

Thurrock Council – Action plan for unpaid carers strategy

Theme 1 – Services and systems that work for carers

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
1	<p>We need to build on what is working well and is valued by carers. Such as direct payments, voluntary sector support, condition specific advice and support and being able to talk to other carers (peer support):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we will continue to support the development and delivery of peer support groups in Thurrock • we will ensure that there is strong links between support services and those who can provide condition specific advice • we will improve our training offer to ensure that carers can access condition specific training 				
	Year 1 – Review training offer.	Thurrock Council	March 2024	Agreed	None
	Year 2 – Review all links between carers support service and those services who can provide condition specific advice. Review our peer support offer to ensure it is inclusive and best practice.	Thurrock Council and Adult Carers Service	March 2025	Agreed	None

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
2	<p>Improve communication between different support services to avoid carers having to repeat themselves. Communication between services is a significant issue raised by carers. We plan to enable the carers service to carry out assessments on the council's behalf and to be aligned with our health and social care locality teams.</p> <p>As detailed in Thurrock's integrated health and social care strategy – The Case for Further Change, the most appropriate person can take on a coordinating role. For carers this will mean that Carers Officers can take on the co-ordinating role for advice and support rather than the carer having to navigate separate pathways, often receiving unaligned visits from multiple services – that is, they can act as the consistent person who can draw other professionals in, stopping the carer from having to repeat their story.</p>				
	Year 1 – Improve joint working between carers service and locality teams. Resolve IT barriers to enable carers officers to undertake assessments on behalf of the council.	Thurrock Council	March 2024	Agreed	None
	Year 2 – Embed practice.	Thurrock Council	March 2025	Agreed	None
3.	<p>Increase staff availability so that allowances agreed in assessments can be met. This feedback was specifically around the availability of the 'sitting service'. At the time of the engagement exercise there were capacity issues within the service, but this has been resolved. However, we know we need to provide a wider variety of support options to carers.</p>				
	Year 1 – Capacity issues within in-house sitting service have been resolved. However, we need to undertake a review of short break services to ensure we have sufficient choice locally (in Thurrock as a whole and in localities/specific communities).	Thurrock Council	September 2024	Agreed	None

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
	Year 2 – Undertake procurement and/or market development opportunities to meet the identified need.	Thurrock Council	April 2025	Agreed	None
4	<p>Better explanation of Carers Assessment process. Many carers were unsure if they had received an assessment.</p> <p>Our online information has been reviewed – including our explanation of the carers assessment process – independently and been found to be of good quality. We are now reviewing our physical/traditional communications to ensure they are of the same high standard and available to carers.</p>				
	Year 1 – Review written physical information and work with carers to ensure the information we give them is clear, relevant and easy to understand. Ensure information is accessible to all.	Thurrock Council	March 2024	Agreed	None
5	Ensure timely follow up following referral into services. As detailed in action 2, if the Carers Officers is best placed to support, they will be able to have a co-ordinating role in the future. This should ensure that rather than just referring people onwards, that they can draw professionals in to support the carer rather than having to refer on/out.	See Action 2	See Action 2	See Action 2	See Action 2

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
6	<p>Improve availability of information regarding support for carers. Having a central point of access, taking into consideration different digital abilities. The Carers Information, Advice and Support Service will act as this central point for adult carers, especially as they will have the wider offer of assessment and training available to carers in addition to their valued services – for example, peer support.</p> <p>The council’s digital information has been independently reviewed and found to be of good quality. As stated in action 4, we are reviewing all other written material to ensure it is of a similar quality.</p> <p>The Carers service has a physical point of access in a convenient location and actively goes to other communities/locations. It has been increasing its social media presence to ensure that carers seeking support in Thurrock can do so easily, but digital reach is an area for further exploration once other service improvements are embedded.</p>				
	Year 1 – Information quality, availability and accessibility review	Thurrock Council	March 2024	Agreed	None
	Year 2 – Explore different options to specifically increase the digital reach of the Carers Service and low-level information and advice to carers in general.	Thurrock Council	March 2025	Agreed	None

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
7	<p>Provide training workshops to carers to support an improved understanding of the health condition of their loved one.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing our training offer to carers and have identified a variety of on-line training that can be flexibly accessed by carers at a time that suits them. However, we are aware that not everybody has or wants digital access and may like to use the training opportunity to meet other people, socialise and take a break from their caring role. As such, we are exploring the carers service having access to the Council's training programmes to enable them to facilitate group learning.</p>				
	Year 1 – Review training offer and provide different training options to meet identified need.	Thurrock Council	March 2024	Agreed	None

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
8	<p>Working with healthcare settings to ensure that patient notes reflect carer status/ability to speak on loved one's behalf. Nearly a quarter of carers felt they weren't listened to by professionals in their role as carer. Specifically, this issue was raised in terms of health appointments and discussing the needs of loved ones with health professionals.</p> <p>Health has recently undertaken a review of the number of carers that have been identified by each GP practice in Thurrock. They have then compared this to the expected number. They also carried out a desktop review of how easy it was to find out information about caring and to register as a carer on a GP practice website.</p> <p>This will be used as a baseline to measure improvements against this action over the life of the strategy.</p> <p>Health and the Carers Information, Advice and Support Service jointly presented this information to GPs and suggested ways of improving carer identification and ways to promote the support available through the carers service.</p>				
	<p>Increase the number of carers identified in primary care settings by 2.5% through the Implementation and review of a cross sector process to enable identified system partners to notify primary care when an individual is identified as a carer. Encourage GP practices to demonstrate to patients how practices support carers through participation in the Carer's Quality Mark scheme.</p>	Health	April 2025	Agreed	None

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
	Increase the number of carers identified in primary care settings by a further 2.5%. Identify a suitable process to support the sharing of information regarding carer contingency plans between system partners (please also see Action 10).	Health	April 2026	Agreed	None
9	Making sessions on LPA/Guardianship available to carers. We will work with partners to make this available to carers.				
	Year 1 – This will be incorporated into action 7 – ‘review training offer and provide different training options to meet identified need’.	See Action 7	See Action 7	See Action 7	See Action 7
10	Working with carers to ensure they have plans in place for if something were to happen to them. We are reviewing our contingency arrangements and are putting improvements in place.				
	Year 1 – develop a carers emergency card, new contingency planning documentation and associated processes to ensure carers have plans in place for an emergency. Promote the use of contingency plans with carers.	Thurrock Council and Thurrock Carers Service	March 2024	Agreed	None
	Year 2 – ensure the carers service can support with the completion of contingency plans and upload them to the social care system via the portal. Promote contingency arrangements with health and other partners. Ensure services such as ambulance and police are aware of the emergency card and what action they need to take to activate the plan.	Thurrock Council and Thurrock Carers Service	March 2025	Agreed	None

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
11	<p>More flexible respite – a flexible and individual offer. Please see action 3. We know we need to undertake a review of all current and potential provision available to carers to allow them to take a break. We will then encourage new and existing providers to enter the market to meet identified need.</p> <p>This will be through market engagement for services that carers will use a direct payment to access (direct payments were one thing that was identified as working well) or through a procurement if further commissioned services are required.</p>				
	<p>This will be incorporated into action 3.</p>	See Action 3	See Action 3	See Action 3	See Action 3
12	<p>More flexibility in appointment times (health). The first step in being able to offer flexibility is identifying and recording carers. As stated in action 8, improvements in this area are underway.</p>				
	<p>Year 1 – In addition to the actions outlined in action 8 to increase the number of carers identified a communications plan will also be developed to raise awareness of the extended access provisions available outside of core operating hours</p>	Health	April 2025	Agreed	None
13	<p>Non digital options for support that are in each community, not just Grays. As stated in action 2, we plan to allow the Carers Information, Advice and Support service to undertake assessments on the council's behalf. We are also aligning the Carer Officers with our social care and health locality teams. Although the Carers Service has a base in Grays, it is increasing its presence within all localities in Thurrock. As part of the accessibility review (action 6) geographical delivery of services will also be considered.</p>				

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
	Year 1 – Undertake an information quality, availability and accessibility review. Continue to embed joint working between the carers service and locality teams. Review our peer support offer to ensure it is accessible to all (including geographical delivery of peer support). This action has been incorporated into actions 1, 2 and 6.	See Actions 1, 2 and 6.	See Actions 1, 2 and 6.	See Actions 1, 2 and 6.	See Actions 1, 2 and 6.

Theme 2 – Employment and financial wellbeing

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
1	<p>Work with employers to see how carers can be supported in the workplace and ensure flexible working that can meet the needs of carers that wish to work. We need to build on the positives – Carers reported how they value local employers with carer friendly policies around condensing hours, working from home when needed or simply time to check on a loved one.</p> <p>As a large local employer, Thurrock Council has implemented its own carers passport to support our employees. We will work with local employers to promote the benefits of offering flexible working arrangements on both carers' wellbeing and retention of staff. We will support local employers via our Carers UK umbrella membership to review and improve current policies and practice in relation to carers.</p> <p>The carers service will make information available to local employers to enable them to support carers in the workplace and to signpost their employees to available help.</p>				
	Year 1 – Work with corporate colleagues to identify the best avenues of communication that already exist with our local employers – for example, chamber of commerce or equivalent.	Thurrock Council	March 2024	Agreed	None
	Year 2 – Invite Carers UK Employers for Carers programme to promote the benefits of being a carer friendly employer to local businesses and organisations.	Thurrock Council	March 2025	Agreed	None
	Year 3 – Continued promotion of carer friendly workplaces with and signpost local employers to further support and advice.	Thurrock Council and Thurrock Carers Service	March 2026	Agreed	None

Theme 3 – Supporting Young Carers

No.	Requirement and action	Lead	Due date	Status	Notes
1	<p>Expand the referral pathway into the Young Carers Service – that is, self-referral or referral by other services. Timely referrals into the Young Carers Service. More days out and activities for young carers, giving them time and space to embrace their hobbies.</p> <p>We need to build on the positives – the young carers service is valued by those that use it, enabling young carers to take a break from their caring role, meet others with similar experiences and just be children!</p>				
	<p>Year 1 – We will review existing referral routes to ensure young carers access support. We will promote the identification and referral of young carers through the training of front-line staff and other promotional activities – for example, utilising carers week/carers rights day.</p> <p>We will continue to seek additional monies to fund meaningful activities for young carers</p>	<p>Young Carers Strategy Group</p> <p>Childrens Social Care</p> <p>Young Carers Service</p>	March 2024	Agreed	None

2	<p>Nearly all other actions identified by young carers relate to schools and colleges. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the council to work with schools to ensure that Young Carers can be identified by members of staff to ensure they can access support • reasonable adjustments to be made for young carers that take into account challenges at home – for example, adjusted detention times, warning systems for phone removal, quiet space in school • clearer signposting to pastoral care in schools and colleges • carers support groups either teacher led or peer led in all schools in Thurrock • raising awareness of carers amongst student population to help young carer identification and reduce bullying • raising awareness of different health condition amongst student population to reduce bullying <p>The issues identified by young carers may be best addressed by Thurrock schools achieving bronze level in the Young Carers in School (YCiS) programme. It is a free 10 step programme run jointly by the Carers Trust and The Children’s Society to ensure best practice and to make it easier for schools to support young carers. This would ensure that good practice is consistent across all of Thurrock schools rather than the variation currently experienced.</p> <p>However, as there are a significant number of schools, there is a large amount of work to be done before we can begin this journey. Before January 2023, there was no available</p>				
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	<p>data on the number of young carers who have been identified and supported by schools – nationally it is believed to be approximately 2 per class. However, since this date young carers have for the first time been included in the school census – this should enable us to have a baseline we can build upon.</p>				
	<p>Year 1 – work in partnership with the Virtual School Team to start to raise the profile of young carers in schools, increase awareness within schools of the importance of supporting young carers and the challenges they face.</p> <p>Year 1 and 2 – Support schools to increase the identification of young carers and referral routes into the wider offer – for example, promote the young carers support service.</p> <p>Year 2 – Continue to share the experience of young carers and examples of best practice in supporting these young people</p> <p>Year 3 – Support schools to achieve bronze level award in YCiS (dependent on year 1 and 2 progress and appetite to be part of the recognised scheme).</p>	<p>Education Thurrock Council Young Carers Service</p>	<p>By March 2026</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>As most schools and colleges in Thurrock are academies and are therefore independent of the local authority and have autonomy over how they choose to do things, this will be one of the most complex actions to deliver as we are seeking multiple organisations to agree to the strategy. Work continues to be undertaken to develop this action and its solution</p>

3	<p>Transitions – one of the main drivers for developing an all-age carer’s strategy.</p> <p>There are two types of transition affecting carers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. young carers transitioning to becoming an adult carer – that is, those young carers approaching 18 years-old and requiring ongoing support 2. parent carers of children with support needs transitioning to adult services <p>Transition to adult care comes at a time of significant change in a young person’s life. It sometimes means changes to existing support services they may have had for many years such as education, care and health. Young people with disabilities and young carers can have worse outcomes than other people of a similar age. As such, an early conversation can provide much needed guidance at a time of significant change.</p> <p>The local authority must not allow a gap in support when young people with support needs and young carers move to adult services. As such, heads of service in both adult and children’s social care have reviewed our existing policies and processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose.</p> <p>A flowchart for practitioners has been developed. It has been agreed by children and adult services to use this years Carers Rights Day (Thursday 23rd November 2023) to promote better joined up working for parent and young carers amongst children and adult front-line staff.</p>				
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	<p>Unlike many local authorities, in Thurrock parents and carers are already supported by our adult Carers Information, Advice and Support service. Although other support solutions such as respite are assessed and provided for by children's social care, the adult and children's carer services have been working jointly to provide a peer support group to young carers who are/or will be transitioning to adult service.</p> <p>The development of this group is to ensure a seamless transition and a peer support group to be available for those of a similar age/experience.</p>				
	<p>Year 1 – Promotion of improved joint working between adult and children's social care. Specific event to be held on Carer's Rights Day 2023.</p> <p>Hold briefing sessions for front-line adult social care staff during 2023.</p>	<p>Thurrock Council</p> <p>Thurrock Carers Service</p> <p>Young Carers Service</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Year 2 – Expand training offer to front-line staff so that best practice around carer identification and support is a core component of training to social workers, support planners and occupational therapists.</p> <p>Review our peer support offer to ensure it is inclusive and best practice.</p>	<p>Thurrock Council</p> <p>Thurrock Carers Service</p> <p>Young Carers Service</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>None</p>