

Portsmouth Plan for Carers

2022–2024

What we mean by a carer

Do you look after a family member at home?
Or regularly go shopping for a neighbour who can't get out? If so then you, like many others, are a carer.

Caring can range from popping in to see a neighbour every few days, to being around 24/7 for a loved one with a disability.

A carer is:

"Anyone who provides unpaid care or support to someone who would not manage without that help."

Many of us will care for someone in an unpaid capacity or need someone to care for us at some point in our lives. Caring for someone is a natural part of life, indeed 1 in 8 adults look after someone. But that doesn't mean it is an easy task - it can be challenging and lonely.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the often invisible work of unpaid carers, providing critical support to our city and society. Carers deserve all the support we can offer.

What this plan is and who has agreed it

Our new Portsmouth plan for carers for 2022-24 follows on from our carers' strategy for 2015-20.

We have achieved a great deal of recognition and support for carers in recent years. Portsmouth has a comprehensive carers' service which is nationally held up as an example of good practice, but there is still much to achieve.

This plan sets out our new goals:

- To listen to and recognise the needs of carers
- To give a city-wide and integrated response
- To share responsibility for support across a number of partners.

The plan has been informed and supported by a range of organisations. It is a Portsmouth plan for carers, published by Health and Care Portsmouth, but has a broad perspective.

We want to make sure there is understanding and support for carers in every part of their lives. We intend to make Portsmouth a truly carer-friendly city.

A partnership between

Our values

We have agreed a set of shared values which will underpin all we do:

- **We respect carers**
We will always value the expertise and lived experience of carers
- **We know how important unpaid carers are**
We will work together to do whatever we can to make carers' lives easier
- **We know every carer's life is different**
We will work with carers to find out what matters to them most
- **We will listen to and involve carers in all we do**
We will provide lots of opportunities for carers to tell us what they think and be involved in planning and decision making, both online and face-to-face. We will regularly report on our progress, what we have achieved, and what is next.

This document is a summary version of the full plan, which you can read here:

portsmouth.gov.uk/carers-strategy

We have established a new oversight group to keep us on track and check we are meeting these targets over the next two years and will regularly ask carers to feed back on how they think we are doing.

How we made the plan

Work on this plan began in late 2019 but was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we tentatively begin to move out of the pandemic, we felt now was a good time to launch.

We have gathered and analysed stories, opinions, data and ideas from a wide range of sources, including: open consultation events for carers, online surveys, events, conversations, local and national reports, and strategies.

The following two pages give you a snapshot of what we have heard and a flavour of how we intend to respond, with our five key priorities for action.



What Carers have told us

What help and support have you found most useful as a carer?

- Someone to talk to, especially carers
- Break/respice
- Family
- Carers Centre support
- Carers group
- Medical support
- Carers' break card
- Social care and agency carers
- Day Centre

"Someone giving me the time to go out on my own is precious"

"I like having people who care to talk to"

What is the toughest challenge in your life as a carer?

- Lack of time / need for respice
- Lonely / isolated
- Stressful
- Tiring
- Unable to go out
- Wanting to 'get it right'
- GP appointments
- Lack of Self-care wellbeing
- Having to challenge professionals

"Not being able to support my dad while I'm at work"

"The constant pressure with next to no sleep"

What would make your life easier?

- More and better respice
- Emotional support
- Household help
- Involve me in planning
- Positive attitude from staff
- Independence training
- Increase financial support
- More outside contact
- Earlier and better assessment
- More care at home

"More groups at times when I am free"

"Not feeling like I have to fight for everything"

"Physio for me! And access to special needs babysitters"

Any other suggestions to improve services for carers?

"Carers need more support, it's a tough job and our mental health can suffer"

"Make it easier to access information and help for carers"

"Better coordination between all the services"

"I worry about what will happen to my loved one if I get ill"

"Talk to us carers more—we know our loved ones best"

Five key priorities for action

1. Improving targeted practical, psychological and emotional support for carers

- Develop and extend peer support projects
- Increase range of respite
- Improve access to talking therapies

"My biggest challenge? Feeling isolated after 19 years caring for my wife"

2. Supporting working carers to remain in work

- Make use of Employers for Carers package

Encourage employers to:

- provide support for carers who they employ
- make sure support available to carers is clear and accessible.

"Juggling work and caring is very difficult"

3. Improving identification of carers

- Promote formal registration of carers with all health services
- Provide carer awareness training for key staff

"I know my husband best; services should include me in planning meetings"

4. Communicating and engaging with carers

- Run annual event for carers in Portsmouth
- Publish programme of regular consultation with carers using a range of methods

"Listen to carers; we know what we need"

5. Make sure we do what we have agreed we will do

- Establish carers strategy oversight group
- Publicise plans and achievements
- Give carers the chance to comment on their area of expertise

"I want to know that plans turn into actions"



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