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West Wales
Regional Partnership
Board

West Wales Strategic Plan for Unpaid Carers 2025 - 2030



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Partnered with:



Foreword

On behalf of West Wales Regional Partnership Board, I am delighted to introduce the Strategic Plan for Unpaid Carers for 2025-2030. This new strategy builds upon the foundations laid out by our previous strategy, 'Improving Lives for Carers' and has been developed through engagement with unpaid carers and organisations who support unpaid carers in West Wales.



Pictured: Hazel Lloyd-Lubran

We recognise that unpaid carers in West Wales continue to make a critical contribution, not only to the lives of relatives, friends and neighbours but to the local community too. Caring is such an important part of life and many of us will find ourselves in a caring role at some point in our lives whether the role emerges unexpectedly or unfolds gradually, as each carer's journey is unique to their own circumstances.

We are all too aware that caregiving often brings significant personal challenges, and it can be physically and emotionally demanding, sometimes having a profound impact on a carers' own health, finances, and personal life. This is why supporting the wellbeing of unpaid carers is a priority for the Regional Partnership Board.

This strategic plan makes a continued, collective effort to improve the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers across West Wales. It ensures that partner organisations will work alongside unpaid carers to make sure that unpaid carers are not only recognised and valued but will also be equipped to receive the right type and level of support at the right time.

We look forward to working together in the years ahead to make this strategy a reality for the unpaid carers who make such a vital contribution to our communities.

Hazel Lloyd-Lubran

Chair, Regional Partnership Board, West Wales



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Pictured: WWRPB Citizen and Third Sector Engagement Board

Bringing the strategy to life through the eyes of the carer

Throughout our strategic plan we have used the lens of the 'Teulu Jones' family to bring the strategy to life, viewing the priorities through the eyes of 'the Carer'. The 'Teulu Jones' family was developed by Hywel Dda University Health Board (the Health Board) and its partners, to support its work on transforming health and care services in West Wales.



'Teulu Jones' isn't a real family but represents some of the caring roles within families in West Wales and by thinking about scenarios such as these, can help demonstrate how a difference can be made to carers in our communities. Here is an introduction to members of 'Teulu Jones'.

Mari's story



Mari Jones has lived in Newcastle Emlyn all her life. She lives with her husband Alun in an old two-storey house. Mari is a retired teacher and is President of the local Merched y Wawr. She has recently been diagnosed with dementia and has become increasingly frail and relies on family members for support.

Alun's story



Alun Jones is 80 years old and lives with his wife Mari. He loves to watch rugby and supports Carmarthen Quins. Alun enjoys his daily walk to the local shop to get the newspaper and always does the crossword. He has a history of heart disease and had a heart attack when he was 70 years old. Alun still drives a car, and he and Mari regularly visit their daughter Sioned in Tumble. Sometimes they stay overnight, so they can spend time with their granddaughter and great-grandson.



Bringing the strategy to life through the eyes of the carer

Sioned's story



Sioned is 47 years old and lives in Tumble, near Llanelli with her daughter and grandson. She is juggling her part-time job as a health care support worker in Prince Philip Hospital, Llanelli and having to help care for parents. She is also becoming increasingly worried about her mother Mari. She also helps her daughter Lianne by providing childcare for her grandson, Ben.

Lianne's story



Lianne Thomas is 19 years old and lives in Tumble with her mum and dad, and her three year old son Ben who has respiratory problems and mild developmental delay. Lianne is pregnant with her second child and is doing a full-time childcare course at the local college. Because her mum works shifts, Lianne is often relied upon to care for her elderly grandparents.

Ben's story



Ben Thomas is three years old. He lives in Tumble with his mum, Lianne, and mamgu and tadcu. Ben is a happy little chap and always puts a smile on everyone's face. Ben was born prematurely and has respiratory problems and a developmental delay.

Gareth's story



Gareth is the 38 years old younger brother of Sioned. He is the Finance Director of an engineering company in Talybont, where he lives but spends a lot of time in Birmingham for work reasons. He is married to Aysha and they have two boys. Gareth tries to visit his parents as much as he can and stays in contact with Sioned.



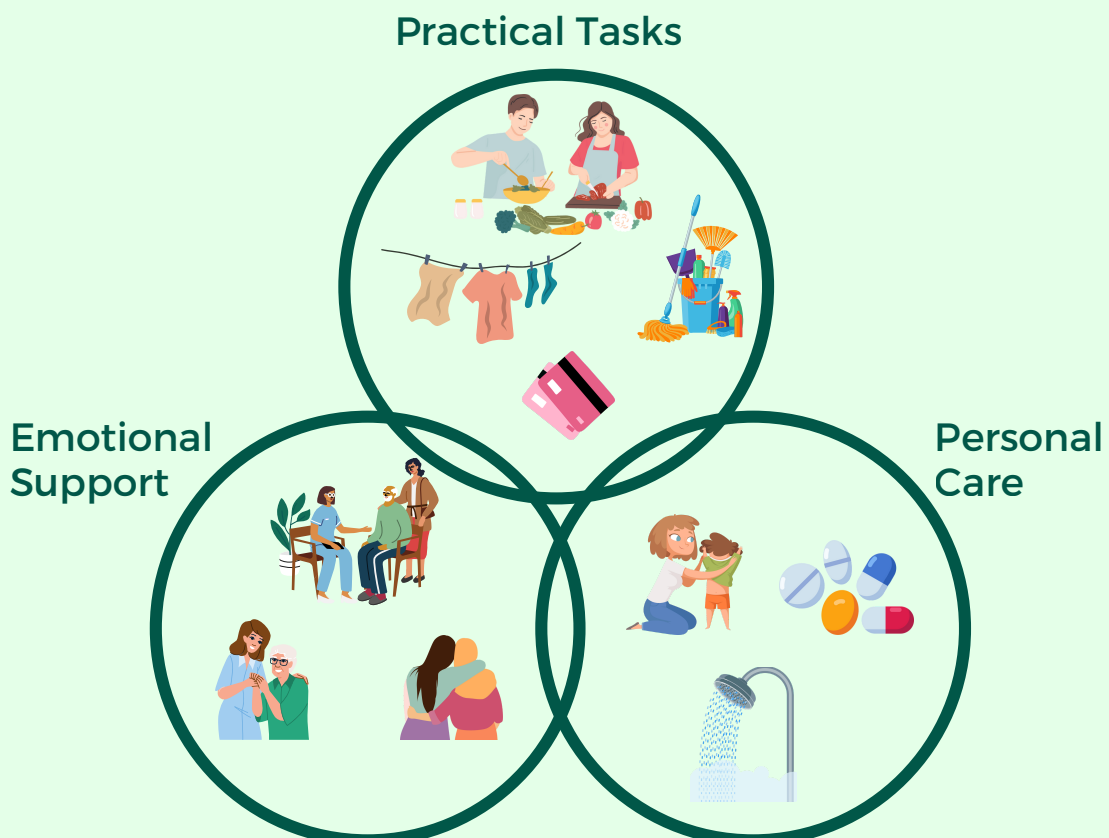
Who is an unpaid carer? and what does it mean?

An unpaid carer is someone who provides support to family members or friends who would struggle to cope without their help. This may include individuals who are ill, frail, disabled or experiencing mental health challenges or substance misuse issues. There is no such thing as a 'typical unpaid carer'—each caring role is unique and shaped by individual circumstances.

The care and support provided is unpaid and differs from the care provided by paid care professionals or volunteers working through voluntary organisations. Some unpaid carers may receive benefits however these are not classed as a payment like a salary.

An unpaid carer could be a spouse, partner, parent, sibling, child, friend, neighbour or any other relation. It is also important to recognise that many children and young people under the age of 25 also take on caring responsibilities. Within this strategic plan the term Young Carer refers to those under 18 and Young Adult Carer applies to individuals aged 18 to 25.

Unpaid carers come from all walks of life, representing a wide range of circumstances. The reasons someone becomes an unpaid carer, and the types of support they provide varies significantly, including practical tasks, emotional support and personal care, as shown in the image below.



Why is this strategy important?

This strategic plan is for all unpaid carers in West Wales, regardless of the condition or needs of the person they care for. We recognise that every unpaid carer's situation is unique with diverse needs, priorities and experiences.

Most people are carers at some point in their lives (Carers UK, Facts About Carers, 2025). Caring can be deeply rewarding, and unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting those who rely on them. However, it's also recognised that taking on a caring role can present significant challenges, and each unpaid carer's experience is shaped by their unique circumstances.

The following information shows some of the key facts and figures for Wales and West Wales:

In Wales around 311,000 unpaid Carers of all ages provide care, worth around £10 billion to the Welsh economy each year.



3 in 5 people in Wales will become a Carer at some point in their lives. Source: Carers Trust Wales, July, 2020.



Wales has the highest proportion of older carers and carers providing more than 50 hours of care a week. Source: Census 2021.



There are approximately 8,200 carers in Wales aged between 5 and 17 years old. Source: Census 2021.



10.5% of the population in West Wales provide unpaid care (40,535).



51% of over 65's in West Wales provide over 50 hours care per week.

Source:

Carers Trust Wales (2020)
Carers Trust UK, Facts About Carers (2025)
Carers Trust Wales (2020)
Office of National Statistics, Census (2021)



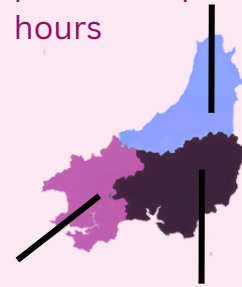
Why is this strategy important?

Percentage of unpaid carers providing up to 19 hours of care per week:

Pembrokeshire:
4.9% provided
up to 19 hours

Ceredigion: 5.3%
provided up to 19
hours

Carmarthenshire:
4.9% provided up to
19 hours.

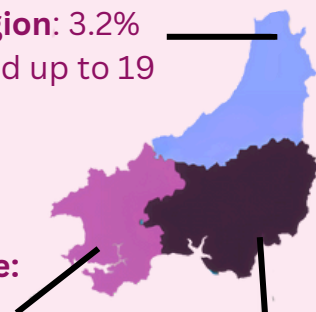


Percentage of unpaid carers providing at least 50 hours of care per week.

Ceredigion: 3.2%
provided up to 19
hours

Pembrokeshire:
3.5% provided
up to 19 hours

Carmarthenshire:
3.9% provided up to
19 hours.



Looking ahead:

Data from the Office of National Statistics illustrates that the number of people aged over 85 is projected to increase by 27.8% between 2021 and 2031, whereas the working aged population is projected to fall by 3.1% over the same period.

Furthermore, according to Welsh Government (2024), two thirds of adults over the age of 65 years are expected to be living with multiple health conditions by 2035 and an increased life expectancy means that people spend longer living with multiple conditions, with little change in healthy life expectancy. This is likely to impact on the support needed from families and friends.

Social Care Wales estimates that by 2037 the unpaid carer population across Wales is expected to increase to 16% of the population.

These figures demonstrate the importance of continuing to identify and support unpaid carers in West Wales.



Working together – our shared vision

In recent years there has been progress towards recognising and supporting unpaid carers through legislative developments. Key milestones include the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and most recently, the Carers Leave Act 2024.

The West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) brings together key partners across the region, including Hywel Dda University Health Board, the County Councils of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, and Pembrokeshire, representatives from the voluntary sector, and individuals with lived experience.

The RPB acknowledges the vital role unpaid carers have and in recognition of this, the RPB established the West Wales Carers Development Group (WWCDG) to lead efforts in improving outcomes for unpaid carers in West Wales and to oversee delivery of the Strategic Plan for Unpaid Carers 2025 - 2030.

Despite ongoing pressures across the health and care system—including rising demand and limited resources—this strategic plan sets out a shared vision for how all partners can work together to better support unpaid carers across West Wales.

Our approach to developing this strategic plan draws on several important principles, including:

- Collaboration - working closely with the Citizen and Third Sector Engagement Board to ensure broad and inclusive input.
- Carer-led insight – Placing the voices and lived experiences of unpaid carers at the heart of shaping our future priorities.
- Reflective practice – Remaining open to learning, adapting, and continuously improving based on feedback and evidence.
- Social Model for Health approach - rebalancing our health and wellbeing system by tackling the root causes of poor health to enable people and communities to have more control over their health and maintain the best possible health, supporting equity, sustainability, and community resilience.



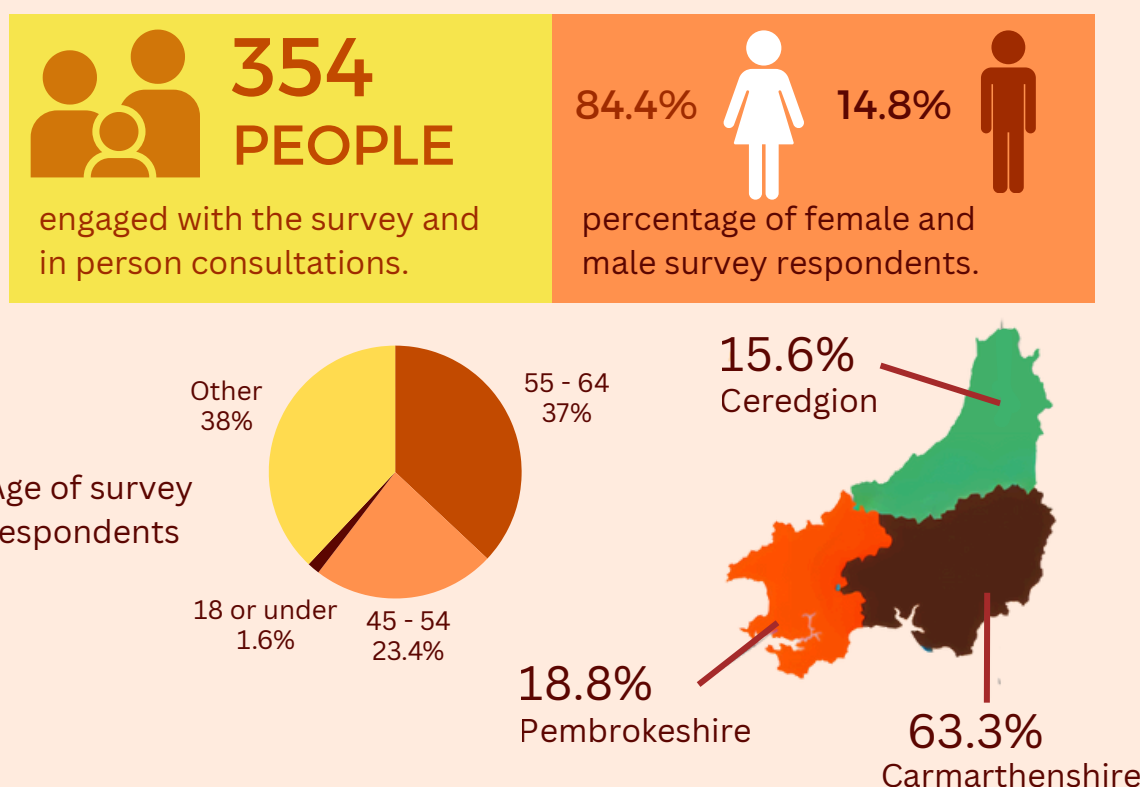
The voices of carers

In developing this strategic plan, we listened to unpaid carers of all ages across West Wales to understand what matters most to them. We also engaged with professionals and organisations who support unpaid carers, who provided valuable insights into the challenges and barriers carers face.

Our initial engagement work took place over an 18-month period, concluding in November 2024. We are grateful to everyone who shared their views and experiences. Through this process, two key priorities were identified, along with a range of potential actions to support their delivery.

From December 2024 to March 2025, we undertook a second phase of engagement to test and refine these priorities. We reached out to unpaid carers, carers' groups and professionals working with unpaid carers to check whether the priorities reflected what we had heard. The feedback confirmed strong agreement with the priorities, along with valuable suggestions which we used to finalise the strategic plan.

In the following section, we provide an overview of the findings from these engagement activities and demonstrate how they have helped shape this strategic plan.



What are we going to do

Our Vision

That West Wales is a region where unpaid carers are recognised, supported and widely valued for the essential contributions they make to our communities and services.

Our Mission

This Strategic Plan for Unpaid Carers sets out the Regional Partnership Board's commitment to improving the lives of unpaid carers in West Wales, by ensuring they receive the necessary support, resources and recognition they need and deserve.

The West Wales Strategic Plan for Unpaid Carers brings this vision to life through two core priority areas, outlining how partners will work together to plan, develop, and deliver services that make a meaningful difference to the lives of unpaid carers and their families.

Our Priorities

Priority 1: Carers are visible and valued

Priority 2: Carers are supported



These priorities will guide our work over the next five years and will be delivered through a series of annual action plans. Progress will be led, monitored, and reviewed by the West Wales Carers Development Group.

In the next section we set out:

- Why each priority is important.
- The current picture in West Wales drawn from our engagement and co-production work.
- What we need to do and how it will be achieved.
- What we expect to see.
- What unpaid carers will say, using the 'Teulu Jones' family as an illustration.



Priority 1: Carers are visible and valued

Why is this important?

Identification and self-identification of unpaid carers is crucial to ensure they can access the right help and support at the right time, while also maintaining their own health, well-being and independence.

According to the Carers Wales Report (State of Caring in Wales, 2022), the total number of carers in Wales is estimated to be nearly 500,000. This suggests a gap of 189,000 “hidden carers” who may not recognise themselves as unpaid carers and, as a result, could be missing out on essential support.

The Carers UK State of Caring 2022 survey also reports that 35% of UK adults do not view caring for a relative or friend as “care,” which contributes to many individuals failing to identify themselves as an unpaid carer. The report also found that 51% of unpaid carers looking after family members or friends took over a year to recognise their caring role.

The 2021 Census reported approximately 8,200 young carers in Wales, aged 5 to 17. However, Estyn (2019) highlighted that many secondary schools, colleges, and pupil referral units are unaware of which learners have a caring role at home, stressing the need to improve support and outcomes for young carers.

This is important to note because unpaid carers may well be missing out on vital support, potentially impacting on their physical/mental health and wellbeing, finance and employment opportunities. Increasing the awareness of unpaid carers is essential as it enables them to seek timely support.

Furthermore, 73% of people in Wales think that the role of unpaid carers is not valued by the general public – the highest in the UK with only one in five people (22%) thinking unpaid carers are valued (Carers Week, Make Caring Visible Valued and Supported, 2022)



Priority 1: Carers are visible and valued

What did the survey results say?



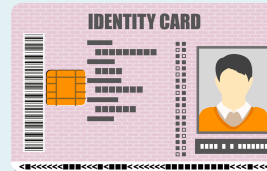
Helped to be identified as a carer?

44.7%

they were helped to be identified as a carer in the initial survey.

Only **45**

out of 111 people asked had a carers ID/ carers emergency card.



68%

had not had a 'what matters to me conversation'.



23.4%

of respondents make use of Health Technology.



What did people say?

What more can be done to help identify carers? Carers said:

- Information that is visible and accessible
- Increased outreach
- Community engagement
- Information dissemination



Pictured: WWRPB Citizen and Third Sector Engagement Board



Pictured: Attendees at a WWRPB Community Event



What can unpaid carers expect to see

What we need to do	How will it be achieved?
Celebrate and promote the value of unpaid carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in national, regional and local unpaid carer campaigns • Participate in local community events, raising the awareness of unpaid carers • Promote unpaid carers ID Card schemes and their purpose • Increase awareness of the Carers Support West Wales website • Continue to have information in public places, including libraries, contact centres and GP surgeries
Increase organisational awareness of unpaid carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver initiatives such as 'Investors in Carers' to encourage the early recognition of unpaid carers of all ages and increase awareness of support available • Encourage local employers to identify and support staff who have caring responsibilities • Increase awareness of rights at work, including flexible working opportunities, carer's leave and right to time off in emergencies involving a dependent
Provide carer awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement unpaid carer awareness training for professionals and volunteers, delivering in a variety of ways including: e-learning, webinars and in-person sessions

By taking these actions we expect that:

- Unpaid carers know where to get help and information that's important to them.
- Unpaid carers receive information and advice that is consistent across the region.



What can unpaid carers expect to see

- There will be an increase in the reported number of unpaid carers accessing early intervention and prevention services
- Staff and volunteers feel confident to have a conversation with an unpaid carer and signpost them to information, advice and support that matters to them
- Statutory organisations have unpaid carer policies for staff that strengthen commitments to support unpaid carers in employment which allows them to balance work and caring responsibilities
- More organisations will participate in the Investors in Carers scheme
- There will be an increase in the number of unpaid carers accessing early intervention and prevention services

By taking these actions carers will say:



“To be honest I’ve never thought of myself as an unpaid carer. After all, they are my parents and looking after them as they get older is just what you do. A friend of mine said they had seen a poster in the council offices titled ‘do you look after someone’ and they immediately thought of me. I rang the number right away and was given lots of information on help and support available which I shared with my sister Sioned.”

Gareth Jones, unpaid carer for his elderly parents.



“I love my job, but juggling work and caring for my elderly parents, including my mum who recently developed mild dementia, as well as supporting my daughter to care for her son, is a real challenge. My employer has recently developed a Carers Policy, which has raised awareness of the role of working carers. This has given me the confidence to ask for support from my line manager, and I’ve been able to reduce my working hours to 30 hours a week which has been a huge help. I also have a Carer’s Passport and have the support of my team if I need to make a phone call about my mum’s care during my shift”

Sioned Jones - Health Care Support Worker and unpaid carer .



Priority 2: Carers are supported

Why is this important?

Unpaid carers often have a crucial role in supporting others to live well, and make a significant contribution to society. Yet, in doing so, they often prioritise the needs of others above their own, which can take a toll on their own physical and emotional well-being.

As caring roles and circumstances can change over time, access to timely and comprehensive carer needs assessments is essential. These assessments help ensure unpaid carers receive the right information, advice, and assistance at the right time.

It's estimated that three in five people will take on a caring role at some point in their lives (Carers UK, 2020). Many unpaid carers are also in paid employment. In fact, Carers Wales estimates that one in seven members of the workforce is juggling work with caring for someone who is older, disabled, or seriously ill. Recognising and supporting working carers benefits the unpaid carer and also helps employers recruit and retain skilled staff and foster a more supportive workplace culture.

Young carers face their own unique challenges. Issues such as poor school attendance and reduced academic performance can significantly impact their futures. Research by Public Health Wales shows that 1 in 5 young people aged 16 – 22 years in Wales have caring responsibilities, yet 35% of school aged carers have not told their school of their situation. Furthermore, this research also states that young carers miss or cut short an average of 48 school days per year due to caring responsibilities and are four times more likely to drop out of further education (Public Health Wales, Closing the Educational Engagement Gap for Young Carers, 2021).

Whilst West Wales offers many benefits, for some individuals and communities who live in rural areas, they often face barriers in accessing services, particularly due to limited public transport. However, feedback suggests that people of all ages have embraced new digital skills to stay connected with friends and family, helping to reduce isolation and improve access to support.



Priority 2: Carers are supported

What is the picture in West Wales?

Summarised below are some of the key points which came from our engagement and consultation work.

What did the survey results say?



What did people say?

Carers felt that support which would improve a carer's experience include:

- Tailored Support for Carers.
- Digital Skills Training.
- Employment Support Programs.
- Person-Centred Planning.
- Extended Out-of-Work Services.
- Supportive employers who offer flexible working options.
- Community-Based Workshops.



What can unpaid carers expect to see?

What we need to do	How will it be achieved?
Ensure the right information is available at the right time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is available in a range of formats including, the Carers Support West Wales. website, leaflets, posters and face to face advice • Promote single point of contact to make it easier for unpaid carers to find out what help is available. • Health and social care professionals such as nurses, pharmacists, GPs, social care staff and voluntary sector staff will signpost unpaid carers to appropriate services no matter what stage of the unpaid carer's journey someone is at.
Ensure that unpaid carers receive support whichever organisation they contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities, the Health Board, voluntary sector and unpaid carers will work together to develop, deliver and improve services to meet local and regional needs. • Improve the knowledge of staff working in organisations to help them feel confident to feel confident to proactively signpost unpaid carers to services that can support them.
Offer a range of services to respond to unpaid carers needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpaid carers are offered a 'what matters to me' conversation in a language of their choice to access services and a statutory Carer's Needs Assessment undertaken if needed. • Unpaid carers can access support to gain skills, seek employment, or retain existing employment. • Provide a diverse range of short break. opportunities (subject to eligibility assessment and available funding). • Promote information about Advocacy and cost of living advice services • Provide peer support groups and unpaid carer networks in the region.



What can unpaid carers expect to see?

By taking these actions we expect that:

- Unpaid carers can communicate and access information in formats which are accessible to them.
- Unpaid carers feel confident and supported when navigating various systems of support and services.
- Unpaid carers can express what they need to maintain their caring role and are aware of how to develop an emergency action plan.
- Unpaid carers can access training and services that supports their own health and wellbeing.
- Peer support groups and unpaid carer networks are available across the region.
- Services will be working together to share relevant information, to avoid unpaid carers having repeat their information about their caring circumstances.

By taking these actions carers will say:



“I never considered myself to be a Young Adult Carer or parent Carer. I care for my grandparents and my son Ben who has a developmental delay. I got in touch with the local Carers Information Service, and they helped me to access a short break for my son, so that I could have some time to myself. I feel so much better, and Ben really enjoyed the time away too.”

Lianne Jones – unpaid carer for her son Ben



“Even though I’m 80 years old, I still like to keep up to date with things that are happening in the community and the rugby of course. Being an unpaid carer for my wife, it’s sometimes hard to go out as I don’t like to leave her alone. Being able to access the Dementia Carer support group via Zoom is great. A volunteer came to the house and showed me how to use a “tablet” and since then I’ve accessed lots of support that I never knew was there!”

Alun Jones – unpaid carer for his wife who has mild dementia



Measuring and reporting our progress

Working in a co-productive way, WWCDG are keen to receive feedback about how our actions are leading to improved outcomes for unpaid carers. To do this we will:

- Obtain regular feedback from unpaid carers on their views as to how the strategy is progressing.
- Hold ‘check and challenge’ sessions with unpaid carer representatives to ensure actions are delivered in response to feedback from unpaid carers of all ages.
- Undertake unpaid carers experience surveys; and
- Collect feedback in the format of unpaid carer stories seeking to capture and understand the most significant changes.

Furthermore, the table below sets out how we plan to measure our progress and we have identified baseline data for 2024-25, which will be our starting point.

Measurable benefit - based on commissioned services data	BASELINE 2024-2025
An increase each year in the number of adult unpaid carers supported by Carers Information Services *	2170
An increase each year in the number of young (unpaid) carers supported by Carers Information Services *	2019
An increase each year in the number of young adult (unpaid) carers supported by Carers Information Services *	Not Currently Reported
An increase each year in settings across West Wales who engage in the Investors in Carers scheme.	171
An increase each year in the number of unpaid carers supported by Carers Discharge Support Services.	363
An increase each year in the number of visits to the regional carers’ website.	187,687

*based on the contract monitoring data from the voluntary sector service providers jointly commissioned by the Health Board and Local Authorities.



Measuring and reporting our progress

Measurable benefit - based on information received from: The voice of the carer, qualitative information and Carer reported outcome measure.

Percentage of adult (unpaid) carers each year who report that the support they accessed has **promoted wellbeing and/or achievement of personal outcomes**.

Percentage of young adult (unpaid) carers each year who report that the support they accessed has **promoted wellbeing and/or achievement of personal outcomes**.

Percentage of young (unpaid) carers each year who report that the support they accessed has **promoted wellbeing and/or achievement of personal outcomes**.

Percentage of young and young adult (unpaid) carers who feel they are receiving support that meets their needs as a carer.



Pictured: Speaker at a WWRPB Dementia Conference.



Pictured: Staff engaging in the Carers Strategy Consultation.



What next?

This strategic plan sets out our commitment to improving the experiences and outcomes of unpaid carers across West Wales. In anticipation of a growing number of unpaid carers, this Strategy adopts a forward-looking approach, focusing on how we can proactively plan to meet both current and future needs.

The strategic plan is underpinned by annual action plans that will be responsive to emerging issues raised by unpaid carers, as well as evolving needs driven by national priorities. The progress of these action plans will help inform the preparation of annual reports which will be made available each year on the West Wales Regional Partnership Board website.

The West Wales Regional Partnership Board will oversee the implementation of this strategic plan by:

- Receiving and scrutinising update reports from the West Wales Carers Development Group (as a subgroup of the Regional Partnership Board).
- Publishing a report annually on the impact of the work undertaken for West Wales.
- Seeking assurance, through the WWCDG, that contract and performance management of commissioning arrangements for unpaid carer services includes regular service user consultation, data collection and outcomes monitoring.
- Ensuring that the strategic plan is supported and resourced effectively to deliver on the priorities identified; and
- Ensuring that the strategic plan has sufficient priority within the Regional Partnership Board to raise the profile of caring and unpaid carers' needs across the region in areas such as health, education, housing and transport.

Progress in respect of the implementation of this strategic plan will also be considered by the statutory partners: Hywel Dda University Health Board and Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire County Councils through their own corporate reporting processes.



References and data sources used to develop the strategy

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Carers Trust Wales (2020) [Key facts and figures | Carers UK](#)

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The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>

The Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/WFGAct-English.pdf>

UK Government Legislation (2024) [The Carer's Leave Regulations 2024](#)

Carers Wales (2016) [Missing out the identification challenge](#)

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[Provision for young carers in secondary schools, further education colleges and pupil referral units across Wales](#)

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Public Health Wales, Closing the Educational Engagement Gap for Young Carers (2021) - <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/knowledge-directorate/research-and-evaluation/publications/closing-the-educational-engagement-gap-for-young-carers/>

Carers UK, Facts About Carers (2025) [facts-about-carers-march-2025-final.pdf](#)

State of Caring (2022) [cukstateofcaring2022report.pdf](#)

Summary of West Wales feedback 2024-2025

