

**TITLE OF REPORT:**           **Gateshead Adult Caregivers Strategy**

**REPORT OF:**                 **Dale Owens, Strategic Director, Integrated Adults and Social Care Services**

---

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To ask Cabinet to approve the Gateshead Adult Caregivers' strategy.

### **Background**

2. The Adults and Social Care Strategy 2023-28 commits to publishing a Caregivers Strategy which reflects the priorities of Caregivers in Gateshead.
3. The last Gateshead Caregivers' strategy covered the term 2014-17. A replacement strategy is required, which sets out the system's commitments to Caregivers and outlines the strategic framework, ahead of recommissioning the Caregivers.
4. The Caregivers Partnership Board agreed to develop a new strategy which updates the strategic priorities. Two consultation groups of adults and young carers were formed to facilitate engagement, supported by Gateshead Carers Association and Carers Trust Tyne & Wear, and wider system partners.
5. The Partnership Board is made up of members from across the Gateshead System including: Integrated Care Board (ICB), Carers Trust Tyne and Wear, Gateshead Carers Association, Voluntary Organisations such as Alzheimer's Society and Connected Voice, and Healthwatch, Adults and Children's Social Care colleagues, and Gateshead Health Trusts.
6. A joint ICB and Council strategy (Appendix 2) has been produced. The strategy was signed off by the Partnership Board in January 2024.
7. An action plan (Appendix 3) has been developed to implement the strategy and ensure it is embedded system wide. The Caregivers Partnership Board will oversee the delivery of the strategy and delivery plan, with the Council and ICB responsible for leading the work.

### **Proposal**

8. The revised strategy (see attached) is built on 5 key themes which reflect the priorities of Caregivers:
  - Information and Advice
  - Valuing Caregivers

- Money and Finances
- Employment and Education
- Health of Caregivers.

9. The word 'Caregiver' is used in the strategy to describe someone who provides unpaid care. The majority of respondents to the Gateshead Carers Association 2020 survey (60%) did not like being referred to as 'carers' because 'carer' is often used to describe paid care workers. Members of the Partnership Board suggested Caregiver as an alternative, as it emphasizes the 'giving' of time and care in a voluntary capacity.
10. Consultation on the strategy took place between 2021-2023, and a panel of Caregivers were recruited to shape the scope and direction of the new strategy. Consultation with Young Carers resulted in a decision to devise a separate Young Carers strategy which is youth focused.
11. The Caregivers Partnership Board members provided constructive feedback on drafts between 2022-23 and signed off the final draft Strategy in January 2024.
12. A communication plan has been developed to promote the publication of the new strategy, involving the use of the NHS Melissa Bus, publication on the Council and ICB websites, dissemination through social media channels, and the publication of hard copies for those who are digitally excluded, or prefer print formats.
13. An Easy Read version of the strategy will be developed prior to the launch, to ensure it is accessible to Caregivers with additional needs, in line with the Equality Act (2010) and Accessible Information Standard.

## **Recommendations**

14. Cabinet is asked to approve the Integrated Adults Caregivers' Strategy and Delivery Plan as set out in appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure Gateshead place has an up-to-date and relevant strategic approach to improving support for Adult Caregivers.
- (ii) To ensure the implementation of the aims and objectives set out in the strategy by relevant stakeholders.

---

**CONTACT: Clare Vaughan**

**PHONE: 07542320664**

## APPENDIX 1

### Policy Context

1. Gateshead Council has committed to making Gateshead a place where everyone Thrives. This Adult Caregivers' Strategy supports delivery of the Council's Thrive pledges in the following ways:

<b>Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do</b>	The strategy and delivery plan commits to a joined-up approach to supporting Caregivers in Gateshead, including parent carers and those caring for family members and spouses. The strategy identifies ongoing work which supports improved outcomes for families such as the Family Hubs, and the improved offer for parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
<b>Tackling inequalities, so people have a fair chance</b>	<p>Through established research, we know that Caregivers who have intersecting needs can face additional barriers to accessing suitable support. For example, those from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, Caregivers who identify as LGBTQ+, Caregivers with additional needs, and those who experience severe financial hardship. The strategy recognises the increased importance of delivering the strategic aims successfully will have on these populations.</p> <p>Developing an Easy Read version of the strategy recognises that some Caregivers in Gateshead themselves have care needs or disabilities.</p>
<b>Supporting our communities to support themselves and each other</b>	The strategy has been developed alongside community partners, through the Caregivers Partnership Board. Partners have actions aligned to them within the delivery plan to ensure a system-wide approach is taken. Community partners have committed to supporting the distribution of the strategy across communities, to ensure it has a wide reach, and that communities can hold us accountable to delivering the objectives.
<b>Investing in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation, and growth</b>	Caregivers can experience difficulties with accessing flexible employment and volunteering opportunities to fit around their caring responsibilities. The strategy identifies Employment and Education as a key priority and sets out actions to improving outcomes for Caregivers on this theme.
<b>Working together and fighting for a better future for Gateshead</b>	The strategy sets out a framework for change which involves a range of key stakeholders across the Gateshead system, to ensure a unified and cohesive approach to improving the lives of Caregivers and their families.

2. This work supports the delivery of the Integrated [Adults and Social Care Strategy 2023-28](#) which commits to:
  - Publishing a Caregivers Strategy which reflects the priorities of Caregivers.
  - Review the Carers Assessment process to ensure it is fair, consistent and meets the needs of Caregivers.

- Strengthen the link between Adult Carers and Young Carers through joint working with Childrens' and Adults Services.
3. [CQC Assurance guidance](#) developed by the LGA and partners suggests “all public facing plans, strategies, policies, strategic needs assessments and commissioning intentions relevant to unpaid carers are up to date and easy to find”.
  4. In the annual [State of Care 2022/2023](#) report, CQC identified a gap in publicly available Unpaid Carers strategies and plans by Councils.
  5. [NICE Guidance](#) and [Quality Standards](#) around supporting unpaid carers reflect the core themes set out in the strategy, for example the importance of valuing and identifying the needs of caregivers through assessments, sharing information and advice around work, education and training, and the importance of psychological and emotional support for caregivers.

### **Consultation**

6. The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care has been consulted on this work.
7. The Director of Place and Senior Leadership Team at Gateshead ICB have been consulted. Gateshead ICB have signed up to the strategy.
8. Caregivers and partners were consulted between 2021 and 2023 to identify key priorities and shape the direction of the strategy. Council officers met regularly with key Caregivers within the community to understand their key concerns and ensure the strategy and delivery plan outlined a realistic, needs-led approach to improving the experience of providing unpaid care in Gateshead.

### **Alternative Options**

9. There is no alternative option but to update the Integrated Adults Caregivers' strategy.

### **Implications of Recommended Option**

10. **Resources:**
  - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms there are no direct implications arising from this report.
  - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.
  - c) **Property Implications** - There are no property implications arising from this report.
11. **Risk Management Implication** - There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - In the development of the strategy, information was sought about caregiver populations who may experience additional

barriers to support, or intersectional inequalities, such as those from minoritised ethnic communities and LGBTQ+ caregivers. This provided context to the development of the strategy. The strategy also recognises the disproportionate effects unpaid caring can have on individuals and families, and the negative impacts this can have on, for example, education and employment, socioeconomic exclusion, and health inequalities.

13. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.
14. **Health Implications** – The strategy promotes health and improving health outcomes for Caregivers in Gateshead as a key priority. To deliver this, the strategy commits to improve awareness of Caregivers’ needs and rights across the Gateshead system to improve identification and access to suitable support.

The strategy also commits to improving the collation and use of data about Caregivers in Gateshead, to support evidence-based decision making.

Finally, the strategy commits to improve the interconnectedness of existing ICB-commissioned mental health and bereavement services with Caregivers services to promote access and improve mental health outcomes for Caregivers.

15. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - There are no climate emergency or sustainability implications arising from this report, though the Council recognises the impact of the climate emergency on Caregivers’ health and wellbeing.
16. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications arising from this report.
17. **Ward Implications** - There are no specific ward implications arising from this report.

### **Background Information**

18. Integrated Adults and Social Care Strategy 2023-8.
19. Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.
20. Health and Wellbeing Strategy.