

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	BCP Carers Strategy Update
Meeting date	15 January 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The report is to update Committee members on the progress on the BCP Carers Strategy, 1 year on from its approval.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: a) The Committee note and scrutinise the contents of this report
Reason for recommendations	This paper provides the committee with an update on the implementation progress of the BCP Carers Strategy (2022-2027).

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor David Brown – Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing
Corporate Director	Jillian Kay – Corporate Director for Wellbeing
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Update or Information

Background

1. The BCP Carers Strategy (2022-2027) was approved by Cabinet in September 2022 and sets out 5 key strategic priorities to support carers and recognise the valuable contribution they make to our community. At least 35,000 people in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are carers and they play a vital role in sustaining our health and social care system by enabling the people they care for to live safely in their own homes for longer.
2. The strategy was shaped by the views and experiences of local carers and aims to support them to look after their own health and wellbeing, to enable them to stay in their caring roles and prevent, reduce, or delay the need for health and care services for the people they care for.
3. The 5 key strategic priorities for the BCP Carers Strategy are:

Priority 1: Identification and Recognition

- Identify carers as early as possible in their caring journey.
- Support carers to self-identify.
- Recognise the full diversity of carers.
- Recognise the contribution that carers make to society.
- Involve carers in planning, commissioning decisions and service design.

Priority 2: Information and Advice

- Ensure information and advice is accessible to all carers.
- Involve carers in the planning and development of information and advice.
- Invest in training for carers and professionals.

Priority 3: Supporting Carers Physical, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

- Enable carers to take a break from their caring role.
- Support carers to look after their own physical and mental health.

Priority 4: A Life Alongside Caring

- Enable carers to have time for themselves.
- Enable carers to have access to education and employment.

- Support carers to access activities they enjoy.

Priority 5: Collaborative Working Across Dorset

- Work with partners to ensure equity of service across Dorset.
- Engage with all organisations across Dorset that support carers to promote, value and recognise carers services.

Annual Update on the implementation of the Carers Strategy

4. Following the approval of the BCP Carers Strategy, an implementation plan was produced to cover the 5-year period of the strategy. A copy is contained in appendix 1 to this report.
5. A governance board was established in August 23 to monitor the implementation plan. Bi-monthly highlight reports are produced, and a copy of the December 23 report is contained in appendix 2 to this report.
6. In early 2023, the carers support service relocated from St Ambrose Cottage in Westbourne to the Boscombe Resource Centre, co-locating with another adult social care team. This is a more central location for the BCP conurbation, and the move released financial savings of £119,000.
7. The recommissioning of the Dorset Carers Card at the beginning of 2023 enabled carers to feel supported and valued in their local community. The new provider brings added value by providing carer friendly training to businesses and creating carer friendly communities.
8. The carers advocacy service was recommissioned, along with the representation service for carers of people with a learning disability, helping to ensure that carers are able to express themselves clearly and raise issues or concerns when necessary.
9. As highlighted on the implementation plan, the planned start dates for some actions have been revised. This was because of reduced staffing levels in the carers team due to a combination of maternity leave, long term sickness and resignation. Priority needed to be given to the office relocation, which led to a pause in the rebranding of the carers support service and subsequent promotion. Staffing levels have gradually increased since June 2023, with the recruitment of two carers officers, a carers direct payment officer and carers contact officer. Further analysis will be carried out to determine if current staffing levels will be sufficient to meet increasing demand as more carers are identified or come forward to register with the service.
10. The CRISP carers support service will now be rebranded as 'BCP Carer Support' with a planned carers information and recognition event in Spring 2024 being used to launch the new branding.
11. BCP Council continues to be an active member of the Pan Dorset Carers Steering Group, contributing to the refresh of its strategic vision, and ensuring it is aligned with the BCP Carers Strategy.
12. The recent Local Government Association Peer Review to prepare for the upcoming CQC assurance visit praised the engagement with local carers that helped to shape

the strategy, regarding this as a strength under the 'providing support' assurance theme.

13. The carers support service and the young carers team are working together to improve the information and support available to older young carers as they approach their 18th birthday. This will ensure they get the support they need for themselves and the person they care for, and that the change of responsibility from Children and Family Services to Adult Social Care services is as seamless as possible.
14. Integrated Care Systems are invited to apply for Accelerated Reform Funding, made available from the DH&SC for projects that support carers. The terms and conditions of the funding offer are currently being explored to determine whether it would be feasible to submit an expression of interest as an Integrated Care System consortium.
15. Slippage from the Better Care Fund (22/23) has been allocated to carers services. This will:
 - Enable the potential purchase of a replacement holiday lodge for carers, which they value highly.
 - Allow additional temporary staff resource to speed up the completion of outstanding carers assessments.
 - Provide resource for the rebranding of CRISP to BCP Carer Support and host an information event for carers for the launch.
 - Allow for membership of the Carers UK Employers for Carers Scheme to promote a better deal for carers with local employers.
16. Agreement has been given and support provided by the Corporate Director for Wellbeing to host an initial BCP Council Carers Staff Networking Group meeting to gauge interest and potential for its formal creation. This demonstrates the Council's own commitment to its employees who find themselves balancing work and caring responsibilities.
17. Participation in Carers Week and Carers Rights Day have continued this year to help recognise, support, and identify new carers. An information event at the Citygate Church in Bournemouth on Carers Rights Day received positive feedback from carers on the breadth of information and advice available on the day.
18. It is essential that the Council works jointly with carers to develop the range of support that is appropriate for their needs. Feedback from carers is therefore sought on a regular basis at the BCP Carers Reference Group, the Pan Dorset Carers Steering Group and the Learning Disability Partnership Board Carers Action Group. Opportunity is also taken at carers events, such as carers rights day to seek feedback face to face and via surveys. The Head of Access & Carers Services is open to receive invitations from carers groups to attend their meetings and respond to questions.
19. The BCP carers survey to monitor the impact of the strategy will be staggered with the bi-annual ASCOF carers survey. This is currently live and the results will be released in Spring 24.

Options Appraisal

20. No requirement for options appraisal

Summary of financial implications

21. Delivery against the priorities of the BCP Carers Strategy is within the financial envelope of the Better Care Fund. If further staffing resources in the carers team are required to meet increasing demand, this will require a negotiated transfer of funding within the Better Care Fund from other areas of spend.

Summary of legal implications

22. The Care Act 2014 makes provision for the responsibility and duty on a local authority to assess a carer's need for support, to include any possible future support, what those needs may be and how those identified needs will be met having been evaluated and if they meet the eligibility criteria.
23. The implementation of the Carers strategy aims to support and encompass the statutory duties placed on the local authority to carers of people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. Non-eligible carers are also supported through the commissioning of universal services.

Summary of human resources implications

24. Staffing levels of the carers team will continue to be reviewed over the course of the 5-year strategy to ensure that the service is able to keep pace with demand.

Summary of sustainability impact

25. A decision impact assessment report was produced for the BCP Carers Strategy, and it showed a positive impact on:
 - a. Communities and culture
 - b. Economy
 - c. Health and Wellbeing
 - d. Learning and Skills
 - e. Sustainable Procurement
 - f. Transport and accessibility
26. The carbon footprint of the BCP Carers Strategy is classified as low.

Summary of public health implications

27. The implementation of the BCP Carers Strategy will improve the health and wellbeing of carers as one of the key strategic priorities is to support carers physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. It also reduces local health inequalities by promoting collaborative working across Dorset to ensure equity of service.

Summary of equality implications

28. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening tool was completed for the BCP Carers Strategy and reviewed by the EIA Panel. The panel gave a green rating and praised the level of engagement that had been carried out for the strategy. A copy is contained in appendix 3 to this report.

29. The priorities of the BCP Carers Strategy have positive equality implications as they improve the accessibility of carers services and allow more carers with protected characteristics to have access to information, advice and support that is tailored to their needs.

Summary of risk assessment

30. If the Better Care Funding for carers is reduced or withdrawn in future, the priorities of the strategy would need to be reviewed to ensure any available funding is targeted to areas where it has the greatest impact.

Background papers

Published works:

The BCP Carers Strategy: [Carers-Strategy-2022-27 \(bcpCouncil.gov.uk\)](https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/carers-strategy-2022-27)

Appendices

1. Implementation plan
2. Highlight Report (Dec 23)
3. Equality Impact Assessment