



## INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

Date of Meeting	6 July 2021
Report Title	Carers Strategy
Report Number	HSCP.21.079
Lead Officer	Sandra MacLeod, Chief Officer
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Consultation Checklist Completed	Yes
Directions Required	No
Appendices	Appendix A - Carers Strategy

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Integration Joint Board's (IJB's) approval for the extension of the timeframe of the current Aberdeen City Carers Strategy and subsequent full review.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board:

- a) Approves the proposal to extend the timeframe of the Aberdeen City Carers Strategy contained in Appendix A.
- b) Approves the plans for a subsequent full review of the Aberdeen City Carers Strategy.
- c) Instructs the Chief Officer to bring back the revised Aberdeen City Carers Strategy for approval to the March 2022 IJB meeting.



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### 3. Summary of Key Information

- 3.1.** On 1 April 2018 The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 (the “2016 Act”) came into effect. The 2016 Act extends and enhances the rights of Carers in Scotland to help improve their health and wellbeing so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, and have a life alongside caring.
- 3.2.** The 2016 Act places a duty on local authorities and health boards to prepare and publish a local Carers Strategy covering both adults and young carers. On 27 March 2018 the IJB approved Aberdeen City’s Carers Strategy ‘A Life Alongside Caring’. The strategy had a three-year life span ending March 2021.
- 3.3.** Two other requirements in the 2016 Act were to publish Eligibility Criteria for Carers and a Short Breaks Services Statement. On 22 May 2018 the IJB approved the Aberdeen City Carers Eligibility Criteria and Funding Allocation Process and on 11 December 2018 it approved the Short Breaks Services Statement.
- 3.4.** There remained one further obligation under the 2016 Act and that was to provide guidance on the timescales for preparing Adult Carers Support Plans and Young Carers Statements for those caring for people who are terminally ill. Scottish Statutory Instrument No. 133, The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 (Adult Carers and Young Carers of Terminally Ill Persons: Timescales for Adult Carer Support Plans and Young Carer Statements etc.) Regulations 2021 was published on 10 March 2021 and comes into force on 31 July 2021.
- 3.5.** The Carers Strategy contained an Implementation Plan and delivery of this was monitored by the Carers Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG) which consists of a broad range of stakeholders from Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, Aberdeen City Council Children’s Services, ACVO, Scottish Care, the commissioned Adult Carers Support Service, third sector providers and the IJB Carers representatives. On 27 November 2019, progress on the implementation of the Carers Strategy was reported to the Clinical and Care Governance Committee.
- 3.6.** During 2020 and into the first half of 2021, these stakeholders were all diverted to the Covid pandemic response meaning the CSIG did not meet and some actions from the Implementation Plan remained outstanding. Covid also had an impact on the delivery of support services for both carers and cared for people and the intensity of the caring role increased for many carers in the City.



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- 3.7. Work was underway during the latter half of 2020 in relation to consultation on the recommissioning of some social care support services and plans were in place to undertake consultation on the Strategic Plan refresh. Between lack of capacity and concern about overburdening carers, in terms of consultation, the end date of the Carers Strategy passed without any review, consultation, or refresh work being carried out. This is not a situation we would want to find ourselves in, especially when we are aware that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the caring role. We are keen, however, that the refresh of the strategy should be undertaken thoroughly, in a co-produced way with our unpaid carers, and include a proper review of the impact of covid on the caring role and an understanding of the current needs of carers in the City. This will take time to do but work on this is planned to begin in July 2021 with the recommencement of the CSIG meetings.
- 3.8. Despite work not being undertaken on the refresh of the strategy, the support provided for carers in the City continues to be an area of focus and is being kept under review. The Young Carers Development Group has continued to meet. The Adult Carers Support Service has been recommissioned and a feature of the new service is the provision of Respite (a combination of Respite and Hospitality) which will offer a range of short break options. The Stay Well Stay Connected programme is also focused on providing a range of innovative and bespoke support activities.
- 3.9. A desktop review of the current Carers Strategy has been undertaken and both the strategy itself and the Implementation Plan have been updated. It is proposed this extends its lifespan to March 2022 during which time a fuller review will be undertaken in tandem with the review of the Strategic Plan. The updates in the strategy reflect how it links to the current Strategic Plan, which was approved the year after the Carers Strategy, and the implementation work that has now been completed.
- 3.10. This tandem approach will reduce the potential of consultation fatigue. At the same time services are remobilising and the threat of the pandemic is receding. It is hoped unpaid carers will be in a better position to engage meaningfully with the review process and have their voices heard. It is proposed that a revised Carers Strategy is brought to the March 2022 IJB meeting for approval. It is further proposed that the lifespan of the Carers Strategy is aligned to the Strategic Plan in order that this tandem consultation can be repeated when both are due for revision.
- 3.11. Meetings of the CSIG will recommence and they will be tasked, not only with completing the outstanding actions in the Implementation Plan, but also with



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planning an approach aligned to the Strategic Plan consultation, to ensure carers voices inform the refreshed Carers Strategy. One of the outstanding actions on the Implementation Plan is in relation to implementing the terminal illness regulations, and arrangements will be in place for these in time for the commencement date of 31 July 2021.

### 4. Implications for IJB

- 4.1. **Equalities, Fairer Scotland and Health Inequality** - It is acknowledged that unpaid carers often experience inequality as a result of their caring role. The Carers Strategy seeks to address the underlying causes of this and to improve carer experiences. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment was undertaken on the Carers Strategy when it was first published in March 2018. The updates made to extend the lifespan of this do not warrant this to be revisited. The Independent Review of Adult Social Care recommends that a human rights-based approach should be taken in the support of carers. A Health Inequality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the process for the full revision of the Carers Strategy and will be published as required at the time that the strategy is approved.
- 4.2. **Financial** - The Scottish Government provide funding for the delivery of support to unpaid carers and the implementation of carers strategies. This funding will continue to be used for both the existing, extended Carers Strategy and the revised one.
- 4.3. **Workforce** - Both the existing and the revised carers strategies will be delivered by the existing workforce across the extended partnership.
- 4.4. **Legal** - Having a local Carers Strategy in place will meet the legal obligations on the IJB within the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and subsequent regulations.
- 4.5. **Covid-19** - Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted on unpaid carers. Completion of the outstanding actions in the Implementation Plan and the refresh of the Carers Strategy will be undertaken with this in mind. Engagement with Carers will continue to take cognisance of relevant Covid guidelines.
- 4.6. **Unpaid Carers** - The recommendations and proposals within this report are focused on improving experiences of Unpaid Carers. They will continue to be fully involved in the planning and delivery of services designed to support them.



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### 4.7. Other - None.

### 5. Links to ACHSCP Strategic Plan

- 5.1. This report links to the commitment under the Resilience Aim of the Strategic Plan to “Value and Support Unpaid Carers”.

### 6. Management of Risk

#### 6.1. Identified risks(s)

There is a risk that if we do not continue to have a robust Carers Strategy that the voices of unpaid carers are unheard, and services designed to support them will not meet their needs. There is also a risk that the IJB fails to meet its obligations within the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

#### 6.2. Link to risks on strategic or operational risk register:

This report links to Risk 5 on the Strategic Risk Register “There is a risk that the IJB, and the services that it directs and has operational oversight of, fail to meet both performance standards/outcomes as set by regulatory bodies and those locally-determined performance standards as set by the board itself. This may result in harm or risk of harm to people”.

#### 6.3. How might the content of this report impact or mitigate these risks:

This report is recommending that we extend the lifespan of the current Carers Strategy following a desktop review and that we have plans in place to undertake a full review taking into account the views of Unpaid Carers in Aberdeen. This should ensure that support for carers continues to be robust and relevant to their needs going forward.

#### Approvals

	Sandra Macleod (Chief Officer)
	Alex Stephen (Chief Finance Officer)