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Welsh Government  
**Consultation Document**

**CONSULTATION ON A CARERS' NATIONAL PLAN FOR WALES**

Date of issue: 20 October 2020  
Action required: Responses by 20 January 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

**Overview** This consultation sets out our proposed direction for a new national Plan for Carers. We want carers to continue their own lives alongside their caring role regardless of their age, circumstance or background.

**How to respond** You can respond to this consultation by completing and returning, by midnight on the closing date, the consultation response form at the back of this document.

The response should be sent to:

Older People and Carers Team  
Social Services Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Crown Buildings  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Alternatively the consultation response form is available on our website [Welsh Government Consultations](#) and can be returned to us, by midnight on the closing date, via e-mail to:

[OlderPeopleandCarers@gov.wales](mailto:OlderPeopleandCarers@gov.wales)

**Further information and related documents** **Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.**

**Contact details** For further information:

Older People and Carers Team  
Social Services Directorate  
Welsh Government  
Crown Buildings  
Cathays Park  
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[OlderPeopleandCarers@gov.wales](mailto:OlderPeopleandCarers@gov.wales)

**Also available in  
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The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

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The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or  
0303 123 1113

Website: [Information Commissioner's Office website](#)

# CONSULTATION ON A NATIONAL PLAN FOR CARERS FOR WALES

## 1. What is this consultation about?

1. This consultation sets out our proposed direction for a new national Plan for Carers. We want carers to continue their own lives alongside their caring role regardless of their age, circumstance or background.

## Purpose

2. We intend to use the final plan to set out how we will work with a range of partners to strengthen our existing strategic priorities to better reflect every aspect of a carers' life.

## Context

3. This document was prepared for public consultation shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown affected all aspects of people's lives in Wales. Consequently, we have revised the original document and incorporated feedback from carers and their representatives, academics and colleagues in local government and health. This revised document sets out the proposed content and direction for a new Carers National Plan. It also reflects what we believe are the main issues that have impacted on the lives of unpaid carers and the organisations that support them over recent months.

**The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, defines a carer as someone who provides unpaid care to an adult or disabled child<sup>1</sup>.**

4. The cared for person may be a family member or a friend, who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. A carer could be a husband caring for his wife, a parent caring for their child who has care and support needs or a child caring for their parent.
5. In Wales more than 370,000 unpaid carers of all ages provide care, worth around £8.1 billion to the Welsh economy each year<sup>2</sup>. 12 per cent of the population of Wales are carers and it is estimated that by 2037 this could increase to half a million.<sup>3</sup> This figure includes anyone caring for as little as an hour a week and most people who spend only very limited time on caring will not require any additional support. However, Wales also has the highest proportion of older carers and of carers providing more than 50 hours' care a week.<sup>4</sup> Since, the start of the pandemic, the number of carers in Wales has increased – the National Survey for Wales issued a monthly report in June 2020, which showed that 35% of people

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<sup>1</sup> [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

<sup>2</sup> Carers Wales (2015)

<sup>3</sup> Carers Wales <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/news-campaigns/news/unpaid-carers-in-wales-feel-demoralised-and-disillusioned>

<sup>4</sup> [https://socialcare.wales/cms\\_assets/file-uploads/Preventative-support-for-adult-carers-in-Wales.pdf](https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Preventative-support-for-adult-carers-in-Wales.pdf)

looked after, or gave help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others. This has increased from 29% in the 2019-20 full-year survey.

6. The contribution of unpaid carers to the Welsh economy must be acknowledged and celebrated so that the well-being of carers is not overshadowed by concerns for the person or people they care for. However, it is equally important not to make assumptions that all carers are fully able or willing to take on or continue in a caring role.
7. We have a moral, legal and practical obligation to support people who are providing significant levels of care or balancing care alongside other substantial commitments such as employment or education. Moral, because of our commitment to everyone's wellbeing in Wales. Legal, because carers' rights are enshrined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, (with associated Regulations, Codes of Practice<sup>5</sup> and statutory guidance) Practical, because if more and more unpaid carers cannot cope, significant pressure will fall on public services and limited public resources.
8. We want this plan to be a first step towards a common understanding of the level and quality of support carers should receive at different points of their lives. For some, this could be at school, at work, within their local community or at home.
9. Support for carers spans wider than health and social care and requires a coordinated response from the Welsh Government and the public, third and private sectors. We want this national plan for carers to challenge everyone to consider the actions they can take to improve lives for carers of all ages and backgrounds in Wales.

## **Core theme - prevention and early intervention**

10. Our vision is for everyone in Wales to have longer healthier and happier lives and remain active, independent and in their own homes for as long as possible. We are therefore working towards a whole-system approach to health and social care which focusses on keeping people well by anticipating health needs, preventing illness, and reducing the impacts of poor health. This approach has become more important in light of the impact of Covid-19 on individuals and communities in Wales.
11. A Healthier Wales acknowledges the invaluable contribution of unpaid carers to Welsh communities and stresses the need to recognise and support the vital role played by this informal workforce, reflecting the principle that carers, if effectively supported, provide a preventative service in their own right.
12. The Welsh Government's national strategy, Prosperity for All, sets out a radically different way of working to deliver on the most fundamental challenges the nation faces. The strategy recognises that integration and collaboration between services supported by early intervention and a people centred approach, is essential to delivering long term outcomes for social care.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://socialcare.wales/hub/sswbact>

13. Early intervention and prevention is critical and we need to consider what can be done to help prevent carers from reaching a crisis point. We need to embed the preventative aspects of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act more effectively in public services and move key providers of services, including the third sector, towards an improved model of support for carers. If we fail to address these key issues now, more carers and the people they care for, will reach crisis point before accessing vital support services. This will in turn, increase the pressure on NHS and social services.
14. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act places further duties on local authorities to embed a preventative approach by considering the long-term impact of their actions. Public bodies are required to adopt a more joined approach to service design and delivery. They must also work in partnership with individuals and communities. This approach supports the strategic direction and intention of this plan.

## **Where are we now?**

15. The Welsh Government has acted consistently to improve the lives of carers. The first Carers' Strategy for Wales was published in 2000, the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure was published in 2010 and the refreshed Carers Strategy for Wales and the Delivery Plan 2013-2016 were published in 2013.
16. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 replaced the Welsh Government's Carers Measure 2010, and strengthened carers' statutory rights. For the first time carers have an equal right to an assessment and support as those that they care for. Carers no longer need to demonstrate that they provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis to be considered as a carer. If carers have needs that are eligible for support, the local authority has a statutory duty to plan for and meet those needs by providing a 'Carers Support Plan.'
17. Significant progress has been made through new legislation, policies and funding streams to enable health boards, local authorities and third sector partners to support carers.

## **To support carers in Wales, we are undertaking the following:**

18. We are providing £1.295 million in 2020/21 to support activity that takes forward our three national priorities for carers. This includes £1 million to local health boards and their carer partnerships for a range of activity to support carers of all ages; funding for the Carers' Ministerial Advisory Group and the new Carers Engagement Group, up to £236,000 for the development of a national Young Carer's ID card model, and £14,000 of funding for the Young Carers' Network.
19. In 2020-21, Welsh Government is providing £1million, for a national Carers' Hardship fund. Delivered via Carers Trust Wales and their local partners, it will enable carers who are struggling financially to purchase essential items including food, furniture, white goods such as a washing machine, or a laptop.
20. We are providing £2.6 million, over three years, to Carers Wales, All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers, Carers Trust Wales and Age Cymru via our Third Sector

Sustainable Social Services Grant Scheme which commenced in April 2020. These four projects aim to provide a range of support for carers of all ages.

21. Earlier this year, the Welsh Government published its first annual report on the Integrated Care Fund (ICF). The report shows that in 2018-19 £1.141m was spent on services **directly** supporting carers in Wales. This is in addition to the investment from other broader projects that support for example, older people and children with complex needs, which also have a positive impact on the lives of carers.
22. Our expectation is that spend on carers across Wales will increase year on year. In 2019-20 some £7.891m was spent directly on projects and services to support carers. Our next ICF annual report, due for publication in the autumn, will showcase how this important group of people are benefitting from the ICF.
23. In November 2019 we launched a national all age carers' rights awareness campaign informing carers of their rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This highlights their right to access a carers' needs assessment. (This campaign will restart when circumstances permit).
24. We are taking forward our two year, phased approach across 2020-2022, to produce a national model for a Young carers ID card scheme, in partnership with local authorities and Carers Trust Wales.
25. We provided direct funding of £35k to Carers Wales for the translation and launch of the new all age "Learning for Living" City & Guilds accredited skills for carers online course.
26. We continue to work with Carers Wales as corporate members of the Welsh Employers for Carers programme. Delivered by Carers Wales, the Hub Wales supports all employers to better understand and implement policies and practices to support their employees with caring responsibilities.

## **Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Inquiry – Caring for our future<sup>6</sup>**

27. The Senedd committee opened their inquiry - "Impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to Carers" – in 2018. The inquiry remit was to assess the impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 on carers of all ages in Wales, including:
  - assessments of need;
  - provision of support, including respite care;
  - provision of information, advice and assistance;
  - information collected by local authorities and local health boards on carers and their needs; and
  - consideration of broader Welsh Government policy on carers.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=022518>



28. The Committee's report, *Caring for our future*, was published on 21 November 2019<sup>7</sup>. Welsh Government responded to the report's 31 recommendations in January 2020<sup>8</sup> and the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services sent a subsequent update letter to the Chair of the HSCS Committee, Dr Dai Lloyd, in July 2020<sup>9</sup>.
29. The Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services stressed the importance of a national plan for carers at a meeting of the Carers Ministerial Advisory Group in May 2019. This intention was then announced in a Written Statement on 21 November 2019 to mark Carers' Rights Day<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s96075/Report%20-%20Caring%20for%20our%20Future%20An%20inquiry%20into%20the%20impact%20of%20the%20Social%20Services%20and%20Well-being%20Wa.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s98194/Welsh%20Government%20response%20-%2028%20January%202020.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s105366/Letter%20from%20the%20Deputy%20Minister%20for%20Health%20and%20Social%20Services%20-%2014%20July%202020.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://gov.wales/written-statement-national-carers-rights-day-2019>

## 2. Covid-19

30. Covid-19 has had an impact on the mental health and well-being of many carers who have been worried about catching the illness and passing it to those they care for. Carers have also faced additional pressures due to the impact of the pandemic on the social care workforce.
31. For some carers, the closure of opportunities for respite, such as day centres, community groups, or being unable to access an overnight sitting service, has made their caring role more challenging. Some carers took on more caring responsibilities because of concerns about domiciliary care workers coming into the home and potentially spreading Covid-19. Others have been concerned about lack of access to a carers' needs assessment, and have experienced difficulties in accessing food or medication.
32. Coronavirus has increased pressure on everyone - carers, third sector organisations, local and national government and health boards - carers supported key services in Wales to cope with the increased pressure caused by the pandemic. To respond to the additional pressure placed on carers by the coronavirus, we allocated an additional £50,000 to Carers Wales to extend psychological support to carers.
33. We have continued to work closely with organisations representing and providing support to unpaid carers to fully understand the impact of Covid-19 on their lives and to take appropriate action. We continue to gather information via our Carers Ministerial Advisory Group and its supporting Engagement group. Both are informing Welsh Government's planning for recovery, and a possible second wave of Covid-19 in Wales.

| <b>Consultation Questions</b>  |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>How has Covid-19 impacted on your life as a carer, or as an organisation supporting carers?</b></li><li>2. <b>What do you think Welsh Government should prioritise to better support unpaid carers affected by Covid-19, both now and in the instance of further waves of infection?</b></li></ol> |

### **3. Carers with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010**

34. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained within the Equality Act 2010, and our Welsh specific equality duties require us to identify what we can do to remove barriers and improve participation and outcomes for people who are under-represented or suffer disproportionate disadvantage. The protected characteristics are:
- age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation
35. Through this consultation we want to understand how different groups of people with protected characteristics may need specific forms of support, so that the design and delivery of our policies and services take into account of the needs of those groups.
36. Covid-19 has shown that individuals from BAME backgrounds and communities experience a higher risk to their health from the coronavirus. It is therefore important that we understand how their experiences and those of BAME carers can help shape this new plan.
37. We want the plan to include a focus on the needs of different carers, in line with an evidence-based, person-centred approach. The 2011 census showed that women make up the majority of carers – across the UK, 58 per cent of carers are women, and 20 per cent of all women aged 45 to 54 are providing unpaid care to someone with a disability or illness, or who is older.
38. We need to consider the language barriers and cultural expectations that can have an impact on how a person provides care. Those who are from different cultural backgrounds may have different perceptions of the role of an unpaid carer. Individuals may not recognise themselves as a carer and may not want to receive help or understand their rights as a carer.
39. We are preparing an Equality Impact Assessment (as part of the wider Integrated Impact Assessment) to help us analyse and consider how mainstream services can support the needs of carers with protected characteristics. Collecting and analysing carer feedback will be critical for us to understand the needs and experiences of all carers, and to inform us about what we need to do remove barriers and improve services for carers with protected characteristics.
40. As our society ages, the number of people living with complex needs is increasing. It is therefore inevitable that more older people will take on a caring role. Most older carers live alone with the person they care for and many also live with life limiting

conditions.<sup>11</sup> In response to Wales' ageing demographic, we are developing a new Strategy for an Ageing Society. Given the increasing numbers of older and working age people providing unpaid care, the effective implementation of that strategy into the national plan for carers is critical.

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| <b>Consultation Questions</b> |
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| <b>3. What are the key areas of inequality experienced by carers with protected characteristics that should be addressed by the new National Plan for Carers?</b> |
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### **Young carers and young adult carers**

41. There are approximately 30,000 carers under the age of 25 in Wales. According to the 2011 census, Wales has the highest proportion of carers under 18 in the UK. This number is likely to have increased during the pandemic.
42. Young carers are children or young people who take a significant role in caring for a family member. The family member could, for example, be suffering from a physical or mental health problem, a disability or drug and alcohol problems. Young carers may not recognise that their role within the family is different from other children and young people, but they often carry significant physical and psychological burdens. Young carers often have little or no "me time" and can lose parts of their childhood.
43. Some of the problems young carers might face are difficulties with school and doing homework; not enough time to see friends; worrying about the person they care for; feeling different from other young people and other people not understanding what it's like being a young carer.
44. Young adult carers are usually carers between 16 and 25 years old. They may be juggling their caring responsibilities with further or higher education; looking for work or navigating the benefits system; starting their working lives; a serious emotional relationship or thinking about leaving home. They can therefore face a different set of issues from young carers.
45. During the Covid-19 lockdown, many young and young adult carers were unable to access their normal support mechanisms, such as friends or wider family, and may have experienced increased emotional pressure as a result. Young and young adult carers may have been caring for more hours each week and undertaking tasks such as shopping for the household, collecting medication from pharmacies, as well as trying to learn at home when schools and colleges were closed.

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<sup>11</sup> Carers Wales 2018 State for the Nation

**Consultation Questions**

- 4. What are the key challenges experienced by you as a young/young adult carer or as an organisation supporting young carers?**
- 5. What additional support would help? (To young/young adult carers).**
- 6. How has Covid-19 impacted on your daily life?**

## 4. The national priorities for carers

46. The new plan is being developed within the context of the existing three national priorities for carers which were launched in November 2017<sup>12</sup>. Whilst we are not planning to end or completely rework the priorities, we are keen to use this consultation to explore how they can be improved to better reflect the diversity of carers and their personal experiences in Wales.
47. To better reflect the issues outlined in the previous sections of this document, we have expanded the explanations that sit below each priority, and propose the addition of a fourth priority. The current three, and additional proposed fourth priority, are set out below.

### Priority One

#### ***Identifying and recognising carers - all carers deserve to be recognised and supported to continue to care.***

48. Carers contribute hugely to society and deserve to be recognised and supported to continue to care. It is vital that carers identify as carers because without timely information, advice and assistance or a carers' needs assessment and any eligible support needs met, both the health and well-being of the carer, and that of those they care for, could suffer.

#### **How are we taking forward this priority?**

49. We plan to use the data we collect and our recent work with the Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers to develop a range of solutions that enable local authorities to deliver timely, effective statutory assessments that are responsive to the support carers.
50. We will continue our Carers' Rights awareness campaign<sup>13</sup> and work with key stakeholders to promote its messages to a wider audience including young carers. We will ensure the campaign messages reach people who are not online by producing posters and leaflets, having previously used radio adverts and made the key information leaflet available on the Welsh Government website.
51. We will work with and commission Social Care Wales to develop further training and information resources, as appropriate, for the social care workforce<sup>14</sup>, to increase awareness of carers' needs and the caring role and improve service delivery.
52. Via our Third Sector Sustainable Social Services Grant<sup>15</sup> we are funding three carer specific projects worth £2.1million over three years. Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales will work to transform carer recognition, respect and support across health and social care settings in Wales. The Carers Trust Wales project will support health professionals to improve their systems and processes by

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<sup>12</sup> <https://gov.wales/carers-rights-day-welsh-government-unveil-new-plans-improve-lives-carers-0>

<sup>13</sup> <https://gov.wales/law-care-and-support-carers-rights>

<sup>14</sup> <https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/working-with-carers>

<sup>15</sup> <https://gov.wales/sustainable-social-services-third-sector-grant-2020-2023-funded-projects>

developing a better understanding of carers' needs and rights. Via the same third sector grant, we are funding Age Cymru to develop person centred services models that can identify and better meet the needs of older carers and carers of people with dementia.

**In addition, carers and their representatives have suggested that we:**

- 53. Encourage a culture change in the way professionals talk about and to carers - there are differences in the formality of language used by professionals and real life; and
- 54. Consider how to use real faces and real situations to help people understand the benefits of identifying a carer.

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| <b>Consultation Questions</b> |
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| <b>7. Do you agree with the suggested actions identified above?</b> |
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| <b>8. Is there anything more public bodies and their partners should do to identify and recognise carers?</b> |
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| <b>9. Should the existing wording of Priority One be changed? If yes, how?</b> |
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## Priority two

***Supporting life alongside caring - all carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care and have a life beyond caring.***

- 55. Carers provide a valuable service to the people they look after and society in general but tend to neglect their own needs. Carers should have equal access to different and innovative forms of short breaks and / or respite, such as sport, leisure and cultural opportunities, as well as more traditional forms such as an overnight sitting service for the person being cared for.

### How are we taking forward this priority?

- 56. As respite moves away from the “traditional” model of overnight care for the individual with care needs, we need to understand how respite services can be re-defined to meet individual need. Respite can include carers' choirs, young carers groups and peer support groups. We also know that individuals who access Direct Payments<sup>16</sup> use this mechanism to access different forms of respite, that best suit the needs of the individual and / or carer.
- 57. Many carers, including young carers, wish to have respite in the form of family breaks and holidays. We have therefore discussed the Scottish models of respite and funding with Shared Care Scotland, including their Short Breaks Fund<sup>17</sup> and Respitality Schemes. A bi-lateral conference between Wales and Scotland took place online in May, which brought together academics, government officials,

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<sup>16</sup> <https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/direct-payments-a-guide>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/shortbreaksfund/>

national carers' organisations and other key bodies to exchange ideas and learning.

58. We also recognise carers may benefit from psychological support in the form of counselling for stress or bereavement. During Covid-19, we provided additional funding to Carers Wales and Cruse Bereavement Care to extend their counselling and emotional well-being services.

**In addition, carers and their representatives have suggested that we:**

- Consider whether we should continue to use the term “respite”;
- Define respite and clarify the difference between respite and short breaks;
- Develop a flexible list of potential respite choices/ offers to inform individuals, their families and delivery bodies; and
- Clarify who is responsible for delivering respite.

| <b>Consultation Questions</b>  |
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| <b>10. Do you agree with the suggestions above?</b>  |
| <b>11. Is there anything more we should do to support life alongside caring?</b>                                     |
| <b>12. How can we improve the provision of psychological support to carers?</b>                                      |
| <b>13. What types of respite do you normally use or deliver? How has Covid-19 impacted on your respite services?</b> |
| <b>14. Should the existing wording of Priority Two be changed? If yes, how?</b>                                      |

## **Priority three**

***Providing information, advice and assistance - it is important that all carers receive the right information and advice when needed and in an appropriate format***

59. Provision of appropriate information, advice and assistance (IAA) provides the vital first steps of a preventative approach. Many carers do not need to access formal statutory or specific social services or health provision but simply require the right information, in the right format, at the right time, in order to manage their caring role. Knowing where and how to access different forms of information, advice and assistance such as welfare benefits or more general rights, can also be preventative e.g. help for carers experiencing financial difficulties.

### **How are we taking forward this priority?**

60. Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities must publicise information about:

- how the care and support system operates in the local authority area;
- the types of care and support available;
- how to access the care and support that is available; and



- how to raise concerns about the well-being of a person who appears to have needs for care and support.
61. IAA is intended to support prevention and early intervention and deliver a wider range of community-based services through partnerships and multi-agency working. Delivered well, and at the right time, IAA can enable carers, and those they care for, to live healthy and fulfilled lives for as long as possible. In order to avoid geographical variants in available services across Wales (a 'postcode lottery'), it is critical that all IAA services in Wales are high quality and easily accessible to all.
  62. Audit Wales (formerly Wales Audit Office) published a report in September 2019, "Front Door to Adult Social Care"<sup>18</sup>, which examined local authorities' provision of Information, Advice and Assistance. This found that amongst carers aged 18 and over, nearly 70 per cent found it easy to ask for an assessment. However, we recognise that we can do more to raise awareness of carers' rights and entitlements using our existing awareness raising campaign, or explore other ways of doing this.
  63. The Audit Wales report also called for greater commissioning of advocacy services (including independent advocacy). Via our Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant, we are funding the **HOPE project** which aims to support older people and carers to access community based preventative services through a range of **advocacy models** led by peers, volunteer groups and citizens.

**In addition, carers and their representatives have suggested that we:**

- Acknowledge that not all carers will access local authority IAA services and there is a need to raise awareness of alternative ways of accessing information such as GPs, community services, or online resources such as DEWIS Cymru.  
<https://www.dewis.wales/>
- Address and counter the negative perceptions some carers have about contact with local authority social services.
- Recognise that social care and other services such as housing, transport, protective services and employability schemes all have a responsibility to support carers.
- Consider the digital divide and digital poverty in the plan e.g. those carers, often older carers, who do not own or have access to an IT device such as a smartphone, tablet or laptop.
- Increase the role of technology in supporting carers needs, e.g. digital voice assistants.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.audit.wales/publication/front-door-adult-social-care>

| Consultation Questions  |
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| 15. Do you agree with the suggestions above?  |
| 16. Is there anything more we should do to improve IAA services in Wales?   |
| 17. What have we learnt from Covid-19 and the need to get accessible information to carers in a short space of time?      |
| 18. Do you have examples of good practice during the pandemic that could be replicated or inform development of services? |
| 19. Should the existing wording of priority three be changed? If yes, how?  |

## Priority four

This new priority would link with the supporting life alongside caring priority.

***Supporting carers in education and the workplace – employers and educational / training settings should be supported to adapt their policies and practices enabling carers to work and learn alongside their caring role.***

64. Having the opportunity to work and learn is an important part of life. It can provide financial stability and bring the wider benefits of a fulfilling career, positive mental health and social interaction. Too many carers leave employment or reduce their working hours to balance caring responsibilities with their work and thereby miss out on career progression, improved pay, or training and development. Carers not in employment, education or training should be able to access the right information, advice and support to develop the skills to gain suitable employment, whether re-entering the workforce, or getting a job for the first time. It is also important to recognise that a carer may also be self-employed, managing their own business or organisation, and therefore face a different set of challenges.

### **Work underway to take forward the proposed fourth priority:**

#### Carers in education

65. Carers of all ages may wish to continue their education, particularly if their learning or career progression has been interrupted due to caring commitments.
66. Taking forward the commitments in *A Healthier Wales* allow us to apply the something for something principle in health and social care so that employers, schools and third sector organisations are challenged to play their part in creating a healthier Wales by supporting carers.
67. We were pleased to deliver our carer-specific Prosperity for All commitment. In 2019-20 we funded Carers Wales for the translation and the launch of the Carers UK online skills learning – Learning for Living - which provides any carer with the opportunity to complete an accredited skills course. We will continue to promote this learning.

## Young carers / Young adult carers

68. All of the national priorities and their proposed actions relate equally to carers of all ages. However, most young carers are at school or attending college and therefore need to balance their learning and personal development with their caring responsibilities. Young adult carers (usually considered to be aged from 16 – 25 years of age) face different circumstances and may be in higher education or employment.
69. Research from Carers Trust Wales<sup>19</sup>, Carers Trust and Nottingham University states that problems with school attendance or attainment can negatively impact on the future of young carers. Young carers may often have lower educational attainment at GCSE level and are more likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training) between the ages of 16 and 19, than those without caring responsibilities. This often results in unemployment, reduced earnings, poor health and depression.
70. We will encourage local authorities to support state funded schools to identify young carers so that their educational attainment, emotional health and well-being are not compromised by their caring role. The development of our new *Curriculum for Wales* contains a much stronger focus on well-being, and on creating ambitious and capable learners and has the potential to address some of the barriers experienced by young carers.
71. In 2019 Estyn published a Thematic Review into the support for young carers in schools, FE and Pupil Referral Units<sup>20</sup>. This made a series of recommendations to local authorities and education professionals as to how they can improve recognition and support for their young carers. Welsh Government has previously funded toolkits for schools and FE colleges on practical ways to help young carers. We have also funded Carers Trust Wales in 2019-20 to produce a suite of training resources and guidance to support young carers and their teachers. These resources are now available for use in schools. [Resources for Teaching Professionals to Support Young Carers in Schools](#)
72. We clearly recognise the need for a strong connection between schools and their local young carers' services so that young carers are fully supported. As part of this, we are aware that some schools have identified a lead for young carers to oversee the support young carers receive, and signpost to young carers services, but we recognise this can be applied more consistently.

## Carers in employment

73. We will work with employers and their representative bodies to encourage them to provide carer friendly workplaces that support the increasing number of older workers and carers, and also young and young adult carers, in our workforce. This

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<sup>19</sup> <https://carers.org/downloads/resources-pdfs/time-to-be-heard/time-to-be-heard-a-call-for-recognition-and-support-for-young-adult-carers.pdf> and Carers Trust Wales (2018) Support for young carers (unpublished).

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/provision-young-carers-secondary-schools-further-education-colleges-and-pupil>

aligns with our commitment to the Fair Work principles and action. Certain sectors, with high levels of older or female employees, may face additional pressures due to an increase of carers in their workforce.

74. We will continue to work with and promote the *Employers for Carers Wales Hub*, which helps organisations in Wales to support staff with caring responsibilities. The Hub provides practical guidance, expert consultancy and training as well as supporting employers to share best practice. Employers can access details about how to get involved from the Hub at [The Wales Hub of Employers for Carers](#).
75. The current rise in redundancies, unemployment due to Covid-19 and the end of the UK Government's furlough scheme could impact negatively on the financial situation of many carers. 25% of people in Wales said that their economic status has changed since the coronavirus outbreak. 74% have said coronavirus has caused problems for their work life<sup>21</sup>.

#### **Going forward, carers and their representatives have suggested that we:**

- Ensure there are consistent and linked policy approaches in government, regarding help and support for employed carers and work with organisations and representatives from the private sector, Social Partnership representatives, including trade unions and others, to understand the impact of policy changes;
- Consider the financial and emotional impact on women, who are more likely to work part time or give up employment because of difficulties in balancing their employment with their caring role; and
- Continue to support the proposal from UK central government for a new employment right of a week of unpaid carers leave, for qualifying employees.

| <b>Consultation Questions</b>   |
|---|
| <b>20. Do you agree with the suggestions above?</b>   |
| <b>21. Is there anything more we and others should do to support carers of all ages in education and employment? Do you have examples of good practice?</b> |
| <b>22. How can we better support carers who are struggling financially?</b>   |

| <b>Consultation Questions</b>  |
|--|
| <b>23. Do you agree with the addition of the fourth national priority for carers based on education and employment?</b>                                    |
| <b>24. Do you think the list of national priorities for carers, and proposed fourth priority, require further amendment? If so, what? Please describe.</b> |

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<sup>21</sup> [National Survey for Wales \(monthly survey\): July 2020](#)

# 5. A Charter for Carers

76. Many carers will have common experiences when supporting the individual whom they care for. These can include:

- A need for respite, or simply to have break to do things for their own benefit or interest.
- Difficulties in managing the demands of full time or part time employment, or study alongside caring responsibilities. This can be exacerbated by inflexible working cultures, policies and practices within the employing organisation and educational institutions.
- Supporting individuals with care and support needs who are admitted to emergency hospital departments due to sudden ill health or accidents.
- Variations in the way people are discharged from hospital - the process can be good if the carer is engaged in conversations about arrangements for any care and support that needs to be in place, or it can be a negative experience with the input of the carer not being taken into consideration.

77. Carers and their representatives have voiced concerns about a significant disparity in levels of support between different health boards and local authority support for carers. In response to this, we are keen to work towards a shared understanding of the level of service carers should expect, particularly during common scenarios that carers encounter as detailed above. We want the carers charter to be the go to resource for people seeking to provide support to carers.

78. The charter will be best practice guidance and will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of Welsh Government, local authorities, local health boards, third sector organisations and carers.

| <b>Consultation Questions</b>   |
|---|
| <b>25. Do you agree with our intention to develop and publish a Charter for Carers?</b>                     |
| <b>26. Should the Charter describe national expectations of organisations supporting carers?</b>            |
| <b>27. Do you think a Charter would help to improve the services you deliver or access?</b>                 |
| <b>28. Do you agree a Charter could help to reduce apparent geographic variation in services to carers?</b> |

## **6. Measuring success – data and research**

### **Evaluation of the Social Services and Well-being of Wales 2014 Act; Measuring the Mountain project**

79. Development of our new national plan for carers will be led with advice and input from our Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers and Engagement group members, who will be considering a wide range of sources, including data and research evidence.
80. Our new Performance and Improvement Framework for local authorities came into force, in April 2020. However due to Covid-19 social care data collections have been put on hold to allow local authorities to reallocate resources appropriately. Time has been spent to ensure we are receiving relevant social care data related to Covid-19 to allow understanding and support to be channelled to the pandemic.
81. Officials are in discussions regarding when routine social care data collation will resume, however mechanisms are now in place to allow more detailed data to be collected from local authorities when it is considered the appropriate time to do so. This will include more robust data on carers and the care and support they receive.
82. We are also working with the social care sector to develop a social care data strategy. This will allow stakeholders and users of social care to agree a shared vision for social care data, including how it can be used to support services to achieve better outcomes which are evidence led, accountable and effective. Work on the discovery phase of the project, in conjunction with KPMG, started earlier this year, and has recently recommenced.
83. The evaluation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 remains ongoing. A substantial amount of work has been achieved to date to assess how the 2014 Act has been implemented at a local, regional and national level. This will include how the principles of “voice and control” have been applied. Reporting of this phase of the evaluation was due to take place in June 2020, however due to Covid-19, fieldwork for the evaluation has had to be put on hold which will cause a delay in reporting. It is now anticipated that we will report February 2021.
84. The interim report assessing the impact of the 2014 Act on those who receive care and support, and carers who receive support, is due to be published in October 2021, with the final report being published in October 2022. It will give insight into how the principles of the Act such as ‘voice and control’ have been applied and the impact the 2014 Act and the principles have had on carers and carers’ well-being. Findings from the evaluation will be used to support us in understanding how we can further improve the lives of individuals, and their carers.
85. As well as the Performance and Improvement Framework and evaluation of the 2014 Act, the Welsh Government funded “Measuring the Mountain” project is designed to help us better understand the experiences of those who receive care and support, and carers. The report for the first phase of the work was published in

March 2019, which set out its findings but also a number of recommendations to take forward, many of which related to how support for carers could be improved.

86. We provided a formal response to those recommendations in February 2020<sup>22</sup>, and are working hard to ensure the findings of the project are recognised across the social care sector, and more widely known and used. The project is now in its second phase looking to further understand the emergent trends from phase one.
87. The project will next report in December 2020 and will provide further insight into the experiences of carers, and how services and the recognition of carers and their help and support needs can be improved.

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| <b>Consultation Questions</b>  |
| <b>29. What other ways can we work with partners to measure the success of the national plan for carers?</b> |

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<sup>22</sup> <https://gov.wales/written-statement-formal-response-recommendations-made-measuring-mountain-project>