

## Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

**REPORT TO:** Healthier Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**DATE:** 23 January 2023

**LOCATION:** Hybrid

**TITLE:** West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Development Group Annual Report

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:** The report has been produced for the Welsh Government to outline the progress that has been delivered to meet the Welsh Government Carer priorities by the West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Development Group (WWCDG)

**REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:** For information.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) has Carers as a key work stream, reflecting the importance of this population group within the responsibilities of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

This report summarises the activity of the West Wales Carers Development Group (WWCDG) during the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022. The WWCDG is a formal sub-group of the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) which includes representatives of Hywel Dda University Health Board (Health Board), the three Local Authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, as well as Third and Voluntary sector organisations, and representatives of Carers in West Wales.

### West Wales Carers Development Group Annual Report 2021/22

Welsh Government have set out their expectation under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales 2014) that health, local authorities and the third sector will work in partnership to support Carers under the Act. In 2021 The Welsh Government under their Strategy for Unpaid Carers has set out 4 priorities by:

- Identifying and valuing Carers
- Providing information, advice and assistance
- Supporting life alongside caring
- Supporting Unpaid Carers in Education and the Workplace.

**CURRENT SITUATION:**

**SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING ACT (WALES) 2014**

The West Wales Care Partnership has accepted the report and in line with the Welsh Government reporting directive, the presented document was submitted to the Welsh Government and accepted.

**RECOMMENDATION (S):** In support of the West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Group Annual Report 2021-22 that Scrutiny Committee notes the Annual Report.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):** 2021-2022 West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Group Annual Report is noted on the basis that it has been accepted by Welsh Government in line with the prescribed directive and is brought before Scrutiny Committee for information.

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<b>Designation:</b>	Team Manager, Carers and Community Support Team
<b>Date of Report:</b>	28 November 2022

# A HEALTHIER WEST WALES:

## West Wales Carers Development Group

### Annual Report

### 2021-22



## Introduction

This report summarises the activity of the West Wales Carers Development Group (WWCDG) during the period 1st April 2021–31st March 2022. The WWCDG is a formal sub-group of the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) which includes representatives of Hywel Dda University Health Board (Health Board), the three Local Authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, as well as Third and Voluntary sector organisations, and representatives of service users and Carers in West Wales.

This report provides an overview of the work which has been taken forward utilising a range of funding to ensure that Carers priorities are embedded in Services across the region in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Funding sources include: a Carers grant provided by Welsh Government, the Integrated Care Fund and core funding from partner organisations. Welsh Government set out their expectation that health, local authorities and the third sector will work in partnership to support Carers under the Act to deliver the four national priorities set out their “Strategy for Unpaid Carers” (March 2021):

- Identifying and valuing unpaid carers
- Providing information, advice and assistance
- Supporting life alongside caring
- Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace.

Responding to the requirements above, and the priorities set out in the West Wales regional Carers Strategy, form the basis of this Carers Annual Report 2021/22, which provides evidence of progress against each of these areas and the benefit experienced by unpaid Carers.

## The Needs of Carers in West Wales

The West Wales RPB published its first Population Assessment for West Wales in April 2017, and following this developed the West Wales Area Plan 2018-2023. A significant amount of information about the needs of the population was gathered through direct citizen engagement. This was further enhanced with the data and citizen feedback collected during our recent work to develop a regional Carers Strategy for West Wales.

Whilst the Population Assessment was refreshed during 2021/22, the main source of published data remains the 2011 Census. This indicates that there are more than 370,000 unpaid Carers of all ages in Wales and experts have calculated that Welsh Carers contributed the equivalent of around £8.1 billion to the Welsh economy in each year. These figures include anyone caring for as little as an hour a week. 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 Carers providing more than 50 hours of care a week.

As a baseline the 2011 Census estimated that there was over 47,000 unpaid Carers representing 12.5% of residents in West Wales in 2011. The 2022 Population Assessment has noted that whilst the number of people self-identifying as Carers has increased over the course of the pandemic, the numbers of identified Carers is below the numbers highlighted in the 2011 Census analysis. This suggests a considerable gap both in terms of the number of Carers being recognised and supported, as well as self-identifying themselves as unpaid Carers.

The number of unpaid Carers is projected to increase by 2% between 2020 and 2030 and the proportion aged over 65 is projected to increase by 17%. An estimated 30% of Carers provide 50 or more hours a week of care, but this rises to 46% of Carers aged 65 or over. ONS data illustrates that the number of people aged over 85 is projected to increase by 27.8% between 2021 and 2031, whereas the working aged population is projected to fall by 3.1% over the same period. This is likely to place increasing pressures on the need to identify and support unpaid Carers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact for unpaid Carers. Analysis by the regional Carers Information and Support services has confirmed significant increases in the numbers of requests made for support over this period;

County	No. Carers on database 2019/20	No. Carers on database 2020/21	No. Carers on database 2021/22
Carmarthenshire	4613	6071	6891
Ceredigion	1575	1849	2419
Pembrokeshire	2679	2918	3357

The 2022 Population Assessment published by the Regional Partnership Board reported that there is a total of 11,505 known Carers in the West Wales region identified via GP practices, social services and education settings – of which approx. 10,000 are adult Carers and over 500 Young Carers. Furthermore, the Health Board identified that 8,483 unpaid Carers were known to GP practices on 31st March 2021. Within twelve months this had increased by over 2,000 (25%) and as a result of the roll-out of the vaccination programme by May 2021 a further 3,000 unpaid Carers had self-identified, an overall increase of over 5,500 unpaid Carers (64%) during the course the 15-month period.

## Key Developments & Progress – 2021/22

### Our West Wales Carers Strategy 2020-2025:

#### Improving Lives for Carers

During the course of 2020/21 significant engagement was undertaken with Carers; initially via regional and local authority based workshop discussions and then moving to the development of an online survey in response to the pandemic. 558 Carers responded to our online survey including 18% who were young Carers under the age of 18.



The West Wales Regional Partnership Board published Our West Wales Carers Strategy 2020-2025: Improving Lives for Carers in November 2020. The Strategy has established four key priority areas which take a longer-term view and set the vision for the next four years. Throughout our Carers strategy, we have used the ‘Teulu Jones’ family members to help us think about how our priorities could make a difference to Carers in our communities. ‘Teulu Jones’ aren’t a real family but they have been designed to be typical of some of the people living in the Hywel Dda area and the types of caring roles within families.



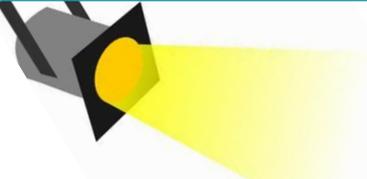
### OUR FOUR PRIORITY AREAS:

- 1.** Improve the early identification and self-identification of Carers, including Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.
- 2.** Ensure a range of services is available to support the well-being of Carers of all ages, in their life alongside caring.
- 3.** Support Carers to access and maintain education, training and employment opportunities.
- 4.** Support Carers to become digitally included.





The following sections of this report outline the ways in which we have been delivering on these priorities and the difference they have made to those with caring responsibilities.



## Spotlight on the Investors in Carers Scheme (IiC)

On behalf of the West Wales Carers Development Group, Hywel Dda University Health Board has continued to roll-out the regional Investors in Carers scheme. In addition to funding an Investors in Carers Lead Officer, the Health Board commission regional support for the IiC scheme which is delivered through Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales. IiC provides the foundation for work with health professionals in primary, community and acute hospital settings to raise awareness of the needs of Carers. However, unlike some other schemes the IiC has been designed to be utilised by a wide range of settings including schools, libraries, local authority teams, Job Centre Plus and third sector organisations.

The IiC Scheme enables settings to progress through three levels; bronze, silver and gold and during the pandemic settings have been encouraged to collate and submit their evidence electronically. A core element of the IiC scheme is providing a simple system that enables unpaid Carers to register as a Carer with their GP, which in turn instigates a referral to their local Carers Information Service who can provide information and additional support. The revalidation process was out of date so in October the IiC team carried out a consultation event to gain feedback and have now redesigned the process to make it more streamlines without compromising the schemes integrity.

### What's been achieved during 2021/22

- **11** settings achieved a new Investors in Carers Award (**11** achieved their Bronze level) **2** settings also achieved their bronze revalidations and **1** at silver level.
- Other settings are currently working on their bronze, with **20** settings working towards Silver and **6** working towards their Gold. In total (since March, 2013) **200** settings have achieved bronze IiC awards, **8** Silver and **3** at Gold.
- Some settings have had to re-prioritise due to the pandemic however support is being given to settings in different ways to continue with either working towards an accreditation or to maintain their existing level.
- **11,505** Carers have registered with GP surgeries across the health board.
- **776** Carers were referred to the Carers information service via the GP surgery registration and referral process
- The number of Carers registered with the GP increased during March 2021 as a result of a health board campaign to identify unpaid Carers for vaccination.



Admiral Nurse Team accepting their bronze level certificate



Carmarthenshire Substance misuse team accepting their bronze level certificate

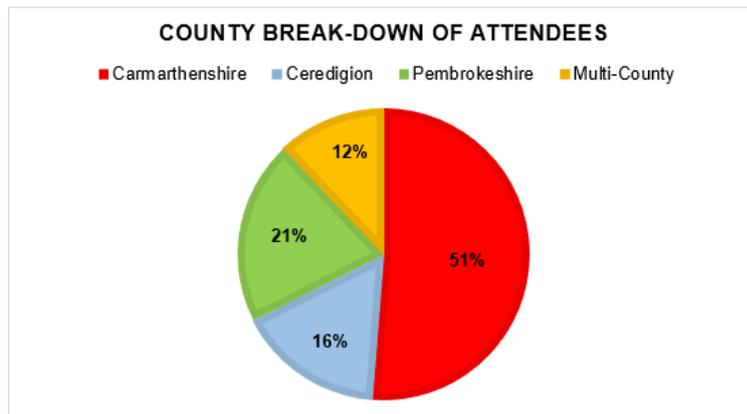
## Carer Lead events

All organisations, teams and departments participating in the liC scheme have an identified Carer Lead. Regular Carers Lead events have been delivered throughout the year in order to bring different settings together providing an opportunity for peer support, joint learning and updating on new local initiatives. During the year 94 sessions have been delivered via MS teams with a total of 988 attendees:

- 62 sessions (509 attendees) were delivered by individual members of the liC team to specific settings engaged with the scheme.
- 9 liC Carer Awareness session (151 attendees) as part of the regular drop in training to the wider staff. These sessions were introduced halfway through the year,
- 23 specific Carer Lead events were delivered (328 attendees).

Feedback from participants include:

*‘Very interesting and eye opening to learn about the statistics. Thank you for a great training.’*  
*‘After attending this course I have more awareness of carers/unpaid carers and how we can help. It’s a brilliant course’*



## Making a difference to Carers

**1.** Improve the early identification and self-identification of Carers, including Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.

**2.** Ensure a range of services is available to support the well-being of Carers of all ages, in their life alongside caring.



To be honest I've never thought of myself as a Carer. After all, they are my parents and looking after them as they get older is just what you do. I got talking to a staff member at my local library about mum and they made me realise I was actually a Carer, they gave me lots of information on help and support available"



## Spotlight on links to statutory and commissioned services

The Health Board has a small dedicated core budget to support the commissioning of specific support for unpaid Carers, in line with the statutory duties set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. In Hywel Dda, support for unpaid Carers is primarily provided by third-sector partners and the Health Board acknowledges the additional social value that working collaboratively with the charitable organisations can bring.

Carers Information Services have continued to take referrals and provide one-to-one support for unpaid Carers across Hywel Dda. Whilst the pandemic has impacted on models of service delivery some organisations have been able to recommence face to face and small group activities in line with national guidance. Illustrated below is an overview of the activity from our commissioned services based on contract monitoring data for 2021/22.

### Overview of support provided by Carers Commissioned Services (April 2021 – March 2022)

A summary of data from our commissioned services:

- **Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales** - Information, Outreach and Young Carers Service
  - **Adferiad Recovery** - Pembrokeshire Carers Service
  - **Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers** - Outreach Service
- **Action for Children** – Young Carers Services in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire

“I cannot tell you how glad I am that I ticked the box in the GP surgery to say I needed Outreach support – 100% glad”

“Words cannot express what a difference you have made to us as a family”

“I am very grateful for all the information you have given me and knowing there is someone in my corner”

“Thank you for the voucher it has made my day. It is really kind of you to send one to me, my Mum doesn’t have a lot and I know she really struggles at Christmas”

#### What our Carers say



#### Key Figures



**1377** new Adult Carers made contact with our services

**3332** Adult Carers were **actively supported**.

**163** new Young Carers made contact with the Young Carers Service.

**1198** Young Carers were **actively supported**.

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## Spotlight on discharge from hospital planning

The Health Board and its local authority partners have taken a whole system approach to support and engage Carers in the discharge planning of patients and ensure active provision of Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA). Carer Officers (who are third sector employees) have been assigned to each hospital since January 2020 to support Carers and staff. The Carers Officers have a specific role in supporting staff to identify Carers earlier, enabling improved involvement in the discharge planning process and active provision of information and support. This service is part of a broader continuum of support that is offered to unpaid Carers, who need support to manage pre-admission care, as well as post-discharge care.

The Carers Officers also work closely with the Family Liaison Officers in each hospital who refer patients and their families to the Carer Officers for carer specific support. When access to the hospitals was restricted during the pandemic training and support was undertaken remotely making the best use of digital technology. This included promoting the uptake of the Carer aware e-learning training. Key figures from the project for 2021/22 are shown in the infographic here.

The Carer Aware e-learning was launched in November 2018 by Social Care Wales has been cascaded out to staff working in statutory and non-statutory services via a number of different means. During 2021/22 **243** staff in Hywel Dda area completed the e-learning.

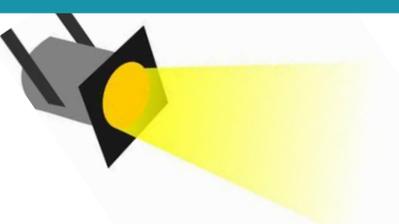


"The support provided by the Carer Officer when mum was in hospital helped my mental and emotional wellbeing at a very uncertain and busy time"

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## Spotlight on supporting Young Carers

The early identification and self-identification of Carers of all ages plays an important part in ensuring that they can access the support that they are entitled to and which will support their own health and well-being. Some of the actions taken include:

- The national Young Carer ID card has been introduced in all three local authority areas. The card was created to enable Young Carers to identify themselves to GP surgeries, hospital settings and schools.
- Ceredigion Carers Unit worked alongside the Youth Service, Action for Children and Arad Goch, a local theatre company, to make a film about being the experience of being a Young Carer. The film will help Young Carers to self-identify themselves and understand how having a caring role can affect their day to day life.
- Young Carers in Ceredigion also got involved with updating and redesigning the content of the regional Young Carers booklet “Who Cares”. Their views and feedback was used to ensure that the booklet included information that they would find relevant and useful.
- Young Carers in Pembrokeshire were invited to enjoy an evening at Folly Farm’s Vintage Fair. Action for Children celebrated their 10 year anniversary of supporting Young Carers in the County and took the opportunity to launch the Young Carers ID card at the same time, with 130 young Carers signing up to the scheme.
- Action for Children arranged a consultation for Young Carers in Pembrokeshire to give their views and feedback on the National Young Carer ID card.
- Young Carers in Pembrokeshire, invited to the Senedd, met with the Deputy Minister and when asked were able to produce the ID card and share their experience of using it and the benefits.
- The co-ordinator for Action for Children is a member of the Pembrokeshire Carers Provider Forum and Pembrokeshire Carers Strategy Board and uses every opportunity to promote and raise awareness of the Young Carers ID card.



“...We had such a fantastic time! I can’t believe there is something so amazing in place for the Children to be part of action for children. I just felt really grateful. So thank you very much”  
- Service user

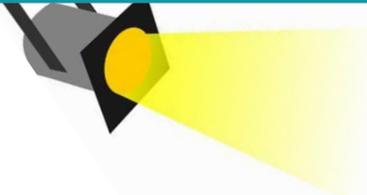
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## Spotlight on Carers Resilience

The pandemic has had an impact on access to traditional support systems for Carers, such as residential respite and day services. Innovative and creative solutions have been made available for Carers with support from our third sector partners and the Carmarthenshire Carers Forum. Carers have been supported to identify suitable solutions for them, to access a break from their caring role with or without the person they care for. A diverse Carers grants programme has been delivered through 2021-22 supporting Carers to access small grant pots for home improvements to protect precious time for rest and relaxation, resilience funds for sessional or overnight breaks away, funds to overcome barriers to accessing a break such as equipment and transport, funding support for Carers events and opportunities delivered by the third sector and community led groups and funding to support peer support for specialist groups such as Alcohol Related Brain Damage, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities.

Carmarthenshire County Council has continued to commission the Carers Resilience Project in partnership with Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales, providing a single point of access for Carers who are seeking support with their caring role. The project links Carers with a dedicated key worker to identify opportunities to promote their well-being and provide support to maintain their caring role. The project provides a pathway for low, intermediate a high-level needs to be identified and the key worker co-ordinates a full range of options such as preventative solutions delivered by third sector partners, technology solutions, Carers Exceptional Circumstance Direct Payments, a range of respite and resilience grants and pathways to statutory services.

Pembrokeshire County Council has also been working to ensure that carers can be supported through the pandemic through a range of different initiatives. This has included: - individual carers grants that are bespoke to each carer and have been used to have alternative breaks; development of the Carers Recognition Card with carers now being able to benefit from free parking and refreshments at Scolton Manor; ongoing growth of the Catalysts for Care project which is supporting the development of micro and social enterprises enabling people more choice and control when accessing care and support. The Supported Employment project has also been working with carers to support them back in and/or maintain employment.

The Health Board has also delivered **six** virtual Looking After Me courses were delivered with **34** Carers completing the I2LAM course.

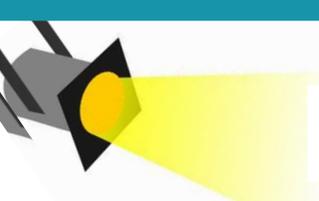
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## Spotlight on Regional Carers Innovation Scheme

The Regional Carers Support Innovation Fund was launched in October 2020 with funding from the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) to offer opportunities for third sector organisations to access short term funding to trial new activities and services to support Carers across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. The fund supports activity of all 4 of the Carers Strategy priorities. During the year 2021-22, 3 rounds of this fund were administered by Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS), in collaboration with Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS) and Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO). Applications were invited to address key themes aligned to the regional Carers strategy. The fund provided up to 100% of revenue costs and up to £5,000 was awarded for projects in one county area and up to £15,000 for regional projects. Applications had to show clear and direct benefits for unpaid Carers, alignment to the Carers Strategy priorities, demonstrate value for money and match funding was encouraged.

### Outcomes of the scheme

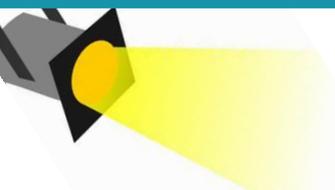
During the year 2021-22, a total of **12** county based projects and **6** regional projects were funded, including

- Wellbeing training for unpaid Carers including Loss & Grief (CTCWW)
- Alternative therapies and wellbeing activities (Ceredigion)
- Continuing Care for Carers – respite at home service (Shalom House)
- Early Onset Dementia Day Service pilot (Ty Hapus)
- Caring and Sharing 2 – respite and retreat days at Holistic Yoga Care Wales
- Men2Men Carers project, providing respite for unpaid male carers in the form of workshops in nature, woodwork, photography, cooking.
- 20 week online mindfulness & wellbeing course for Carers (Adferiad Recovery)
- Strength & Wellbeing exercise sessions for Carers (Pembrokeshire Weightlifting)
- Weekly activity sessions in art, crafts and therapies for carers of people living with dementia (RAY Ceredigion)
- Activities to support carers of people with mental health conditions (VC Gallery, MIND Carmarthenshire)
- Supporting young carers to build resilience & create a strong network of support (Milford Haven Community Society)
- The “Kushti Divvus/Good Day!” project identifying hidden carers in the Gypsy, Roma & Travelling community (Tros Gynnal Plant)

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## Spotlight on working together to support Carers

A **peer support group for Health Board staff** who have a caring role was established during 2020/21 initially as a pilot project. This group has continued in 2021/22. From April 2021 to March 2022 25 virtual meetings were held with a total of 86 staff attending from across the Health Board. Sessions provided an opportunity for informal peer support as well as topics presented by guest speakers e.g. introducing the Carers policy, mindfulness session and advocacy.

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) have proactively supported the delivery of a range of projects, including leading on the creation of a **Regional Carers Platform**. This will be a website to provide a single online front door for Carers to access advice and support to help them in their caring role regardless of where they live in the region. A Regional Carers Platform Steering Group has been formed, which includes a member of staff from Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire who work together to support the website.

Carmarthenshire County Council have undertaken a **dedicated training programme**, in partnership with Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales, delivered to specifically raise the profile of unpaid care. The training initially started as part of Carers Week, but was so well received that it continued through to March 2022. The sessions helped staff to recognise unpaid care, the potential impact of a caring role and how they can support carers by signposting them to carers services. 150 staff members, many of which had a customer facing role, received the training. All staff who completed the training evaluation form (63) reported the training to be 'very useful' and 98% stated their awareness and understanding of Carers had improved.

The **Carers Provider Forums in each County** continue to meet on a regular basis with good attendance from statutory partners, third sector providers and commissioners, to share best practice and encourage collaborative working in developing services for Carers.

In Pembrokeshire, a **Carers Voice Forum was established** in January 2022, to provide a mechanism for Carers to be involved in the design and development of support for Carers. The Forum is facilitated by PCISS and PAVS.

Also in Pembrokeshire, partners have also been working to **support carers through the pandemic**. The Provider Supply Hub at PCC has been supplying carers with PPE and the Community Hub has been offering bespoke support to carers. A carer was contacted by the Community Hub as they had been referred by Track and Trace after they were told that they had to self-isolate. After a conversation the carer was provided with a tablet to stay in contact with family and friends and was supported to complete their Carers' Allowance application. A referral went through to Cariad Pet Food Bank to help them with caring for their animal as they had been struggling financially whilst they got their benefits sorted. On reflecting on the support they had received they said:

"As soon as I was told to isolate I panicked, I felt like my world was falling apart. There were so many things that I felt I had no control over ... I was completely cut off and isolated. As soon as I spoke with the Hub, I felt like there was help there straight away. I woke up the following morning thinking it was a dream, that these problems had been sorted for me. I can't wait until I am in a position again where I can give pay back the support I have received. I cannot thank everyone enough for the help and support I have been offered. It has made such a difference to me and my family."



**A Carer Aware card** has been co-produced in Pembrokeshire for carers of people living with Dementia in response to the need for support at the early stages of the dementia journey, when they are at the GPs for the first conversation about their loved one’s memory/behaviour, prior to any diagnosis. The card emerged from conversations and co-design sessions directly with Carers in Pembrokeshire in a partnership between PAVS, Carers Trust and Wales Co-production Network. The card was designed by carers for carers. GP surgeries throughout Pembrokeshire, the memory assessment clinics are all distributing the cards to patients’ families.

The Health Board’s Diversity and Inclusion Team have been working together with Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales and Travelling Ahead to engage with the Gypsy and Travelling community, helping to raise awareness of unpaid caring roles. The team have also been looking at new ways to raise awareness of unpaid carers within other vulnerable groups such as Armed Forces Veterans, and individuals with Sensory Loss and Substance Misuse.

“Issues around literacy makes accessing information difficult for the Gypsy and Traveler community. During a meeting which was held with the Carers Trust, Travelling Ahead, and the Health Board it was possible to explain to the women who attended what was available and support them in filling out forms. It was invaluable being able to meet as a group with people they trusted as the women felt safe and able to ask questions.”

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## Spotlight on Employers for Carers (EfC)

The West Wales Carers Development Group participates in the Carers Wales Employers for Carers (EfC) scheme through an umbrella membership and we have renewed this for a further two years. Each individual partner organisation has taken forward specific actions, in addition to their collaboration as part of a regional Steering Group.

Hywel Dda University Health Board has taken forward a number of internal initiatives including:

- Submission of Employers for Carers Confident Level 2 evidence, building upon the Level 1 award achieved in 2020.
- Communication of the Health Board Carers Policy and passport for staff
- Targeted awareness raising training with workforce staff who support managers and employees
- Encouraging staff with caring responsibilities to share their views and experiences Continuation of Staff Carer Peer Support Group sessions.
- [Promoting awareness through sharing of personal stories; A member of this group gave her story conjunction with Carer Rights Day 2021 Anwen's Story - YouTube](#)

The Health Board annual staff survey was launched on Carers Rights Day in November 2021. The survey and feedback provided by the 102 staff who responded provided a “temperature check” and valuable insights into the impact of caring roles for our staff who self-identify as unpaid Carers. 52% said their job is negatively affected by their caring role and 26% said that knowing there is a specific policy for Carers will help them combine work and their caring roles. Only 4% have used the Carers Passport. The Carers staff survey report will be used by the Carers Strategy group to identify further actions which can be taken to strengthen support for staff with caring roles, for example working with the Culture and Change Managers and Workforce teams.

Ceredigion County Council have Health and Wellbeing Officers who run drop-in groups for staff who are unpaid Carers as well as focused groups for those Carers caring for someone with specific care needs. They have also produced a Carers Toolkit for small businesses and enterprises to raise awareness of Carers from both the employee and client perspective. The aim is to support SMEs to look at mutually beneficial ways in which they can support Carers who work for them, or Carers who use their services.

In January, Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) recruited a Commissioning & Contracts Management Officer who will take the lead for unpaid Carers within the local authority. The member of staff has signed up to the EfC portal to access material to support staff and has attended Carers Wales training as a Wellbeing Champion. PCC are members of the regional EfC working group, this enables staff to work collaboratively and share their views and ideas with the overall aim of supporting Carers in the workplace.

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### Making a difference to Carers

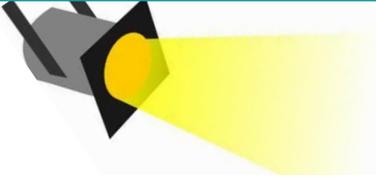
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**1.** Improve the early identification and self-identification of Carers, including Young Carers and Young Adult Carers.

**2.** Ensure a range of services is available to support the well-being of Carers of all ages, in their life alongside caring.

**3.** Support Carers to access and maintain education, training and employment opportunities.





## Spotlight on Digital Inclusion

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated, perhaps more than ever, the essential role that unpaid Carers play in preventing statutory services from becoming overloaded. Yet many Carers have low incomes and, due to their caring responsibilities, are unable to increase their income by working full-time. It is more critical than ever that all those eligible for support are aware of, and are accessing, the full range of entitlements available, including benefits and services commissioned by the Health Board and local authority partners.

Digital inclusion has been a key aspect of the Regional Partnership Board's Transformation Programme and Carers Officers provide a key link to signpost unpaid Carers to support to help them to become digitally included. As part of the regional Integrated Care Fund programme a website, Carers Support West Wales, is being developed through a co-productive approach with unpaid Carers and providers across the Region. This work is being led by PAVS and the website is due to be launched in June 2022.

PAVS Community Connector team co-ordinate a Cluster funded tablet loan scheme where patients of a GP surgery in Pembrokeshire can access tablets, Alexas and WIFI data. They also facilitate a Carer Grants scheme to support the purchase of IT equipment to support them in their caring role.

The Health Board's Education Programme for Patients (EPP) team created a "padlet" which holds a wide variety of useful information and support for unpaid carers. This digital system is also available via social media and promoted to everyone attending a course delivered by the EPP team. <https://padlet.com/cherryevans/x2pxykx6rrojzapo>

In acknowledgement of the important role that digital technology plays, Ceredigion Carers Unit introduced a digital Carers magazine for social media in a bid to reach unidentified Carers. Ceredigion County Council also created a digital form for carers to use to apply for the Carers Well-being Fund and have received positive feedback from carers who felt that the process was simple and user friendly.

In Pembrokeshire Carers Grants supported some Carers to purchase IT equipment to support them in their caring role. All opportunities for carers in Pembrokeshire are promoted via social media; carers email distribution list and via the dementia supportive padlet: <https://padlet.com/cherryevans/x2pxykx6rrojzapo>

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### Making a difference to Carers

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## Priorities for 2022/2023

Carers and the Carers' agenda has been established a priority within the Area Plan for West Wales and will continue to feature within the refreshed Area Plan due for publication in 2023. The Regional Partnership Board adopted Carers as an integral priority, particularly recognising the cross-cutting impact and links across all its key programmes of work, including the new Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund.

The key actions of our regional Carers strategy are based on the views and feedback from Carers and key stakeholders and during 2021/22 feedback gathered from Carers during the development of the refreshed 2022 Population Assessment confirmed that the priorities remained relevant. The WWCDG we will continue to work to implement the priorities outlined in the Carers Strategy and:

- Address key requirements, gaps and improvements identified through the West Wales Population Assessment and the objectives within the Area Plan
- Respond to Ministerial priorities for supporting Carers
- Complement and integrate a range of Carers' initiatives across the region to increase the visibility about the needs of unpaid Carers
- Ensure that the needs of Carers are represented through the Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund programme

Some of our specific priorities for 2022/23 include:

1. Contributing to the refresh of the West Wales Area Plan.
2. Continuing to the development and uptake of Carers cards and the benefits that these offer to encourage Carers of all ages to self-identify themselves and access additional support which is available via Carer's information and outreach services.
3. Continuing to review the support offered to Young Carers in West Wales and engaging Young Carers in the process to ensure a best practice innovative service is provided.
4. Actively promote the regional Employers for Carers membership, focusing in particular on working collaboratively with other public sector services as well as small and medium size enterprises (SMEs).
5. Continuing to encourage involvement in the Investors in Carers accreditation scheme and support progression through the award levels.
6. Work with others, including commissioned services to maximise the potential of digital services.
7. Develop a bilingual web based platform (Carers Support West Wales) to support the provision and accessibility of consistent information and advice for Carers.
8. Support Carers to be digitally included through training and access to technology.

## Conclusion

Carers are a fundamental focus within the West Wales Area Plan 2018-2023 which sets out our communities needs across West Wales and how we will work in partnership to respond to these. During 2022/23, the Area Plan will be refreshed, but support for unpaid Carers will continue to be a key feature.

We are facing unprecedented challenges in Health and Social Care and with an aging population, as well as the need to deliver services differently as we respond to the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic. The West Wales Carers Development Group is committed to working together to deliver support for Carers in our communities in new and innovative ways, and to ensure that the needs of Carers are considered at every stage of their health and social care journey.

This Annual Report has provided an overview of the wide range of activity which has been on-going in West Wales to improve outcomes for Carers. Whilst the focus of the report has been on the work lead via the West Wales Carers Development Group and how the Welsh Government funding, ICF and core funding of partner organisations has been utilised to support this work, it is acknowledged that there are many other organisations and groups within West Wales who also provide valuable support and services to Carers.