



2023-2026 West Lothian Carers Strategy

Supporting **people** who care for others



West Lothian Carers Strategy 2023–2026

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Section 1: Introduction

In West Lothian we recognise the crucial contribution that unpaid carers make to their families, friends and extended communities by supporting people who need additional help to cope with differing needs. We are committed to ensuring that carers are supported to take a break from caring, look after their own health and also ensure that they are not defined by their caring role.

We know that caring for family or friends can be incredibly rewarding but that it can also be emotionally, financially, and physically challenging and that carers may at times require support to continue in their caring role and to stay in good health themselves.

This strategy is for all people who care for others regardless of whether or not they recognise themselves as carers. The results of our West Lothian Carers Survey carried out in March 2022 highlighted that 80% of those who responded did not recognise themselves as 'carers' but as spouses, parents, children, siblings, or friends / neighbours.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact for many carers. The number of people providing care increased and many existing carers took on more intensive caring roles, while also losing the opportunity to take breaks from caring when support services closed.

Additionally, we are currently facing the most severe economic upheaval in a generation with the current cost of living crisis. National and local feedback from carers reflects that financially^[1] carers and their cared for person are being affected disproportionately and in West Lothian we are prioritising financial advice to carers and their cared for person(s).

We recognise all carers as Equal, Expert and Valued and will continue to learn from those with lived experience in a caring role, to shape our strategy and action plan. As part of this strategy, we will work with internal and external services and organisations who play an integral role in helping unpaid carers access help and support, including raising awareness of carers' rights.

[1] Financial pressure on unpaid carers unsustainable | Carers UK



Section 1: Introduction

This strategy builds on the current strategy 2020-2023 and considers the key priority areas of the National Carers Strategy published in December 2022.

The strategy has been shaped by carers and their families and draws from a range of engagement activities undertaken in partnership. It sets out how we plan to achieve our priorities and outcomes to ensure that carers' physical and emotional health and wellbeing is supported, that breaks from caring are available, and that young carers are supported to be children first.

We are committed to ensuring that people with a caring role recognise themselves as carers and support is available to enable them to lead a full life beyond their caring responsibilities.

Alison White

Director of West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership



Ann Pike

Carer Representative, Integration Joint Board



Supporting **people** who care for others



Strategy at a Glance

Our **Vision** for Carers in West Lothian is that:



Carers are valued as equal and expert partners in care and that they are supported and empowered to manage their caring responsibilities with confidence

Carers remain in good health and have a life of their own outside their caring role

Our Priority Areas & Strategic Outcomes



Recognising, Valuing and Involving Carers

- Carers are recognised and their contribution is understood and valued by society
- Carers voices are heard and their views and experiences are taken into account in decisions which affect them

Health and Social Care Support

- People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact on their caring role on their own health and wellbeing

Health and Financial Inclusion

- That the social and economic contribution, impacts and scale of caring are recognised, understood and reflected in local and national policy making across all areas
- Carers are able to access the financial support and assistance they are entitled to
- Carers are able to take up or maintain employment and education alongside caring if they wish to
- Carers can participate in and are valued by their community and wider society

Young Carers

- Young carers are supported and protected from inappropriate caring and negative impacts on their education, social lives and future opportunities
- Young adult carers are supported when moving from education to training and work while balancing ongoing caring roles



Section 3: Who are Carers?

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines unpaid carers as "an individual(s) who provide or intend to provide for another individual".

An unpaid carer can be a child or an adult who, unpaid, looks after a friend or family member who can't cope alone due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction. Many people don't recognise themselves as carers and we are determined to raise awareness to highlight that people who care for others are playing an active unpaid carers role and they have legislative rights to help them in their role.



What Carers do:

There are many ways carers might care for someone else including;

- practical tasks like cooking, housework, shopping and dog walking
- physical support, like lifting, helping someone on stairs or with physiotherapy

- personal care, like washing, dressing and helping with toileting needs
- managing the household budget, and collecting benefits and prescriptions
- giving medication
- emotional support
- Transporting to hospital, doctor or other appointments
- Looking after siblings

The time spent in a caring role can vary hugely from carer to carer. A caring role can involve visiting a relative or friend to give them a meal and company or accompanying them to any appointments necessary or generally helping with household tasks. Other caring roles are more intensive when the carer lives with the cared for person and provides support throughout the day and sometimes through the night.



Section 3: Who are Carers?

Carers can be:

Adult Carer

A carer who is at least 18 years old but is not a young carer.

Parent Carer

An adult who cares for a child with a long term illness or disability to a greater extent than would be expected in a parenting role for the age and stage of the child.

Young Carer

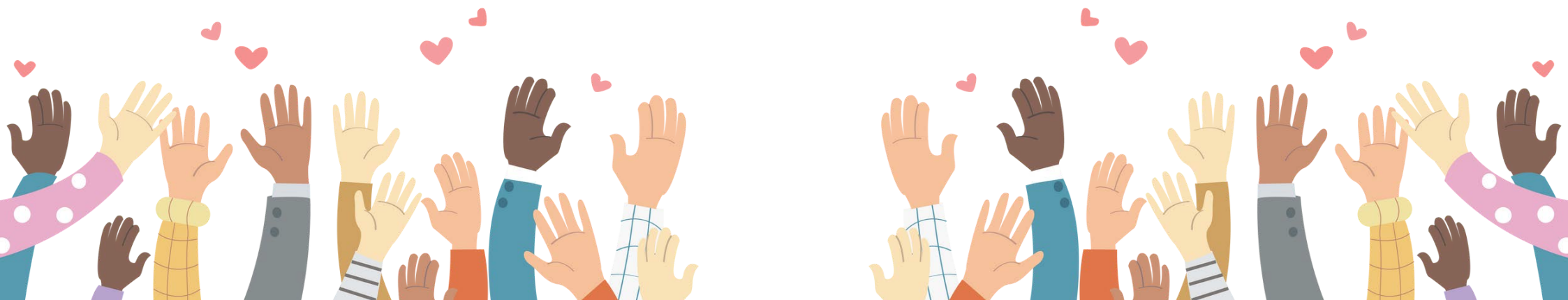
A young carer is someone who is under the age of 18, or who is still in school over the age of 18 and cares for a sibling, parent or other family member who has an illness or a disability.

Hidden Carer

Do not identify themselves as carers and therefore may not seek support and information that would benefit them. There are different reasons for this including differing cultures where looking after someone is not considered as being a carer or seeing themselves as looking after a parent, child or relative on a regular basis and do not recognise this as a caring role.

Kinship Carer

Where a child is looked after by their extended family or close friends if they cannot remain with their birth parents. Kinship carers will also have rights as unpaid carers where the child they are looking after has a disability or long term health condition or where they are also supporting the birth parent alongside looking after their child.



Section 4: Carers Rights

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect on 1 April 2018. The purpose of the Act is to help carers continue in their caring role whilst being supported to look after their own health and wellbeing.

The Act provides for carers in a number of areas. These include:

i.	The right for carers to be offered or to request an Adult Carers Support Plan or Young Carer Statement
ii.	The right to support to meet any identified eligible needs
iii.	A duty on the local authority to develop a short breaks statement
iv.	A right to be involved in planning carer services
v.	A requirement for local authorities to have an information and advice service for carers
vi.	A duty for the health board to inform and involve carers in the hospital discharge process for the person they are or are going to be caring for

i. Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statement

Carers are entitled to an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) or Young Carer Statement (YCS) to support them in their caring role. The purpose is to look at the support a carer offers and the impact that this support has on their individual needs and outcomes, their wider family, work, study, housing, social life, leisure activities, age, health, and any support already in place.

Depending on the level of identified needs there may be consideration of both formal and informal options around how best to support the carer. Details on available carer support can be found by clicking [here](#)

Carer Support Pathway



Section 4: Carers Rights

ii. Identified Eligible Needs

Where a carer meets the assessed formal eligible support there is an option to receive a financial budget to support their needs. This is met by offering Self-Directed Support (SDS) which allows carers to make a choice on how any support to meet assessed outcomes is delivered.

In West Lothian an SDS Project Board has been established which aims to ensure that locally we are embedding the national SDS Framework of Standards (2021).

The local carer eligibility criteria for formal support can be viewed and downloaded:



[West Lothian Eligibility Criteria for Carers](#)



[West Lothian Eligibility Criteria for Carers - Easy to Read version](#)

iii. Short Break Statement

A Short Breaks Services Statement (SBSS) which is produced alongside the Carers Strategy, sets out information about short breaks services available for local carers and cared-for people. The Short Breaks Services Statement includes information for both adult and young carers.

The aim of the Statement is to help carers and supported people to understand:

- What short breaks are
- Who can access short breaks
- What short breaks are available locally and in Scotland
- How they can access short breaks and find further information

The SBSS also provides a source of information about what available resources that carers and the cared-for person can expect from a range of local agencies, including education, health and social care. Knowing what is available will give you more choice and control over what support is right for you.



[West Lothian Short Breaks Statement](#)



Section 4: Carers Rights

iv. Involved in Planning Carer Services

Under the current social care system, carer representatives must be included in both the governance structures of integration authorities and their strategic planning groups for health and social care strategies. This ensures carers have a voice and can influence decisions making at strategic level, including decisions about service planning and design.

Carers input to planning of services is also sought through surveys, consultations, targeted campaigns, feedback from the carers of Carers of West Lothian 'Carers Voice Group' and participation by the carer Rep, the carer lead and CoWL representatives in national and local forums.

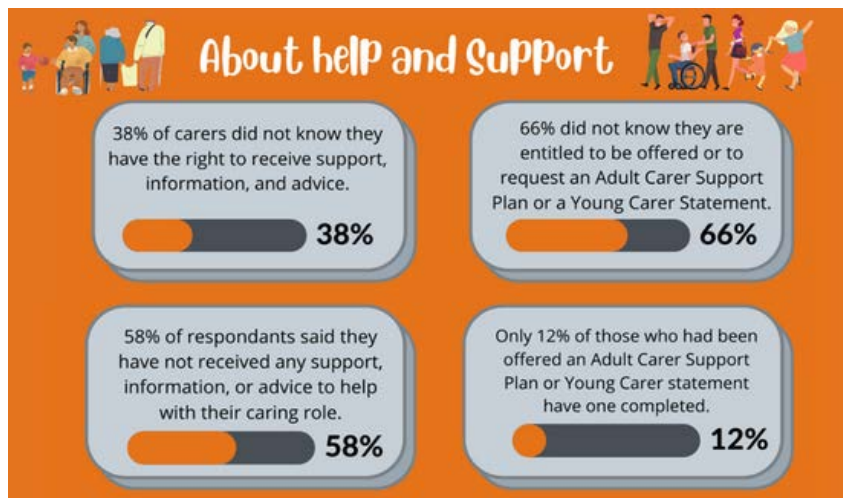
v. Rights to Advice, Information and Support

There is a duty for local councils to provide information and support through local organisations to meet carers' needs. The results from the West Lothian Carer Survey showed that many carers are not aware of their rights and entitlements, therefore missing out on the financial, practical and emotional support available to them.

Raising the awareness of carers rights to advice, information and support will be a key priority in this strategy and associated action plan.

vi. Involvement in the Hospital Discharge Process

In West Lothian, carers play an integral part of the hospital discharge planning process of their cared for person. The integrated discharge hub within St John's Hospital, Livingston, is committed to ensuring effective processes are in place to commence discharge planning at the hospital's front door, to start the planning for discharge as soon as possible with the needs of the family / carer and cared for person considered.



Section 5: West Lothian Demographics

Positively, people living in West Lothian are now living longer. Of particular significance is the increasing population of older people which brings both opportunities and challenges for future care delivery.

The latest population statistics for West Lothian^[2] (National Records Scotland), indicates the area's population stood at 185,580 in June 2021, the 5th highest population in Scotland. In the 10 years previous, the population in the local area had grown 16.7%, the second highest increase of all the local authorities in Scotland and two and a half times that of the Scottish average (7.6%).

Further increases in the local population are also projected, with a 5.9% increase predicted by 2028, three times the increase of the national average. Growth in the older population will be the most significant with the 65-74 age groups increasing by 19% and people aged 75 and over increasing by 39% by 2028. These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services.

Almost one in five (19.5 %) people living in West Lothian report having a limiting long-term health condition. A long-term condition can have an impact on quality life and ability to carry out day to day activities and includes any condition which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months.

Older age impacts the incidence of frailty, including dementia and other long term conditions and services will need to change to ensure that the right types of supports are available to people at the right time and in the right place. People with long term conditions are also living longer and this will have an impact on demand for care and support and where it is delivered and also increase the demand for carer support.

Progress has been made to identify and support many carers in West Lothian but we know there are many other 'hard to reach' or 'hidden carers' including Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) carers who continue to provide substantial levels of care with little or no recognition. Our aim is to ensure that all people in West Lothian with significant caring responsibilities have access to information and support they require as carers.

The strategy will also continue to take forward effective carer identification by ensuring that the Health and Social Care workforce have the necessary knowledge and skills to refer and signpost carers to the relevant support services.

^[2] [NRS Scotland](#)



Section 5: West Lothian Demographics

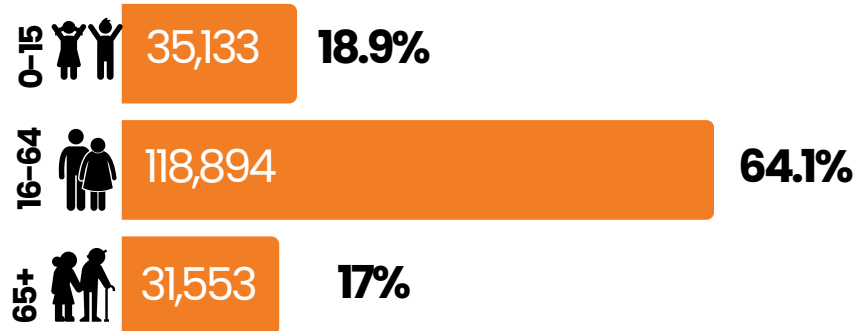


185,580

people live in the **West Lothian**

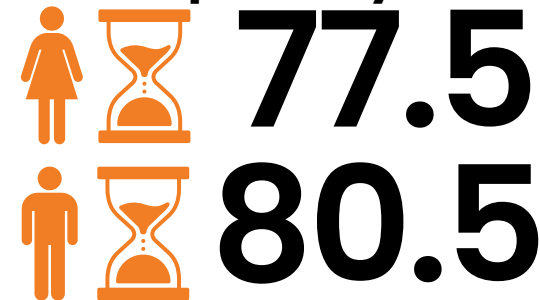
50.9% are Female **49.1%** are Male

NRS: Mid-2021 Population Estimates



NRS: Mid-2021 Population Estimates

Life expectancy at birth



ScotPHO: 2016-2020

Between 2001-2021, the population of WL has **increased** by

16.7%

NRS: Mid-2021 Population Estimates



82,549

households within West Lothian

NRS: Mid-2021 Population Estimates



Almost **one in five (19.5%)** people living in West Lothian report having a limiting long-term health condition.

Supporting **people** who care for others



Section 6: Adult Carers

Caring can be very rewarding but can also be extremely demanding role. Care may be provided throughout the day and night seven days a week, or may fluctuate depending on the needs of the person they care for. Each carer, and their caring situation, is unique and as such, carers experience varying degrees of positive and negative impacts.

In West Lothian there is an increasing ageing population which is higher than the national average with many older people living longer and face caring for their partners or adult children for longer.



Parents caring for a child with a disability often don't recognise themselves as having a caring role as there is a widespread view that caring for a child with a disability is 'what you do'. When a parent recognises themselves as a carer they often refer to themselves as parent carers.



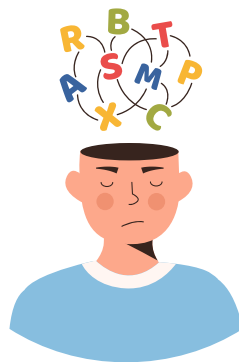
Many young carers transition into being young adult carers and this transition phase can be a difficult time for them as they find themselves moving into training or employment and are at an age when managing financial, emotional and social issues become more important. Young adult carers are supported when moving from education to training and work while balancing an ongoing caring role.



Section 6: Adult and Older Carers

Sometimes, a caring role can feel very challenging and can lead to:

- social isolation due to not having time to develop or nurture relationships with friends or family members;
- stress of co-ordinating care with wider family responsibilities;
- having very limited or no opportunity to have 'time out' or a break to recharge;
- difficulties in maintaining education or employment, leading to the loss of opportunities and income;
- increased financial pressures due to caring role;
- making long-term lifestyle changes;
- health and wellbeing being impaired due to pressure and stress of the caring role.



The pandemic has added to the many challenges that face carers and the results of the West Lothian Carer Survey reflected the impact that a caring role had on people's own Health and Wellbeing.



A key focus in the strategy will be to support people being able to access advice, information and a range of supports at the right time and in the right place to avoid or minimise them reaching a personal crisis situation.

Section 7: Young Carers

This strategy must ensure that young carers are identified, respected and supported to balance their caring responsibilities with having a life outside their caring roles and ensuring they reach they achieve their full potential and their own ambitions. From our engagement young carers have told us that they feel proud of their caring responsibilities and helping their families, and it is not always a negative experience. It however remains of critical importance that any potential negative impact to their well-being is understood.



What impact could being a young carer have?

Caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying and stressful. For young carers, this can negatively impact their experience in education. Over a quarter of young carers aged 11-15 regularly miss school. This can have a lasting effect on their educational achievements and life chances.

One in three young carers said that their caring role makes them feel stressed. Research also shows that 23% of young carers in the UK said that their caring role had stopped them making friends. This can lead to social isolation and loss of confidence.

Generally young carers do not recognise themselves as having a caring role and it's usually only when they reach secondary school that they realise that their home life is different from that of their friends.

In West Lothian we recognise that we can do more to identify and support young carers. Our action plan has a dedicated section to young carers and we are actively working with internal and external partners to ensure we reach young carers and put supports in place to ensure they enjoy a happy and healthy childhood and receive the same life chances as young people with no caring responsibilities.

As well as local young carer support through schools and Carers of West Lothian there are additional national supports available to offer emotional and financial help and our action plan includes ways to raise awareness of these supports, including Young Carers Statements.

Section 7: Young Carers

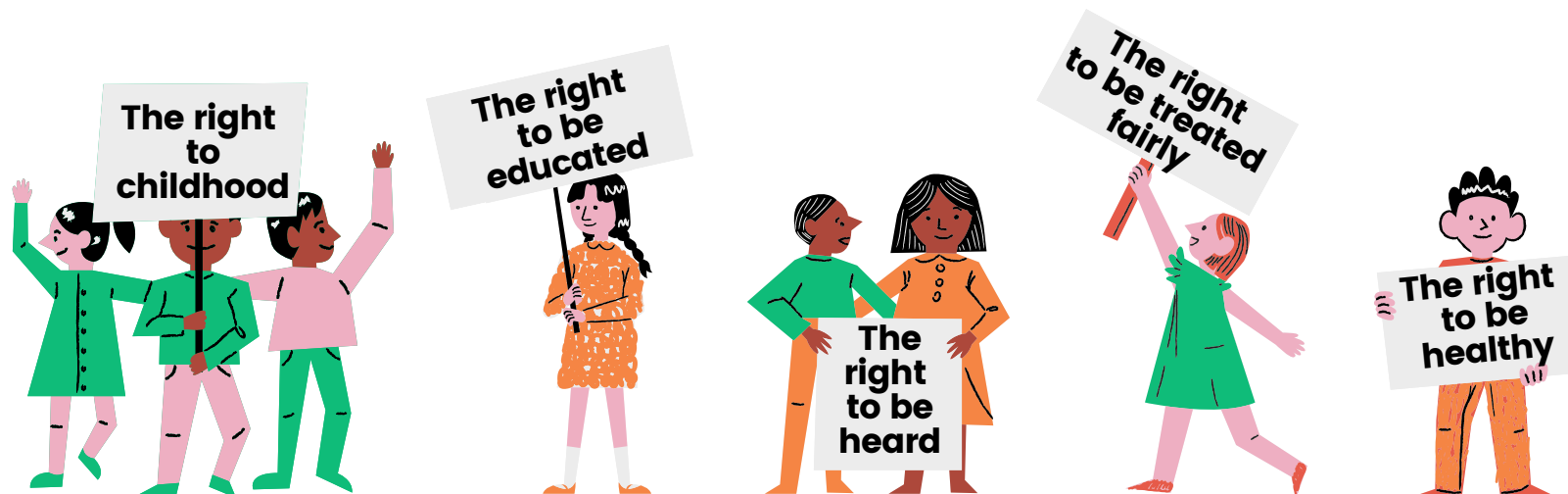
Children's Rights

Promoting Children's Rights is a priority in the Children's Services Plan and partners in West Lothian are committed to upholding and embedding the Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at every level of our services. We are working to ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights and that our workforce understand their role and remit as duty bearers. The Children's Services Plan has the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach at its heart of service delivery and this is based on the UNCRC, the Promise and requires those who work with children and young people to put children at the centre of their day-to-day practice. Young Carers will be a key targeted group to ensure they know and understand their rights as a Young Carer.

Recognition

West Lothian seek to recognise the contribution young people make to their own lives, those of others and the impact they have on their local community. Young carers are a key group of young people who are recognised through the **West Lothian Children's Achievement Awards**.

In November 2022 the latest annual event to highlight the achievements of West Lothian's infants, children and young people up to age 26 was held. The event is for young people to be nominated who have shown they can achieve whatever the difficulties and challenges they have faced or they have shown resilience and determination to contribute not only to their own development, but the development of others.



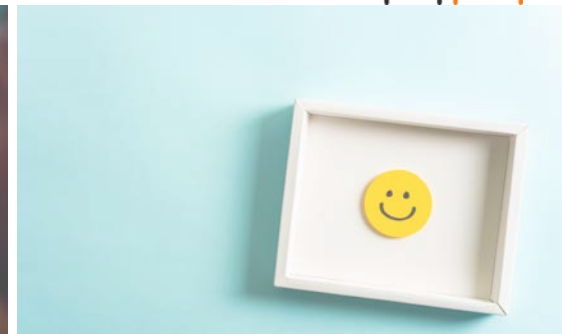
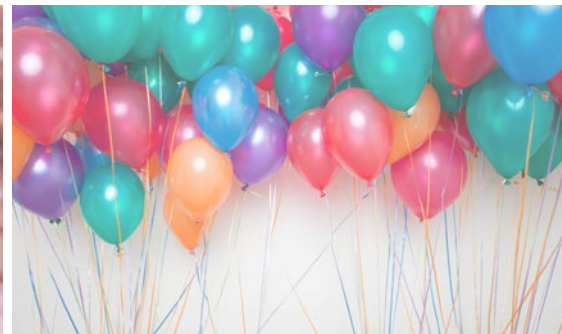
Section 7: Young Carers

Recognition

The event was held face to face within Whitburn's new partnership centre. This is the first time the event has been held face to face since 2019 due to the COVID-19 restrictions and it was a huge success. Infants, children and young people are being recognised for their achievements in 5 categories:

1. Caring for/helping others
2. Successful learners
3. Achievement in Physical activities
4. Achievements in art
5. Contributing to the Community

Young carers are recognised primarily in the first category but contribute to them all. In total 86 young people were nominated and had their achievements acknowledged, with 2 young people in each category being celebrated as overall winners, after review of applications by a multi-agency panel.



Section 8: Progress on the Strategy 2020–2023

Our Carers Strategy 2020–2023 was drafted prior to the pandemic and no one could have foreseen the impact this would have had on carers. With the increased recognition of the valuable role of carers and the additional support they provided, our priorities and actions were updated to include and reflect the support carers require.



The Carer Strategy action plan 2020–2023 has four key areas priority:

- Carer voice and engagement
- Health and social care support
- Social and financial inclusion
- Young carers

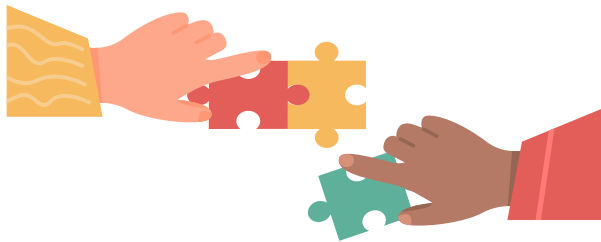
The progress of the action plan was reviewed regularly by the Carer Strategy Implementation Group, with annual updates being provided to both the Integration Joint Board and Social Work and Health Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

Actions that have been completed or well progressed to achieve our outcomes for carers include:

- Carers of West Lothian established a ‘Carers Voice’ group to ensure carers voices and needs are heard and used to inform a range strategic documents including the Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023–28
- Surveys and consultations undertaken to establish carers views and experiences to influence strategic and operational decisions;

Section 8: Progress on the Strategy 2020–2023

- Awareness raising and training has been delivered to HSCP staff and partners to raise awareness of carers needs and outcomes;
- Awareness raising and promotion of Carers Rights and entitlement to support them in their caring role;
- Established representation from the CSIG on the Self Directed Support (SDS) Project Board to ensure SDS options are understood for carers



- Targeted campaigns have been established to increase awareness of the benefits of having Power of Attorney for the cared for person and also what financial supports are available for carers and their cared for person.
- A review of the Young Carer Statement (YCS) was completed and a new statement produced including an app to simplify the process of completing a YCS

Many of the current actions are still relevant to be carried forward into the 2023–2026 action plan to progress further. These are detailed in section 11: Moving Forward Carers Strategy 2023–2026

At the initial stages of the pandemic the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership established a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distribution Centre in Livingston in April 2020 and volunteers from Carers of West Lothian assisted in delivering PPE equipment to unpaid carers and their cared for person(s) to help avoid additional risks to people’s health from the virus.



Section 8: Progress on the Strategy 2020–2023

A range of funding was provided by the Scottish Government to the HSCP and Carers of West Lothian (CoWL) in 2022 with a focus on providing alternative support to those undertaking a caring role whilst traditional respite / short break opportunities were closed or operated at reduced capacity.

To address this the Carers Strategy Implementation group offered to unpaid carers a range of alternative means such as garden equipment, IT equipment, gym or leisure equipment, art materials and many others in order to support unpaid carers whilst access to traditional short break provision was reduced.



CoWL also administered various funding streams to support alternative breaks from caring and also ways to help with rising costs and the additional pressures this brought to carers and their cared for person.

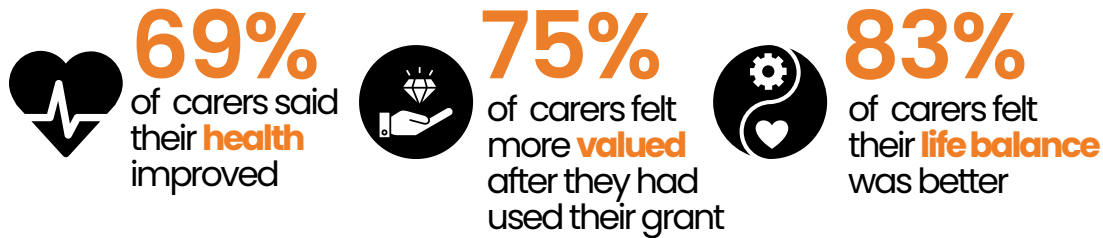


The West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) also agreed to create a one-off fund to support local organisations enhance their support to carers. It was aimed at grass roots community groups, small charities, social enterprises, 3rd sector and voluntary organisations to bid in to proactively find innovative ways to encourage carers (and their cared for person if appropriate) to engage in short breaks from caring to support their health and wellbeing. This funding also raised awareness of the needs and rights of carers.



Section 8: Progress on the Strategy 2020-2023

In response to a Winter Isolation Short Break campaign involving alternative short breaks administered by CoWL, the following feedback was received which reflects the positive impact on outcomes for carers health and wellbeing:



My caring role has remained the same but when I am using the art products for my course I have a break from my caring role and my mind is also taking a break.

I've struggled in lockdown but can now invite friends to the garden and have BBQs using the gazebo even if it rains. This means so much to me! Thank you!



Thank you very much. It's made such a difference to receive this funding.

C's Story

C is a young adult carer with multiple caring roles which takes up a lot of her time, as well as studying - she rarely takes time to for herself and tends to spread herself thin. C suffers a lot of anxiety thinking about the future and really wants to do well while continuing to care. C applied to the fund for a new iPad which would help her feel more comfortable working from other locations and allow her to contact family in France. C was delighted to be awarded the fund and said:

The grant has really helped me as I have something to prepare and help me with college, so having the iPad will be a great benefit to my studies. It's also great as my gran (who is one of the people I care for) will now be able to see my auntie who is bed bound with Ms, and my uncle who lives in France on a bigger screen. It will also give me the ability to watch/play stuff when I'd like as I can connect to my hotspot even outside so I can do this in my spare time to escape from my caring role.

She also reported feeling less stress, less anxious and less isolated as well as feeling happier and more connected to family.



Section 9: West Lothian Survey Results

To understand the needs of our carers and prepare for the review and refresh of this Carers Strategy, a survey was undertaken from January to March 2022 where people in West Lothian who help care for others were asked to share their experiences of their caring role. The aim of the survey was to provide a better understanding of the level of care that is being delivered by unpaid carers in West Lothian and also to determine the supports that they require to enable them to continue with their caring role and stay in good health themselves.

592 people responded to the survey and summary^[3] and detailed^[4] results were produced and communicated through social media and local news publications.



40%
of respondents said that they provided more than 50 hours of care per week

43%
of respondents told us that they found their caring responsibilities hard a lot of all of the time

45%
of respondents were aged over 60

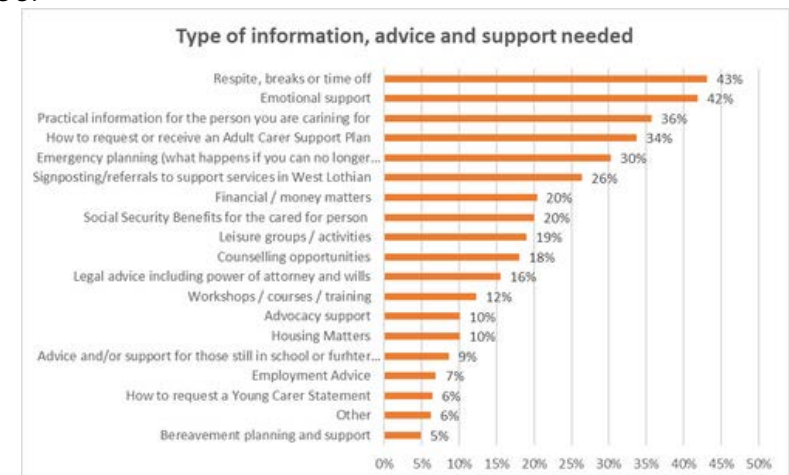
53%
of respondents said that they provided personal care as part of their caring role

20%
of those who responded, only 20% identified as carers

The survey provided meaningful information to plan future needs for carers and their cared for person and also identified where needs are not being met. The results of the survey will be reflected in the action plan which underpins this strategy.

The analysis of the survey respondents showed that there are specific groups of carers who have not participated in the survey and we will focus our efforts on reaching these groups to understand their needs: namely; males, under 18 year olds, 19 – 30 year olds and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME).

The chart below shows the types of information, advice and support needed by carers to help them continue in their caring role and help them to stay in good health themselves.



[3] [West Lothian Carer Survey Summary Results](#)

[4] [West Lothian Carer Survey Full Results](#)

Section 10: Developing this Strategy 2023–2026

In developing this strategy, we have used the findings of the West Lothian Survey as well as engaging with carer organisations and a range of delivery partners to make sure that those who have responsibilities to support carers have been involved in shaping this strategy.

Unpaid carers views were also sought as a part of an independent commissioned research carried out by the local carers organisation CoWL and findings from a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) based on carers responses to develop the Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023–2028 have also been considered.

The SNA engagement with a range of organisations highlighted the following in accessing support for unpaid carers

- Little community based out of hours support available, most of the support in the area is Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- Requests for support often come at crisis point, despite many carers having regular contact with health and social care services. There are potentially many missed opportunities to identify carers who need help at a much earlier time

- There is little respite support or emotional support available for carers in the West Lothian
- The Home First programme could increase pressure on carers if additional carer support is not available
- There needs to be a carer pathway so that they can access support earlier and not at crisis point



The SNA analysis also suggested areas for improvement:

- Easier access for unpaid carers to get help and support
- Much clearer information about what services are available.
- More actual support for ALL unpaid carers including parent carers
- Keep better contact with families
- More respite needs to be offered to unpaid carers and assessments need to be done with their needs in mind more often

Section 10: Developing this Strategy 2023–2026

National and local research has shown the pressures of the past three years have left many carers at breaking point. Many are now in acute need of support to enable them to have breaks, support their own mental health and reduce isolation. More than ever, the contribution made by unpaid carers has to be recognised and steps taken to address the problems caused by the pandemic as well as the long-term, systemic issues that continue to affect unpaid carers.

The Scottish Government published a National^[5] Carers Strategy on 21 December 2022. West Lothian participated in the consultation to inform the national strategy and our local areas of priority reflect the national areas of priority.

The areas of priority in the West Lothian carers strategy 2020–2023 were

- Carer Voice and Engagement
- Health and Social Care Support
- Social and Financial Inclusion
- Young Carers

Carer Voice and Engagement was reworded to **Recognising, Valuing and Involving Carers** to align with the national priority areas and to reflect the importance of carers being recognised and valued in their caring role.



Section 11: Moving Forward Carers Strategy 2023-2026

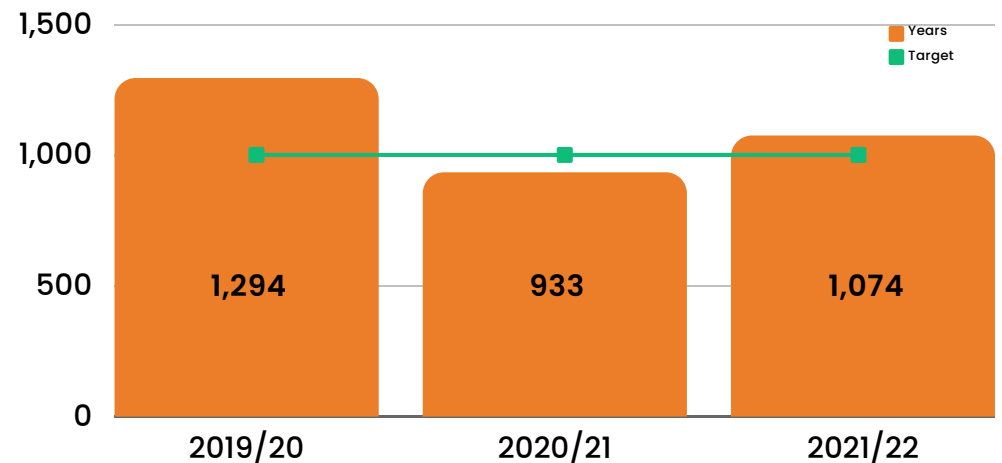
This Carers Strategy for the period 2023-2026, builds on the achievements from the Carers Strategy 2020 – 2023 and sets out the Health and Social Care Partnership’s (HSCP) ambitions for the continued development and improvement of information, advice and support services for all carers and their cared for person in West Lothian. The HSCP is committed to working in partnership with our partners, carers and their cared for person and the wider community.

The priority areas detailed below will be the main focus to ensure that all carers know and understand their rights and get the right support that they need at the right time. The current Carer Strategy Action Plan for 2020-2023 has been reviewed and updated to capture actions that are being carried forward into the new Action Plan for 2023-2026 to continue the progress already achieved. The Action Plan will remain as a live document and additional actions will be added if areas for improvement are identified.



It has been recognised that there is a need for more robust information and performance data on the work we are progressing to establish the outcomes we are achieving in supporting carers to live happy and healthy lives alongside their caring role. All partners will work together to produce SMART performance indicators to measure our progress and achievements.

Social Policy – number of carers offered an Adult Support Plan (ACSP) of their needs and outcomes sought



Trend Chart Commentary:

The number of carers offered an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) has increased to 1,074 in the period 2021/22 and this may reflect the easing of pandemic restrictions. The number is below pre-pandemic numbers.

There has been a focus on raising awareness of the benefits of having an ACSP completed and we will expect to see the number of carers being offered an ACSP to increase in the next reporting period

Section 11: Moving Forward Carers Strategy 2023–2026

The 2023–2026 action plan is a continuation of the 2020–2023 action plan and includes the following areas for improvement:

Priority area 1: Recognising, Valuing and Involving Carers

- Encourage people who have a caring role to recognise themselves as carers and know and understand their rights to advice, information and support
- All carers are aware of their rights and know how to access the support available to them
- Ensure the voices of all unpaid carers are heard in matters that affect them
- Work in partnership to deliver carers rights
- Develop more robust information and performance data on the work we are progressing to evidence our impact on how we support all carers
- Review and update the HSCP website with relevant information for carers and their cared for person
- Agree an engagement and communication strategy to ensure carers are involved in matters relevant to them

Priority area 2: Health and Social Care Support

- Promote short break respite opportunities and explore alternative types of breaks to suit all carers
- Carers are made aware of Self-Directed Support options and are encouraged to choose the one that meets their personal circumstances to have a break from their caring role
- Carers are made aware of the benefits of completing an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement and are encouraged and supported to complete one
- Raise awareness of carers with professionals including in health care settings to ensure carers are involved in the hospital discharge planning
- Training is available to staff and volunteers to understand carers needs and rights
- Expand the use of digital and technology advances devices to support the carer and the cared for person to remain safely and independently at home
- Review referral processes between all partners and ensure it is as streamlined and accessible as possible



Section 11: Moving Forward Carers Strategy 2023-2026

Priority area 3: Social and Financial Inclusion

- Increase awareness of the financial and benefits advice available for carers and their cared for person
- Promote the benefits of completing a power of attorney for the cared for person
- Implement the Carer Positive accreditation in West Lothian Council and encourage other employers to do the same to increase rights for carers in their workplace
- Develop carer friendly communities where people reach out to support carers wherever they can by understanding the caring role

Priority area 4: Young Carers

- Review how young carers are involved in decisions that affect them
- Involve young carers in individual decisions which affect them and encourage them to engage in strategic decisions, supporting young carers to engage and have their voices heard
- Support young carers to have a life alongside their caring role and support them when transitioning from school to their next positive destination
- Young carers are made aware of their Children's Rights in line with the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) principles which reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and their right to a Young Carers Statement



Section 12: Associated Strategies and Plans

The West Lothian Carers Strategy 2023–2026 does not sit in isolation but is part of a suite of other strategies and plans that relate to unpaid carers and their cared for person(s) support and wellbeing.

These strategies and plans influence the priorities and outcomes that we collectively agree to achieve to ensure the best outcomes for all unpaid carers.

The West Lothian Carers Strategy aligns with National legislation including Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 and the Equality Act 2010 and aligns to the newly published West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028.

Strategies and plans that have links to the West Lothian Carers Strategy are:

Local Strategies

- Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023/28
- Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023/28
- Lothian Strategic Development Framework 2023/28
- Raising Attainment Strategy 2023/28
- Local Housing Strategy 2023/28
- Gender Based Violence Strategy 2021/24
- Autism Strategy 2022/25
- Alcohol and Drug Strategic Plan

National Strategies

- Carers Strategy
- Dementia Strategy
- Mental Health Strategy
- SDS Improvement Plan

Plans

- Community Planning Partnerships Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2023–2033
- Children's Services Plan 2023–2026
- Children's Services Commissioning Plan 2023–2026
- Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–2026
- Youth Justice Development Plan
- Community Learning Development Plan 2021–2024
- Corporate Plan 2023–2028
- Dementia Action Plan

The National Care Service proposal is currently out for consultation and the partnership is awaiting further detail around the progress of the proposals.

In West Lothian partnership working is about developing inclusive, mutually beneficial relationships that improve the quality and experience of care. This includes the relationships between individuals, their carers and service providers. It is also about relationships within and between organisations and services involved in planning and delivering health and social care in the statutory, voluntary, community and independent sectors.

Section 13: Carers Support in West Lothian

To ensure carers in West Lothian are treated with dignity and respect the Scottish Governments Health and Social Care Standards My Support, My Life are followed. The Standards set out what we should expect when using health, social care or social work services in Scotland. They seek to provide better outcomes for everyone; to ensure that individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and that the basic human rights we are all entitled to are upheld. The development of our services will continue to be based on the following underpinning principles:

We will:

- Prioritise preventative support to help prevent problems developing
- Enable choice and control so that support can be personalised

By:

- Ensuring Adult Support Plans and Young Carer Statements meet the personalised needs and agreed outcomes of the individual
- Involve carers who's cared for person is in hospital in the hospital discharge process

- Promote Self Directed Support to offer the most flexibility to the carers support needs
- Ensure there is a high quality carer advice and support organisation in West Lothian



The guiding principles of personalisation and prevention will help deliver the best outcomes for individuals and the system as a whole.

In addition, West Lothian support the Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) core principles where carers are;

- Identified
- Supported and empowered to manage their caring role
- Enabled to have a life outside of caring
- Free from disadvantage and discrimination related to their caring role
- Fully engaged in the planning of services
- Recognised and valued as equal partners in care



Section 13: Carers Support in West Lothian

West Lothian Organisations to Support Carers:

West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)

The HSCP is committed to working in partnership in delivering the best outcomes for adult carers and young carers and for the person(s) they care for. Contact the Adult Social Care Enquiry Team (ASCET):

Phone: 01506 284848

E-mail: adultsocialcare@westlothian.gov.uk

The Advice Shop

The Advice Shop is a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty and to promote inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy. They can offer advice on benefits, energy, debt / money worries and housing issues.

Website: [WLC Advice Shop](#)

Carers of West Lothian (CoWL)

CoWL is the carers organisation in West Lothian which has been commissioned to provide support to carers across the Health and Social Care Partnership. CoWL offers a range of services, advice and support, including:

- Information and advice
- Training
- One to one emotional support
- Hospital based carer support including the hospital discharge process
- Peer support groups
- Counselling
- Signposting and referral to support services
- Individual & group support for young carers
- Recreational Courses
- Short Break Funding / respite opportunities

Phone: 01506 448000

E-mail: office@carers-westlothian.com

Website: <https://carers-westlothian.com>



Section 13: Carers Support in West Lothian

West Lothian Organisations to Support Carers:

Community Learning Disability Service

The Community Learning Disability service aims to provide specialist health care, advice and treatment to adults with a learning disability through locally based multidisciplinary teams. This also includes advice and support for families / carers.

Website: [Community Learning Disability Team](#)

Scottish Autism

Offers a helpline, advice and information for families and carers who are supporting someone with autism.

Phone: 01259 720044

E-mail: autism@scottishautism.org

Website: [Scottish Autism](#)

Alzheimers Scotland

The Dementia Resource Centre is based in Livingstone and aims to support people with dementia, their families, relatives and friends at any stage of the illness. The following support is on offer;

- Information and advice
- Community activities for people with dementia and carers
- Peer support groups
- Specialist support for younger people living with dementia
- Supporting 8 Community Dementia Cafes across West Lothian: Armadale; Bathgate; East Calder; Fauldhouse; Linlithgow; Livingston; Uphall; Whitburn

Phone: 01506 533108

E-mail: WestLothianServices@alzscot.org

Website: [Alzheimers Scotland](#)



Section 14: Useful Links

[Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)

[Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

[Social Care \(Self-Directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#)

[Community Care and Health \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)

[Equality Act 2010 Guidance](#)

The Equality Act 2010 strengthens the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality. A quick guide Equality Act 2010. What do I need to know as a carer is intended to help carers understand how the Equality Act can help them:

[Short guide to the Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know as a carer](#)

A key priority in West Lothian is promoting carer awareness and visibility and this is supported through our ongoing commitment to promote equalities and embed human rights into all aspects of service delivery.

Recognising Carers as being Equal, Expert and Valued

<https://www.carersnet.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/05/Equal-Expert-2022.pdf>

[West Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#)
(link to be added)

[Children's Services Planning Part 3 Guidance](#)

[West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
(link to be added)

[Equal Partners in Care \(EPiC\)](#)

[National Care Standards](#)

National directories for information around short break services:

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/directory>

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/fundingbreaks/funddirectory>

<https://www.euansguide.com>

<https://www.aliss.org>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/directory.aspx>

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/care-services>

<https://www.oscr.org.uk>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-unpaid-carer-advocacy-scotland>

