

Our strategy

for the future



Our Vision, Purpose and Values



Throughout 2020 our Trustees, employees and volunteers worked hand in hand with carers to review who we are, what we aspire to and what we must do to achieve it. We heard from 1,000 carers, held six carer focus groups and heard from almost 200 other individuals and organisations. (Have Your Say – Carers Support West Sussex). Our team also held several organisation-wide strategic development workshops. This is what we agreed together.

Our Purpose

We are there for unpaid carers when they are most in need.

- We are a carer facing helpline offering information, guidance, and practical support. We are a gateway for carers to learning, emotional, specialist and peer support.
- We work with carers, communities, and partners in the county of West Sussex and throughout the south east of England.
- We meet carers where they are at on their carer journey asking the right questions at the right times, offering them recognition and empowerment, as well as a sense of community from their peers.
- We know that mothers, sons, fathers, daughters, friends, lovers, partners, husbands, wives, and family do so much for others every day while trying to maintain a life for themselves.

There are more than 120,000 ⁱⁱ carers in this county.

Our strategy is designed to focus on being there for unpaid carers when they are most in need.

Our Vision

Carers are at the heart of our strategy. Imagine a world where carers do not have to fight to be heard and recognised. A world where carers feel valued and supported for who they are and what they do.

Our vision is to bring the day forward when unpaid carers are seen, heard, and included.





Statistics ⁱ

There are more than 120,000 ⁱⁱ unpaid carers in West Sussex. If that figure remains correct (next census data available March 2022) 1 in 4 of the unpaid carer population is registered with us.



24% of carers considered themselves to have a disability

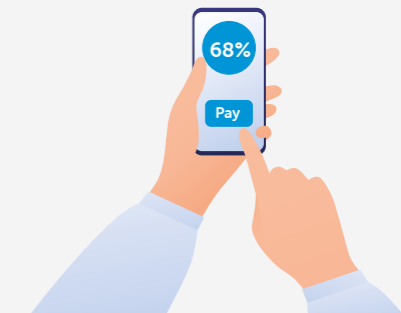


Women are more likely to take on a caring role



2 in 5 carers surveyed were struggling to make ends meet (around 39%)

68% had to regularly use their own income/savings to pay for care or support services, equipment, or products for the person they care for



Our Values

We are focused, putting carers at the heart of everything we do.

We act together, working with and for carers, the communities they live in and the people that can make a difference to them.

We are leaders working with each other to find potential and opportunities across all communities, enabling carers to be identified and involved.

We are committed to behaviours that support:

Quality – the highest practical level we can reach in outcomes, learning and behaviour

Inclusivity – respecting people, cultures, and organisations

Caring – improving quality of life and influencing behaviour change

Integrity – operating with honesty and reliability

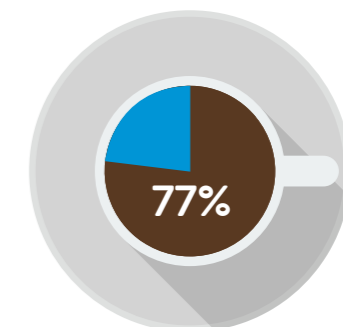
Loyalty – long-term committed partnerships and co-operation

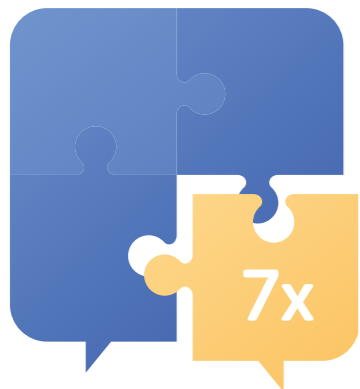
Innovation – driving our service development and our will to succeed



4 in 5 carers reported using one or more types of technology

77% have had to cut back on hobbies and leisure activities





Unpaid carers are seven times more likely to be lonely than other sections of the public.

Only 1 in 6 carers (17%) had had a conversation with an NHS professional (e.g. a GP or a nurse) about what to do if the condition of the person they care for deteriorates, or they are no longer able or willing to provide care for them.



During 2020 and as part of our primary research the Charity Team worked with carers and the top three challenges carers have (or are likely to have) experienced were: ⁱⁱⁱ

Feelings of stress

Managing their own physical and mental health

Not being able to take time away from caring

The need we are trying to address

Recommendations from research in 2020

Based on our survey findings, carers and stakeholders in West Sussex are calling for: ^{iv}

- Carers to be identified, involved, and valued
- Greater choice and control to help maintain a balanced life and care well
- Improved social opportunities for young carers
- Independent carer advocacy support
- Carers supported at each stage of the caring journey
- Connecting carers
- Reduce financial hardship
- Support for seldom heard carer communities
- Support for working carers

The public view of carers

Who a carer is, what they do and the difference they make, are often misunderstood by employers, the community, the business sector, health and social care colleagues and even the carer themselves (although the challenges faced by young carers tend to resonate more with the wider public). This makes our job even harder but underlines the importance of carers' voices in shaping our strategy.

Equality, diversity and inclusion context

At present Carers UK estimates that one in ten carers has an ethnic minority background.

Carers UK (July, 2020) reported that the number of people caring had increased by 50% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with carers caring an extra 10 hours a week, on average. More carers are in crisis, facing social isolation and significant health and wellbeing impacts.

Ethnic minority carers in particular already faced many challenges prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. These have been exacerbated by further increased challenges in their caring role and the increased risk of COVID-19 because of

their background (Marmot Review, 2020). Carers UK (Oct, 2020) found that 92% of ethnic minority carers reported providing more care since the start of the outbreak, compared to an average of 81% of all carers.

Crawley, which falls within our catchment area, is the most diverse area in West Sussex, with 20.1% of the population describing themselves as from an ethnic minority background.

Our new "people plan" will aim for greater ethnic diversity within our workforce to better reflect the population we work with.



Policy Context

This strategy takes account of the following legislation and relevant national policy and guidance:

The Care Act 2014 sections 6 & 7

The NHS Act 2006 section 82

Children Act 1989 section 27

Children Act 2004 section 10

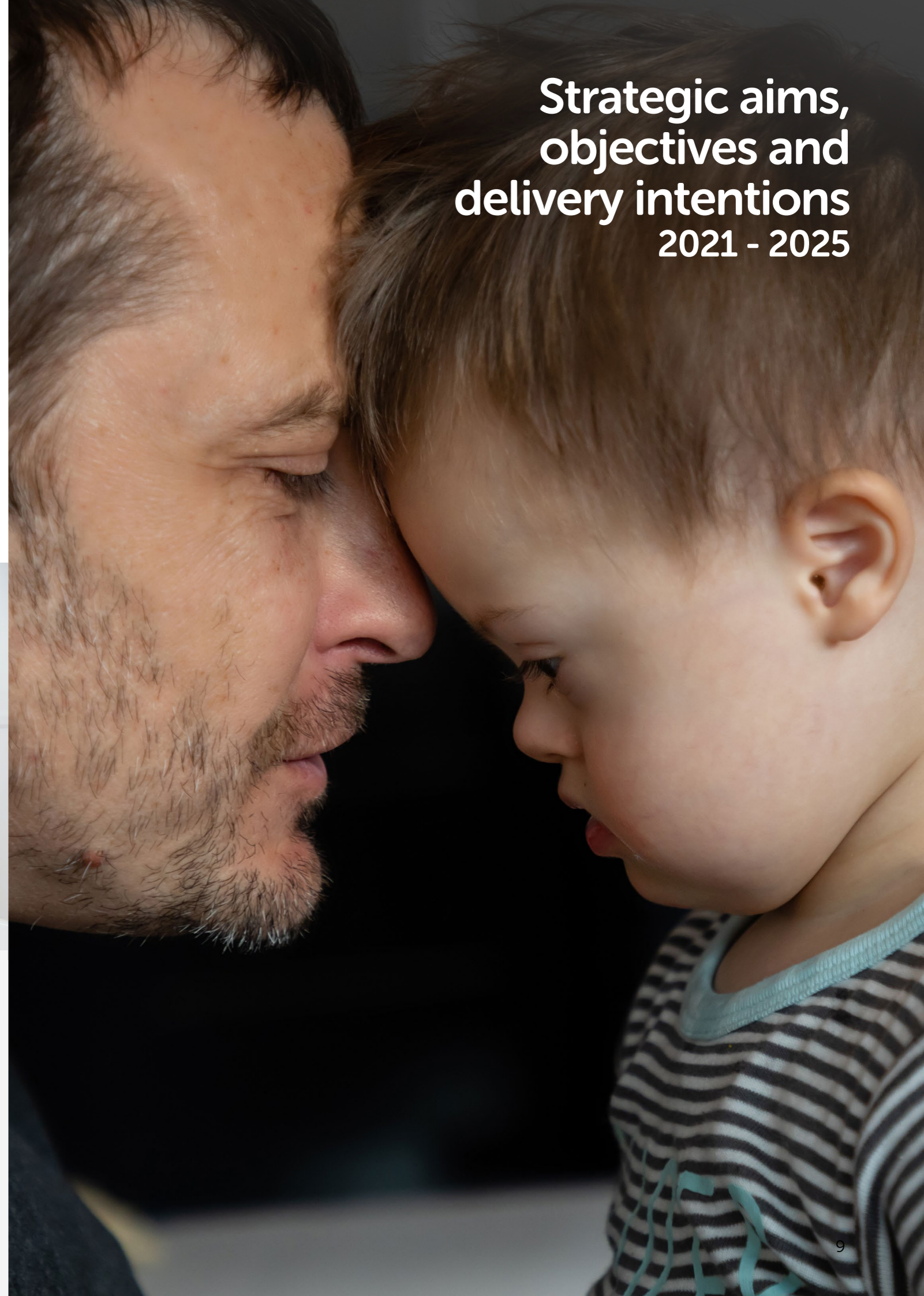
Children and Families Act 2014

NHS Constitution and NHS Long Term Plan

The Long-Term Plan for the NHS

NICE Supporting Adult Carers guideline

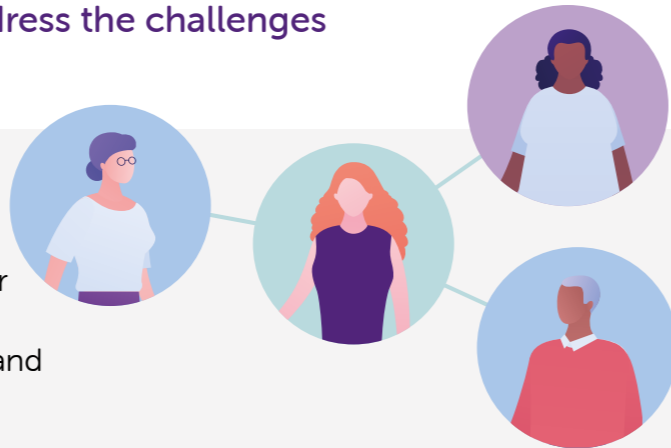
Strategic aims, objectives and delivery intentions 2021 - 2025



The context supplied gives this strategy clarity and focus – as do carers themselves, who tell us every day what works for them and what doesn't. We believe the following six strategic aims and objectives and the associated delivery intentions will best address the challenges facing both carers and our organisation.

Strategic Aim: Be connected

Specific Objective: We will meet carers wherever they are in their journey, working individually with at least 4,000^v every year to improve their health and wellbeing.



What is the challenge? Carers and stakeholders surveyed called for:

Better choice and control over how carers access and receive local services, including affordable respite options.

Emotional wellbeing services (e.g. counselling) and practical support (e.g. equipment) to combat feelings of isolation.

The right tools to care well (through learning and training).

GPs, health and social care staff, educational staff and network partners to work together to better support carers from the initial point of identification as a carer to life after caring.

Support for young carers who miss out on socialising.

Connection to other carers through peer to peer support, individually, in groups and digitally.

What we are going to do: We will work with carers and partners to provide:

Direct services and support including:

- Volunteer-led befriending
- Information
- Signposting and support for health and well-being activity
- Informal and formal advocacy support
- Peer-to-peer support
- Socialisation opportunities
- Contingency planning
- Coaching for and with carers to enable them to live a healthy and well life during their caring journey and beyond.

Practical support including:

- Access to grants
- Access to equipment
- Support to access respite services
- Support for up to 20% more carers to become digitally connected.

A central register of carers and provision of statutory carer assessments and/or carer well-being reviews for all eligible carers.

A blended model of peer support including digital connection for carers unable to travel.

A review and relaunch of the West Sussex Carer Alert Card Scheme and contingency planning help for up to 20% more carers.

A new model for young carer engagement and social support.

Strategic Aim: Be the early offer

Specific Objective: Provide the carer contact point and increase new carer registrations by a minimum of 10%^{vi} year on year.



What is the challenge? In the 2019 State of Caring Survey from Carers UK^{vii} over 7,000 carers responded and noted that:

Over half of all carers (55%) took over a year to recognise themselves as a carer.

Nearly a quarter (23%) took over five years to recognise themselves as a carer, especially parent carers and young carers.

Our own survey in November 2020 identified that carers need and want more than just identification – they also want meaningful involvement in care-planning.

What we are going to do:

We will deliver a recognisable, navigable, dynamic first point of contact in West Sussex for carers with a range of needs.

We will advocate and provide mandatory carer awareness training for all health and social care staff to increase the opportunities for early conversations and referrals for carer support.

We will increase our reach to new carers by 10% annually with a minimum of 10% of new carers being from ethnic minority groups^{viii}.

We will hold a carer register of up to 30% of the carer population.



Strategic Aim: Be the experts in carers

Specific Objective: Influence communities, partners, and decision makers across the county to deliver what carers say they need.

What is the challenge? In our survey both carers and stakeholders told us they wanted a carer advocacy service to support them when dealing with:

Health and social care professionals (i.e. hospital discharge);

Employers (i.e. workplace rights);

Local authority processes (i.e. Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)).

They also asked for urgent support in:

Reducing financial hardship;

Addressing inadequate carers' benefits;

Accessing allowances to which they are entitled (In West Sussex less than 8% of carers who may be eligible for Carer's Allowance are in receipt of this benefit.)^{ix}

What we are going to do: We will work with carers to:

Develop and sustain a 'carer voice network' to help carers of all ages and backgrounds work with and challenge those with the power to effect positive change in their lives.

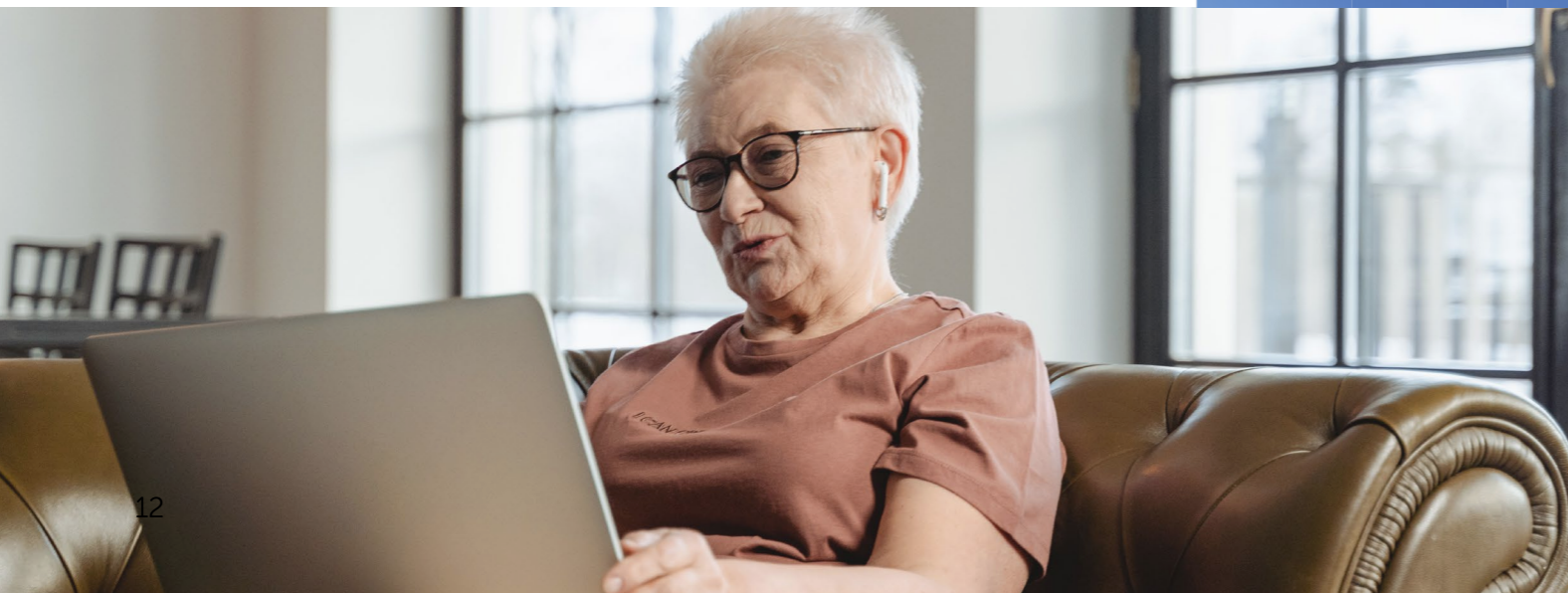
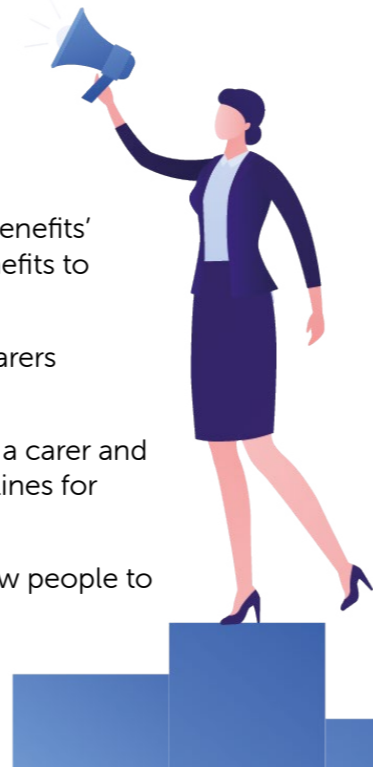
Limit risk of financial hardship for carers; with partners and through a dedicated Benefits' Adviser, provide information and guidance to ensure they are aware of all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Support working carers by influencing local employers and increase support to carers wanting to return to work or re-train.

Encourage the national adoption of carer's passports, which identify someone as a carer and enable health and social care staff to involve them in patients' care; set out guidelines for their use based on trials in Manchester and Bristol.

Carer's passports should be complemented by electronic health records that allow people to share their caring status with healthcare professionals wherever they present.

Work with existing advocacy partners and funders to develop and implement a carer advocacy service for the county.



Strategic Aim: Be present in the community

Specific Objective: Be there for all carers in West Sussex: locally and culturally appropriate, visible, and accessible.

What is the challenge?

To be advocates with and for carers, we need to be present in all communities across the county. For example, in our survey carers from an ethnic minority background (3% of carer survey respondents) said they want simple, inclusive, and appropriate support so they may access timely information and guidance. Our challenge is to support carers both close to where they live and where they access the services they need, in a manner that works for them.

What we are going to do: We will work with carers, communities and partners to:

Support carers in the geographical, cultural, and faith-based communities where they live and work, by working with those communities and those with most influence over carer support.

Provide specialist, community focused services that meet the needs of all carers whatever their caring circumstances.

Provide resilience-building and/or coaching for carers.



Strategic Aim: Be partners

Specific Objective: Create at least four new tangible partnerships leading to opportunities for and with carers.

What is the challenge?

We can only support all West Sussex carers by working both directly with them and with partners. In our survey carers called for particular support for working carers, calling on employers to offer flexible working during employment, or if returning to work.

In March 2021, as a result of the Pan Sussex Carers' Engagement project,^x six recommendations were made that would make a difference for carers in their relationship with health:

Incentives for health partners to identify carers	Reduce negative impact of caring on mental health
Introduction of mandatory carer awareness	Regular and consistent messaging
Centralised carer records	Road map for services and support

What we are going to do: We will work with carers to provide:

Blended digital/in person carer-awareness training for all health and social care partners.

Regular carer communications for all partners.

A recognised/accredited Carer Awareness Training programme for all health professionals (with partners Pan Sussex).

Work with carers and partners to develop a Triangle of Care^{xi} approach, linking service users, professionals, and carers, for all health interventions.

Clear, concise and accessible information about services and support available.

Increase the take up across the county of the Employee for Carers' Award^{xii}.

Provide carer awareness for partners to enable early identification close to where they live.

Strategic Aim: Be Consistent and Creative

Specific Objective: Create and sustain the internal capacity we need to deliver consistent and quality services, whilst exploring opportunities and potential.



What is the challenge?

Sustaining our current level of financial and human resources whilst creating a culture of creativity, learning and development is a key ongoing objective. Our staff and volunteers are dedicated, engaged, skilled and seven out of ten are carers themselves – we are what we do.

Our fourth Employee Engagement Gallup 12 Survey ^{xiii} since June 2019 was published internally in March 2021. Staff scores mirror the top quartile for the 'Best Companies to Work For' awards. 75 employees (77%) completed the survey, similar to previous surveys and consistent with external surveys, showing high levels of engagement despite home working challenges throughout 2020. Scores were "extremely high" with no staff score below 74%. The year-on-year scores clearly show significant improvement with three of the twelve measures improving by more than 10%. Our challenge is maintaining

that level while our work continues to be of high volume and increasingly complex.

We have significant responsibilities for and with carers across the county to provide them with support that meets both the statutory requirements of the local authority to provide a Carers' Register and Carers' Assessments as needed - and a range of services which promote health and well-being.

We also have a responsibility to marshal the funds we receive from health and social care partners effectively, whilst maximising the benefits for carers living in West Sussex. The new challenge beyond effectively managing our contract funded services is to raise further monies for services and support which continue to make a difference to carers.

What we are going to do:

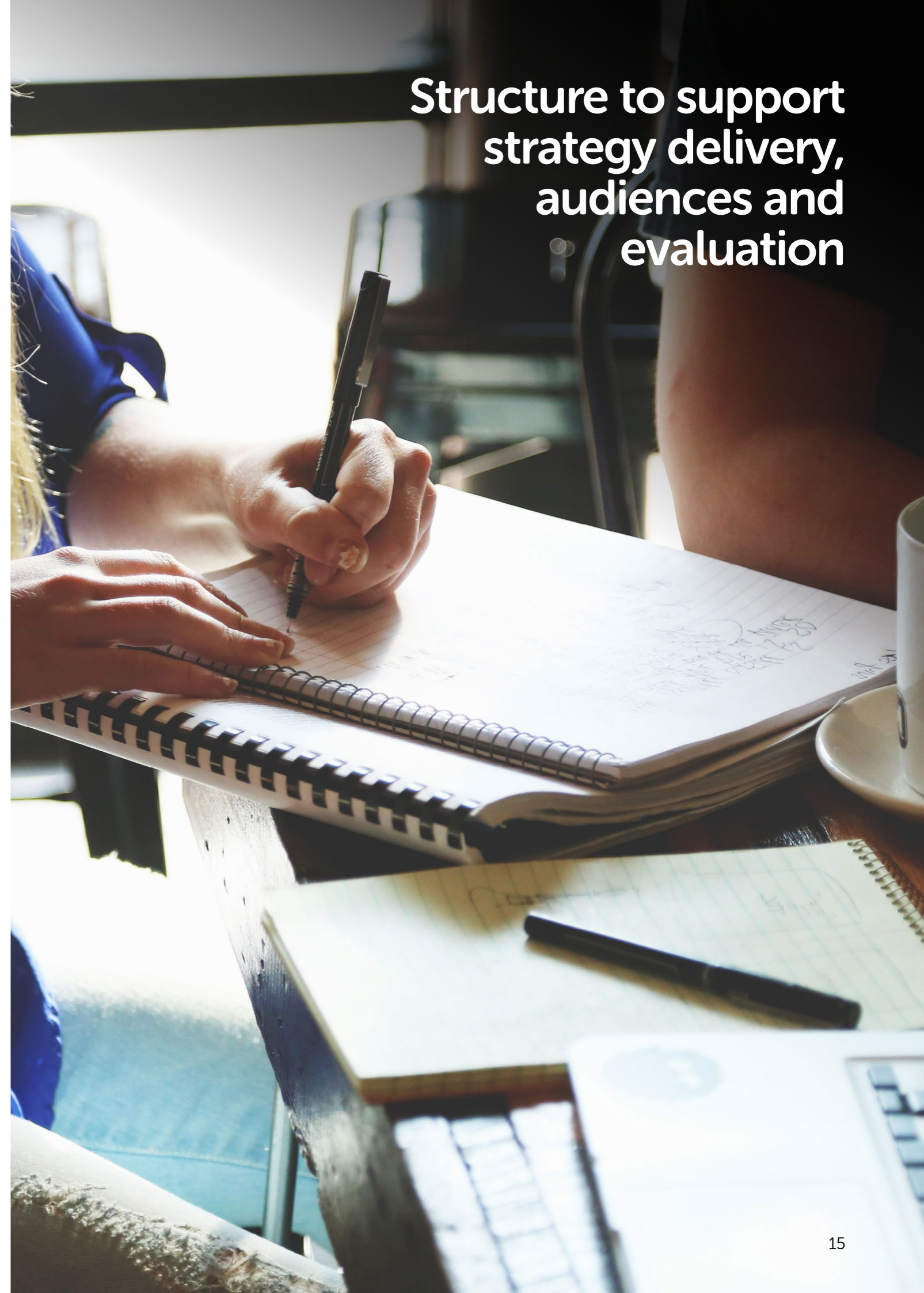
Our annual business plan will incorporate a number of specific 'business objectives' designed to enable us to meet our strategic organisational aims/objectives as laid out in this document.

Our strategy and business plan will also be supported by the following:

- Marketing/communications plan
- People plan
- Equality and Diversity plan
- Volunteering plan
- Governance plan
- Fundraising plan
- Systems and resources plan
- Finance strategy



Structure to support strategy delivery, audiences and evaluation

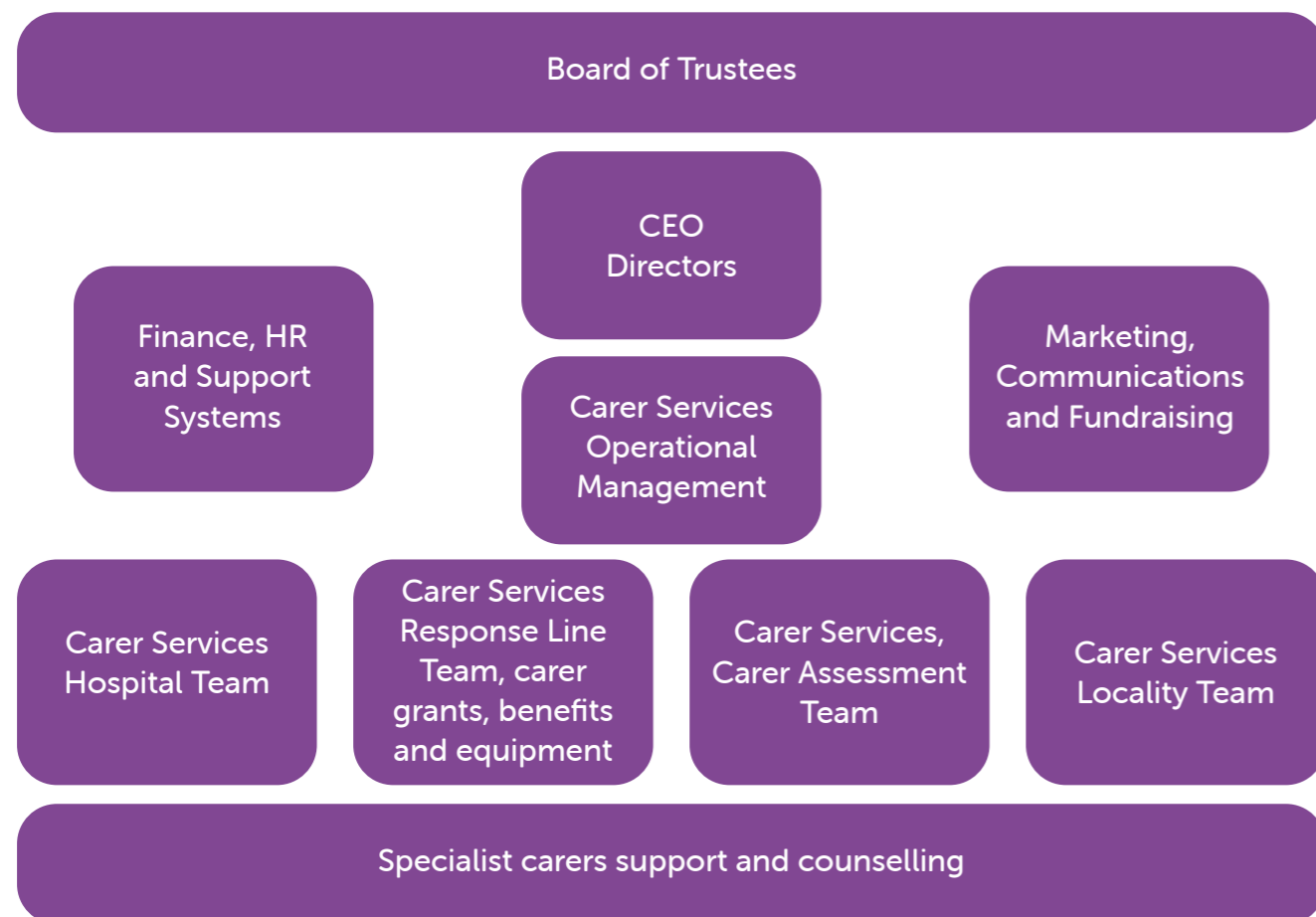


The Board of Trustees have set the strategic direction and agreed the strategic aims and objectives through collaboration with unpaid carers, stakeholders and the Charity staff and volunteers.

We have undertaken extensive primary and secondary research for and with our beneficiaries, unpaid carers living in West Sussex. The Trustees' responsibilities to ensure financial viability, compliance with legal and regulatory obligations, and the delivery of the Charity objects for its beneficiaries are further supported by three Committees of the Board, Finance and Risk Committee, Human Resources Committee, and an annual Remuneration Panel. The Board delegate the delivery of the strategic objectives to the CEO and Executive Directors who are supported by a management team delivering a range of carer services and charitable support functions.

Our carer services' teams work in a locality

team structure creating connectivity for carers with local services. The teams cover Adur, Arun, Chichester, Horsham, Mid Sussex and the boroughs of Crawley and Worthing. We have a Response Line Team managing carer registrations, grants and equipment, Carers Assessment Team delivering statutory carers' assessments as well as contingency and a Hospital Team supporting carers in and out of hospital. The team are supported by specialist services' leads and coordinators covering benefits' advice, carer discount cards, drug and alcohol, carer engagement, counselling, young adult carers, young carers, mental health, autism, learning disability, dementia, long term conditions, and parent carers.



Audiences



Clarity of audience is crucial not only to ensure that the organisational strategy itself is precisely targeted but also to guide marketing/comms, income generation, volunteering, and people strategies.

The primary audience for - and beneficiary of - our strategy is the carers we work with and for.

However, we need funds to support that work and so other key audiences are: Health and Wellbeing Board, local leaders, officers, commissioners, and funders.

Crucially the strategy is also for our team of staff and volunteers who are responsible for its delivery and advocacy.

Care has also been taken to make sure this strategy resonates with the wider public.

Evaluation

This strategy has specific objectives coupled with long term aims. Implementing an evaluation framework will ensure key KPIs and targets are set and measured on an annual and cumulative basis.

We will consider evaluation in terms of:

- Input: What money, time, resource has been expended?
- Output: what was the reach, quantity or volume of what was achieved?
- Outcome: What actually happened as a result – what changed, what did people do?
- Impact: Did any of the above contribute to achievement of strategic aims and objectives?
- Outtake: Did the target audience think, feel, understand or say they intended to do something as a result of the activity?



Appendix:

Our Carers' Charter with Health, Social Carers and Voluntary Sector Partners across West Sussex

In West Sussex we have had a joint commitment for and with carers since 2015^{xiv}. Primary and secondary research with carers during 2020 alongside the March 2021 Pan Sussex Carers' Engagement project^{xv} supports a continued partnership approach for carers.

We have agreed the following collective action for carers in West Sussex, which is reflected in our organisational strategy:

Carers will benefit from greater recognition and support

We will improve how health and social care identifies unpaid carers and strengthen support for them to address their individual health needs. We will do this by introducing best practice quality markers for primary care, developed with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), that highlight best practice in carer identification and support.

We will encourage the national adoption of carer's passports, which identify someone as a carer and enable staff to involve them in a patient's care and set out guidelines for their use. These will be complemented by developments to electronic health records that allow people to share their caring status with healthcare professionals wherever they present.

We will continue to identify and support carers, particularly those from vulnerable communities

We will review and relaunch the West Sussex Carer Alert Card Scheme and thousands more carers will benefit from contingency planning conversations. More carers will benefit from similar conversations with the NHS and have their plans included in Summary Care Records, so that professionals know when and how to call those plans into action when they are needed.

We will ensure that more carers understand the out-of-hours options that are available to them and have appropriate back-up support in place for when they need it

We will pilot a dedicated Benefits' Adviser role, so that carers can be supported with information and benefits guidance to ensure they are receiving the benefits they are entitled to (i.e. Carer's Allowance, Personal Independence Payment).

We will continue to support working carers through influencing local employers and offer increased support to carers wanting to return to work or re-train.

We will try and limit financial hardship, as a result of caring

We will reduce carer isolation

We will ensure that 1,000's of carers are helped to become digitally connected.
We will develop a blended model of digital and face to face peer support to meet varying travel and ability requirements.
We will ensure that more carers benefit from Technology Enabled Care.

As GPs, health and social care staff, educational staff and network partners, we will work together to better support carers from the initial point of identification as a carer to life after caring.

We will support carers at each stage of the caring journey in order to best prevent carer breakdown and enable best care

Young carers will not feel they are struggling to cope on their own

We will roll out 'top tips' for general practice, which include access to preventive health and social prescribing, and timely referral to local support services.
We will develop social opportunities and group provision for young carers, missing out on socialising because of caring responsibilities.
We will, through consultation and training support a greater number of professionals to recognise and support young carers, with a particular focus on learning environments.

References

ⁱ Carers UK State of Caring 2019

<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/soc-19> (accessed 12.02.21).

ⁱⁱ The figure from the 2011 census for West

Sussex is 89,000 carers we know that annually there are more and more carers in this county and the 120,000 figure is our current extrapolated figure as per February 2021. State of caring report from Carers UK June 2020 says that the pandemic has led to an increase in the number of carers by as much as one third taking the number nationally to 13.6m.

<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/carers-week-2020-research-report> (accessed 11.02.21).

ⁱⁱⁱ As part of CSWS primary research for strategy development the Charity surveyed 1000 carers living in West Sussex and found that these issues were the top three barriers Please see the strategy research available on the Have Your Say page here:

<https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/have-your-say>

^{iv} Please see the strategy research available on the Have Your Say page here:

<https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/have-your-say>

^v 8,512 unique carers have engaged with our services during 2020/21.

^{vi} We have met this target since 2017 with 29,000 carer registered at the end of 2020/21 and during that same year 3744 new carers registered.

^{vii} Carers UK State of Caring 2019

<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/missing-out-research-briefing-on-the-state-of-caring-2019-survey> (accessed 10.03.21).

^{viii} <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities/foreword-introduction-and-full-recommendations#full-recommendations>

(accessed 16.06.21)

^{ix} Latest data from NOMIS (part of ONS)

suggest that in 2018 only 7,140 of the 89,000 carers in West Sussex were claiming Carer's Allowance; an indication that only 8% were benefitting from this financial support.

^x <https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/assets/documents/Sussex.Carers.Partnership.Engagement.Report.pdf>

^{xi} The Triangle of Care, Carers Included: A Guide to Best Practice in Mental Health Care in England - Resources - Carers Trust (accessed 10.06.21)

^{xii} An award developed by Carers UK which offers self-assessment accreditation for employers

https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/employers-for-carers?gclid=Cj0KCQjw6-SDBhCMARIsAGbl7Ujs_AztF56SUj6gaUM-VLMMYrKYdRryTsDjiQxT5Wp5y8W6fSFpM3YaApDAEALw_wcB (accessed 16.04.21)

^{xiii} Gallup 12 Employee Engagement

<https://www.gallup.com/access/323333/q12-employee-engagement-survey.aspx> (accessed 30.03.21)

^{xiv} <http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/ds/cttee/hwb/hwb160715i5.pdf> (accessed 28.03.21)

^{xv} <https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/assets/documents/Sussex.Carers.Partnership.Engagement.Report.pdf> plus here is the link to the webinar copy of link here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzoskJrR6Kg>).