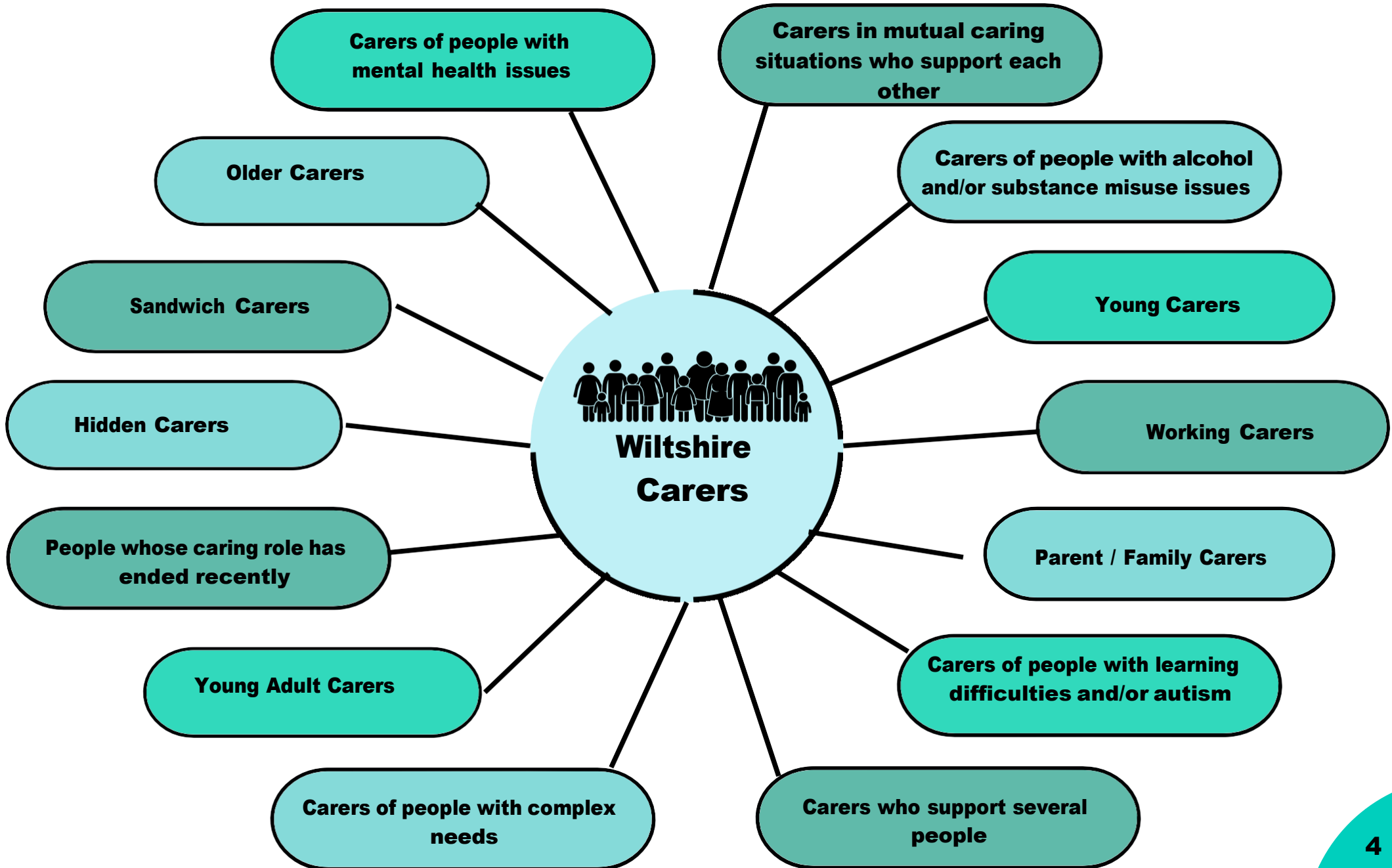


Cllr. Laura Mayes
Cabinet Member for
Children's Services,
Education, and Skills
Wiltshire Council



Cllr Richard Clewer
Leader of **Wiltshire Council** and Chair
of
**Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire
Integrated Care Partnership**

This strategy is for all unpaid carers who live in or are caring for someone that lives in Wiltshire (excluding Swindon), including but not limited to:



Introduction

A person is a unpaid carer if they provide unpaid care to a family member, friend, or neighbour because of long-term physical , mental ill health , disability or care needs relating to old age.

Unpaid carers provide a range of support including personal care, emotional support, help with practical tasks such as shopping, and reminding or giving medication. Most unpaid care is provided by children and spouses. Research suggests that 1 in 5 children under the age of 18 provide some level of care.

As a society, we rely on unpaid carers, and improving support for unapid carers must be at the heart of how we meet the needs of both our ageing population and the demands on our health and social care systems. This is an issue that can affect any of us - the need to provide care for a friend, neighbour or loved one in our lifetime, often with very little time to plan. However, the impacts of being a carer are wide ranging: it affects carers' social and family lives; their mental and physical health; their education, work and income.

Wiltshire Council's vision is to encourage the development of strong communities ,where people can fulfil their potential, be actively involved and included in their communities, make informed decisions, have control over their lives, and be valued and included within society. In Wiltshire, we start from the strengths, talents and assets that each person has – this means looking beyond their diagnosis or needs, however important these may be.

This strategy describes how we will work together to make Wiltshire a supportive, carer-friendly place where the contribution of unpaid carers of all ages is valued and recognised, and where carers are able to live good lives alongside their caring responsibilities. The delivery plan that goes with it will set out how we will make that happen.

The term Carer Friendly Wiltshire was created and is a working concept by our former contract holder, Carer Support Wiltshire.

Quotes are from Wiltshire Unpaid Carers in 2022-2023

"I need to know where to get help in a crisis"

"I don't want to be treated differently to my peers"

"A break that is right for me is important - time to recharge my battery"

"I want to have choice and be able to find information that will support me in my caring role"

"My financial situation needs to be recognised - there is a financial impact to caring so I may need help"

"Quality services are important for both me and the person I care for"

"I don't want to be seen as just an overprotective parent. I want to be listened to"

"I need to be prepared to adapt to changes"

"I want to be able to access support in my local community"

"Early recognition will help me to work longer"

"I matter too. I want to enjoy my own life and achieve my own goals"

"I want to access the right help as my life changes"

"I want to carry out my role safely"

"Peer support is really helpful"

"I want to have some support when my caring role ends"

"Caring can be rewarding but it can take its toll on your own health"

Our Vision and Aims

Our aim is to ensure that unpaid carers can maintain good physical and mental health and wellbeing, achieve a healthy balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside of caring, whilst enabling the person they care for to enjoy a good quality of life.

The strategy has been shaped by the diverse range of unpaid carer voices in Wiltshire. They have told us that caring is often uniquely rewarding but sometimes incredibly frustrating. So many people do not realise they are unpaid carers; they do what they do because they love those they care for. They need our recognition, creativity, and tangible action so they feel confident, supported, and able to cope with the often tough demands they face daily.

Our vision

We want Wiltshire to be a carer friendly county, where communities recognise and support unpaid carers of all ages, so people do not feel alone in their caring role.

It is important that unpaid carers are able to continue to support the person they look after and care about, to a degree of their choosing; and that in doing this, unpaid carers are still able to look after their own health and wellbeing.

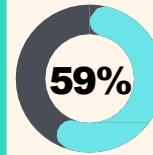
A) The impact of caring

The impact of caring is significant and varied. The financial value of unpaid care work in England and Wales is roughly equivalent to the annual NHS England budget. The quality of care provided by a family member will often be high-quality and personalised, to an extent which a paid worker arguably could not reach. However, caring can also negatively affect relationships, as well as the health, quality of life, education, skills, work status and income of the unpaid carer. Often the impact will be more negative for unpaid carers that provide personal care (such as helping to dress), care for 50 or more hours of care per week, and for those that live with the person for which they care.

The contribution that unpaid family members, partners, friends, neighbours and others make in caring for people with age-related frailty, disabilities, health conditions, substance misuse and other needs is enormous. New findings from Carers UK and the University of Sheffield show that unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute £445m to the economy every day – that's £162bn per year, roughly equivalent to NHS England's entire annual budget.

These impacts are felt disproportionately by some groups more than others, and this strategy will target the right support where it is needed most.

According to the 2021 Census, there are an estimated **5 million** unpaid carers in England and Wales. **(Carers UK, 2021)**



Nationally 59% of unpaid carers are women. Women are more likely to become carers and provide more hours of unpaid care than men. **(Carers UK, 2021)**

1 in **7**

1 in 7 unpaid carers in the UK are juggling work and care. **(Census 2021).**

1 in **5**

As many as 1 in 5 children and young people are young unpaid carers. **(Action for Children, 2023)**

B) Local profile

The proportion of the total population who provide unpaid care has dropped since the last Census^[1]; however, the number of people providing significant levels of unpaid care increased. Unpaid carers who provide more than 20 hours per week, and particularly more than 50 hours per week, are more likely to experience poor mental and physical health outcomes, lose out in the workplace, and feel unable to cope.

	2011 Census	2021 Census
% of population providing unpaid care for family, friends, neighbours etc	10.1%	8.7%
Number of carers providing more than 20 hours unpaid care per week	14,500	19,300
Number of carers providing more than 50 hours unpaid care per week	9,500	11,800

[1] This may be because the wording of this question in the Census changed between 2011 and 2021.

On Census Day 2021, there were approximately 5million unpaid carers in England and Wales – equivalent to 9.1% of the usual resident population aged 5 years and over. Nationally, a higher proportion of females than males are unpaid carers; a higher percentage of people living in the most deprived areas provide unpaid care, compared to people living in the least deprived areas. Almost half (41%) of unpaid carers are between 46-65.

1 in 7 unpaid carers in the UK are juggling work and care, and as many as 1 in 5 children are unpaid carers. The latest census data shows 166,000 young unpaid carers in England and Wales; however, there are estimated to be an additional 600,000 hidden young unpaid carers who may not be receiving any support.

We know that the number of unpaid young carers nationally is under-recorded, and this is likely to be reflected in Wiltshire. A survey of young people in 2020/21 provided stark evidence of the impact of caring on young people's lives:

- ◆ Young unpaid carers are significantly more likely to drink alcohol daily or weekly than their peers. 4% of young carers at primary school drink alcohol often / most days.
- ◆ Young unpaid carers are the group of vulnerable young people most likely to take prescription drugs recreationally.

National and local context

- ◆ Young unpaid carers at primary school are less likely to feel safe at home than their peers, and young unpaid carers are least likely to feel safe from crime.
- ◆ 36% of secondary school age young unpaid carers have either been a victim of domestic abuse or violence themselves or witnessed a family member being a victim.
- ◆ 33% of primary age young unpaid carers and 42% of secondary age young unpaid carers have spent money on gambling.
- ◆ Less than two thirds of primary school age young unpaid carers and less than one third of secondary school age young unpaid carers feel confident about their future. Half of young unpaid carers have felt so worried, they cannot sleep at night.
- ◆ More than a third of young unpaid carers in Year 12 and above have self-harmed – the highest proportion in this age group.
- ◆ Amongst primary school pupils, young unpaid carers are the least likely to eat breakfast and are less likely to have 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

Whilst we have made progress through the previous Wiltshire Carers Strategy, we still have further to go. Each year, unpaid carers nationally are asked five questions about their experiences of being a carer. Although carers in Wiltshire report better-than-

average satisfaction with the support they get, and often feel part of the decision-making process, they currently report poorer quality of life and social contact than the national and regional averages.

	Wiltshire	England	South West
% of carers who said they were extremely/very satisfied with Social Service support for carer or cared-for person	39.3	36.3	37.8
Proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussion about the person they care for	65.7%	64.7%	66.5%
Proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about support.	58.9%	57.7%	61.5%
Carer-reported quality of life score	6.6	7.3	7.1
% of carers who reported they have as much social contact as they want	16	28	23.9

National policy and legislation

This strategy aligns with and supports implementation of national and local priorities

National policy / legislation / guidance

The Care Act 2014

The Children and Families Act (2014)

NHS Commitment to Carers (2014)

National Carers Action Plan (2018 - 2020)

The NHS Long Term Plan (2019)

The White Paper - Health and Social Care Integration (2022)

The White Paper - People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform (2021)

NICE Guidelines

The Triangle of Care: A guide to best practice in Mental Health Care in England

Local policy / guidance

Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2022 - 2032

Wiltshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Wiltshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Wiltshire Independent Living Strategy 2022

Wiltshire Autism Strategy 2022

Wiltshire Dementia Strategy 2023

Wiltshire Council and BSW Integrated Care Board (ICB) have worked with unpaid carers, practitioners, our local voluntary sector and other stakeholders to create a shared vision of what support for unpaid carers in Wiltshire should look like

In Spring 2022, Carer Support Wiltshire which is the former commissioned service for carers hosted a series of conversations with unpaid carers to explore experiences of providing unpaid care. This included a conference attended by around 30 unpaid carers, an online survey and 1:1 and group discussions with carers who attend CSW carer support groups. Separate sessions and workshops were also held with young unpaid carers.

The themes that emerged included:

- ◆ The importance of peer-to-peer support for unpaid carers to get the information and support they need.
- ◆ The need for professionals to be sensitive to and aware of the challenges unpaid carers face.
- ◆ The need for clearer communication between professionals and unpaid carers.
- ◆ Unpaid carers are often not aware of the full range of support that is available.

- ◆ Respite is still a critical part of helping unpaid carers manage their wellbeing, allowing them to take breaks from their caring role and access training.
- ◆ Training and support needs to be delivered flexibly so unpaid carers can access it at a time and a place that's convenient to their caring role.

Carer Support Wiltshire has written a report summarising these conversations, in which they review the experience of being an unpaid carer:

“Many unpaid carers go on a journey that is uniquely rewarding but sometimes incredibly frustrating. Their experiences may reflect that of others, but the diversity of unpaid carers and their loved ones means that one size does not fit all when it comes to finding solutions. So many people do not realise they are unpaid carers; they do what they do because they love those they care for. They need our recognition, creativity, and tangible action so they feel confident, supported, and able to cope with the often-tough demands they face daily.”

Feedback sessions and workshops were held with young carers in schools and young adult carer groups to explore:

- ◆ What makes you feel good about yourself?

Working together

- ◆ What has helped you in your caring role?
- ◆ What would help you to manage your role and achieve your goals in life?

Young unpaid carers reported that they need their caring role to be recognised and appreciated, and that they require support (1:1 and peer support) around developing skills, counselling and other mental health support for their emotional health and wellbeing, and access to breaks.

Working together will continue and will include partnership with a range of voluntary sector organisations using different models of engagement to make sure there is good insight into harder to reach communities.

Engagement with unpaid carers that have or are experiencing looking after someone with dementia was also conducted over the Summer of 2023 to inform our dementia strategy at Wiltshire Council. This consisted of group sessions held in Trowbridge, Salisbury and Corsham.

The main outcomes of this were:

- ◆ Understanding an unpaid carer and their role when the cared for moves out of the family home
- ◆ The impact of COVID on families and people with a diagnosis of dementia

- ◆ A guide for families when receiving a diagnosis
- ◆ Peer support

This will support and inform dementia commissioners on what works well for the unpaid carer and family members as well as the person being diagnosed ensuring a whole family approach and more joined up working in commissioning.

Lastly, Wiltshire Council commissioned over the late summer/autumn of 2023 an external provider to hear and relay Wiltshire carers voices since the change in contract in 2018.

This provider has encouraged unpaid carers of all ages and backgrounds to use the creative arts to talk about their experiences and lives as a carer, through the uses of:

- ◆ Poetry
- ◆ Song writing and music
- ◆ Movement, performance through play
- ◆ 360 film making and animation

Achievements from the last strategy

Outcome 1

- ◆ Carers cafes in every area (support group for other carers to get together)
- ◆ Bereavement groups
- ◆ Health checks at GPs surgeries (this is a expectation in the GP accreditation)
- ◆ Schools accreditation launching

Outcome 2

- ◆ Training provided to unpaid carers by Wiltshire Council (manual handling, safeguarding yourself and understanding autism)
- ◆ Hospital liaison service commissioned

Outcome 3

- ◆ Cost of living crisis support by public health
- ◆ Free cooking classes, slow cookers and vouchers given to select young unpaidcarers
- ◆ Wiltshire Council employment of young unpaid carers
- ◆ Citizens advice specialist services for unpaid carers

Outcome 4

- ◆ Monthly meeting with unpaid carers commissioners
- ◆ Events for carers week
- ◆ GP and schools accreditation

Outcome 5

- ◆ Regular engagement events
- ◆ Unapid carers sit on the Wiltshire carers forum as members
- ◆ Hospital liaison service

Priority outcomes

Our priorities are informed by the outcomes that unpaid carers have said are important to them. We have worked with unpaid carers, care professionals and partner organisations to design our approach to supporting and working with unpaid carers under the vision of a carer-friendly Wiltshire.

Our priorities are not ranked in importance and they will all be equally considered throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

Priority 8

Awareness raising in communities, within schools, and workplaces and services
Unpaid carers to be expert partners in the growth and monitoring of services

Priority 7

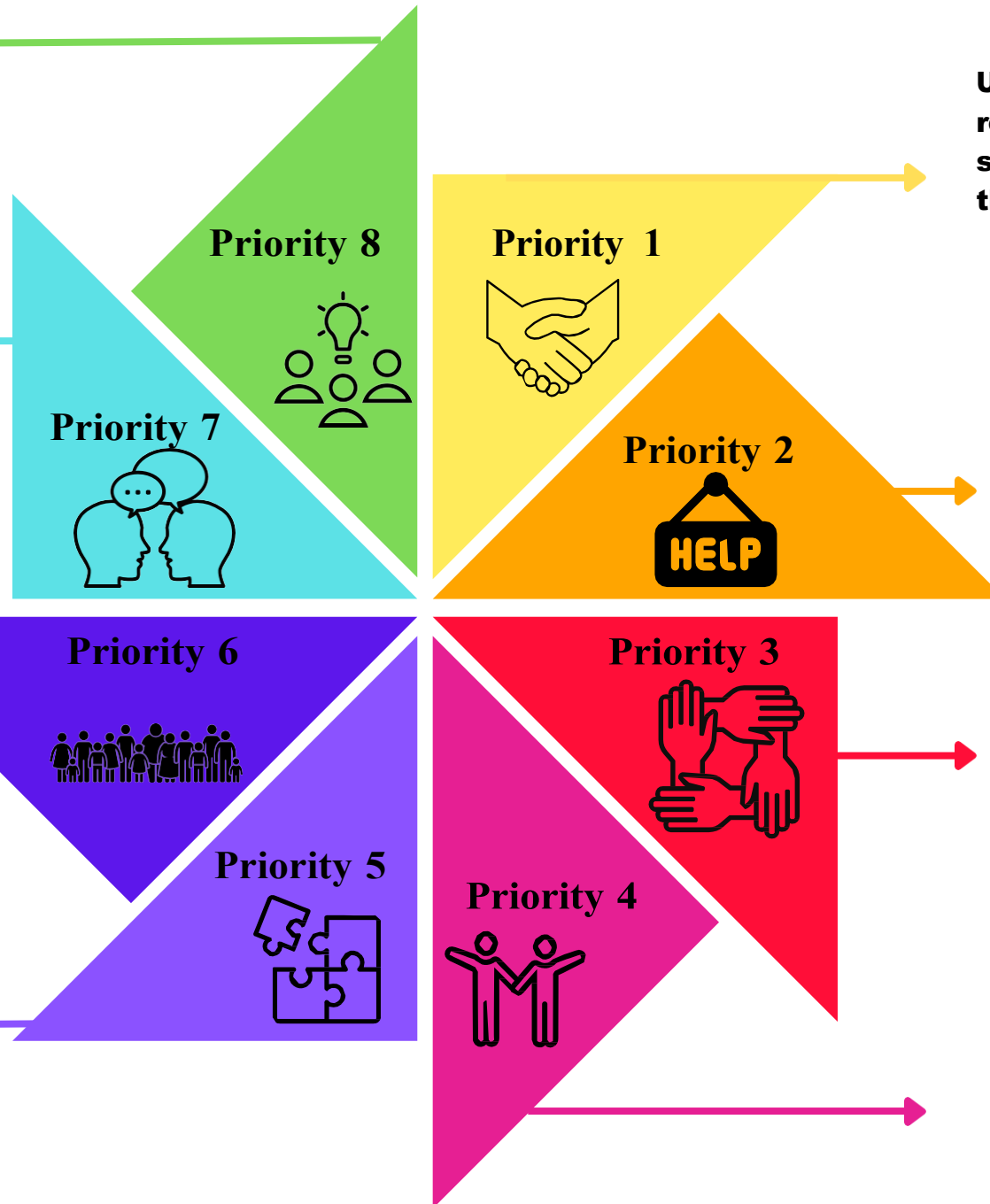
Unpaid carers are able to share their experiences, and have a wide range of social opportunities in order to reduce isolation

Priority 6

Unpaid carers are supported to transition from their caring role when the time comes

Priority 5

Unpaid carers have access to information and services which support their health and wellbeing



Priority 1

Unpaid carers are identified, recognised and offered support if they need it, at the earliest opportunity.

Priority 2

Unpaid carers with different needs are able to access the right support and information when they need it, in the way that works best for them.

Priority 3

Unpaid carers have fair access to support and information on financial matters and their rights

Priority 4

Young unpaid carers are able to thrive and develop educationally, personally and socially, and are protected from excessive or inappropriate caring roles.

Additional priorities

Safeguarding unpaid carers

We are committed to ensuring our unpaid carers are included in conversations or enabling safeguarding practices, Unpaid carers themselves can be in situations at times that are considered at risk. We are committed to support unpaid carers through training for carers including: manual handling, understanding legal power of attorney, and understanding autism . Through working with unpaid carers, we will better understand what support we need to develop. We are also exploring more ways to ensure each unpaid carer has a carers emergency card in different forms to promote the importance of having a contingency plan.

Unpaid carers can also be vulnerable with their own needs so we should ensure that we continue engagement with internal social care teams, hospital and local charities to support with social care support, staying safe online and combating social isolation.

Parent carers:

We have identified that being a parent carer can be one of the longest caring roles, with many parents not realising that having a child with additional needs could make them a parent carer. If your child relies on you for support with a learning disability, neurodivergent diagnosis or mental health condition this does leave you eligible for support as a parent carer. We work closely with our Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, Growing up and Moving on Team, Local Offer Team and the commissioned carers provider to ensure that parent carers are supported through their child's educational and life journey as well as creating social and wellbeing support to continue life as a parent.

Mental health in carers:

From a recent survey (2023) conducted by Carer Support Wiltshire 98% of unpaid carers feel stressed about their caring role, 90% feel mentally exhausted and 60% express the need for more emotional support.

Whilst there is good work happening with our commissioned providers it is important that Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire ICB ensure that support is also provided. We will be working with our Training and Development team to create mental wellbeing training, working with public health to develop respite offers that include healthy weight management and healthy mind and Warm and Safe Wiltshire to develop support to carers struggling in the cost of living crisis.

Caring steps together:

Caring Steps Together has been devised to support individuals who are admitted to hospital. One of the aims is to make it easier for those with care needs and their unpaid carers to access information related to discharge.

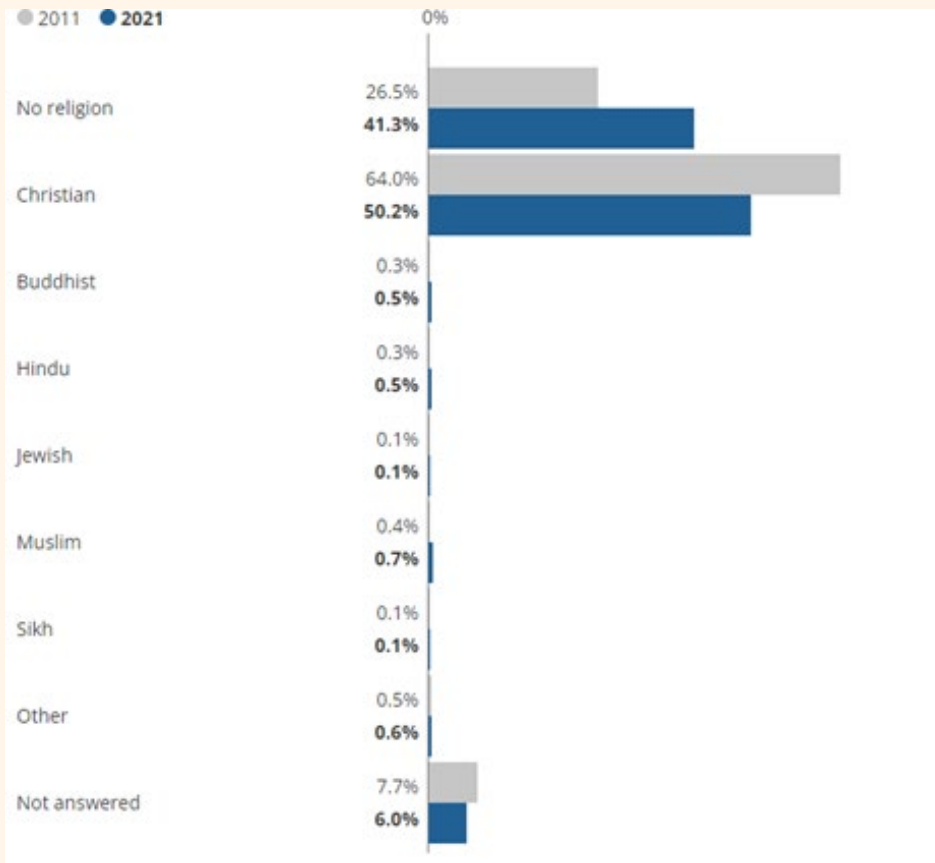
Caring Steps Together offers a range of leaflets and videos about planning for discharge, including what help is available to support the process of leaving hospital and adjusting to returning home.

Caring Steps Together recognises the importance of carers throughout this process and, where appropriate, encourages them to participate in developing the support plans.

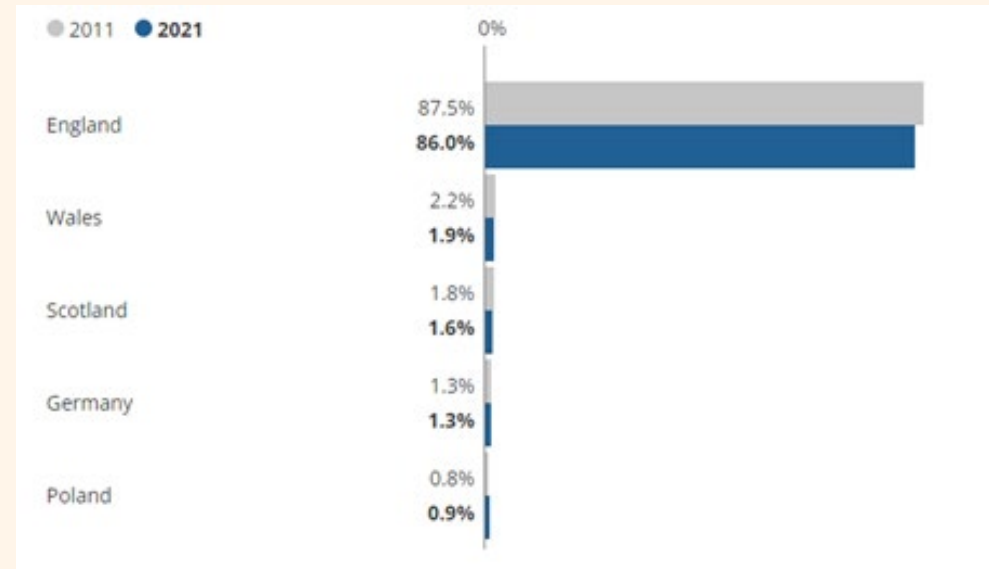
Diversity in Wiltshire

From the census data we are able to understand how Wiltshire is changing culturally, this will help us ensure that services are created to support unpaid carers from different cultures and languages to be supported whilst supporting other people.

Percentage of residents in Wiltshire stating they have a religious affiliation:

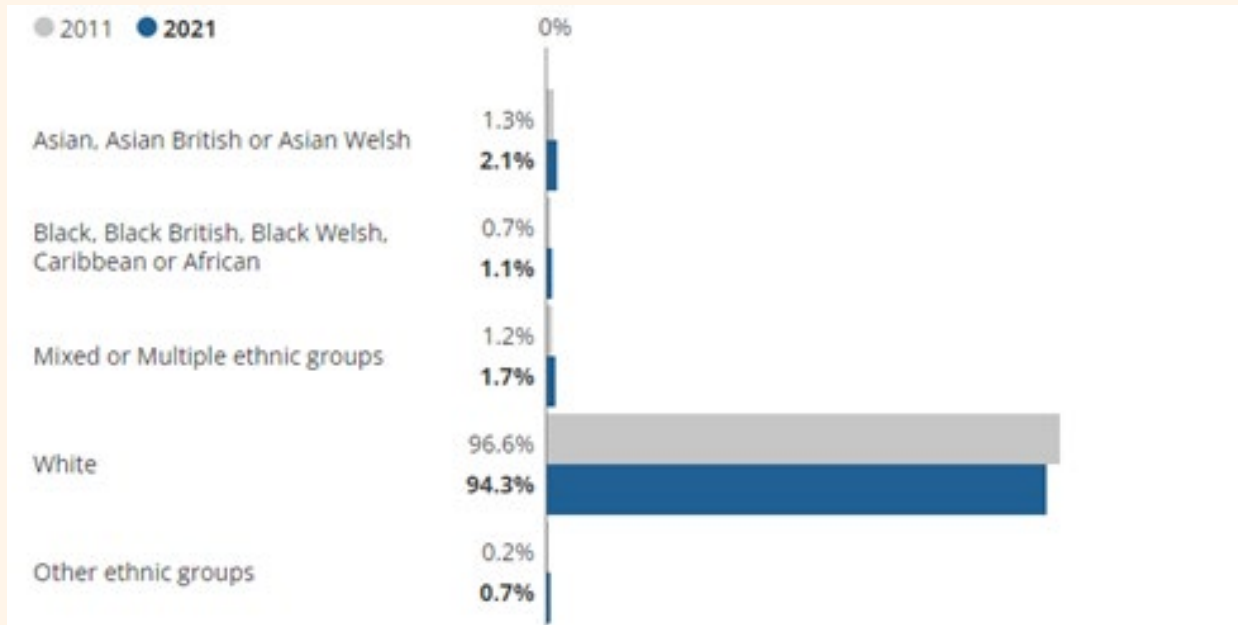


Percentage of residents in Wiltshire country of birth:



Diversity in Wiltshire cont.

Percentage of residents ethnic group



12% of the population of Wiltshire are either currently serving in the armed forces or part of the veterans/ex-military community , so this is an important area to ensure support ties in with existing services for this community.

Principles underpinning the delivery plan

Community recognition and understanding of the issues faced by unpaid carers of all ages

The needs of cared for and unpaid carer should not be seen in isolation of each other

Readily available information and support to access services for children, young people and adults

Working together to commission a range of easily accessible services to support unpaid carers

Personalised care

Organisations working together

Reducing social isolation of carers

Delivery plan

Community engagement	Easy access to information and assessment	A range of personalised support	Support during crisis	Support when the caring stops
Review and extend the unpaid carers champion role	Online assessment tools as well as paper based information and support	Online resources for workplaces on supporting carers at work and into employment	7 day a week 8am-8pm urgent community response services	Counselling support and mentorship
Community meeting events	Range of assessors including social prescribers, hospital carer liaison, social workers and school-based champions	Developing flexible at home and residential options for respite care for self-directed support	Unpaid carers advanced care planning support	Bereavement support
Young unpaid carer community projects	WC dedicated web page and links to delivery partners. Financial assessment tools to maximise benefits, financial advice	Manual handling training , end of life care, as well as CV support and careers advice	Unpaid carers hospital based liaison	Housing and employment advice
Awareness raising projects in workplaces and communities	Broad communications campaigning and events throughout the year to raise awareness on key issues	Expert unpaid carers mentor role developed. Health checks for all carers Wiltshire Carers passport with wellbeing benefits	Safeguarding for young unpaid carers	Support for 18 months after caring role has ended

Measures

OUTCOMES REQUIRED	MEASURES
I want to access support , contribute to and be valued by my community (inc. work, education, family & social life)	100 % of identified unpaid carers receiving carer assessment & review Satisfaction survey of unpaid carer services & experience of being a carer Improvement year on year of 31% of young unpaid carers satisfaction to 85% Improvement year on year from 42% adult unpaid carers satisfaction to 85% School attendance/attainment for young unpaid carers Active identification of people with LD living at home with older parents, Increase number of carers registering for a carer contact card
I don't want to be financially disadvantaged because of my caring role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Referrals to / uptake of financial advice •Impact of caring on working hours
I want good mental and physical health and wellbeing	Referrals to / uptake of mental health services (inc. counselling, psychotherapy) Caregiver Strain Index Number of unpaid carers registered as a carer with GP
I want to be identified as a unpaid carer, recognised as an expert partner and be informed, involved, included and listened to	Access to training Survey of unpaid carers feeling involved in decision-making around the cared-for person
I want to spend quality time on myself, away from my caring role	Number of people receiving respite increasing from current baseline Number of hours respite provided from current baseline Number of unpaid carers able to have personalised support increases year on year
I want to be able to adjust to transitions in life, including a life outside of caring when the time comes	Access to bereavement counselling support Access to employment and financial advice Access to support for 18 months after caring ends
I want early support to prevent crisis	Number of referrals to rapid response reduce from baseline Number of emergency admissions to hospital for cared for persons reduce from baseline Working with community hospitals and the three acute hospitals to develop an accessible support system for treating carers in hospital

"BSW"

Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire

"Hidden Carers"

Hidden carers are those who may not recognise themselves as a carer and consequently are less likely to access support. Some studies suggest that identification as a carer and seeking support can vary across the spectrum of caring, with some carers being more at risk of being hidden. For example, those who do not care for people with very complex and/or intensive needs are more likely to be hidden. Parent carers of children and young people with SEND, may not always recognise themselves as a carer. There can also be a resistance to adopting the label of 'carer' because of close family relationships.

"Sandwich Carers"

There is an increasing number of 'sandwich carers' (Carers UK estimate 2.4 million in the UK) - those looking after more than one person at the same time. For example, caring for young children and caring for older parents. This terminology can also be used much more broadly to describe a variety of multiple caring responsibilities for people in different generations.

"Working Carers"

An increasing number of people are having to work longer, often beyond retirement age. According to the 2021 Census, the largest proportion of carers are in employment either full or part-time. This means that carers are often juggling working with caring responsibilities and some with multiple caring responsibilities.

"Young Carers"

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under whose life is affected by caring for at least one family member, over and above just 'helping out'. Young carers might look after, parents, grandparents, siblings or close relatives.

"Parent/Family Carers"

Parent and family carers can provide support for their children, including grown up children if they cannot manage without their help. They can be ill, disabled or have mental health and substance misuse problems.

"Strategy"

Outlines the key priorities we'll focus on for carers services over the next five years and the vision of Wiltshire Council. It describes how we'll work together to improve the health and needs of carers and provide support when needed. The plan has been developed by listening to carers living in Wiltshire in our communities, our partners and stakeholders.

"Unpaid Carers"

Carers who are not employed by a business and not receiving a typical wage to care for the person they are caring for, this does not include incomes such as: benefits or employment for another job.

"Outcomes"

Focusing on achievements for the carers due to the changes in processes and services.

"Priorities"

Important factors based on importance to Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire carers.

ICB

Integrated Care Board

