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(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting: Community Wellbeing, Health & Care Cabinet Member

Subject: Portsmouth Carers Service

Date of meeting: 5th December 2023

Report by: Ben Muller, Acting Team Manager

Wards affected: All

1. Requested by

Councillor Matthew Winnington, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Health & Care

2. Purpose

To inform the Cabinet Member and Spokespeople of the outcome of a self-assessment, completed by the Portsmouth Carers Service as part of the governance process of Adult Social Care, (ASC) preparing for inspection.

3. Background

In November 2022, the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care received a briefing¹ on the intention of the Care Quality Commission, (CQC) to inspect how Local Authorities meet their duties under the Care Act (2014) as mandated by the Health and Care Act (2022). An update on preparation for inspection, including a comprehensive self-assessment exercise will be brought to a future decision meeting.

Portsmouth has a long history of recognising that carers are a fundamental part of the health and social care landscape and Portsmouth Carers Service is the lead organisation with a reputation for providing high quality, innovative support to carers.

This briefing paper focusses specifically on informal/unpaid carers. Support for unpaid carers is a significant theme in the CQC assurance guidelines and Portsmouth ASC has used Local Government Association, (LGA) benchmarking² to assess how well it meets the needs of carers in Portsmouth as part of the preparation for inspection. The LGA uses a range of criteria as a checklist for assessing readiness for inspection.

¹ [Adult Social Care Assurance](#)

² [Preparing for Assurance around unpaid carers](#)



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4. Benchmarking

4.1 Policy, strategy and commissioning

Portsmouth's most recent full carers strategy ran from 2015 through to 2020. The strategy was developed in partnership with Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust, (PHUT) Solent NHS Trust, The HIVE and Portsmouth Healthwatch. The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic and capacity constraints have delayed the publication of an updated strategy. It is expected this will be completed by March 2024.

Portsmouth Carers Service has a plan which was published in March 2023 and is due to be renewed in March 2024. The plan is developed based on performance data and direct consultation with carers through feedback events, co-production and community engagement. The plan focuses on the 5 main priorities from the short plan; improving targeted practical, emotional and psychological support for carers, supporting carers to remain in work, improving identification of carers, communicating and engaging with carers and making sure we do what have agreed to do.

4.2 Care Act 2014 Statutory duties

Portsmouth Carers Service has been developed to ensure compliance with our statutory duties relating to unpaid carers and as such, the service can demonstrate familiarity with the Care Act 2014. There is a senior social worker integrated into the service and the data produced shows Care Act compliance through use of direct payments, personal budgets and carers assessments. Where eligibility for services is met, they are offered. These services can be a mixture of statutory services and preventative services. In order to comply with the Care Act we are planning to produce separate care and support plans as these are currently incorporated with assessments. This will strengthen our compliance with the Act.

4.3 Unpaid carers data

When looking at the data recommendations within the LGA guidance, there are areas that we can clearly show good quality, accurate data and there are areas where the data does not meet requirements. Through the collection of referral, assessment and support data we can extract information on waiting times, length of time from assessment to support and how long it takes to deploy that support. This data reinforces our narrative around low waiting times for assessment which aids our role as a preventative service, reducing the reliance on more costly and intrusive interventions and providing comprehensive support that allows carers to continue their caring role in the way that they choose to. This data is held centrally within the service and is used extensively for service planning.



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The areas in which the data may not be as comprehensive as needed is around benchmarking levels of satisfaction or quality of life. The planned developments within the SystemOne case management system relating to Client Level Data³ may enable us to focus on individual client groups such as parent carers and further develop this data to provide greater insight however, as SystemOne is not a traditional care management system, extracting a narrative with this level of detail presents significant challenges.

Overall the data that we collect is comprehensive and provides us with information to be able to accurately plan and support wider service development. We can separate out data on wait times and assessment for unpaid carers through our locally collected measures data and have the ability to be flexible and increase carer assessment and support when required from our service.

4.4 Joint assessments

Joint assessments, (of carers needs and the cared for person) within the carers service reinforces parity of esteem for carers and allow for a holistic, whole family approach that balances the needs of the carer and the cared for in equal measure. This mechanism reduces the risk of carers' needs being viewed as an 'add-on' to those of the cared for. In addition, the support for the carer and cared for is separated in the support planning section of the assessment.

Joint assessments are a choice for carers and cared for who would like a whole family approach to assessment and support planning and should they decide that they would like separate assessments, these will be carried out.

4.5 Offering diversity and choice

Portsmouth Carers Service is able to evidence the choice on offer through data and publicly available information sources. The website⁴ details the support available directly through the service and our partners. Data is also submitted to the ICB regarding direct payments. In 2022/23, 331 direct payments were issued. The focus when identifying suitable support mechanisms for carers revolves around asking them what they would like to achieve and uses a strengths-based approach⁵ to assessments and support planning.

Whilst our approach to unpaid carers support provides choice and supports diversity, we are not able to evidence through data, the extent of the diversity. When looking at support for parent carers, we can show that we assess separately from the young person they care for however we are not able to quantify this due to our data collection processes. We do not classify different carer types and are not able to statistically

³ [Client-Level Adult Social Care Data \(No. 3\) - NHS Digital](#)

⁴ [Home - Portsmouth Carers Service](#)

⁵ [Strengths-based approaches | SCIE](#)



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identify parent carers from the other carers we support. Changes in data collection that will form part of Client Level Data may enable us to meet this requirement under the 'carer by association' categorisation.

Another area of focus is young carers transition assessments. At present the Young Carers service is based in Early Help⁶ in children's services. Portsmouth Carers Service support a Young Adult Carers, (YAC) group which runs weekly and is for carers aged 18-25. There is a specialist YAC worker who runs this group and is funded via the adults service; however, there is no specialist transition assessment. The development of this assessment will be a priority in 2024. Carers who attend this group have been offered carers assessments and access to the same services that all carers over the age of 18 can access.

The support for parent carers and young adult carers is largely focussed on support groups and providing carer breaks. There are a number of support groups for parent carers, parent carers from diverse and ethnic minority communities and support for parent carers who do not have English as a first language.

5. Summary

On review of the LGA carers criteria for assurance, and comparing this to the services in place, work in progress and work still to be done, we have confidence that Portsmouth City Council provides a carers service that meets a significant portion of the LGA carers criteria for inspection. Where gaps have been identified, they have been reviewed and where possible, work is in progress or planned to meet these criteria.

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

⁶ [Early help and prevention service - Portsmouth City Council](#)