Cwm Taf Carers Strategy 2016-2019







Table of Contents

1. Foreword	3
2. Vision and Principles	4
3. Strategic Context and achievements	5
4. Carers - An Overview	7
5. Cwm Taf Profile	8
6. Carer Profile in Cwm Taf	9
7. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in Cwm Taf	11
8. Engagement with Carers and other Stakeholders	13
9. Improving outcomes for Carers – our Key Aims	15
9.1 ***Aim 1***: Identifying Carers of all ages and recognizing their contribution	15
9.2 ***Aim 2:*** Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice and assistance to Carers of all ages	16
9.3 ***Aim 3:*** Providing support, services and training to meet the needs of Carers of all ages	18
9.4 ***Aim 4:*** Giving Carers of all ages a voice, with more choice and control over their lives	19
9.5 ***Aim 5:*** Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of Carers of all ages	20
10. Implementation and Delivery	22
11. Next steps	24

Table of Contents 2

2. Vision and Principles 5

The UHB and the two Local Authorities also have a range of operational plans, policies and procedures that need to consider the issues affecting Carers and ensure they are contributing to the delivery of our Vision for Carers as appropriate..... 7

4. Carers: an Overview 8

Alongside this legal definition, we recognise that there is no typical Carer. Carers of all ages, whether Young Carers, Young Adult Carers, Parent Carers of children with a disability, working age or older Carers, look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide can be physical, emotional or social. Carers are individuals who may not see themselves as Carers, but consider themselves above all a parent, wife, husband, partner, son, daughter, friend or neighbour 8

Carers' circumstances vary enormously, as can the type of support they give. Many Carers live in the same house as the person they care for. Others live nearby and visit regularly. Some live a distance away and visit weekly or monthly. Some provide care for a limited period of time or as part of an informal family support network. Some provide care for more than one person. Caring often impacts on the whole family and not just on one person. 8

6. Carer Profile in Cwm Taf 10

It is probable that the number of Carers is even higher, as the census indicated there are over double the number of people reporting a long term limiting illness compared with the number of people reporting themselves as a Carer. Whilst not everyone with a limiting long term illness will have a Carer, it is surprising the number of people reporting themselves as a Carer is not higher. Also many people may not consider themselves a Carer in terms of the census return. 11

7. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in Cwm Taf 12

Provides care 1-19 hours 14

Provides care 20-49 hours 14

Provides care 50+ 14

Total number Caring..... 14

Proportion of this age group that provide informal care 14

Wales 14

9,675..... 14

1,697..... 14

1,690..... 14

13,062..... 14

5.7% 14

UK 14

173,249..... 14

29,128..... 14

26,941..... 14

229,318..... 14

5.3% (UK average) 14

9. Improving outcomes for Carers – Our Key aims 16

10. Implementation and Delivery 23

Annual Action Plans 23

1. Foreword

Welcome to the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy for Cwm Taf University Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

About the proposed Carers Strategy

Cwm Taf University Health Board (UHB), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) County Borough Council are committed to working together to improve the ways we provide support to Carers of all ages. We have developed this Strategy in order to explain how we are going to do this. The Strategy is also in response to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB) and the repeal of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.

The SSWB Act came into force in April 2016. The Act will transform the way social services are delivered, promoting people's independence and giving them stronger voice and control. The SSWB Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and also Carers who need support. It simplifies and consolidates the law relating to Carers and, for the first time, gives them equivalent rights to those that they care for. The Act applies to Carers of all ages.

The new Cwm Taf Carers Strategy replaces the separate Carers Strategies that had previously been in place in the two Local Authorities and the Cwm Taf Information and Consultation Strategy. Colleagues from the Third Sector and Carers themselves have been a part of the multi agency steering group in the development of the Strategy. We have listened to the views of Carers of all ages to identify what is important to them and the outcomes they want to see achieved.

We would like to thank everybody for taking the time to participate in the engagement and consultation process. We have taken account of all the comments made during the development of the Strategy and we will ensure that we keep you informed of progress in implementing it. This Strategy will only be a success if we all commit to work together to deliver our shared aims and action plan, putting Carers at the heart of everything we do to support them.

Lynda Williams – Director of Nursing, Midwivery and Patient Services - Cwm Taf University Health Board

Lisa Curtis-Jones – Chief Officer of Social Services – Merthyr Tydfil CBC

Giovanni Isingrini – Director of Community and Children's Services – Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

2. Vision and Principles

Throughout health and social care communities in Wales and other parts of the UK, there is an increasing emphasis on supporting people in ways that help them to retain their ability to live in the community, maximise their independence and give them choice and control over the services they receive. It is also important to promote and improve health and wellbeing, providing preventative services and early intervention.

For many people, this will involve help and support from a Carer. This Strategy is about what we need to do to support Carers, understanding and meeting any needs they may have in their own lives, as well as working together with them to address the needs of the person they are caring for. Based on what Carers have told us, we have developed a Vision Statement:

Carers of all ages in Cwm Taf will be recognised and valued as being fundamental to supportive and resilient families and communities. They will not have to care alone and will be able to access information, advice and support to help meet their needs, empowering them to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, balancing their caring role and their life outside caring.

To underpin our Vision, we have identified the following principles and approach to service delivery which reflect what Carers say is important to them and which are also consistent with the approach taken in other relevant Cwm Taf plans, for example, the Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People:

- ***Recognition and Respect***

Carers tell us that too often there is a lack of recognition and value of how much they do. Professionals and people in wider society do not always understand and appreciate the indepth knowledge Carers have of the needs of the person they are caring for, the relationship they have with them and how difficult it can sometimes be juggling a range of demands.

- ***Working together***

One of the main messages from Carers was that we need to listen to their views and experiences and include them effectively in decision making. Proactive, two way communication and involvement is vital.

- ***Integration of services***

There needs to be better coordination at every level between the Carer and all the organisations they come into contact with. Services need to be joined up and targeted more

appropriately so they deliver the best possible outcomes for the Carer, the person they care for and also make best use of our resources.

- ***Accessibility***

Factors such as the timeliness of a response and access/ transport to services will be a key consideration in the way we commission and provide services.

- ***Tackling isolation***

A greater focus is needed on tackling the isolation and social exclusion that can sometimes be felt as a result of caring commitments. The effects of limited choice, freedom and opportunity or the lack of understanding and discrimination faced by Carers may be different depending on their age, for example, Young Carers but a range of support is needed to enable a Carer to balance caring with activities outside their caring role.

- ***Focus on actions and outcomes***

We must ensure that there are direct and positive benefits for Carers as a result of the new Strategy. We must deliver change and improved outcomes in the areas they have identified as important to them.

3. Strategic context and achievements

We need to make sure our Strategy fits with other National and Local plans and requirements. In particular, the SSWB Act sets out new obligations on Local Authority social services and their partners in relation to people who need care and support and Carers who need support and as a result repeals the previous Carers legislation listed below:

☐ The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995

☐ The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000

☐ The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

☐ The Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010

The new Act gives people a stronger voice and control over the support they need to remove barriers to their wellbeing. It focuses on earlier intervention; increasing preventative services within the community and helping people maintain their independence. The Act provides a framework to enable people to get the help they need before their situation becomes critical. The Act also promotes integration between health and social care in order to achieve improved wellbeing outcomes and provides for a strengthened approach to safeguarding people.

The Cwm Taf Strategy we have now developed takes account of the new SSWB Act and its codes of practice, regulations and standards. There are detailed requirements in relation to assessments, the provision of information and advice, preventative services and duties to shape local services, so they are responsive and can provide the extra help people need to enable them to do the things that are important to them. Carers are given an equal right to assessment for support as those they care for.

Our Strategy is also set against the context of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This requires public services to think more about and plan for the long term, working effectively with people, communities and each other and taking a more preventative and joined up approach to solving problems.

Other reports that have informed our Strategy include "Dementia: more than just memory loss" from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales which clearly captured the voices and experiences of older people living with dementia and their Carers.

A number of local plans in Cwm Taf are also particularly relevant for Carers and have therefore been taken into account. For example,

- The Cwm Taf Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People
- The Cwm Taf Ageing Well Plan
- Cwm Taf Together for Mental Health Plan
- Single Integrated Plans for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff

The UHB and the two Local Authorities also have a range of operational plans, policies and procedures that need to consider the issues affecting Carers and ensure they are contributing to the delivery of our Vision for Carers as appropriate.

Against this background, we are building on the achievements delivered locally over the last three years and, in particular, implementing the requirements of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure. Examples of improvements made are included in Section 9 (under each of our Key Aims) but key areas of work include:

- The identification of nearly 420 Carer Champions in a range of settings including across the UHB and the Local Authorities, in libraries, community and leisure centres, Job Centre Plus and Third sector groups. These Champions ensure more front line public staff are Carer aware and can signpost to appropriate support.
- Carers are provided with up to date and relevant information which is disseminated via training and event days, workshops, assisted technology, A-Z guides of support services, dedicated Carer corners in GP surgeries, Carers support contact information on prescriptions and stickers on dispensary bags, posters, web-sites and social media.
- An accredited training unit for use in GP Practices has been developed to raise awareness, up skill primary care staff and improve support for Carers in primary care settings.
- Roll out of successful training of student nurses to other sectors including pre registration social workers. Carers have been integral in the production of a CD, which is used to inform the training of staff and also participate directly in training sessions
- A Carers Measure Teachers guide has been produced to aid in the identification of and provision of support to young Carers.
- The Carer awareness training undertaken by all staff highlights the importance of early planned support and inclusion of Carers in decision making.

Feedback from Welsh Government in response to the Annual Report submitted by Cwm Taf partners in May 2015 concluded that it *"provides a detailed and robust analysis of the achievements to date and an insight into the favourable improvements hoped to be made in*

the future. A number of case studies have provided the qualitative information to help measure the outcome for Carers. There is clear evidence that the implementation of the Carers Measure has made a real difference to the lives of Carers in Cwm Taf".

This progress is reinforced by comments we have received from Carers and staff:

"I have experienced lots of problems over the years with medical appointments but since the implementation of a Carers Champion at our surgery, it has made life so much easier and less stressful. We now have a fast track facility and are seen in a far more "autistic friendly" environment. It makes such a difference." Carer

"The Carers Project is a very special part of our care. Without it we wouldn't find out what is available to us. The organization is wonderful." Carer

"I feel more confident about my role as Carers Champion. Its so nice to have the information to hand and know where to signpost my customers for further support." Job Centre Plus Carers Champion

"Take a look at the Carer aware E learning - I found it really helpful, especially for the completion of Carer Assessments." Social Worker

4. Carers: an Overview

The SSWB Act defines a Carer as a person of any age who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child but who is unpaid except for Carers related allowances. The Act has removed the previous requirement that Carers must be providing "a substantial amount of care on a regular basis".

Alongside this legal definition, we recognise that there is no typical Carer. Carers of all ages, whether Young Carers, Young Adult Carers, Parent Carers of children with a disability, working age or older Carers, look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide can be physical, emotional or social. Carers are individuals who may not see themselves as Carers, but consider themselves above all a parent, wife, husband, partner, son, daughter, friend or neighbour .

Carers' circumstances vary enormously, as can the type of support they give. Many Carers live in the same house as the person they care for. Others live nearby and visit regularly. Some live a distance away and visit weekly or monthly. Some provide care for a limited period of time or as part of an informal family support network. Some provide care for more than one person. Caring often impacts on the whole family and not just on one person.

Caring can be a gradual process or it can happen overnight. For example, someone can become a Carer suddenly, for example when a partner has a road traffic accident or a stroke. Other people move more gradually into a caring role when a relative's health deteriorates over time, which they see as part and parcel of family life. They don't recognise that as the person they look after needs increasingly more support, they are becoming a Carer.

Caring for someone can be both physically exhausting and emotionally stressful. Carers often feel isolated, unsupported and alone. Many Carers may themselves have poorer health, a

stress-related illness or long-term health problem as a result of caring without adequate support.

Carers often experience a lack of financial security because of the cost of caring. There can be particular difficulties for Carers accessing support to enable them to balance caring with work. For Young Carers, taking on extra responsibilities at such a young age make it particularly difficult to deal with school life and participate in everyday social and leisure activities that other young people take for granted.

5. Cwm Taf Profile

In order to develop the Strategy and the Action plan that will sit alongside it, we need to understand the local population, both in terms of Carers and the people they are caring for.

Demography
The resident population of the UHB area is estimated to have been 295,953 in 2014, accounting for 10 per cent of the Welsh population. Cwm Taf is geographically the second smallest Health Board area in Wales, but also the second most densely populated area. Compared to the Wales average, there are over three times as many people per square km living in the UHB area. Within Cwm Taf, 20% of the population live within the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil with the remaining population (80%) living within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Age of the Population
The age profile of our population is similar to Wales but with slightly higher proportions of children under 5 years old and in the 20-44 year age group, and slightly higher proportions of people aged 60 and over.

Current projections see a rise in the total resident population of Cwm Taf to 298,600 by the year 2033. This is primarily due to an increase in the older population. The number of residents aged 75 years and over is projected to rise from 23,300 (7.9% of total population) in 2013 to 37,100 (12.4% of total population) in 2033. The number of people aged 65 and over resident in Cwm Taf is projected to increase by 37% over the same period.

Overall, our population is living longer and the increase in elderly population is likely to result in an increase in the prevalence of chronic conditions such as circulatory and respiratory diseases and cancers. The proportion of the population aged over 75 who live alone is higher in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil than other parts of Wales. All these factors will have implications for the number of people who may need care and the age of Carers.

Deprivation
Overall the health of our population is improving however, within the UHB, we have areas of significant deprivation and far too many people still experience poor health. Many of the causes of poor health are difficult to tackle. Cwm Taf is a socio-economically deprived area, with low levels of employment and educational attainment. These factors, along with other aspects of the physical environment, impact on the lifestyles of people living in the area. In 2010, over 40% of the populations of Rhondda and Cynon Valleys and Merthyr Tydfil lived in the most deprived areas of Wales. This results in a higher burden of ill health which has implications for both Carers and the people they care for.

Life Expectancy

There is a significant variation in people's life expectancy across Wales, with those living in the most deprived communities living shorter lives than those in the least deprived areas. In 2012-14, male life expectancy at birth in Wales was 78.5 years. This was less in both RCT (77.0 years) and in Merthyr Tydfil (77.3 years). Similarly female life expectancy is lower - in RCT it was 80.9 years and in Merthyr Tydfil 80.5 years whilst the Welsh average was 82.3 years.

The difference in life expectancy between males in the most and least deprived areas of Cwm Taf is 8 years. In other words, a male born in the least deprived area of Cwm Taf can expect to live 8 years longer than a male born in the most deprived area. For females the equivalent difference in life expectancy is 6 years.

Healthy Life Expectancy

Deprivation not only limits life expectancy, it is also a determinant of the age at which we lose our good health. This occurs 10-15 years earlier in those living in the most deprived circumstances compared with the most affluent. Individuals no longer living in 'good health' are also more likely to have multiple morbidities and for mental health issues to be one of their diagnoses.

In Cwm Taf, the healthy life expectancy for women (2005-09) is 60.6 years, the lowest in Wales, and statistically significantly shorter than all other Health Board areas. For Cwm Taf males, the equivalent is just 60 years, again the lowest in Wales and statistically significantly shorter than all other Health Board areas. Males living in the most deprived areas of Cwm Taf live almost a third of their lives with a limiting long term illness or disability.

The impact of living for longer in poor health on our health, social care and third sector services, and communities, including Carers, cannot be ignored. Latest statistics predict an increasing proportion of people aged over 65 in the population. In particular, the rising costs of dementia (human, societal and economic) will be felt as our older population increases and the number of people becoming care dependent increases. This will have a significant impact on individuals, carers and health and social care services

There are consistently higher proportions of people reporting key illnesses and unhealthy lifestyles in Cwm Taf than across Wales (Welsh Health Survey). The prevalence of chronic conditions, disabilities and mental illness is higher in Cwm Taf than the Wales average and this is likely to be an underestimate of the true prevalence in the population. All of this impacts on Carers.

6. Carer Profile in Cwm Taf

The 2011 census showed that there were 370, 230 Carers in Wales. This had increased by 9% since the 2001 census. Carers provided 96% of all care in the community. For Cwm Taf the 2011 census showed:

- 12.6% of the population in Merthyr Tydfil and 12.5% in Rhondda Cynon Taf provided care to a family member, friend or neighbour.
- In RCT there were 29,640 Carers and in Merthyr there were 7,427 Carers. The combined total of Carers in the Cwm Taf area was 37,067.

- The percentage change in the number of Carers of all ages providing care in Cwm Taf from the 2001 census to the 2011 census was 3%. This included an equal increase of 3% in both males and females providing a caring role.

It is probable that the number of Carers is even higher, as the census indicated there are over double the number of people reporting a long term limiting illness compared with the number of people reporting themselves as a Carer. Whilst not everyone with a limiting long term illness will have a Carer, it is surprising the number of people reporting themselves as a Carer is not higher. Also many people may not consider themselves a Carer in terms of the census return**.**

Many Carers provide a significant amount of time caring. A total of 11,752 Carers provide over 50 hours of care per week. This has increased by 8% in Cwm Taf from the 2001 to the 2011 Census. This evidences that Cwm Taf Carers are providing more substantial levels of care, which can often impact on the health of the Carer.

Breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Cwm Taf

Local Authority	Provides care 1-19 hours	Provides care 20-49 hours	Provides care 50+	Total number of Carers per area
Merthyr Tydfil	3,785	1,098	2,159	7,042
Rhondda Cynon Taf	16,363	3,888	8,747	28,998
Total	**20,148**	**4,986**	**10,906**	**36,040**

** Data taken from the Census 2001*

Local Authority	Provides care 1-19 hours	Provides care 20-49 hours	Provides care 50+	Total number of Carers per area
Merthyr Tydfil	3,779	1,285	2,363	7,427
Rhondda Cynon Taf	15,671	4,580	9,389	29,640
Total	**19,450**	**5,865**	**11,752**	**37,067**

** Data taken from the Census 2011*

Carers UK estimates that we will see a 40% rise in the number of Carers needed by 2037. This equates to an extra 2.6 million Carers, meaning the Carer population in the UK will reach 9 million.

1.4 million people currently provide over 50 hours of unpaid care per week. The 2011 Census shows that currently 58% of these Carers are female and 42% are male. The percentage of Carers who are female rises to 60% for those who are caring for 50 hours or more a week. *(NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care (2010) Survey of Carers in Households 2009/10)* and *w*omen make up 73% of the people receiving Carer's Allowance for caring 35 hours or more a week.

Almost 1.3 million people in England and Wales aged 65 or older are Carers. The number of carers over the age of 65 is increasing more rapidly than the general carer population. Whilst the total number of Carers has risen by 11% since 2001, the number of older Carers rose by 35%. *(Census 2011)* Amongst older Carers; the gender split is 50:50 of Carers aged between 75 and 84. Carers over 85 are more likely to be male (59%) than female (41%) – many caring for their partners*. (Census 2011)*

Half of working age Carers live in a household where no-one is in paid work and almost 1 in 3 (30%) Carers had seen a drop of £20,000 or more a year in their household income as a result of caring. *(Carers UK (2014) Caring & Family Finances Inquiry UK Report)*

3 million people combine caring for a loved one with paid work; one in nine workers in the UK have caring responsibilities.
(Census 2011)

Caring often impacts on a person ability to maintain their employment. Over 2 million people have given up work at some point to care for loved ones and 3 million have reduced working hours. *(Carers UK and YouGov (2013) as part of Caring & Family Finances Inquiry UK Report (2014) Carers UK)*

Future Impact for Cwm Taf Carers

The Census 2011 figures show us that the amount of time that Carers spend caring for someone has increased sharply since the 2001 census. Undoubtedly, with an ageing population this will increase further over the next 10 years, thus placing more demand on Carers.

Carers who provide over 50 hours care per week are twice as likely to suffer from poor health as other people. The Office of National Statistics found that Carers who do not get a break are twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems as those that do.

Along with this, statistics show that Mental Illness has a higher prevalence in Cwm Taf compared to the national average and also the healthy life expectancy is many years below the national average, which further suggests that Carers in Cwm Taf will be caring earlier and for longer periods.

It is critical that Cwm Taf Carers are recognised throughout the life of their caring role in order for them to receive the support needed to carry out their caring role effectively with minimal impact on their own health.

7. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers in Cwm Taf

As with Adult Carers, there is no typical Young Carer. They may be in a lone-parent household looking after a mother with, for example, multiple sclerosis; they may be in a two-parent family but still be the primary Carer for the sick or disabled parent(s); they may be supporting a brother or sister with special needs. Many Young Carers are the primary Carers – the only person providing care – while others share the responsibility with other family members. They

have needs which are unique to them as children and young people. Young Carers have adult caring responsibilities while having the legal status of children.

According to the 2011 census there are 29,155 carers under the age of 25 in Wales. Wales has the highest proportion of carers under the age of 18 in the UK. It's likely that the actual number of young people in Wales caring is significantly higher, perhaps as much as four times higher

The 2011 Census highlighted that there were 177,918 young unpaid Carers (5 to 17-years-old) in England and Wales. Of these, 54% were girls and 46% were boys. Overall, Wales had the highest proportion of young Carers providing unpaid care, at 2.6%.

An increase in the number of unpaid Carers aged 5 to 17 was observed in all regions in England and Wales between 2001 and 2011. In England and Wales combined, the number of young unpaid Carers increased by almost 19% during this period.

Young unpaid Carers in Wales who were providing care for 50 or more hours a week were 4.4% more likely than those providing no care to report their general health as 'Not Good'.

Number of Young Unpaid Carers in Wales (5-17 yrs old)

	2001	**2011**	**Percentage Increase**
Wales	10,741	11,555	7.6%

Data taken from Census 2011

Breakdown of hours of care provided by Young unpaid Carers in England and Wales

	Provides care 1-19 hours	**Provides care 20-49 hours**	**Provides care 50+**	**Total number of Carers per area**
England & Wales	142,768	19,422	15,728	177,918

Data taken from Census 2011

Census data is likely to be an underestimate. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers indicates that "*the real number of young Carers is much higher because the census makes no mention of alcohol or drug problems and many Young Carers are 'hidden' due to the stigma attached to these conditions"*

A survey carried out by the BBC /University of Nottingham, published in 2010, revealed that over 700,000 children in the UK could be Young Carers. This is 4 times as many as previously thought. If the survey reflects the UK as a whole, this figure could be more than **4000** in Cwm Taf.

Young Adult Carers

Young Adult Carers (YAC's) take on significant additional responsibilities which can make the typical transitions from childhood into adulthood especially complex and challenging.The

difficulties they experience as a result of their caring role can have significant and long term negative impacts on their confidence, socialisation, their engagement with education and employment and their overall physical and emotional wellbeing.

A Carers Trust Study of 16-25 year olds YAC found that over 45% reported a mental health problem and 29% had dropped out of college/university because of their caring role.

Breakdown of hours of care provided by Young Adult Carers aged 16-24

	Provides care 1-19 hours	**Provides care 20-49 hours**	**Provides care 50+**	**Total number Caring**	**Proportion of this age group that provide informal care**
Wales	9,675	1,697	1,690	13,062	5.7%
UK	173,249	29,128	26,941	229,318	5.3% (UK average)

**Data taken from the Carers Trust 'Young Adult Carers in the UK' Report*

The Impact of Caring

There are positive effects of caring that are reported by Young Carers themselves such as learning practical skills, feeling good about themselves because they are supporting someone close to them and an increased sense of responsibility. However Young Carers and Young Adult Carers often miss out on many everyday activities that other young people take for granted. The impact of this can include:

- Young carers are more likely to have poor health than those without caring responsibilities
- Educational problems - the difference in attainment between carers and non-carers in exams is around nine lower grades (ie. the difference between achieving nine Cs and nine Ds).
- Young adult carers are more likely to be not in education, employment or training
- Young adult carers are four times more likely to drop out of college or university.
- Bullying
- Limited opportunities, horizons and aspirations
- Limited opportunities for social and leisure activities
- A lack of understanding from peers and restricted friendships
- Isolation, a feeling of exclusion and being outsiders
- 'Stigma by association' related to physical disability and in particular mental health
- Fearing what professionals might do
- Living with silence and fears
- Health and emotional difficulties including self harm
- Unexpected and early rise to adulthood often resulting in difficulties in transition to becoming an adult

8. Engagement with Carers and other Stakeholders

Cwm Taf recognises the importance of Carers getting their voices heard and that both Carers and service users are engaged and consulted to ensure that their needs are being met. It is essential that Carers are recognised as key partners in care and that their invaluable perspective is taken into account when developing future services.

From the work undertaken locally to develop the previous Carers' plans in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil, and from what Carers have told us more recently (for example, in the RCT Support for Carers Survey undertaken from April to June 2015 which had 349 returned surveys), 5 main aims were identified as important to support Carers effectively. A short discussion paper was developed which outlined these 5 aims and we asked for people's views on them. We wanted to find out whether Carers agreed with the suggested aims and what else we needed to take into account in our plans for the future. In order to get feedback on these aims and to gather input for future plans, we undertook engagement with Carers in October and November 2015.

As part of this engagement, Carers were involved in a variety of focus groups, workshops and meetings. Information and questionnaires were also provided online on partner websites and through the Cwm Taf Consultation Hub. The use of social media and other communication mechanisms were also used. A detailed Engagement Analysis report was produced in December 2015.

The engagement feedback highlighted the areas that Carers feel are important to them and which we therefore considered in developing our Strategy. Carers views were reinforced in March and April 2016, when consultation was undertaken on the final draft of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy. A detailed Consultation Analysis report was produced in May 2016.

The outcomes from both the engagement and consultation exercises have been taken into account in finalising our Strategy. Where the issues raised were not appropriate to be dealt with through this Strategy or were linked to specific operational delivery of services, we have passed the information to other relevant officers to inform their actions and plans.

The most common issues raised during engagement and consultation were regarding:

- Easy access to a central point of up-to-date, easy to understand information and advice.
- Access to respite and short breaks to recharge batteries and more free time for young Carers to spend with friends/socialise.
- Professionals should respect, communicate and listen to Carers.
- Awareness raising is needed to increase knowledge and understanding of the caring role, both in society and with professionals.
- More practical support would ease the pressure on Carers.
- More emotional support would prolong the health and wellbeing of Carers.
- More funding and resources is needed for Carers.

- Support Groups for both younger and older Carers are highly valued.
- Carers would like accessible and discounted transport.
- Better understanding is needed from employers and schools.
- Carers need more understanding of Carers Champions and their role.
- Better communication is needed between different agencies with automatic referral processes.
- Access to appropriate training and workshops to support Carers in their caring role

9. Improving outcomes for Carers – Our Key aims

Having reviewed our current services, the developments we have made implementing the Carers Measure from 2012-2015, the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and taking on board the views expressed during engagement and consultation with Carers and staff, we have developed the following 5 key aims:

- Aim 1. Identifying Carers of all ages and recognising their contributions
- Aim 2. Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice & assistance to Carers of all ages
- Aim 3. Providing support, services & training to meet the needs of Carers of all ages
- Aim 4. Giving Carers of all ages a voice, with more choice & control over their lives
- Aim 5. Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of Carers of all ages

The following sections outline where we are now and an overview of what we intend to do. Detailed actions will be included in a separate Action Plan to be developed once the Strategy has been approved.

The quotes in italics have been taken from responses to the engagement and consultation with Carers referred to above.

9.1. Identifying Carers of all ages and recognising their contributions

By this we mean raising awareness amongst the public and with our staff about who Carers are, what they do and how important it is to identify them and understand their caring role. This will ensure they are aware of the support available to them. We must recognise the value of their caring role and that they are key partners in the care they provide, involving them in decisions that affect them and the person they care for.

"Professionals need to recognise that many Carers are giving a lifetime commitment and need support in maintaining their caring roles."

"Management, GPs and all agencies really need to fully realise the extreme hardship associated with caring."

"The recognition should be worldwide, respected and have perks!" (Young Carer)

"Ensure that the role of Carer is understood more widely in society, that each Carer has different responsibilities and needs."

"Link in with organisations aiming to tackle loneliness and isolation to identify 'hard to reach' Carers."

Where are we now?

- Developed a network of Carers Champions to raise awareness and profile the role of Carers. There are already over 420 Champions in settings across health, social care, education, housing, leisure, Job Centres and in the voluntary sector.
- Developed an e learning tool for training staff across all sectors to raise awareness and knowledge of Carers issues
- Undertaken training for students (nursing and social care) at the University of South Wales, Coleg y Cymoedd and Merthyr Tydfil College so our future workforce is Carer aware.
- Development of Teachers Guide
- Development of a range of digital Carer Stories for use in raising awareness and training

What do we want to do?

- Continued recruitment and support of more Carers Champions across all organisations
- Annual Carers Champions conference to share information and best practice across the network
- Continued training for staff in the statutory and voluntary sectors to raise their awareness of Carers and how to support them, including the new training modules being developed nationally in relation to the SSWB Act.
- Continued training of students (nursing, social care and teacher) so our future workforce are Carer Aware
- Involvement of Carers in training staff, either in person or through the use of Carer stories, DVDs etc
- Roll out of Cwm Taf Award scheme for Carers Champions in GP Practices
- Roll out of RCT Schools Award to increase Carer awareness in schools amongst teachers and pupils

9.2. Providing up to date, relevant and timely information, advice and assistance to Carers of all ages.

By this we mean making it easier for people to find out about care and support services available in their area, both for themselves as a Carer and for the person they care for.

Getting the right information and advice at the right time can make a huge difference. When people are first faced with a caring situation it is critical that they are given the advice and information they need as quickly as possible so that they have access to help and support, making better decisions for themselves and their families. Helping people to realise they are

Carers as early as possible helps ensure they don't miss out on essential information, advice and help for years because they simply don't realise they are Carers. Similarly if someone has been caring for a while, it is important to ensure they are up to date about the support available and how to access it.

Whatever the information needed, for example information about managing money or allowances available, advice about the impact of caring on health and wellbeing, or information about how to access support services, it must be provided in a variety of understandable formats, accessible locally and in a timely manner to help Carers make informed choices.

We recognise that accessing information and advice at an early stage gives Carers choice and control over their lives and often means that Carers can continue to work. From research, we know that Carers who do not get the right information often give up work to look after their relative and as a result pay heavy financial, social and health penalties

Information, advice and assistance services can play an important role in signposting Carers and others to preventative care and support services in their community without the need for formalised assessments.

"Literature to be easier to understand for my age group." (Young Carer)

"One point of contact – someone who can give you basic information and you can go back to with any queries and not be passed from one person to another and back again."

"*Recognising that there are a range of different methods of communication needs – face to face, surveys, electronic, phone, British Sign Language etc."*

Where are we now?

- Developed a Cwm Taf wide Carers A-Z Guide - over 30,000 have been distributed
- Young Carers Information Guide
- Carers "business" card
- Information page for Carers with contact numbers in annual 50+ Calendar - 10,000 copies distributed across Cwm Taf
- Regular Carers Newsletters and leaflets made available in the community and accessible online
- Carers Notice Boards in GP surgeries,
- Carers Support Information in community pharmacies and stickers on prescriptions
- Information sharing events eg in Carers Week, Big Bite RCT, Hospital atriums,

What do we want to do?

- Implement the new Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) service required by the SSWB Act i.e
- **Information** – this will be quality data that provides support to a person to help them make an informed choice about their well-being. This will include information about how the care and support system works, the availability of preventative services, financial information, information on direct payments, information on charges, and other matters that would enable someone to plan how to meet their care and support needs, or support needs if they are a Carer
- **Advice** - this will be a way of working co-productively with a person to explore the options available. This will require staff to undertake a proportionate assessment,

making sure that the enquirer understands what is available to them, and that they are actively involved in making decisions about what matters to them and the personal outcomes they wish to achieve.
- **Assistance** - if needed, will follow the provision of information and advice. Assistance will involve another person taking action with the enquirer to access care and support, or a carer to access support.

The new IAA service must be:

- Welcoming and easy to use, accurate and up to date, impartial and have the best interests of the individual
- Available through a variety of media: online, social media, telephone, face to face, outreach, posters and publications (Welsh, easy read, child friendly)
- Respond to web based enquires within 3 working days
- Provide advocacy support for those who require it or support for specific groups such as deaf blind

9.3. Providing support, services and training to meet the needs of Carers of all ages.

By this we mean enabling Carers to access appropriate support to help them carry out their caring role effectively and meet a range of needs, including maintaining their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, accessing education, training and employment opportunities and participation in activities outside their caring role. Individuals, their families and Carers may require care and/or support from more than one professional or organization. Where this is the case, the care and support they receive should be effectively coordinated and delivered.

"Practical help. Caring for elderly relatives and young children and working full time caused ill health in my case. Juggling roles was stressful."

"Provide us with time as a caring employer to do what is necessary."

Many Carers referred to the need for respite care to enable the Carer to "recharge their batteries" but also stressed that they needed to have confidence in the care being provided to the person they care for.

"Respite care for the cared for when the going gets tough."

"Respite care will always be a challenge – but it is vital for many Carers. Meeting that need will be a vital component in achieving aims."

"Carers need to have a break from caring, so extra support is needed."

"Support groups offer the chance to offload, be with like minded people and share experiences."

"Carers would benefit from a call once a month from the agency they were involved with or a befriending service. Just that link to someone remembering/caring about the Carer."

"*Carer support needs to be in all areas - some people are unable to travel."*

"Transport is a big problem for me and my wife as she is in a wheelchair."

Where are we now?

- RCT Carers support project has a Carers Freephone line (0808 100 1801)available from 9-5pm, 5 days a week to take people's queries and signpost or refer Carers on for further support. There is also a Project Officer within Adult Services and a dedicated Young Carers Assessment and Development Worker, a Young Carers Support Worker and a Young Adult Carers Development Worker. In addition to this there is a Parent Carer Worker who supports parents of disabled children and young people up to the age of 25.
- Local initiatives for Carers such as Carers Emergency Card scheme, discounted access to leisure services in RCT and Merthyr.
- Merthyr Tydfil Carer support including a dedicated Carers Information and Development Officer and dedicated Carers services delivered as part of Merthyr Tydfil Carers Strategy Network.
- Training need analysis undertaken with Carers and a range of training courses provided from manual handling to stress management
- Flexible working policies for employees of the UHB to support our staff who are Carers to maintain their caring role.

What do we want to do?

- Implement the new assessment arrangements for Carers required by the SSWB Act. Many Carers will receive support through the provision of the IAA services and/or through signposting to community based preventative services as described above. Many of these services will be provided through voluntary sector and community groups.
  Where there is a need for a Carer to have a Care and Support plan, this will be developed with the Carer and will be centred around them, their identified needs and what outcomes they want to achieve.
- Develop and commission a wider range of preventative services to promote health and wellbeing, early intervention and minimise the escalation of crises.
- Consider how technology can play an important part in supporting Carers. For example, face time technology to provide remote support, particularly out of hours; e learning; telecare in the home.

9.4. Giving Carers of all ages a voice, with more choice and control over their lives

We recognise the need to improve Carer involvement in decision making within Cwm Taf to ensure that Carers are valued as partners in care and that the care and support they provide is recognised.

By this we mean ensuring Carers are involved in and consulted on issues and decisions that affect their daily lives and the lives of the person they care for, for example in relation to individual care plans. In addition we must enable their voice to be heard in the planning, design and delivery of future services that affect them. Advocacy arrangements will be available

where a Carer needs support to make their voice heard, to fully participate in decisions that affect them or to access the IAA service.

By coming together as a supportive community of Carers, people can share what is on their mind and talk about issues that affect them with people who understand and can be of help.

"*Respect and listen to the Carers knowledge and experience."*

"Listen, listen, listen."

"Things flow better when everyone sings from the same hymn sheet."

"Someone to talk to and share concerns."

"Get away from one size fits all. Need a 'doing with', not 'doing to' service."

"Provide communication route via website to voice concerns – set up blog/discussion board to contact other Carers."

Where are we now?

- Carers representatives on a range of planning groups including the Citizens Panel
- Carers participation in awareness raising and training events for staff
- Undertaken engagement and consultation with Carers on the development of the draft Strategy
- Undertaken a Support for Carers Survey in 2015
- Developed a range of Digital Carers stories to raise the profile of Carers and their issues.
- Case Studies developed jointly with University of South Wales are being used in training

What do we want to do?

- Implement the requirements of the SSWB Act, working with Carers on outcomes they want to achieve
- Ensure that all service providers commissioned by the LAs and UHB have robust contract monitoring arrangements that demonstrate Carer and Service User involvement
- Continue to engage meaningfully with Carers of all ages through an active and participative process which captures their aspirations and priorities by using an assets based approach which provides insight into their needs, what the best solutions may be and who is best placed to provide or contribute to these.

9.5. Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of Carers of all ages

By this we mean partnership working between Carers, statutory and voluntary organisations to create and sustain an environment where adults, young people and families have access to information, support and opportunities relevant to their caring roles.. We will need to deliver local services in a joined up manner to meet the needs of individuals and maximise the resources available to ensure Carers and their families achieve a greater degree of independence and improved quality of life.

It is impossible to consider the future without reference to the challenging financial circumstances in which we are operating. Working more efficiently and with fewer resources but with increasing demand will be a feature for public services during the life of this Strategy.

We will therefore need to ensure we are making the best use of all our resources, skills and expertise and can provide sustainable services. This will ensure sufficient capacity and good quality services to respond to the needs of people in Cwm Taf. To do this will involve a range of service reviews or service redesign, workforce modernisation and performance improvement.

"Provide joined up thinking, with all agencies aware of everything that's available and how to access it."

"Coordinate doctors/hospital appointments to reduce the amount of time I need to take off work"

"Initiatives, strategies are put in place. However on times they do not filter down to grass roots level."

"Working in partnership with the many groups in Cwm Taf to identify resources that already exist."

Where are we now?

- Building on a strong history of collaboration and regional working across the statutory and non statutory sector in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil. One Cwm Taf Public Services Board has been established which will focus our joint energy and efforts in a determination to make a difference to people's lives in Cwm Taf.
- Developed the roles of Carers Measure Coordinators working together across the two Local Authorities and the Health Boards in a consistent and joined up way
- Shared best practice across sectors and agencies at the annual Carers Champions conference which involves statutory sector, Third Sector and Carers - 120 people attended in 2015 and 115 people attended in 2016
- Worked in partnership to develop a Cwm Taf wide Carers Strategy which will help focus and maximise the impact of our efforts to support Carers, rather than have a number of disparate and uncoordinated single agency plans.

What do we want to do?

- Address the requirements of Part 9 of the SSWB Act which relate to cooperation, integration of care and support and partnership arrangements between the Local Authorities, Health Board and other partners.
- All partners will contribute to the development of the Population Needs Assessment (required as part of the SSWB Act) by April 2017 which will inform priority areas for investment to meet the needs of carers for support.
- Take an integrated approach to the commissioning and provision of services which will help the Local Authorities and Health Board to exercise greater influence over the shape and delivery of services.
- "Make every contact count" by maximising opportunities from other programmes of work eg Health and Housing project in Tylorstown, UHB's Inverse Care Law project to identify and capture views from Carers and look for new ways to meet their needs

- Make more effective use of a range of anti poverty programmes (including Communities First and Families First) to provide community based interventions which will help address the needs of Carers.

10. Implementation and Delivery

To achieve the Vision set out in the Strategy will require a multi agency and partnership approach. A cross section of agencies will need to commit to the delivery of the Strategy. Each has a role to play enabling Carers and the cared for to live as independently as possible and maintain a good quality of life.

We will establish a Cwm Taf Carers Strategy Steering Group and any specific Task and Finish groups needed to be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Strategy and monitoring performance. The Groups will include Carers representatives.

Annual Action Plans

The Cwm Taf Carers Strategy is not a fixed and final plan but a framework which sets out what will be taken forward over the next three years. Annual Action plans will be developed which will detail key actions, lead responsibilities, timescales, resource implications and performance measures, which will focus on the outcomes we want to achieve.

Outcomes we want to achieve and monitoring progress

The success of this Strategy and the benefits it delivers will be reviewed regularly. It will be a partnership plan and a variety of staff within a wide range of sectors will be responsible for working in collaboration to implement it effectively.

Progress will be reported to the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board, as well as the individual organisations ie the two Local Authorities and the Health Board. We will also have to report on our plans for Carers to Welsh Government.

Below are the outcomes that through a multi-agency approach we want to achieve in order to meet our Vision and Aims. An outcome is not in itself a measure, so in order to be accountable and to assess how effective we are in achieving the desired outcomes, we will use performance measures and indicators. This enables us to quantify achievement and measure change.

Some of these measures have been set nationally by the Welsh Government as part of the new SSWB Act. Annual Service User Questionnaires are also required under the Act. Others are measures we have identified locally as being important. Further work on performance management is being undertaken as part of the plan to implement the SSWB Act across the region. This may affect the measures we need to include in the Carers Strategy and the mechanisms needed for capturing and recording information. We will therefore need to review and update this aspect of the Strategy and Action plans as appropriate.

	Outcome

Aim 1. ***Recognition and Value***	More Carers of all ages are identified and recognised for their caring role ***How will we know how we are doing?*** Increase in the number of Carers Champions (Local measure) Increase in the number of staff trained in Carer Awareness (Local measure) Increase in the number of accredited GP Practices (Local measure) The percentage of people reporting they were treated with dignity and respect (national measure)
Aim 2. ***Information, Advice and Assistance***	***Outcome*** More Carers of all ages have access to up to date, relevant and timely information, advice and assistance ***How will we know how we are doing?*** People report they have received the right information or advice when they needed it. (National measure) Data and feedback from IAA service
Aim 3. ***Support and services***	***Outcome*** More Carers of all ages receive the support, services and training to meet their needs. ***How will we know how we are doing?*** Carers reporting they feel supported to continue in their caring role. (National measure) Increase in the number of Carers referred to Carers support projects and feedback on effectiveness of services Number of assessments of need for care and support for Carers and Young Carers undertaken during the year and of those, the number of assessments that led to a care and support plan (National measure) Number of carer assessments that were refused by carers during the year For Carers with a care and support plan, the percentage of people with a care and support plan reporting that they have been given written information of their named worker in social

	services (national measure) The percentage of people who are satisfied with care and support that they received (national measure)
Aim 4 ***Voice, Choice and Control***	***Outcome*** More Carers of all ages feel they have a voice, with more choice and control over their lives ***How will we know how we are doing?*** The percentage of people reporting they felt involved in any decisions made about their care and support (National measure) Increase in the number of Carers of all ages who report having a positive care/life balance (Local measure) Carer involvement/feedback provided as part of the SLAs for commissioned services Increase in Carer representation on planning groups, training sessions and ,appointments
Aim 5 ***Working together***	***Outcome*** More Carers of all ages feel part of and experience a seamless service that helps them achieve the things that matter to them and the person they care for. ***How will we know how we are doing?*** Carers reporting they felt involved in designing the care and support plan for the person that they care for. (National measure)

Accountability

The individual organisations which make up the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy Steering Group remain accountable for the delivery of services for which they are responsible for and are always responsible to their own governing authority. In addition, however, they are accountable to one another and as a Partnership to develop and deliver the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy.

11. Next steps

Following its approval by RCT and Merthyr Tydfil CBCs and Cwm Taf UHB, the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy will be translated into Welsh and an Executive Summary and Easy Read version will also be produced. Copies of all these documents will be available on partner websites:

- www.rctcbc.gov.uk

- www.merthyr.gov.uk
- www.vamt.net
- www.interlink.org.uk
- www.cwmtaflhb.wales.nhs.uk

If you require further information, please contact the Head of Health and Wellbeing Manager at Cwm Taf LHB on 01443 744800 or e-mail: Nicola.Davies12@wales.nhs.uk