



**A HEALTHIER WEST WALES:
West Wales Carers Development Group
Annual Report
2019-20**



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1. Introduction

This report summarises the activity of the West Wales Carers Development Group (WWCDG) during the period 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020. The WWCDG is a formal sub-group of the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) which includes representatives of Hywel Dda University Health Board (Health Board), the three Local Authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, as well as Third and Voluntary sector organisations, and representatives of service users and carers in West Wales.

This report provides an overview of the work which has been taken forward, utilising the Carers funding provided by Welsh Government to Health Boards, the Integrated Care Fund and core funding from partner organisations, to ensure that Carers priorities are embedded in Services across the region in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. In their budget letter dated 11th February 2019 Welsh Government set out their expectation that health, local authorities and the third sector will work in partnership to support carers under the Act by:

- Supporting life alongside caring - providing opportunities for carers to have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring.
- Identifying and recognising carers - improving carers recognition of their role and ensuring they can access the right support.
- Providing information, advice and assistance - providing appropriate advice where and when carers need it.

Responding to the requirements above form the basis of this Carers Annual Report 2019/20 which provides evidence of progress against each of these areas.

2. The Needs of Carers in West Wales

The West Wales RPB published its first Population Assessment for West Wales in April 2017, and following this has developed the West Wales Area Plan 2018-2023. A significant amount of information about the needs of the population was gathered through direct citizen engagement. This was further enhanced with the data and outcomes collected during the Carers' Measure work across the region in order to develop a profile of Carers' across West Wales.

The 2011 Census identified that within the West Wales population of 348,000, there is approximately 47,000 Carers. Around 9,000 Carers have been identified either through GPs or Social Services, which demonstrates that many Carers are being identified as a result of their own health or care needs. In addition, over 400 Young Carers are currently being supported in West Wales; these are young people under the age of 18 years old who are caring for siblings and parents.

3. Key Developments & Progress – 2019/20

The WWCDG established a delivery plan for 2019/20 detailing the activity to be taken forward throughout the year. The delivery plan took account of the priority areas set by Welsh Government and the key developments and progress are summarised below, with further detail provided within subsequent sections of this report;

- Commencement of a regional Employers for Carers membership and establishment of a formal steering group to support the roll out;
- Completion of Phase 3 of the Carers Resilience and Well-being pilot in Ceredigion;
- Roll out of the new Social Care Wales national Carer Aware e-learning course;
- Development of a carers needs assessment quality assurance framework and audit tool;
- Identifying new and innovative approaches to respite services;
- Launch of the redesigned Investors in Carers scheme;
- Commencement of a Carer Officer project in our four acute hospitals to improve engagement of Carers in discharge planning arrangements.

Finances available to support the delivery of the work plan during 2019/20 included: specific Welsh Government Carers funding allocated to the Health Board, Welsh Government respite grant allocated to local authorities, Integrated Care Fund resources and core resources from the Health Board and each local authority.

The following sections of the report provide evidence of the progress which has been made both locally and regionally to address the Welsh Government priority areas.

4. Supporting life alongside caring

4.1 Learning & development opportunities for carers

The Health Board includes a focus on recognising and responding to the needs of Carers within its corporate induction programme for all new employees. During 2019-2020 1,152 new staff employees across a wide range of professional groups and departments received information about Carers, including how to identify and support Carers whether they are staff members, patients or their Carers. This has been a great opportunity to raise awareness within the Health Board and ensure employees are thinking about Carers, both from a patient and family perspective, as well as employees who are carers, right from day one of their employment.

The Carer Aware e-learning launched in November 2018 by Social Care Wales has been cascaded out to staff via a number of different means. During 2019/20 214 staff in Hywel Dda completed the e-learning, along with 38 colleagues in Ceredigion County Council. Bespoke awareness training is also delivered as part of the Investors in Carers scheme within the region.

4.2 Identify ways of supporting carers to improve their physical, emotional and mental well-being

The Health Board has been working closely with the Education Programme for Patients (EPP) team to promote the introduction to Looking After Me (ItoLAM) courses for Carers across the region. The emphasis of this programme is to give carers the opportunity to learn skills to enable them to take care of their own health whilst caring for someone else. For former carers it can support them to look after themselves and to make plans for the future. During 19/20, 38 carers completed the ItoLAM course. The sessions planned towards the end of the last financial year were cancelled due to Covid-19, however plans are in place to deliver these remotely using digital technology from Summer 2020 onwards which we anticipate will increase the numbers of Carers accessing the course.

4.3 Commissioning of carers services

Pembrokeshire County Council have led on the regional review of respite provision undertaken in conjunction with Swansea University who consolidated this into a report with recommendations for next steps.

Links have been developed with Shared Care Scotland and Carers Trust to inform a West Wales model and share best practice. This programme of work will continue in 2020/21 and further meetings looking at new models of delivery are scheduled and a working group established to take this forward. The group will also seek opportunities to align recommissioning timelines as well as developing joint commissioning arrangements, in line with the regional approach.

For the second year running, using Welsh Government Carers Respite funding Ceredigion County Councils Carers Unit delivered the Ceredigion Carers Fund scheme. Carers (adult and young) and groups of Carers could apply for a small “grant” to meet outcomes that support activities that improve their health and wellbeing and encourage them to maintain a life alongside caring. Over 200 Carers have benefitted from the fund during the year.

4.4 Carers Resilience and Well-being pilot in Ceredigion

The Ceredigion Carers Unit have led on the delivery of Phase 3 of the Carers Resilience and Well-being pilot, successfully embedded 2 streams of the programme within the suite of training offered by Ceredigion County Council’s Learning and Development department. This included:

1. ‘Carers Resilience and Wellbeing’ – A course for Adult Carers in employment
2. ‘Team Carer Awareness: Understanding Carers Resilience and Wellbeing’ – A course for teams

Between April and October 2019, they engaged with 73 members of staff, 12 participants identified themselves as Carers and attended the training developed exclusively for Carers. Feedback received from some of the Carers following the training included:

- “The training will enable me to spot stress at an early stage and discuss matters with a colleague or line manager so that assistance and better understanding of my issues can be noted/supported.”
- “I will share some of the information learnt with my team so that they can understand me better and use some of the strategies in their daily work too.”
- “I have learned that I have to safeguard my mental wellbeing as well as those I care for.”

The teams that took part in the training represented a broad range of service areas within Ceredigion County Council:

- Customer Services
- Adult Social Care
- Internal Audit
- Legal Services
- Housing Operations
- Housing Strategy
- Learning and Development
- Health and Safety

Feedback received from staff attending the team training said:

- “This session made me more aware of how many Carers there are, what constitutes a Carer and the difficulties they face by working whilst being a Carer. The information that was delivered will help me signpost Carers and also make me aware of my colleague’s emotions.”
- “I will be more aware of the needs of Carers as they face the demands of combining work and caring responsibilities and offer flexible support should a member of our team find themselves in this position”

Using the learning from the initial programme developed in conjunction with Grays Learning, the programme is currently being adapted by Ceredigion Carers Unit to align with the Signs of Safety model. A priority during 2020/21 will be to provide materials that can be shared freely, making them available to the partnership and the third sector, without restrictions or additional costs. The programme will be rolled out across community settings and to employers across the region in 2020/21.

4.5 Working Carers - Service improvement and integration

The WWCDG participates in the Carers Wales Employers for Carers (EfC) scheme through an umbrella membership. A West Wales EfC Steering Group has been established chaired by Ceredigion County Council with representation from the four statutory organisations. The group have been reviewing how organisations can best utilise the EfC resources, for example policy advice, staff networks, staff survey and learning materials for line managers, to improve organisational support for working Carers. The steering group is being supported by the EfC Wales Hub Manager from Carers Wales to evaluate current policies and practices around how organisations are supporting carers within their workforce.

Each individual partner organisation has taken forward specific actions, in addition to their collaboration as part of a regional Steering Group. For example, Ceredigion County Council’s Human Resources department have collaborated with the Carers Unit to develop a Corporate Carers Policy, which aims to support employees to remain in

work, fulfil their career potential and meet their caring responsibilities while also increasing the awareness of managers and employees to the needs of Carers to ensure a sympathetic response to caring responsibilities/needs. The policy is in the process of being finalised for approval.

Hywel Dda University Health Board has established an internal Employers for Carers Group which is being chaired by the Health Board's Vice Chair. This group has co-ordinated:

- The development of a statement of intent and action plan
- Staff drop in events during Carers Right Day in November, 2019 (engaging with over 70 staff who are caring for a family member or friend)
- Marketing and social media campaign to support Carers Week, Carers Rights Day and Young Carers Day which included staff stories and videos.
- A staff survey to gather views of staff within the Health Board who are also unpaid Carers
- The development of an information leaflet for staff who are Carers highlighting support available internally and externally
- Review of Carer Policies in other health boards and other public sector organisations to inform a Carers Policy for Hywel Dda.
- Robustly benchmarked the Health Board against the Employers for Carers - Carer Confident benchmarking scheme in order to develop and sustain support for Carers within the workplace.

5. Identifying and recognising Carers

5.1 Improving engagement of Carers in Discharge Planning and Transfer of Care

The Health Board and its local authority partners have taken a whole system approach to support and engage Carers in the patient's discharge planning and ensure active provision of Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) to all Carers. Service Level Agreements have been established across the three counties for a pilot project with existing third sector Carer providers.

Carer Officers (who are third sector employees) have been based in each hospital since January 2020 to support Carers and staff. The Carers Officers have a specific role in supporting staff to identify Carers earlier, enabling improved involvement in the discharge planning process and active provision of Information, Advice and Assistance. They also work closely with the Patient Advice and Liaison Teams in each hospital and encourage referrals of patients and their families to the Carer Officers.



During the initial mobilisation period (January–March 2020) the Carer Officers have been developing links and raising awareness of unpaid Carers within each hospital including with Ward Sisters, Hospital Chaplin, Heads of Nursing, Discharge Liaison Teams, MacMillan Cancer Support Services and Patient Liaison Teams.

The feedback from staff is encouraging, with departments keen to engage on how their teams can better support Carers. Whilst staff have only been in place for a few months a quote from one of our Carer Officers is shown below which gives confidence in the role moving forward.

“When I walk through the corridor in the hospital, staff are now recognising me and asking for more Carers information leaflets to restock their stands or information boards. I have also received phone calls and e-mails from hospital staff asking where they can source further information”.

5.2 Investors in Carers Scheme (IiC)

On behalf of the West Wales Carers Development Group, Hywel Dda University Health Board has continued to roll-out the regional Investors in Carers scheme. In addition to funding an Investors in Carers Lead Officer, the Health Board commission regional support for the IiC which is delivered through Carers Trust Crossroads Sir Gar.

IiC provides the foundation for work with health professionals in primary, community and acute hospital settings to raise awareness of the needs of Carers. However, unlike some other areas, IiC has been designed to be utilised by a wide range of settings including schools, libraries, local authority teams, Job Centre Plus and third sector organisations. Following a scheme review in November 2018, the IiC award now enables settings to progress through the three levels; bronze, silver and gold. The statistics below demonstrate the significant engagement with the scheme across the Hywel Dda area.

- In total (since March, 2013) 115 settings have achieved bronze IiC awards, 5 Silver and 2 at Gold
- In 2019/20 15 settings achieved a new Investors in Carers Award (8 achieved their Bronze level, 5 achieved Silver (3 of which were GP Surgeries) and 2 achieved Gold level).
- Another 55 settings are currently working on their bronze, with 18 settings working towards Silver and 3 working towards their Gold.
- Support was provided to many other IiC settings to ensure active support to Carers with the referral process and to help them with their revalidation of their Bronze level.



Coleg Sir Gar, Bronze Level Investors in Carers Award, February, 2020



Above, Furnace House Surgery, Carmarthen, Silver Level Investors in Carer Award, November, 2019

Below, Ceredigion County Council Carers Unit was the very first organisation and service across any sector to be awarded the Gold Level Investors in Carers Award, September, 2019



A core element of the Investors in Carers scheme is providing a simple system that enables Carers to register as a Carer with their GP, which in turn instigates a referral to their local Carers Information Service.

During the year:

- 704 Carers have registered with GP surgeries across the Health Board area (bringing the cumulative total of Carers registered with GP surgeries to 8467)
- 742 Carers had a referral to the Carers Information Service via the GP surgery registration and referral process (bringing the cumulative total of referrals by GP surgeries to 4154).

Feedback from carers

“Only after visiting my GP surgery on a number of occasions and seeing Carer related information on the notice board did I see myself as a Carer.”

“It was a very good idea to have a notice board specifically for Carers, really did help me when I was worried.”

Regular Carers Lead events have been delivered throughout the year in order to bring different settings together as an opportunity for peer support, joint learning and updating on new local initiatives.



5.3 Raising awareness of the challenges faced by Carers

Young Carers Awareness Day is an annual event, led by Carers Trust, and this year it took place on 30 January 2020. All partners in the WWCDG undertook a range of activities including our Investors in Carers Carer Leads who developed notice boards and linked in with schools and colleges to set up displays in their reception areas.



Outpatients in Prince Phillip Hospital - Young Carers Awareness Information Board

Carers Week (June, 2019) is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, it also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

The campaign was brought to life again this year by our partners who came together to provide support for carers, run activities and highlight the vital role carers play in our communities.



Carers Information stand in Withybush General Hospital supported by Macmillan, Pembrokeshire Carers Information Service & Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services Community Connectors.



Carers Information stand in Prince Phillip hospital supported by Macmillan, Crossroads Sir Gar and Community Health Centre.

The Health Board set up information stands for **Carers Rights Day on 21 November** in each of the general hospitals with Carer information for staff who have caring roles outside of work. These were supported by the Health Board Chair, Vice Chair and other independent board members. Social media and posters were used to advertise the stands with a reach of 35.6K on Facebook and 14.5K on Twitter and on the day a total number of 68 staff members who have caring roles came to talk to the Carers Team.



5.4 Support for carers wishing to return to education, employment or volunteering roles

Carmarthenshire County Council have worked with the Carmarthenshire Carers Forum, attending their meetings and listening to views and feedback from carers and former carers. They also commissioned a report from the Forum during Q4 on the experiences of carers in work/education, who want to return to work / education or who have recently finished work / education. The report highlights the barriers and difficulties carers can face, where there are areas to support and provides an opportunity to highlight good practice. This engagement work has been used to develop a pilot project that will commence in 20/21 with a view to understanding how best to support carers.

All three local authorities work in partnership with the Workways+ Project to support Carers to gain confidence, skills and return to work, e.g. Pembrokeshire Workways+ has worked with 80 Carers since the start of 2018; Carmarthenshire Workways+ has worked with 66 carers since start 2018.

5.5 Carers Needs Assessments

The **Social Care Wales Carers needs Assessment Toolkit** for practitioners was released in Summer 2019. In order to roll out the national resource in Ceredigion, the Council's Carers Unit and Learning and Development team are developing a taught training programme which will be mandatory for all staff responsible for carrying Carers needs assessments (to be delivered in 2020/21).

5.6 National Young Carers ID Card

Ceredigion County Council has agreed to be an early adopter of the National Young Carers Card and has started to work in partnership across 5 clusters of local authorities (incorporating the region and Gwynedd/Ynys Mon) to test specific elements of implementation and to measure the impact.

6. Providing information, advice and assistance

Building on a mapping exercise of information for Carers undertaken across the region in 2018/19, re-prints of key information materials were commissioned as well as new resources such as pop up stands for use by all partners including Investors in Carers settings.

Links have also been established with the Region's Transformation Programme Connected Communities group, ensuring that unpaid Carers maximise support through Delta Connect (technology enabled care) and community connectors.



Pull up banners have been designed and distributed to all IiC settings and used to highlight how to contact local Carers Information Services for support. This ensures that information is visible to patients, family members and staff who are carers, and not reliant on the availability of staff members to identify carers.

Work has also continued to strengthen links with DEWIS and other information services, ensuring information relating to Carers across the region is relevant, up to date and accessible.

6.1 Commissioning of Carer Information and Outreach Services in each County

In order to maximise core budgets for our Carers' services the commissioning arrangements are delivered in partnership through the West Wales Carers Development Group. In addition, the Health Board agrees an annual project plan for the use of the Carers funding which is allocated by Welsh Government; for 2019/20 this was £121k. Our Carers services are delivered through Ceredigion Carers Unit and third sector providers including Carers Trust Crossroads Sir Gar in Carmarthenshire, Hafal Crossroads in Pembrokeshire and Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers.

Carer Feedback

“ Being provided with a comprehensive pack of information, which we used to access other things that would benefit us was invaluable”

“Lots of help I previously didn't know existed”

The West Wales Carers Development Group have made a commitment to work together to ensure commissioning of carers services supports the regional collaborative models and identify further opportunities to develop joint commissioning arrangements, in line with the regional approach.

6.2 Development and expansion of online and digital media

This work has been linked with the WWCP Transformation Programme to develop carer pathways with review of community level support and pilot to improve transition between Carers Information Service and Social Care in Pembrokeshire for carers requiring carers' assessment. Further work has been undertaken and learning from the COVID-19 situation will inform future plans.

6.3 Training opportunities for Carers

The Carers Unit worked with Ceredigion County Council Learning and Development team to develop a training programme for Carers, using the Welsh Government Social Care Workforce Development Partnership grant. The training programme aimed to provide a selection of courses and events that improve the wellbeing of all Carers, an example of these are:

- Looking After Me: An introduction for Carers
- First Aid
- Tai Chi taster sessions
- Dementia Bus – virtual tour
- Sleep management specifically for Carers
- A happiness/laughter workshop designed for Carers
- Stress less
- An annual Carers Garden Party co-designed with Social Care students from Coleg Ceredigion (N.B. event postponed due to COVID-19)

The training events took place in a wide variety of community venues across the county with approximately 75 Carers participating.

7. Support for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers

The WWCDG continue to help Young Carers to cope with their caring role through commissioned services delivered by Action for Children and Carers Trust Crossroads Sir Gar who supported 514 young Carers during 19/20. In addition, Carmarthenshire County Council Young Carers Service supports children and young people up to the age of 18 who have a caring role that significantly impacts on their basic entitlement to childhood. The service sits alongside the Social Work Teams, School Attendance Service and Team Around the Family enabling effective collaboration when planning for children and families as well as robust safeguarding.

In line with Carmarthenshire's core values the team take a person centred, relational approach that is Trauma Informed and ACE Aware, providing face to face support and virtual contact as well as group support and regular social activities. In collaboration with Carers Trust Crossroads Sir Gar, the team also support schools, partners and GP surgeries with the Investors in Carers awards and raising awareness of the needs of Young Carers.

There are effective working relationships with other local authority services including Adult Social Services, Schools, Housing and Youth Support Teams as well as established links with third sector services. The 'Step Up- Step Down' protocol with Carers Trust Crossroads Sir Gar Young Carer's Service ensures that Young Carers with the highest level of family support needs sits within Children's Services and that all Young Carers in Carmarthenshire are in receipt of a service that is best suited to their needs.

Case Study

Jacob is 11 years old and has been part of the Pembrokeshire young carer's project for seven months. From the age of nine he has been caring for his mother who has serious health conditions that means she cannot be left unattended.

Jacob's caring role has recently increased due to the marriage breakdown of his parents. Jacob's caring role starts very early in the morning, Jacob helps his mother out of bed, he supports his mother to walk as safely as she can down the stairs and makes her breakfast. Jacob carries out these caring tasks all before getting himself ready for school. Jacob's grandparents arrive to take over the caring to enable Jacob to attend school. When Jacob comes home from school, he does his homework and takes over from his grandparents where he will clean the house, cook dinner and attend to his mother's needs, whilst keeping her company. This leaves Jacob with very little time to see his friends and play outside on his scooter.

Being part of the project has enabled Jacob to have a break from his caring role by attending a local support group twice a month along with the activities during the holiday programme and has allowed him to have fun and make new friends. As a result of attending and accessing the young Carers service Jacob's mother says that the *"Pembrokeshire young Carers project has given Jacob more confidence and he is a lot happier in himself, as now he realises he is not alone and there is support"*.

Jacob will continue to be a part of the project for the foreseeable future as his caring role is unlikely to change. He needs the consistency of support and the fun activities that are on offer from Pembrokeshire young Carers to support Jacob to reach his full potential.

Young Carers and Young Adult Carers Services are delivered through a person centred approach ensuring the voice of the Young Carer is heard. Funding through West Wales Carers Development Group has enabled a number of activities to take place. This includes Young Adult Groups which delivery of a range of social activities, links with Workways and other youth projects to further the development of individuals seeking employment around their caring role.

Good links with Colleges including Pembrokeshire College, Coleg Ceredigion and Coleg Sir Gar have been established with multiagency meetings taking place. Links between services which span local authority areas means Young Adult Carers can attend groups to suit their social groups as opposed to their physical county location. A successful residential programme was delivered at Bluestone with both counties (Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire) attending and helping to shape the look of services.

There has been positive feedback from all Young Adult Carers when attending activities and events. The continued support to Young Adult Carers has been vital as this group of Carers falls between young and older and can often be difficult to engage with, particularly if they have not been identified previously.

8. Priorities for 2020/21

Carers and the Carers' agenda has been established a priority within the Area Plan for West Wales. The Regional Partnership Board has adopted Carers as an integral priority, particularly recognising the cross-cutting impact and links across all its key programmes of work.

The WWCDG are currently developing a regional Carers Strategy for the period 2020-2024. The key actions in the strategy will be based on the views and ideas of key stakeholders that were captured at the regional and local carers planning events held in spring 2020 as well as feedback gained through a regional Carers Strategy engagement survey which attracted 558 responses. The principles which will underpin the regional strategy are that it will:

- Address key requirements, gaps and improvements identified through the West Wales Population Assessment and the objectives within the Area Plan
- Respond to Ministerial priorities for supporting carers
- Complement and integrate a range of Carers' initiatives across the region to increase the visibility about the needs of unpaid Carers
- Ensure that the needs of Carers are represented through the A Healthier West Wales Transformation Programme

9. Conclusion

Carers are a fundamental focus within the West Wales Area Plan 2018-2023 which sets out our communities needs across West Wales and how we will work in partnership to respond to these. We are facing unprecedented changes in Health and Social Care and with an aging population, as well as the need to deliver services differently in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of unpaid Carers in the region is likely to increase. The West Wales Carers Development Group is committed to working together to deliver support for Carers in our communities in new and innovative ways, and to ensure that the needs of Carers are considered at every stage of their health and social care journey.

This Annual Report has provided an overview of the wide range of activity which has been on-going in West Wales to improve outcomes for Carers. Whilst the focus of the report has been on the work lead via the West Wales Carers Development Group and how the Welsh Government funding, ICF and core funding of partner organisations has been utilised to support this work, it is acknowledged that the needs of Carers are being addressed across a wide range of other services within each partner organisation.

We look forward to progressing key areas of actions based on what we heard from Carers in our Regional Carers Strategy 2020-2024.