What is Carer Aware?

Carer Aware is a joint project, funded by Welsh Government, between Carers Trust Wales and Carers Wales to work collaboratively with unpaid carers, social care and health professionals to better empower unpaid carers to be actively involved in decisions and services for the people they care for and themselves.

The project is working with the Welsh NHS Confederation, British Association of Support Workers (BASW) and Social Care Wales for insight and endorsement for the training programs.

The objective of the project is to work with staff at all levels of our social care and health systems to create meaningful cultural change to benefit unpaid carers in Wales. This includes:

• raising the awareness of the rights that unpaid carers have, based on the framework set out by the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 that gave unpaid carers rights of their own,
• identifying and spreading pre-existing good practice already happening across Wales
• actively supporting unpaid carers to be more involved co-productively, to makes changes on a personal and systematic level.

Our aim is to listen to the concerns of the different stakeholders and advocate for changes that will enable good practice to be incorporated into the day to day work of professionals who have interactions with unpaid carers.

The different inputs will be combined to create new training resources in multiple types of media that will be accessible and informative. There will also be additional guidance to unpaid carers to support their understanding of the different systems and to encourage them to work in partnership with professionals.
Our overall purpose is to build a culture which recognises the importance of unpaid carers in every area of our social and health care systems in a way which supports professional practice and improve outcomes for patients and carers.

Who is an unpaid carer?

An unpaid carer is anyone who provides unpaid care for someone who is ill, older, has a disability, has mental health concerns or has addiction issues. They can be any age, gender or race and are most commonly a family member or friend.

The type of care ranges from, physical, emotional and financial support, to providing basic needs like cooking and cleaning, to complex medical intervention on a periodic or daily basis.

These actions are undertaken as the person requiring care cannot support themselves without the regular intervention of the unpaid carer or carers.

An unpaid carer may provide this care alone or as part of a network of people who provide different elements of care for the person in need of support. An unpaid carer may also have multiple caring roles to juggle where they are providing support, often of different types, to multiple people.

Young Carers
A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 who provides care for someone. Young carers juggle education and caring. They have the same rights as adult carers but need additional support due to their age and vulnerability. For more information on young carers, please click here (CTW link).

Young Adult Carers
A young adult carer is anyone between 18 and 25 who provides care for someone. Young adult carers may be in further education, apprenticeships or starting their working lives. They may have also had to delay making these choices to provide care. They have the same rights as adult carers but need additional support due to their age and vulnerability.

Working carers
A working carer is someone who combines paid work with unpaid care. The paid work is unrelated to the care provided.

Sandwich carers
A sandwich carer is someone who cares for an older person and has child care responsibilities.
Who are Carers Trust Wales?

Carers Trust Wales is part of the Carers Trust, a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with a UK wide network of quality assured independent partners and through the provision of grants to help carers get the extra help they need to live their own lives.

With locally based Network Partners we are able to support carers in their homes through the provision of replacement care, and in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks.

We offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

Who are Carers Wales?

Carers Wales is part of Carers UK - the UK’s only national membership charity for unpaid carers. We are led by carers, for carers. Our mission is to make life better for those looking after someone.

We are highly respected in our field, both as a support network and movement for change. We want a society that respects, values and supports carers. Our shared mission is to make life better for carers. We do this by:

- Giving expert advice, information and support
- Connecting carers so no-one has to care alone
- Campaigning for improved carers rights and lasting change
- Innovating to find new ways to reach and support carers

Carers Wales operates across all of Wales and our main beneficiaries are unpaid carers and those they care for.
Why get involved?

To create meaningful change for unpaid carers, it is essential to work collaboratively with you, the professionals, who are creating, deciding on and providing the services.

You are the ones who know how the system works, what needs to change and how this can be accomplished for the betterment of all involved. Your insight into the barriers of providing support for unpaid carers shape how the information upskilling and training programs can be incorporated into the reality of providing this essential support.

It is also a great chance to hear from unpaid carers directly. Their insight into the experience of the other side of this conversation can support you into making small, meaningful changes that can make the processes easier for all involved. This opportunity to communicate in a supportive atmosphere breaks down any combative barriers to garner a logical and attainable way to better support unpaid carers.

Our training resources will be made available in multiple formats. Direct training from staff in both organisations will be run periodically through 2021 and 2022 while written and video resources will be viewable at your leisure.

Our work is being actively supported by the Welsh NHS Confederation, BASW and Social Care Wales.

How do I get involved?

It is quick and easy to get involved with the Carer Aware project.

You can find the latest sessions, training resources and latest insights into caring in Wales by visiting www.carers.org/wales/CarerAware or www.carersuk.org/wales/careraware

You can also sign up for the bi-annual newsletter by emailing info@carerswales.org to get the latest developments around the Carer Aware project.

If you would like to have a conversation about Carer Aware or carers in general, you can also contact both organisations at wales@carers.org or info@carerswales.org