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Partnership



West Glamorgan

Regional Carers Strategy

Region: West Glamorgan Regional Partnership

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Introduction

The important role of unpaid carers in our society is recognised by Welsh Government in [‘A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health & Social Care’](#). Without the vital role they play, there would be no sustainable system of health and social care. That is why Wales remains committed to supporting and investing in unpaid carers as an integral part of the health and social care workforce. This commitment is reflected in [‘Prosperity for All’](#) – the national strategy for taking Wales forward – which covers learning provision and access to information and support for carers.



The Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care identified ‘carers’ as one of the priority areas for transformation of health and social care. It calls for greater effort across the health and social care sectors to plan for new models of care and support for carers on an ongoing basis.

Changing the way we support carers is part of the cultural journey we are undertaking in Wales under the [‘Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015’](#) to create a healthier, more resilient nation. Giving carers the help and support they need is one key step in this journey. The [‘Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014’](#) [The Act] sets out how carers should be supported. Certain parts of The Act form the legal foundation of meeting carers needs:

- Part 1 of the Act defines what a “carer” is;
- Part 2 sets overarching duties, wellbeing outcomes and local functions;
- Part 3 sets out how to assess needs;
- Part 4 establishes how to meet needs.

The Act, as with all legislation, can be interpreted in different ways and so carers’ experiences can differ from place to place. This document provides a strategic focus for working with carers to achieve improved outcomes and better support for the important role they play in our communities in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

Foreword



As Chair of the West Glamorgan Regional Carers Partnership Board, I am very pleased to present this five-year Carers Strategy on behalf of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership. Unpaid carers are under recognised, undervalued and underappreciated in our society. It is our hope that this strategy will take a step forward to addressing this.

It is important to recognise and give heartfelt thanks to our Carer Representatives who have made a significant contribution to this work. Their time, attention to detail and enthusiasm is truly inspirational, in spite of their already busy lives. Third Sector Carers Services involved in this work have been instrumental in representing the voices of carers and made invaluable contributions to help us understand carers' experiences and the challenges they face navigating this post viral world. Despite increasing pressures on our public services, our statutory partners from Swansea Bay University Health Board [SBUHB], Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council have continued their involvement and been committed to the development of this strategy as well as the action that will be driven by our regional commitment.

This strategy represents the future, we are keenly aware that our ambition may not be realised fully within five years. This document is a beacon for us to follow on the journey to achieving our aims. We will need to revisit and revise this strategy at points along the journey in order to meet the demands of this rapidly changing world. Nevertheless, this document sets out the West Glamorgan region's strategic commitment to unpaid carers and its commitment to work collaboratively to achieve these aims to the best of its ability.

Gaynor Richards, Chair West Glamorgan Carers Partnership Board.

Using this document

The purpose of this document is to outline what we know about Carers, their needs and outline how we intend to meet those needs. The intended audience for this document is varied and there are sections which will hold more relevance to some people more than others.

For example, Carers may want to pay more attention to section 1, which explain our shared mission, vision and values, or section 2, which outlines what we know about carers and what outcomes they want to achieve. Statutory partners will likely pay closer attention to section 3, as this will aid the implementation of the strategy into their own policies and processes. It is for you to determine which parts of this document are of more relevance and importance to you.

This document will make reference to **other related documents** which are available to access from the West Glamorgan Transformation Office. There will also be some links to other online sources of information [highlighted](#) throughout this document.



This document is one of a series of regional strategies produced by the Regional Partnership Board [RPB] for West Glamorgan. Each strategy defines a regional approach to addressing one of the key priorities for health and social care across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

The regional strategies explain this strategic approach in three parts:

Section 1 – Establishing our aims

In this section, we will establish the national, regional and local factors that influence the direction we are heading for this particular strategic focus. This will give us a clear mission and vision and a set of principles within which we will work together to achieve our aims.

Section 2 – Defining the context

In this section, we will explain the key terms, challenges, opportunities and definitions that underpin this strategy. We will also describe the specifics of the West Glamorgan region and the relevant services that are within scope.

Section 3 – Achieving our aims

In this section, we will build describe how we will achieve our mission within the context defined in Section 2. This gives us a set of outcomes and indicators as well as an approach to implementation that covers how we will monitor, report, evaluate, fund and govern the changes to be delivered.

The **Quick Reference Guide** will bring all the elements of the strategy together into a shorter document for you to print and keep at hand. The guide is designed so that people can connect the key concepts to the broad aims of this strategy.

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Section 1 – Establishing our aims

Mission

The Social Services and Well-being Act defines a “**carer**” as “**a person who provides, or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child**”. The term “carer” can be associated with paid professionals who provide care to people. Unpaid carers are usually family or friends that give their time to support a person who need support. However, “unpaid” does not necessarily mean that they do not receive any financial support for carrying out this role. Some carers can claim allowances and benefits to support them. Unpaid carers are focus of this strategy but are referred to as “carers” throughout this document.

This regional strategy represents a commitment to a long-term strategic mission for meeting carers’ needs. We (the Regional Partnership which includes representatives of service users and carers) believe that this mission is defined by the following statement, which has been agreed in partnership with unpaid carers, their representatives and the organisations involved in our regional carers partnership:

We will work together to improve the wellbeing of carers in West Glamorgan by listening, learning, being supportive and delivering changes through the Regional Partnership that meet the rights and needs of carers.

This mission means that we want to work together using co-production principles and ensure that we are listening and learning from carers throughout the lifetime of the strategy. We want to achieve a consistency of experience for carers tailored to their individual needs. We want the strategy to make changes where needed to continuously improve services to enhance the well-being of carers consistently across the region.

By committing to this mission, we aim to achieve our vision for carers over the course of the next five years. We will continue to monitor and revisit our mission to ensure it remains appropriate and aligned to the needs of carers in our region.

Vision

Carers are identified, recognised and supported to care. They have a life alongside caring and have a feeling of well-being throughout their caring journey.

This vision represents the future we aspire to, where we recognise the contribution of carers to our society. It is a statement that we plan to continue to actively identify, listen, respect and properly support carers to not just continue their caring role but to enable them to have fulfilling lives. At the end of this five-year strategy, we want to be able to look back and see that this vision has come true.



What matters to us

Fig.2. What carers told us matters to them (2019)

The West Glamorgan Regional Carers Strategy vision was developed in several stages. In 2019, Carers Representatives discussed the broad issues facing carers and developed a number of statements to spark discussion with larger groups of carers. Workshop events held in the Autumn of 2019 established an aspirational vision and themes that were important to carers. This formed the basis for an 'outline' of the regional strategy that we could continue to develop collaboratively.

A second series of Workshops in March 2020 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and meant an alternative approach to co-production of this document was taken.

Co-production of the strategy to the level desired by the Regional Partnership was not possible due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, involvement of Carers Representatives continued. We recognised there is a need to create the right conditions for continuous involvement and engagement with carers to enable co-production opportunities to flourish.

To this end, one of the first actions arising from this strategy is the establishment of a **Carers Liaison Forum** to bring carers together with people and organisations who work with or have an interest in carers' issues. Once the Forum is established, we will seek their support in reviewing and updating this document throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

Following the immediate urgency presented by the pandemic, the Strategy Development Group was reconvened to discuss and continue our efforts in creating the Regional Carers Strategy. The group consisted of Carers Representatives, Third Sector Carer Support Services, and Health Board and Local Authority representatives. From August 2020 to November 2020, the group met to review the existing evidence available and new evidence emerging about the impact of the pandemic on carers.

The Regional Carers Strategy is underpinned by the following **values**:

- 🎨 **Carers are treated with kindness, dignity and respect.**
- 🎨 **Working with carers will be built on a foundation of honesty and integrity to foster trusting relationships.**
- 🎨 **Carers are empowered to speak up for themselves and the person they care for if/when needed.**
- 🎨 **Carers are respected as experts by experience and specialists in the wellbeing of the person they care for.**
- 🎨 **Carers are equal partners in discussions about their needs.**
- 🎨 **Carers are supported to achieve equity to enable them to make informed decisions and enhance their well-being.**
- 🎨 **Carers' rights are upheld by making consistent, reliable, fair and just decisions.**
- 🎨 **Carers and organisations/services learn together through experience, empathy and partnership.**

We will use these values as the foundation for everything we will do to deliver this regional strategy. This will drive everything from our behaviours in working together as a partnership to evaluating that the changes we deliver align with the principles of our strategy.

Strategic Alignment

Carers provide a significant contribution to society in Wales. Nationally, care provided by unpaid carers is worth an estimated £8.1 billion a year.

There are currently **three national priorities for carers** – established by Welsh Government – which underpin this strategy:

- **Supporting life alongside caring** – All carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring.
- **Identifying and recognising carers** – Carers deserve to be recognised and supported so that they can continue to care. It is vital that carers identify themselves as carers.
- **Providing information, advice and assistance** – It is important that carers receive the right information and advice when they need it and in an appropriate format.

A fourth national priority proposed by Welsh Government in the Carers National Plan¹ is also included:

- **Supporting carers in education and the workplace** – employers and educational / training settings should be supported to adapt their policies and practices enabling carers to work and learn alongside their caring role.

Welsh Government is supported in its ambition to deliver these priorities and improve outcomes for carers by the Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers. This group is a national forum to inform and steer the delivery of improvements for carers across Wales. Their vision for carers in Wales is one where “**all carers are identified, recognised and supported for the invaluable care and commitment they provide**”.

The Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee inquiry² into the impact of The Act on carers described the progress made as

¹ Welsh Government (2020) Carers’ national plan for Wales. Retrieved from: <https://gov.wales/carers-national-plan-wales>

² Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (2019) Caring for our future: An inquiry into the impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to carers. Retrieved from: <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s96075/Report%20->

“underwhelming” and “patchy”. Welsh Government accepted fully or “in principle” all but two of the Committee’s recommendations. For our region, this report offers valuable insight into the progress that must be made to ensure The Act has a more positive impact on carers.

In West Glamorgan, our regional partnership focuses on the following themes as priorities for transformation across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot (further details are provided at Appendix B):

-  Older People;
-  Children and Young People;
-  Mental Health;
-  Learning Difficulties and Autism;
-  Carers (cross-cutting theme).

There are many other strategic drivers, imperatives and influences that underpin our strategic approach to supporting carers across the region. These have been reviewed and considered in the development of our Regional Carers Strategy and an overview of each source of strategic direction is included in the Appendix C.

Section 2 – Defining the context

About Carers

We recognise that carers are critical to supporting our health and social care services. We support Carers Wales’ call for their recognition as the “third pillar” to this infrastructure³. We support this view because across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot there are over 50,000 carers⁴ in over 160,000 households⁵ who provide care and support that prevent the need for health and social care interventions.

The **Carers Week 2020 - Research Report** revealed that since the pandemic, not only are carers providing more care than before, the number of carers in Wales may have increased from 370,000 to 683,000⁶. How the pandemic has affected the figures for West Glamorgan is, as yet, unknown. The 2021 Census presents an opportunity for us to better understand the impact of the pandemic on our population and determine a baseline for monitoring the impact of the strategy in years to come.

The Equality Act 2010 aims to prevent discrimination of people with protected characteristics. People can be discriminated based on age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Carers will have some of these characteristics and have the right to be protected from discrimination. Carers with protected characteristics can sometimes feel that health and social care services do not recognise, understand or meet their needs effectively in relation to their characteristics. This strategy speaks for all carers and through the Carers

³ Carers Wales (2020) Track the Act Briefing 5. Retrieved from:

<https://www.carersuk.org/files/section/6609/carers-wales-track-the-act-briefing-final-version-eng.pdf>

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2011) Provisions of unpaid care by general health by sex and by age. Retrieved from: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/lc3301ew>

⁵ Office of National Statistics (2014) Number of unpaid carers in household – UA's in Wales. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/adhocs/003305ct02762011censusnumberofunpaidcarersinhouseholduasinwales>

⁶ Carers Week (2020) Research Report. Retrieved from:

<https://www.carersweek.org/images/CW%202020%20Research%20Report%20WEB.pdf>

Liaison Forum we want to ensure that there is diverse representation i.e. including people from BAME and LGBT communities.

Carers can be of any age, have different relationships with the person they care for and different life situations. For example, carers may be Black, Asian or from other Minority Ethnic groups [BAME] and carers from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender [LGBT] communities must also have their identity respected and supported to care in a way that respects this identity. These different dimensions to caring mean that carers are as different to each other as they are similar.

The table below shows the potential differences based on age, relationships and the situations. It is important to note that caring for someone can involve several carers and each circumstance is likely to look different to the next, even within the same caring situation.

Caring scenarios are based on...						
Your age group <i>What stage of life?</i>	Child	Young Person	Adult	Older Adult		
Your relationship <i>Who are you caring for?</i>	Parent / Grandparent	Sibling	Child / Grandchild	Spouse / partner	Unrelated (e.g. neighbour)	
Your situation <i>What is your life like?</i>	Caring for multiple individuals	Working	Unemployed / retired	In education	Living separately to cared-for individual	Living with a disability or illness

Fig.3. Understanding different caring situations

Carers' age, relationships and situations are rarely static. We recognise that people can become carers gradually, but caring can also be thrust upon people through life events. We also recognised that carers can have health conditions that impact on their lives and we would like this strategy

to influence how carers are recognised when navigating their own care and support services.

We have chosen to focus our understanding of “carers” on the needs of carers rather than the situations arising from the needs of the people they care for. Therefore, an element not included in the table above is that of the **types of conditions** that the cared-for person lives with, whether those conditions be physical health, mental health, learning disabilities, autism and/or substances misuse.

We recognise that carers who care for people with conditions or multiple conditions will have different needs from each other. It is also important to recognise that carer’s needs will also vary between groups of carers who may appear to share many of the same concerns and experiences. Nevertheless, conditions have a significant impact on levels of care in terms of time, knowledge and effort. We would like this Carers Strategy to influence how carers are supported in care and support pathways for patients and services users across the health and social care sector in West Glamorgan.

The West Glamorgan Regional Strategies that will support and be influenced by this Regional Carers Strategy are:

-  **Regional Children and Young People Strategy;**
-  **Regional Digital Strategy;**
-  **Regional Dementia Strategy;**
-  **Regional Housing, Health and Social Care Strategy;**
-  **Regional Learning Difficulties Strategy.**

We want to understand **the caring journey** better and ensure there is suitable support at each stage of the caring journey. Many carers have told us they felt a sense of an uphill battle in their journey, from getting information and advice to accessing services and support. We recognise the importance of providing the right support at the right time along this journey.

We have chosen to acknowledge this challenge by illustrating the caring journey in the diagram below:

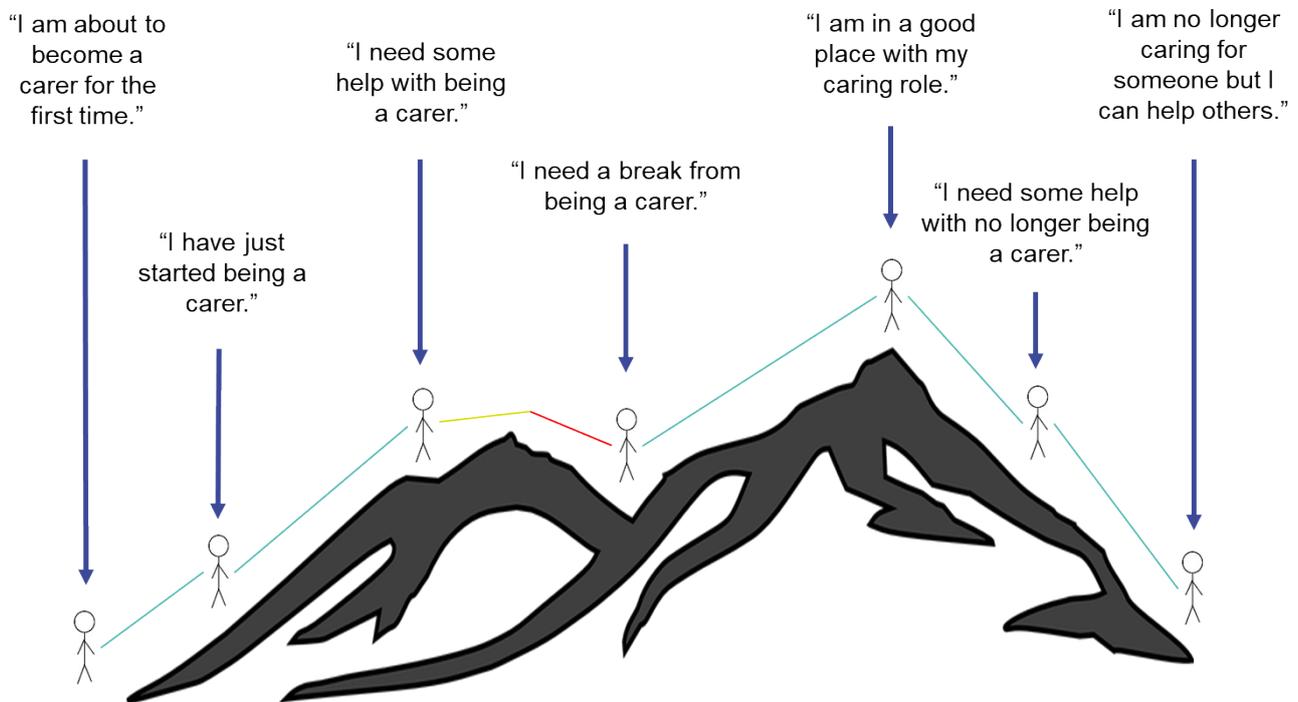


Fig.4. Understanding the journey of becoming a carer

The caring journey can be difficult and rewarding, just like climbing a mountain. It does not take place in a linear form, the path can undulate and the terrain can change. However, unlike a single mountain climb or short-term caring role, caring is frequently a long-term commitment.

Carers will begin the journey with varying levels of knowledge and experience. They may find that along the journey they need help or need a break to get them to being in a good place and they can move between these parts of the journey continuously for the duration. There is also a need to consider the needs of carers at the end of the caring journey, including transition from their caring responsibilities, what their experience can offer other carers and how we can learn from their personal journey.

Carers shows us through their actions that it is a role that people take on because of their commitment and tenacity to help the people they care about. Our aim is to ensure that the caring journey is made easier through working collaboratively with carers, health, social care and third sector

organisations to create the right mix of services and support that meet the needs of carers in West Glamorgan.

About the region

Part 9 of The Act required the establishment of Regional Partnership Boards across Wales to:

- improve the well-being of the population;
- improve how health and care services are delivered.

West Glamorgan is one of six regions established in April 2016 as part of The Act. It covers the local authorities of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, as well as the Swansea Bay University Health Board, one of seven LHBs in Wales which were first established in 2003. West Glamorgan was previously known as Western Bay as it included the local authority area of Bridgend until April 2019.

The **Western Bay Population Needs Assessment** – conducted in 2014/15 and based on 2011 census information – highlighted a number of regional statistics and factors related to carers, which is reflected in the [‘Carers who need support’](#) report. This included:

- 🌸 12.7% of people in Swansea (30,349) recognised themselves as carers;
- 🌸 14.6% of people in Neath Port Talbot (20,365) recognised themselves as carers (the highest percentage of its population in Wales);
- 🌸 The numbers of people across the region who were receiving carers support increased over the reporting period 2013 – 2015;
- 🌸 The percentage of young carers (aged 5 to 17) was increasing across Wales;
- 🌸 Numbers of adult carers aged 50 or over in Western Bay was 39,757 (about 58% of adult carers in total);
- 🌸 There was a clear correlation between the number of hours of unpaid care and the reported health of the carer (longer hours lead to less healthy lifestyles and poorer well-being);

- 🧩 Projections indicated that while the number of carers was forecast to increase over time, the age of these carers would also increase in line with population life expectancy.

As part of this assessment, carers also told us that what matters to them:

- 🧩 *“A single point of contact for information on services, activities and financial matters”;*
- 🧩 *“Improve sharing of information between professionals and across services”;*
- 🧩 *“Support groups and services for carers”;*
- 🧩 *“Help to overcome transport difficulties to get to and from the person the cared for better”;*
- 🧩 *“Protection of children from inappropriate levels of caring”.*

About the services

There are a range of services available to carers across the West Glamorgan region; some are statutory public services provided by Local Authorities or SBUHB, some are voluntary services (supported by voluntary organisations in the Third Sector but funded from various sources including Welsh Government) and others are private services. Below are some of the main examples of these types of services:

Advocacy – Sometimes carers need help from people who can act as a spokesperson when it comes to correspondence, decision-making and meetings. Advocates provide this independent support to carers as part of the Carers Needs Assessments, care & support planning, and safeguarding.

Benefits and Tax Credits – Financial support is available to carers. Though different situations may determine exactly what a carer is entitled to, this may include Universal Credit, Carer's Allowance, Carer's Credit, Pension Credit and other relevant welfare benefits.

Breaks and Respite – Also known as 'short breaks', it usually involves the cared-for person spending time in a residential care environment or finding an alternative means (e.g. direct payments) for enabling the carer to arrange a break from their caring responsibilities.

Carers Emergency Card – a form of identification that an individual is a carer, which helps the carer to identify themselves in the event of an emergency concerning the cared for person.

Carers Hospital Support – this service targets carers of people who are in hospital and may need information and support about their carers role as well as help in the process of discharging the patient from hospital to return home.

Counselling – Carers can access talk to a qualified counsellor through face-to-face, telephone or online services. It can help for the carer to discuss their feelings and explore solutions to the challenges they are facing in their role as a carer.

Helping Services – An assessment of a carer’s needs might identify specific support services that apply in certain caring situations, from gardening and housework to professional support for specific health conditions (such as parents/carers of children on the Autistic Spectrum). Some services may be subject to grant funding or other means of financial support.

Holistic Therapies – Carers can access a range of therapeutic services to help them manage their health and well-being, including Reiki, reflexology and massages.

Networking and Peer Support – There are many different activities that can bring carers together from across a community, social group or area, from coffee mornings to social activities to networking forums. Outreach support provided by the third sector enables many such activities to be coordinated locally.

Sitting Service – Also known as a ‘carer response service’ or a ‘befriending service’, this involves someone temporarily taking on a carer’s duties for the cared-for individual, allowing that carer a break from their responsibilities and more time for themselves.

Telephone Helpline – A number of organisations, not just local authorities, offer telephone support and helplines including Swansea Carers Centre locally to Carers UK and Age UK nationally. This can include signposting carers to further information available online or advice on how to raise complaints about a service.

Direct Payments – Carers may have the option to request a direct payment instead of receiving support in the form of a service. Based on an assessment, it can be determined that carers can be better supported with the financial support to choose and purchase the help they need through different services and approaches.

There are also a range of organisations who play an important role in supporting carers in West Glamorgan:

Organisation	Contact	Purpose
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Organisation	Contact	Purpose
Swansea Carers Centre	104 Mansel Street, Swansea, SA1 5UE Tel: 01792 653344 www.swanseacarerscentre.org.uk	...provides a range of information, advice, support, services and events for carers in Swansea.
Neath Port Talbot Carers Service	Cimla Health & Social Care Centre, Neath SA11 3SU Tel: 01639 642277 www.nptcarers.co.uk	... to identify carers and to provide carers aged 18 and over in Neath Port Talbot with advice, information and support
Swansea Parent Carer Forum	61 Pennard Drive Southgate Swansea SA3 2DN swanseapcf.org	...to work co-productively with local services to help bring about improvements in services for disabled children, young people and their families.
Hafal Swansea	Alexandra House, Alexandra Road, Swansea SA1 5ED Tel: 01792 816600 www.hafal.org	...offers daytime support and information for carers of adults with severe mental health problems and also a monthly support group.
YMCA Swansea	YMCA Swansea 1 The Kingsway Swansea SA1 5JQ Tel: 01792 652 032 www.ymca.org.uk/location/ymca-swansea	provides support and information for young carers aged 8-18 in Swansea.
Neath Port Talbot Youth Service	Neath Port Talbot Youth Service Tir Morfa Centre Marine Drive Sandfields Port Talbot SA12 7NN Tel: 01639 763030 www.npt.gov.uk	The Neath Port Talbot Young Carers Service offers a range of support to children and young people up to the age of 25, who have a caring role at home. This could be because of illness, disability, mental health or drug & alcohol misuse.

Key Themes

To support the adoption of this strategy across the region, a pull-out **Quick Reference Guide**, outlining the vision, values and following series of concepts and information is provided in Appendix D. All the concepts in the tables you are about to see are pulled together in quick reference guide for ease of reference.

The following table outlines the cross-cutting threads that need to permeate through the themes.

Cross-cutting Threads	Theme
Carer wellbeing Communication Co-production Training	Balancing priorities
	Supporting each other
	Information and advice
	Identified and recognised
	Dignity and Respect
	Support services

The themes were originally derived from the co-production events held in the Autumn of 2019. A subsequent review of the evidence of strategic documents highlighted key issues that have an impact on all the themes identified. We have outlined these as cross cutting threads that should be considered in approaches to meeting needs under each of the themes.

The table below contains more detail about each of the themes and what they mean to carers:

Theme	Carers View	What does this mean?

Theme	Carers View	What does this mean?
Balancing priorities	<i>Carers value having a break from caring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better range and quality of services to meet carers' needs for a break e.g. respite • More flexibility and choice • More support to enable carers to access social and leisure opportunities • More opportunities to 'take a break' • Support to enable carers to access work, education or volunteering
Supporting each other	<i>Carers value support from other carers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More networking and interaction • More peer support and community-based or local services • Better channels for engagement • Raised awareness of carers' issues/stories • Enabling digital inclusion for carers
Information and advice	<i>Carers value the right information and advice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance is easy to access and understand (clear & concise) • Different organisations "on the same page" • Guidance is signposted/easily accessible • A single point of contact for information on what help is available
Identified and recognised	<i>Carers value being recognised for being a carer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals (e.g. Doctors, pharmacists, front line staff) are more aware of carers and their rights • New carers understand what it means to be a carer • Promotion of statutory services for carers to all parties • Carers are encouraged to self-identify as a carer. • Carers are valued as expert partners in care and included in conversations and decision making.
Dignity and Respect	<i>Carers value being treated appropriately for being a carer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviours from staff include empathy • Attitudes from staff include respect • Actions include meaningful listening • Aligned with United Nations Conventions and Principles • Partnerships means consistency in how carers are treated across professions and the region.
Support services	<i>Carers value help in understanding their rights and receive support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely access to Carers Needs Assessment / Carers Support Plan • Responsive Housing support (e.g. adaption of homes) • Consistent and timely Education support (e.g. for young carers struggling at school or adult learners) • Timely and accessible Transport support (e.g. carers who live in a different location to the cared-for person)

The themes identified provide a framework for understanding the needs of carers better but as so many carers have told us, “understanding is great but so what?”

Our Strategy Development Group were keen to ensure that the themes translated into tangible outcomes for unpaid carers. They developed the following outcomes for each of the themes based on the reviewed evidence. We intend to enlist the support of the Carers Liaison Forum to review these outcomes over the lifetime of the strategy. The numbers do not relate to importance or priority but are to aid cross referencing with action plans and monitoring processes.

Theme	Outcomes
Balancing priorities	1. Carers have flexible and responsive respite opportunities. 2. Carers have support with developing contingency plans. 3. Carers have access to wellbeing workshops. 4. Carers have workplace and educational support.
Supporting each other	5. Carers have opportunities to meet each other. 6. Carer led groups are common place.
Information and advice	7. Carers are informed of their rights. 8. Carers have dedicated and tailored information and advice portals/places across all statutory providers. 9. Carers have information and advice about contingency planning. 10. Carers are informed about Assessments and how they can be of benefit. 11. Easy read options and minority languages are catered for appropriately.
Identified and recognised	12. Carers are recognised even if they do not self-identify. 13. Carers are actively identified by organisations and staff supporting them. 14. There is shared responsibility across and within organisations for identifying carers.
Dignity and Respect	15. Carers are recognised as experts by experience. 16. Awareness of Carers is commonplace. 17. Standard approaches across department's e.g. schools, IAA services, hospital discharge. 18. There are consistent approaches across and within organisations.
Support services	19. New developments and changes are co-produced with carers. 20. Carers services are funded sustainably 21. Carers are actively offered direct payments. 22. Carers' positive and negative experiences are used to inform service improvements. 23. Carers have responsive and flexible access to mental health and well-being services.

Some of these outcomes may appear difficult to achieve at first. It is the aim of this strategy to be aspirational and we recognise that not all of the outcomes listed will be achieved in full over the course of this five-year strategy. Together, we are expected to work towards achieving these outcomes for the benefit of citizens and carers. Our approach to achieving these outcomes is outlined in the next section but a more detailed plan will be developed with carers and other partners to support the aims of this strategy.

Section 3 – Achieving our aims

Strategic Approach

This strategy has established our regional ambitions for improving and transforming the ways in which carers are supported throughout their caring journey. It has also highlighted the strategic context for these ambitions and the factors which will influence our plans for change over the period of this strategy. We now need to define how we will implement the outcomes we have identified as our priorities for the next five years.

The following diagram defines this strategic approach for our five-year regional strategy:

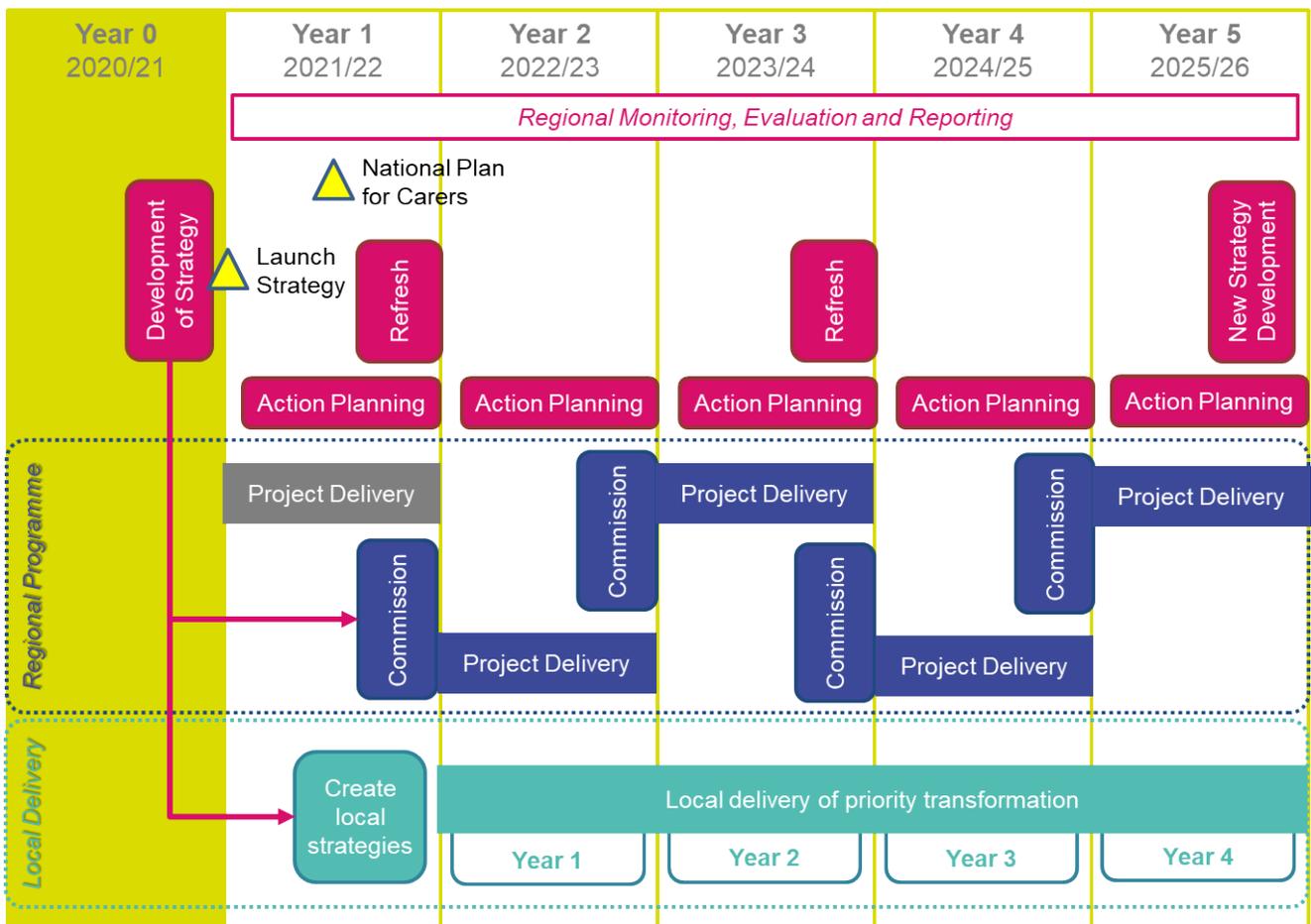


Fig.5. Our strategic five-year journey for carers

Below are some of the key points to note about this strategic journey in the diagram above:

- 🌸 The strategy will be formally launched in the first quarter of 2021/22 through the Carers Liaison Forum;
- 🌸 A regional strategy will be a catalyst for our Partnership Bodies to develop or refresh their own local strategies and action plans in relation to carers;
- 🌸 Following Welsh Government's response to the public consultation on the National Carers Plan for Wales, the strategy will be revisited with the Carers Liaison Forum using co-production principles to refine our priorities, outcomes and objectives;
- 🌸 Every year, the Carers Partnership Board will co-ordinate detailed action planning on the back of this strategy, in order to identify what actions need to be taken and how funding will be used for the upcoming financial year;
- 🌸 The first year of funded projects (2021/22) will be driven by the high level priorities of this strategy but as the strategy is refreshed later in 2021, more detailed criteria will be defined to determine what projects should be funded in future years;
- 🌸 For subsequent years (2022/23 and beyond), we will use a regional commissioning approach to ensure that the changes we deliver are directed by the priorities of this strategy and contribute towards our key priorities for carers in West Glamorgan;
- 🌸 Our strategy and annual planning activities will also inform our Partnership Bodies in their local activity planning, so that Local Authority and Health Board action plans align with the regional strategic direction for carers. These planning activities will also feed into the other regional strategies and frameworks for the Regional Partnership (e.g. Digital, Housing, CYP, etc);
- 🌸 In the final year of this strategy (2025/26) we will conduct a new round of strategic planning and refresh our vision, missions and strategic aims for carers in West Glamorgan.

Objectives

With this approach to our regional strategy, we can focus our resources, funding opportunities and collaborative efforts on delivering the changes that best meet the needs of carers in our region.

We identify what these changes should be through clearly defined objectives. Some of these objectives will be short-term activities, others will take longer to achieve due to its complexity or our ambitions. As we achieve one objective, this may also generate ideas for new ways of meeting our desired outcomes.

The following table lists the key objectives that we will plan to achieve in order to meet our mission and vision statements:

No.	Key Theme	Objective
1	Balancing priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing respite provision and innovation opportunities to agree regional approach/principles to respite and short breaks. • Identify key areas where representation is needed on Carers Partnership Board e.g. education. • Establish processes for connecting the Carers Liaison Forum to governance structures e.g. representatives on CPB and RPB. • Support the introduction of contingency planning tools and support for completion. • Prioritise and promote initiatives that support carer wellbeing.
2	Supporting each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Carers Liaison Forum and grow membership of individuals and carer groups. • Establish carer groups for staff in all statutory partner organisations and encourage employers across the region to do the same. • Map carers support groups and networks across the region.

No.	Key Theme	Objective
3	Information and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop regional information and advice initiatives e.g. rights, carers assessments, direct payments, etc. • All regional carers document to be available in Welsh, Easy read and other minority languages common in West Glamorgan communities. • Establish a “one stop shop” of digital information sources.
4	Identified and recognised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain regional data set on the demography of carers in West Glamorgan • Identify key points of contact where carers can be identified and establish regional approach for signposting to information, advice and support. • Support the introduction of Carer Aware training schemes.
5	Dignity and Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a carers’ charter for organisations to sign up to across the region. • Develop and promote rights awareness information. • Develop a library of carers’ stories that support engagement and promotion of carers services and support.
6	Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Carers Services in line with themes and priorities. • Refresh carers services mapping and identify potential gaps or opportunities. • Define and implement a regional approach to direct payments for carers. • Promote the Carer Liaison Forum as an established group for partners to involve in their co-production opportunities. • Develop a regional approach to learning from common challenges faced by carers in accessing and using services.

The solutions to each of these objectives will be implemented in line with our agreed values and we may find more than one solution that is worth delivering. Every year, the Carers Partnership Board will undertake action planning to prioritise initiatives we want to deliver that achieve these objectives, as well as any new or amended objectives that may arise from our collaborative working with the Carers Liaison Forum.

Success Factors

Every strategy needs a clear approach to measuring whether the changes it is implementing are successful. All of the actions we will implement over the course of this five-year strategy will be measured against our **vision** using the Success Factors in the table below:

No.	Success Factor	Indicators
1	Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Increase) Number of carers in West Glamorgan • (Increase) Number of attendees of Carers Liaison Forum • (Increase) Number of recipients of Carers targeted communications
2	Recognised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Increase) % of carers who report that they recognise themselves as a carer • (Increase) Number of people who attend the Carer Aware training course • (Increase) Number of people who apply for Carers ID Cards
3	Supported to care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Increase) Take-up of Direct Payments • (Increase) Amount of Tax Relief and Benefits attributed to Carers • (Increase) Number of carers who use helping services • (Increase) Amount of Carers Peer Support groups and activities
4	Life alongside caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Increase) Take-up of Respite • (Increase) Number of carers who use sitting services
5	Feeling of wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Increase) % of carers who report improvement in their wellbeing in the past 12 months • (Increase) Number of carers who use 'preventative' mental health services (counselling, therapies, etc.) • (Decrease) Number of carers who use 'crisis' mental health services (Sanctuary Service, medication, etc.)

Our approach to how we manage these Success Factors and report on our progress throughout the life of this strategy will align to the West Glamorgan framework for performance measures which, at the time of

writing is in development. We will also continue to review and refresh these measurements to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose for our strategic ambitions and functions.

Implementation

We will achieve the objectives listed above by developing a **WGLAM Regional Carers Action Plan** with all of the actions that are needed to achieve this. This Action Plan aligns with the strategy but it is more focused on the detailed activities we will deliver through our regional programmes, projects and functions in West Glamorgan. It will also outline any targets, evaluation and monitoring measures against the objectives of this strategy. It will be owned by the Carers Partnership Board under the governance of the West Glamorgan RPB.

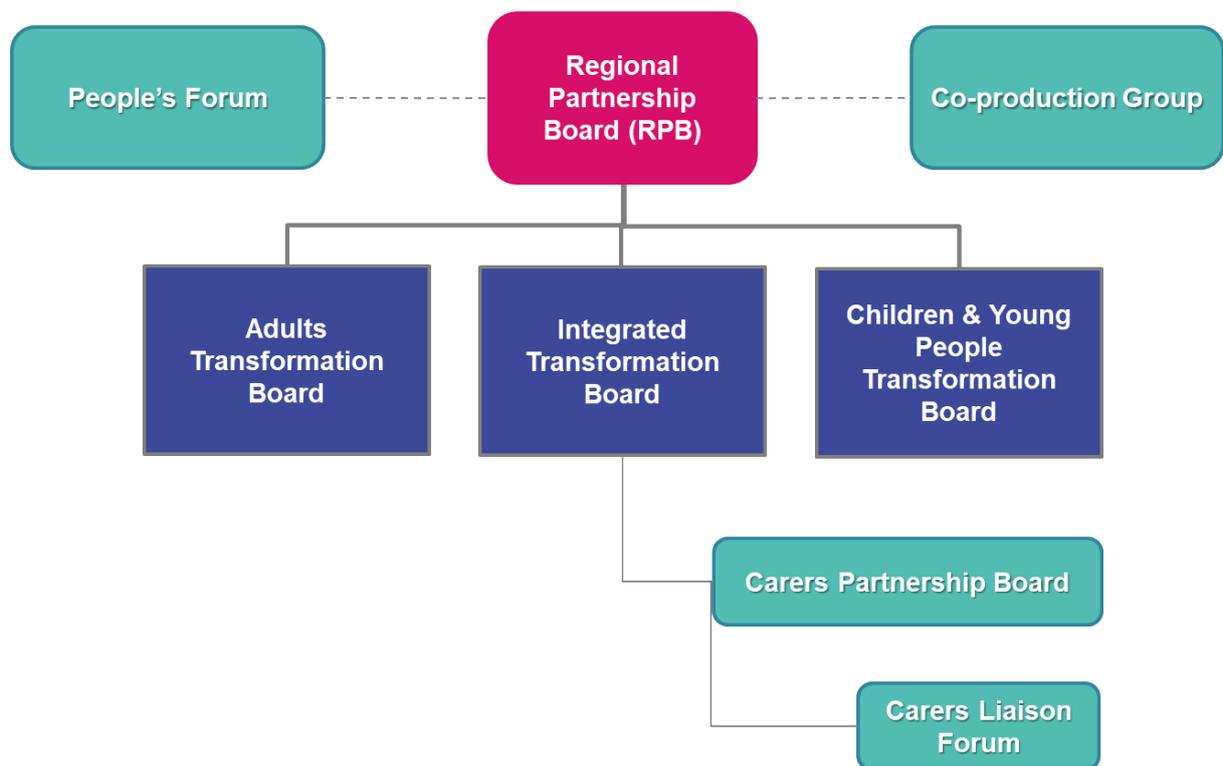


Fig.1. Our governance of the Regional Carers Strategy

Monitoring & Reporting

As we progress in our efforts to achieve our mission and meet the vision of our regional strategy, we will regularly monitor our progress to ensure that we are on track to achieving our outcomes. To do this, we will use common **Indicators** (to show a strategic view of progress) and specific **Performance Measures** for each of the projects and initiatives that we commission as part of our Action Plan.

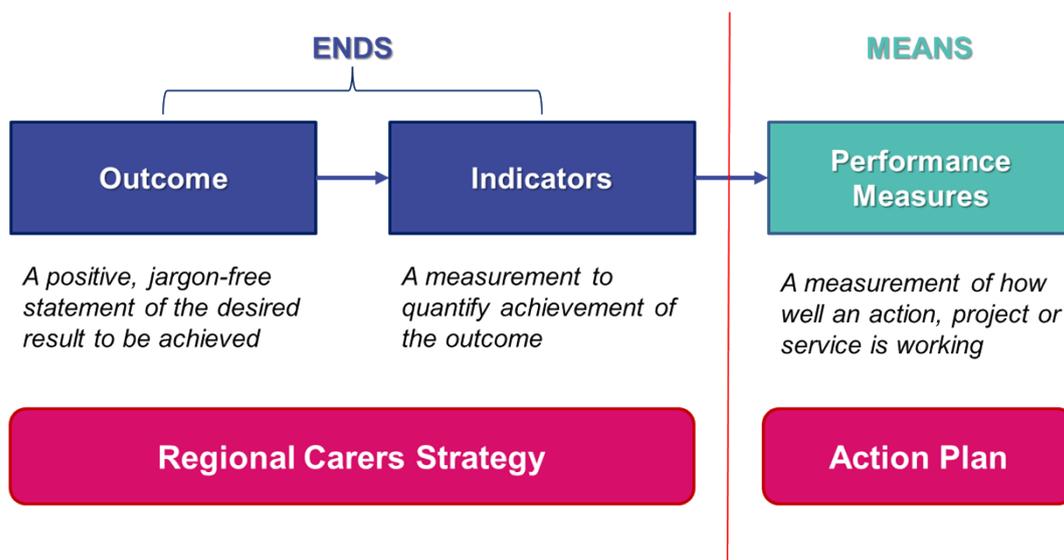


Fig.5. Our approach to monitoring and reporting

We will also report regularly on our progress through the following reporting channels:

- 
Project Returns – each project that is funded to deliver actions that contribute to our strategy will produce quarterly returns, which highlight what has been achieved and how funding is managed;
- 
Highlight Reports – the Carers Partnership Board will produce these reports to the Integrated Transformation Board [ITB] on a bi-monthly basis, which will include highlighting key achievements, progress against plans and important risks or actions for escalation;
- 
Carers Annual Report – the Carers Partnership Board will produce an annual report on its performance over the previous financial year including noting progress on the achievement of this strategy;

- 📄 **West Glamorgan Area Plan Progress Report** – a report on progress against the regional Area Plan is produced every quarter for the RPB to review and endorse progress. This will include noting key achievements towards our strategic outcomes under the Regional Carers Strategy.

Evaluation

As with any strategic plan, we want to continually check that the plan remains appropriate, aligned with the needs of carers and is continuing to contribute to our mission and vision statements.

The Carers Liaison Forum is our first check that we are doing the right things in the right way. Through co-production principles, we will work with members of the forum to regularly refresh the strategy during the five-year period. We will also seek the views of carers and their representatives through the forum on specific elements of the strategy where we feel a need to verify that the actions planned are the right actions for carers.

The Carers Partnership Board is accountable for both the Regional Carers Strategy and the Action Plan that is developed for each reporting year. Members of this group are responsible for ensuring that they have reviewed and scrutinised the content of the strategy.

The Integrated Transformation Board will have the option of conducting independent evaluations of the regional strategy. This may be a function performed by an independent external organisation, commissioned by the ITB on behalf of the RPB. This level of assurance can be extremely helpful if there is any indication that the strategy is no longer fit-for-purpose.

Funding

Delivery of the actions required to achieve this strategy will be dependent upon funding from different sources. Welsh Government is the primary funder for this strategic programme of transformation through the Integrated Care Fund [ICF] which includes a specific allocation for funding projects that support carers.

However, there will be other funding sources that are planned or will come to light during the period of this strategy. Sustainable funding received by statutory partners and intended for supporting the needs of carers should be aligned to this strategy, so that we can consider all aspects of support provided to carers in a consistent way across the region.

We aim is to ensure that our transformation programmes are ‘funding fed’ and not ‘funding led’. This means that we will use available funding to achieve the priorities for carers in our region (as opposed to using funding to simply spending money without a strategy). Therefore, our regional commissioning approach will align directly to the outcomes defined in this strategy so that we can ensure we fund projects and initiatives that meet the needs of carers as defined through this strategy.

Ways of working principles

Delivery of our regional strategy for carers is just one programme of work for West Glamorgan and we will strive to ensure consistency in our approaches to transforming health and social care for the people of our communities. As such, we will work towards a common set of principles for implementing our strategy which include:

-  Promoting collaborative working across the region and across sectors, organisations and services;
-  Ensuring open and honest communications at all levels and with all parties as we continue on our strategic journey;
-  Embedding co-production in our strategic implementation activities and across our services and functions;
-  Providing independent assurance that we are consistently applying the values we have identified, helping partners, service providers and other stakeholders to understand and embrace these important values;
-  Identifying and supporting the delivery of Social Value in the way we commission and implement projects and initiatives.

Most importantly, we will work towards the values specific to the Regional Carers Strategy, as defined in Section 1 above. This strategy will inform the detailed actions we take forward collectively as a region. This will ensure that carers' rights and needs are at the heart of everything we do to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals who provide such a valuable service in our society.

Appendices

A – Action Table

The following actions will support the approval, publication, launch and implementation of the Regional Carers Strategy:

Activity	Responsibility	Planned Timescale
Approval of Regional Carers Strategy	Regional Partnership Board	January 2021
Creation of Easy Read version of Regional Carers Strategy	Carers Partnership Board	February 2021
Establish Carers Liaison Forum	Carers Liaison Forum	February 2021
Launch of Regional Carers Strategy	Carers Partnership Board	March 2021
Develop action planning document to drive implementation of strategy	Carers Partnership Board	March to May 2021
Co-produce funding, monitoring and evaluation processes for 2022/23	Carers Partnership Board	May to July 2021
Establish framework for mapping carers services and support structures	Carers Partnership Board	July to September 2021
Promote Regional Carers Strategy to influence care and support pathways across partners	Carers Partnership Board.	September 2021
Co-produce “refresh” of Regional Carers Strategy	Carers Liaison Forum	November 2021
Co-produce Carers Charter	Carers Liaison Forum	May to December 2021

B – Regional Priorities

Older People

OP.P1	Develop and maintain a sustainable range of services that meet demand, enabling individuals to remain at home while maintaining their independence for as long as possible and receiving appropriate support at times of need.
OP.P2	Develop and provide a range of future accommodation options to meet demand and enable people to remain independent for as long as possible.
OP.P3	Develop community resilience and cohesion to tackle social isolation in areas where older people live.
OP.P4	Develop an optimum model for older people's mental health services (including relevant components of the Welsh Government All Wales Dementia Strategy/Plan).

Children and Young People

CYP.P1	Develop a better range of services for all children with emotional difficulties and well-being or mental health issues, including transition and single point of access to services
CYP.P2	Develop robust multi-agency arrangements for children with complex needs.

Mental Health

MH.P1	Commence implementation of the agreed optimum model for Adult Mental Health services, as outlined in the Western Bay Strategic Framework for Adults with Mental Health problems.
MH.P2	Ensure placements for people with complex needs are effective, outcome-based and appropriate.

Learning Disability and Autism

LD.P1	Develop age blind person-centred models of care to ensure prevention and early intervention through multi-disciplinary services, by remodelling services away from establishment based care into community based services.
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Carers (Cross-cutting theme)

CA.P1	Ensure work continues to promote early recognition of all Carers so that they are signposted to information and support in a timely manner.
CA.P2	Develop and continue to provide information, advice, assistance and support to all Carers enabling them to make informed choices and maintain their own health and well-being.
CA.P3	Co-produce with all Carers on an individual and strategic basis so that their contribution is acknowledged and their voices are heard.

C – Mapping Strategic Drivers

The following strategic documents have informed the development of the Regional Carers Strategy:

Year	Title	Author
2018	In Brief – A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care	Welsh Government
2017	Prosperity for All: the national strategy	Welsh Government
2015	Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	Welsh Government
2014	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014	Welsh Government
2019	Caring for our future: An inquiry into the impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to carers.	Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
2020	Track the Act Briefing Series	Carers Wales
2015	Western Bay Population Needs Assessment	Western Bay Regional Partnership Board
2020	Consultation on Carers National Action Plan	Welsh Government
2019	Making Wales the best place in the world to grow older: Commissioner's Strategy 2019-22	Older People's Commissioner for Wales
2020	Happy, healthy and safe: A manifesto for Wales' children and young people 2021	Children's Commissioner for Wales
2020	Manifesto for the Future	Future Generations Commissioner
2020	Manifesto for an Anti-Racist Wales	Race Alliance Wales

In preparation for developing the five-year West Glamorgan Regional Carers Strategy, a review of existing evidence given by Carers to partners and a literature review was undertaken.

Members of the Strategy Development Group were asked to share existing evidence gathered through consultations and co-production activities in recent years. Group members also shared documents from relevant carers organisations and other partners. Desktop research was also performed to gather additional information sources and a template

was developed to collate the evidence. National issues and recommendations for Welsh Government were listed under the three national priorities for carers. Evidence to support the regional themes were listed accordingly and cross cutting themes emerging from the literature/evidence were also grouped under separate columns.

At the time of writing, 17 sources of information had been reviewed. Information and perspectives from and about different types of carers were as follows: Carers of all ages and types (5), Young Carers (4), Parent Carers (3), Dementia Carers (1), Older People/Workers (2), Sibling Carers (1), Unknown (1).

References

Ref	Year	Title	Author
1	2018	Parent Carer Forum - Consultation, design and planning	Dynamix
2	2019	Carer's Needs Assessment Survey 2019	Swansea Parent Carer Forum
3	2017	Carer Rights Event	Swansea Council
4	2017	Future of Swansea Carers Emergency Card	Swansea Council
5	2019	'Dementia are we Making a Difference' Regional Dementia Conference Evaluation Report	Swansea Council
6	2020	Young Carers consultation carried out during Young Carers Awareness day 2020	Swansea Council
7	2020	"Coming second all the time" Life in lockdown for siblings of disabled children	Sibs
8	2020	#LeftInLockdown - Parent carers' experiences of lockdown	Disabled Children's Partnership
9	2020	Caring behind closed doors - Forgotten families in the coronavirus outbreak	Carers UK

Ref	Year	Title	Author
10	2020	MY FUTURE, MY FEELINGS, MY FAMILY - How Coronavirus is affecting young carers and young adult carers, and what they want you to do next	Carers Trust
11	2019	Provision for young carers in secondary schools, further education colleges and pupil referral units across Wales	ESTYN
12	2020	Leave no-one behind	Older People's Commissioner for Wales
13	2020	Supporting older workers - A toolkit for trade unionists Wales TUC Cymru	TUC
14	2020	Carers Week 2020 Research Report The rise in the number of unpaid carers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak	Carers
15	2019	NPT Carers Have your say event	Unknown
16	2020	Young carers' transitions into adulthood	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
17	2020	Engaging with the Public-a conversation on sustaining a prudent approach to health and care	Bevan Commission

Evidence continues to be gathered from documents, consultations and co-production events regarding carers and are mapped across the themes identified in this strategy.

D – Glossary of Terms

BAME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CPB	Carers Partnership Board
ICF	Integrated Care Fund
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transexual
RPB	Regional Partnership Board
SBUHB	Swansea Bay University Health Board
Social Value	The value that people place on the changes they experience in their lives.
The Act	Social Services and Wellbeing Act
TUC	Trade Union Congress

Note: Throughout this document, the term “We” represents the collective voice of our Regional Partnership, including the representatives of services users and carers who play a vital role in co-producing the strategies, plans and activities of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership. This document has been co-produced with representatives of all parties and we thank them all for their time and efforts in developing this regional strategy.