Aberdeen City
Health & Social Care
Partnership

A caring partnership

Carers Strategy 2023 – 2026

Annual Report – Final Report

NHS Grampian

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Contents

- Implementation and Key Highlights Timeline
- Action Plan 2025 Overview
- Data
- Carers Awareness Week – June 2025
- Carers Improvement Projects
- Carers Service Providers Annual Report Links
- Carers Strategy Development
- Looking forward to 2026 - 2030

Strategy Implementation Key Stages

Year 1 2023

January 2023 Carers Strategy Approved

March 2023 Official Launch of Carers Strategy

Mar – Jun 23 Action Plan Development

May 2023 Young Carers LOIP Charter initialised

July 2023 New SPM Appointed

August 2023 Budget Realigned to support improvement projects

December 2023 Deadline for Improvement Projects Ideas

Year 2 2024

February 2024 Year 1 Annual Report

February 2024 Programme Review Carers Services

Mar – June 2024 Start of Improvement Projects

June 2024 Carers Week Events Awareness Raising

Jun – Aug 2024 Collaborative Commissioning Workshops

Oct 2024 Carers Tenders Published

Dec 2024 Carers Service Preferred Provider

Year 3 2025

February 2025 Year 2 Annual Report Approved at IJB

Jan – Mar 25 Contract Implementation

April 2025 Carers Services Contracts Started

June 2025 Carers Week Events Awareness Raising

Jun – Aug 2025 Carers Strategy Improvement Fund Launch

Jun – Aug 2025 Carers SLWG Final Actions

Sept – Oct 2025 Carers Strategy Review

Oct-Nov 2025 Co-Production Sessions Strategy Development

Dec 25 - Jan 26 Strategy Consultation

Feb 2026 Yr 3 Annual Report and Refreshed Strategy to IJB

Plan on a Page

A CITY FOR ALL CARERS - ABERDEEN CITY CARER STRATEGY 2023 - 2026

Aim: We will demonstrate overall improvement in all four priority areas by receiving a minimum of 40% positive responses to our Carer Experience statements (what we want Carers to be able to say about their support) when surveyed in 2026

Aberdeen City Strategic Plan Priority - **'Caring Together'**

Strategic Enablers - **WORKFORCE - TECHNOLOGY - FINANCE - RELATIONSHIPS - INFRASTRUCTURE**

These enablers are the key resources which will support the implementation of the Aberdeen City Carer Strategy 2023 - 2026

PRIORITY 1 - Identifying as a Carer and the first steps to support	**PRIORITY 2** - Access to advice and support for Carers	**PRIORITY 3** - Supporting future planning, decision making and wider Carer involvement	**PRIORITY 4** - Community support and services for Carers
What we want Carers to be able to say about their Support			
"I am supported to identify as a Carer and am able to access information about the support I may need."	"I am supported as a Carer to Manage my Caring Role."	"I am respected, listened to and involved in the planning and development of the services and support which I and the person(s) I care for receive."	"I have a sense of belonging and a life alongside caring, if I choose to."
What will each priority focus on?			
▸ This priority focuses on the importance of carer's being recognised by themselves and others and having an easy entry to support.	▸ This priority focuses on support and advice which is universally accessible to anyone who identifies as a Carer in Aberdeen City.	▸ This priority focuses more specifically on support with future planning as a Carer and accessing more intensive support where the caring role requires this both for the Carer and the Cared for person. It also includes how carers can be involved in the wider development of support for carers.	▸ This priority is focussed on the practical supports available to Carers to support them to be well connected to their communities and have a life alongside their caring role including hobbies and employment. There will be a strong emphasis on Carer choice here and that no one size fits all.
What actions will we take to achieve these priorities?			
1.1 Proactively create opportunities for more people across Aberdeen City to identify as a Carer. **1.2** Improve the knowledge of Carer's Rights and Carers support services with the Education, Health and Social Care Workforce. **1.3** Improve the Knowledge of the wider Community of Aberdeen City of Carers Rights and Carers Support Services	**2.1** Ensure Young Carers have access to a Young Carer Support Service who can provide individual advice and support. **2.2** Ensure Adult Carers have access to an Adult Carer Support Service who can provide individual advice and support.	**3.1** Young Carers have the opportunity to be leaders in planning their own support (Future Planning). **3.2** Young People with Carer responsibilities experiencing transition from Child to Adult Services have access to individual advice and support to enable future planning. **3.3** Ensure Adult Carers have the opportunity to be leaders in planning their own Support (Future planning). **3.4** Carers have the opportunity to be involved in planning the support of the person they care for. **3.5** There are opportunities to access independent sources of support for both the Carer and the Cared for Person. **3.6** All Carers have opportunities to be involved in decision making about Carer Support Services, the Carer Strategy and the wider work of the ACHSCP (Participation and Engagement).	**4.1** Promote a culture of Creativity to encourage innovative approaches to Carer Support. **4.2** Support the ongoing development of a range of mainstream supports and services to enable Carers to receive a break from Caring in line with the proposed 'right to a break' within the National Care Service Bill. **4.3** Continue to develop a range of support options for Carers, where the cared for person has high level needs, which allow choice and control in line with the proposed 'right to a break' within the National Care Service Bill.

2025 Actions

Full Action Plan at Appendix B

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All actions from Action plan progressed, some actions have been taken forward as part of our service developments for next Carers Strategy.

2025 Carers Week was packed with different initiatives and awareness raising, we have taken the learnings from the engagement and will develop and annual calendar of events for Carers Strategy Implementation Group to promote

Carers Strategy Improvement fund has opened further opportunities for all Carers, including young carers one to one support, mentoring and respite. Carers skills development and employment, peer to peer support and family learning sessions as well as practical support solutions for those with complex needs.

Collaboration, info sharing and listening has been at the forefront of the Carers Strategy Implementation Groups priorities in 2025, developing the Carers Reference Group, Co-Production of the Carers Strategy 2026-2030 and our annual local survey and engagement events.

Data

Identified Carers receiving support	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Adult Carers open to Quarriers Adult Carer Support Service	803	1006	1682	2040
Young Carers registered with Barnardos.	149	174	225	306

250% increase of number of Adult Carers supported from 2022 – 2026

Doubled the number of Young Carers registered since 2022.

Priority 1 – Identifying as a Carer and the first steps to support. Increasing numbers shows the effort put into identifying Carers. Benefits of the three LOIP project makes this evident.

SWBG-Aberdeen-Report.pdf

This year the Aberdeen Gender Inequality and Poverty report was produced, and key findings around Women in caring roles and the inequalities they face.

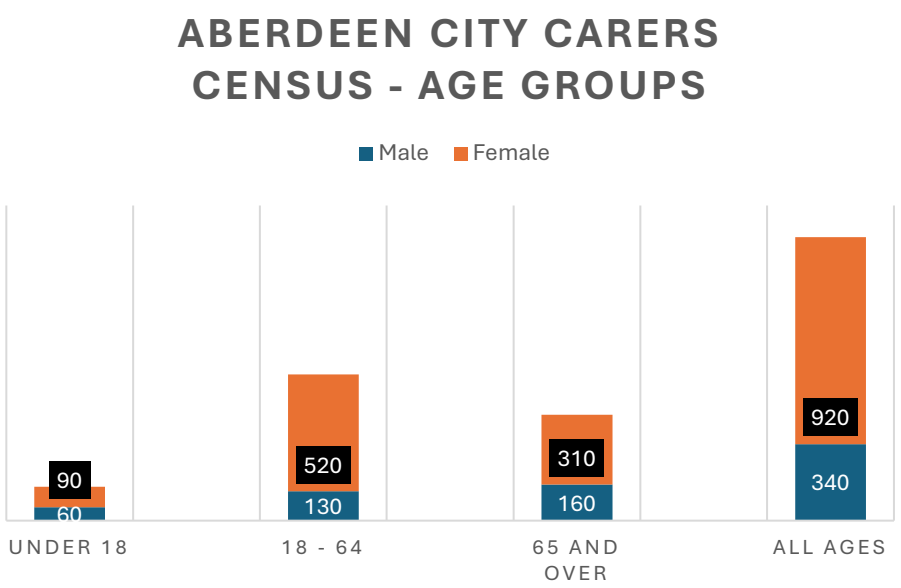
> *Between 2015 and 2019 I had to provide more intense care to my adult daughter, which meant that I could not work many hours, which really impacted my ability to keep my career going - ended up having to take low paid precarious jobs. I've not really fully recovered my mental health, life feels really precarious*

> *It has taken over my life for the past three years and I have stopped and started working multiple times as his care needs increased. I am left exhausted and unable to concentrate so am currently barely working*

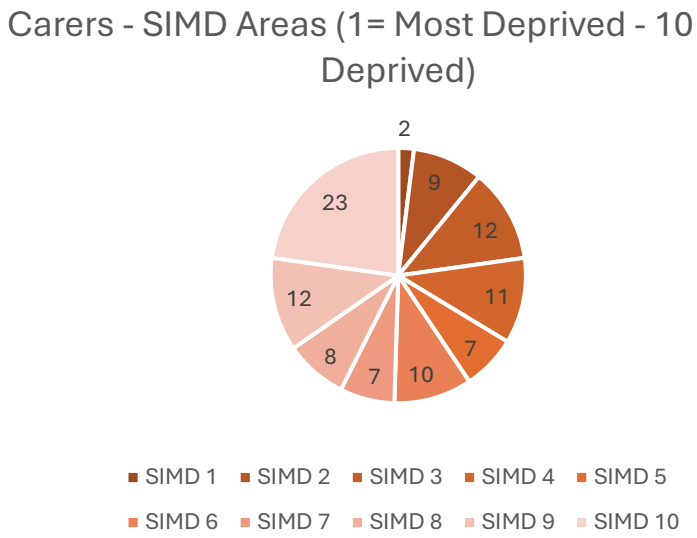
National Indicator (N18) Updates August 2024	Aberdeen Rate 21/22	Aberdeen Rate 23/24	Scotland Rate 21/22	Scotland Rate 23/24
Percentage of carers who feel supported to continue in their caring role	32%	37% ↑	30%	31%

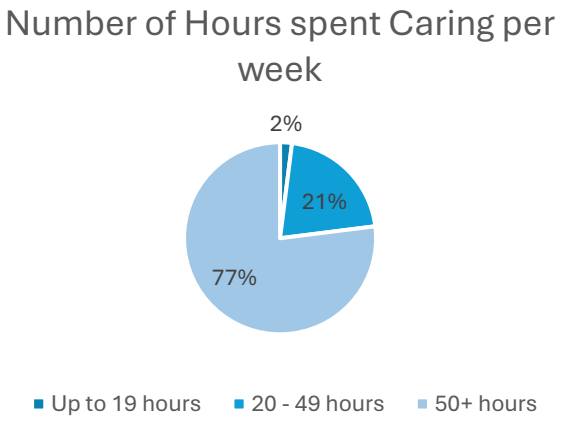
Carers Strategy **AIM STATEMENT** "We will demonstrate overall improvement in all four priority areas by receiving a minimum of 40% positive responses to our Carer Experience statements (what we want Carers to be able to say about their support) when surveyed in 2026. We are hoping to achieve this if trend continues

National Carers Census Data – Aberdeen City



Similar to our Local data survey, there is a higher percentage of Carers spending more than 50 hours per week in their caring role.





Caring for Specific Groups	Percentage of Census Response
Dementia	7%
Mental Health	2%
Learning Disability	5%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	5%
Learning Disability and Physical Disability	1%
Physical Disability	3%
Elderly Frail	5%
Other	6%
Unknown / Missing	65%

Interestingly the census responses note a slightly higher percentage of carers in least deprived areas. However its worth noting it is generally spread across most SIMD zones.

Carers Census, Scotland, 2023-24 - gov.scot For comparisons across Scotland and other supporting figures.

Carers Week June 2025

Carers week took place between the 9 – 15th June 2025, it was great to see another programme of events to support awareness for unpaid Carers across Aberdeen.

Carers Strategy implementation group have committed to and create a coordinated calendar of events all year round.

We already have a vast number of activities and events available, and we recognise our network and collective community are able to drive better promotion.

Carers Improvement Projects 2025

- Barnardos – ELM Music Therapy
- Barnardos – Residential Trips
- PAMIS – PMLD Family Sessions
- We Too – Ninjas
- Sport Aberdeen Carers SPACE Programme
- Quarriers – EPIC
- MCR Pathways – Mentorship Programme

We launched the 2nd round of Carers Strategy Improvement projects in July 2025, projects we scored and agreed by the Carers Strategy Implementation group and we thank all that put forward submissions. We understand that this takes a good bit of effort and a nerve-wracking presentation session. It is however brilliant to see the number of projects coming forward to provide creative and innovative solutions for carers. This improvement fund supports the Implementation group to deliver the Strategy and has been a welcomed resource to enable creativity and collaboration. The projects are only half way through, but we have provided some updates on the progress so far.

Improvement Projects

We Too Update

Digital Expansion – Magazine & YouTube

Read We Too! Magazine Online - We Too!

A major milestone has been the launch of the We Too! Magazine on our website, making it instantly accessible to families and professionals across Aberdeen and beyond. This was driven on feedback from the CSIG. Phionna loves that it has the **“magazine page flicking effect**”! Recent feedback from our printed magazine from social worker Ross Stoker commented: **“Loving your work It’s always a great day when we get the latest edition of the magazine into the office and then get them out to parents.”**

Our Events - We Too!

We have also seen exciting progress on our “Ask the Ninja” YouTube workshops, designed to offer carers practical, peer-to-peer advice in a flexible digital format. The Ninjas are currently scripting and filming the first series, ensuring that carers can access trusted support whenever they need it - whether it’s during a quiet coffee break or late-night moment of worry.

Improvement Projects

pamis
promoting a more inclusive society

PAMIS

Action 1 Deliver targeted family support for adult and young carers in families where someone has profound learning and multiple disabilities (PMLD).

Action 2 We will provide opportunities to attend our national learning and development courses for carers and practitioners in Aberdeen City to empower them to access new knowledge in our specialised training opportunities.

Action 3 We will host a carer support group and set up a carer's network of support facilitated by PAMIS through a medium chosen by carers. This will include 2 4-week sessions of activities for young carers, to encourage them to facilitate a network from which they can access leadership, opportunities and develop new friendships with other young carers.

Action 4 We will facilitate engagement with appropriate services for adult and young carers who wish to access a new or updated support plan

What we have done so far

We have increased the number of adult carers and young carers we support almost reaching our project target

2 new PAMIS Changing places toilets have been registered in Aberdeen City. Providing more accessible facilities.

Increased organisation reach, new partners include Orchard Brae School, Len Ironside Centre and AMZ

Introduction sessions at Aberdeen Art Gallery and 1:1 conversations with Carers

Reflections and Outcomes

At least 2 further facilities are in process of registering a Changing Places Toilet in Aberdeen city due to PAMIS involvement, and more Aberdeen facilities have applied to the Changing Places Toilet fund, which closed for applications on 20 October. Outcomes on those applications will be shared when ready.

Connections with WeToo and Linx Ice Arena . We have also begun to develop a connection with Frozen Light Theatre as a direct result of this funding, and are starting work on a project to help carers communicate how they express emotions as a holistic and sensory experience to address mental wellbeing for carers and people with PMLD

Improvement Projects

MCR Pathways

MCR Pathways: Vital Sparks

Targeted Mentoring Support for Young Carers Across Aberdeen

Young carers are a core focus of our work.

Balancing school with significant responsibilities at home - often caring for a parent, sibling, or family member - young carers carry a burden well beyond their years. Their caregiving role can limit their ability to participate fully in school, engage with peers, or plan for their future. Without targeted support, their potential may go unseen, and their ambitions quietly set aside.

Mentoring provides young carers with something many have never had: someone there just for them. A trusted adult who listens, encourages, and believes in them. With consistent support from their mentor, young carers grow in confidence, broaden their aspirations, and begin to see a future defined by choice and opportunity - not just responsibility.

To date MCR have received 13 referrals and ongoing efforts to raise awareness and identify young carers through partnerships with youth clubs and family support organisations. The team is developing a young carers group, new marketing materials, and recruiting volunteer mentors.

Sport Aberdeen – Care and Connect

To use a child-centred, relationship-based approach to support the rights, wellbeing and life outcomes of young carers in Aberdeen through the power of sport, physical activity and play.

After a successful first year, Sport Aberdeen secured funding again from Carers Strategy Implementation Group to continue the Care and Connect project and its expansion.

Sport Aberdeen have recruited a new Project Activator who works alongside schools and Barnardos. To date the project is running well with the Project Activator supporting 10 young people and developing strong relationships with families and schools. The team is planning a leadership course and expanding support through a further pilot project with Adult Carers.

sport aberdeen
Charity no SC040973

Improvement Projects

ABERDEEN CARERS SUPPORT SERVICE

Quarriers

Action 1 - We will run a block of four cooking session four times a year over a twelve-month period, which unpaid carers will benefit from. Each session will host up to 10 carers and will respond to the needs of carers based on their feedback from a current project. Activities will be run by a qualified tutor, delivering menu planning in collaboration with carers who attend.

Action 2 - In collaboration with sport Aberdeen, we will provide six months gym or golf membership for carers, this project has currently been run with great success and from feedback from carers this has been a much-valued incentive and oversubscribed. This enables us to support more carers, improving health and wellbeing, sustaining resilience and providing short breaks for carers.

Action 3 – First aid wrap around care - To offer on a needs-based support to Carers that require support with maintaining activities in the daily life. Supporting home and garden maintenance due to lack of time from the caring role. Quarriers will support as professional companies for carers in most need**.**

Wee blether groups are still expanding and have been reviewed. Carers still get the most out of wee blether groups

First aid and wellbeing sessions being delivered. Support improvement outcomes for Carers

Creation of the new Sanctuary Room at Quarriers HQ, for carers seeking a quiet space.

Building on the successful Health Improvement Fund project, Quarriers delivering more Cooking with Confidence classes to support Carers in their Caring role

Improvement Projects

Barnardos Case Study

C is a 12-year-old Young Carer who lives with her mother, younger brother (7), and older brother (17). Both siblings have additional support needs- her younger brother is non-verbal, and her older brother has significant and complex needs. The family has no access to public recourse, resulting in extremely limited financial resources. Although her mother has expressed a desire to work, she is unable to do so due to her full-time caring responsibilities. The family also faces practical challenges, including the mother not being able to drive and being unable to manage bus travel with all three children.

YC was referred to the Young Carers Service in July 2024 by the Integrated Children and Family Service due to her substantial caring responsibilities. These include:

- Providing practical, physical, and emotional support for both brothers
- Assisting with household tasks
- Offering continuous emotional support to her mother

Due to the high level of care required within the home, YC has had very limited opportunities to take part in social activities. It was agreed that YC be referred to the 1-1 support programme Care and Connect to ensure she could access personalised support, dedicated time away from her caring role, and opportunities that promote her wellbeing. Transport was also arranged to enable her to attend group sessions, given the family's travel barriers.

Since joining the service, YC has consistently attended Young Carer groups and a range of activities. She has spoken positively about having a safe environment where she can express her thoughts and feelings, stating that sessions "sometimes give me a mental break" and that she feels she can "talk about my problems.". She has also been able to experience activities for the first time, including:

- A visit to the cinema
- Sports sessions
- Craft and cooking activities
- Attendance at the Scottish Young Carers Festival in Dunfermline, taking part in outdoor activities, meeting animals, and engaging in creative workshops

BARNARDO'S Changing childhoods. Changing lives.

Group opportunities continue to be offered, including weekly Biscuits n Banter adult support, school holiday sessions of Barnardo's Infinity LGBTQ+ Group, monthly Saturday YOUTH Primary, S1–3 and S4+ groups, and our summer school holiday programme. The re-establishment of the Young Carers group at Bucksburn Academy will further enhance engagement with Young Carers. In addition, we hosted a stall at Rosemount Market to raise awareness of Young Carers in the city and provide information on the referral process and available support services.

YOUNG CARER

cfine

BARNARDO'S

ELM MUSIC THERAPY

shmu

MCR PATHWAYS

YOUTH WORK ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Bon Accord Care

Young Carers Services Annual Report

ABERDEEN YOUNG CARERS SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Introduction

Barnardo's Aberdeen Young Carers Service was commissioned in April 2019 by Aberdeen City Council – now having been in contract for 5 years. It is the only dedicated Young Carers service in Aberdeen City, working with children and young people from age of 5 to 18 years old with integrated transition support to adult carer services- Quarriers Aberdeen. This report covers 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

We continue to support Young Carers in Aberdeen City to live a happy and fulfilled life alongside their caring roles that aims to reduce the impact upon their own mental health and wellbeing, and offer short-term respite opportunities.

We offer family supports through one-to-one and group opportunities that include an adults group and family events. Furthermore, we provide a range of additional supports including targeted group work, social activities, advocacy, signposting/linking to other services, and financial support.

This year, our aim was to continue supporting schools, services, and the community to increase the awareness of the needs of Young Carers by informing professionals of the challenges that Young Carers face, their needs, and the potential risks associated with being a Young Carer.

We successfully worked in partnership with a wide range of professionals and sectors to implement a culture change with the ideology of 'Think Young Carer' being embedded across various settings including education, health, Social Work, other Third Sector organisations, community groups, and adult services. Whilst also helping to build effective systems to identify Young Carers that have a carer friendly ethos to promote inclusion, making them aware of their rights as a Young Carer, and offering every Young Carer in Aberdeen City a Young Carer Statement.

We have been pro- actively working alongside partners on the Carers Strategy 2023-2026 to identify how a multi-agency approach can be taken to increase the number of Young Carers recognised and receiving support within Aberdeen City with the recommendations from the Strategy continuing to shape service development in how we develop this approach with other organisations.

As part of our Contract Monitoring processes both our Carers service provide quarterly reports and an annual report.

Both these reports give us an in-depth view of all that has been achieved within the services, some things mentioned throughout this report.

We are glad we are able to commit within our Carers Strategy 2026-2030 stable Carers services, as the new Contracts started in April 2025 and will be in place for the next 5 to 7 years.

Co-producing Refreshed Carers Strategy 2026-30

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Local Survey open (DATES)

Engagement Events

CSIG Evaluation – DATE

Co-production Session 1

Co-Production Session 2

Co-Prodcution Session 3

Draft Strategy Consultation

IJB for Final Strategy Approval

Strategy Evaluation and Engagement

Local Carers Survey launched

Help Shape Aberdeen's Carers Strategy (2026 – 2030)

Are you an unpaid Carer? We want to hear from you

Please come to one of our engagement meetings in September.

Your views and insights will help ensure the new strategy is realistic and effective.

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 10th September	6.30pm – 8.30pm	North East College, Gallowgate, room
Tuesday 16th September	10.00am – 12.00md	Marischal College, room 1N – 01
Friday 19th September	10.00am – 12.00md	Marischal College, room 3W - 01
Saturday 20th September	10.30am – 12.30pm	Tillydrone Campus, Donbank room
Wednesday 24th September	6.30pm – 8.30pm	North East College, Gallowgate, room
Thursday 25th September	1.00pm – 3.00pm	Marischal College, room 3W - 01
Saturday 27th September	10.30am – 12.30pm	Central Library, Information Centre
Tuesday 30th September	7.00pm – 9.00pm	Online (Microsoft Teams): call or email for link to join.
Wednesday 1st October	2.00pm – 4.00pm	Online (Microsoft Teams): call or email for link to join.

To get involved, or find out more....
Phone: **1224 067039** or Email: **achscpengagement@aberdeencity.gov.uk**

Co-Production Sessions

Key Elements for Strategy coproduced with Carers, Partners and Professionals

Co-Production Session 1
What we know and what we can shape together. -
Key Elements
Aim
Priorities
Key Actions
6/10/25
Marischal College

Co-Production Session 2

Refining Priorities and Assigning key actions

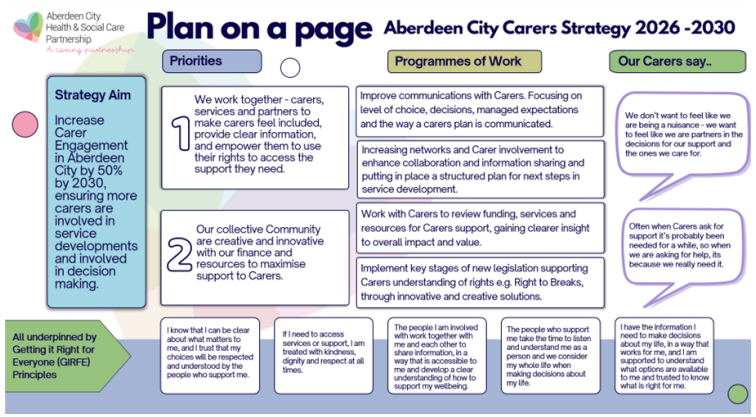
22/10/25
Marischal College

Co-Production Session 3

Developing Plan on a Page
Aim, priorities and key programmes of work agreed
07/10/25
Marischal College

Consultation and Finalisation

Draft Carers Strategy out for consultation with fully coproduced plan on a page.



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Plan on a page Aberdeen City Carers Strategy 2026 -2030

Strategy Aim
Increase Carer Engagement in Aberdeen City by 50% by 2030, ensuring more carers are involved in service developments and involved in decision making.

Priorities

1. We work together - carers, services and partners to make carers feel included, provide clear information, and empower them to use their rights to access the support they need.
2. Our collective Community are creative and innovative with our finance and resources to maximise support to Carers.

Programmes of Work

- Improve communications with Carers. Focusing on level of choice, decisions, managed expectations and the way a carers plan is communicated.
- Increasing networks and Carer involvement to enhance collaboration and information sharing and putting in place a structured plan for next steps in service development.
- Work with Carers to review funding, services and resources for Carers support, gaining clearer insight to overall impact and value.
- Implement key stages of new legislation supporting Carers understanding of rights e.g. Right to Breaks, through innovative and creative solutions.

Our Carers say..

- We don't want to feel like we are being a nuisance - we want to feel like we are partners in the decisions for our support and the ones we care for.
- Often when Carers ask for support it's probably been needed for a while, so when we are asking for help, its because we really need it.

All underpinned by Getting It Right for Everyone (GIRFE) Principles

- I know that I can be clear about what matters to me, and I trust that my choices will be respected and understood by the people who support me.
- If I need to access services or support, I am treated with kindness, dignity and respect at all times.
- The people I am involved with work together with me and each other to share information, in a way that is accessible to me and develop a clear understanding of how to support my wellbeing.
- The people who support me take the time to listen and understand me as a person and we consider my whole life when making decisions about my life.
- I have the information I need to make decisions about my life, in a way that works for me, and I am supported to understand what options are available to me and trusted to know what is right for me.

What we have heard – Public/ Carer Engagement Feedback so far

Respite - there is a desperation around this for people. "I'm not sure I'll be able to keep doing this" statements are often made.

Communication – Carers report on what they feel to be significant breaks in communication between themselves and services as well as services to eachother. Also awareness of useful groups and healthcare opportunities.

Carers report they are still struggling to find relevant information, balancing their caring role with life/ other responsibilities and affecting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Emergency Care Planning - some concerns raised over how effective these are, some confusion over who should be doing them

Carers who responded deliver more that 50 plus hours of care per week.

Rights - particularly at the start of their Caring journey are unaware of what their rights are (benefits, breaks, respite, groups, organisations etc..).

"Strategies are aspirational, and all the priorities will always be important to Carers, but we need more than white papers – we need to see the actions!" Talk the Talk and Walk the Walk!

Continuity is key – people want continuity of support for the people they care for, without that, it can increase stress levels as a whole new relationship and rapport and trust needs to be developed. It also saves Carers – Telling the story repeatedly.

Majority agree or strongly agree with the current Carers Strategy Priorities

Carers Strategy 2026- 2030

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Plan on a page Aberdeen City Carers Strategy 2026 -2030

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Increase Carer Engagement in Aberdeen City by 50% by 2030, ensuring more carers are involved in service developments and involved in decision making.

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- Implement key stages of new legislation supporting Carers understanding of rights e.g. Right to Breaks, through innovative and creative solutions.

Our Carers say..

"We don't want to feel like we are being a nuisance - we want to feel like we are partners in the decisions for our support and the ones we care for."

"Often when Carers ask for support it's probably been needed for a while, so when we are asking for help, its because we really need it."

All underpinned by Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) Principles

- I know that I can be clear about what matters to me, and I trust that my choices will be respected and understood by the people who support me.
- If I need to access services or support, I am treated with kindness, dignity and respect at all times.
- The people I am involved with work together with me and each other to share information, in a way that is accessible to me and develop a clear understanding of how to support my wellbeing.
- The people who support me take the time to listen and understand me as a person and we consider my whole life when making decisions about my life.
- I have the information I need to make decisions about my life, in a way that works for me, and I am supported to understand what options are available to me and trusted to know what is right for me.