

Carers UK briefing on Adult Social Care White Paper – ‘People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform’

Overview

On 1 December 2021, the Government published its long awaited White Paper on Adult Social Care: ‘People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform’.

The White Paper can be found online [here](#). There is also a [Transforming Social Care website](#) which explains the reforms to the public, including people who use care and support and carers.

In the introduction to the White Paper, the Secretary of State sets out the Government’s vision for social care reform. This includes: there is choice and control for people over the care they receive, promotes independence, properly values the workforce and **recognises unpaid carers for their contribution and treats them fairly.**

[Carers UK has issued a statement](#) that we are pleased with some of the measures that have been announced and the fact that carers are considered to be partners in care. However, we are concerned that the level of baseline funding for the system is still too low.

The White Paper has carers threaded throughout, including in the aspiration, vision and strategic objectives. There is also a separate section on carers specifically. There are a series of “I” statements, including statements for carers, which we believe the success of the White Paper should be measured against. *Please see these detailed below in this briefing.*

As well as measures which are already in train, new announcements in the White Paper include:

- £25 million to kick start support for carers including respite care
- £5 million for funding information and advice systems
- Inclusion of young carers in the schools census at their earliest opportunity
- Looking at the carer recognition data flags on NHS records and introducing a new flag for a contingency plan on patient records
- A new discussion around direct payments and international models
- New provisions around data collection
- Modernisation of operational elements of Carer’s Allowance

- Funding for market shaping

There are also existing announcements on:

- Employment, including the consultation on flexible working and the Government's commitment to Carer's Leave
- Data provisions in Data Saving Lives which recognise carers
- The Health and Care Bill and carers provisions

Core aims of the White Paper and funding streams

The White Paper describes its aims and objectives as follows:

"The White Paper sets out an ambitious 10-year vision for how we will transform support and care in England. Our vision puts people at its heart and revolves around 3 objectives:

- 1. People have choice, control and support to live independent lives.*
- 2. People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support.*
- 3. People find adult social care fair and accessible."*

The White Paper sets out a range of policies and states the Government will work with the sector, and those who draw on care and support, to implement these over the next 3 years. These include:

- at least £300 million to integrate housing into local health and care strategies, with a focus on increasing the range of new supported housing options available. The paper states this will provide choice of alternative housing and support options
- at least £150 million of additional funding to drive greater adoption of technology and achieve widespread digitisation across social care. Digital tools and technology can support independent living and improve the quality of care
- at least £500 million so the social care workforce have the right training and qualifications, and feel recognised and valued for their skills and commitment.
- a new practical support service to make minor repairs and changes in people's homes to help people remain independent and safe in their home, alongside increasing the upper limit of the [Disabilities Facilities Grant](#) for home adaptations such as stairlifts, wet rooms and home technologies
- **up to £25 million to work with the sector to kick-start a change in the services provided to support unpaid carers**
- £30 million to help local areas innovate around the support and care they provide in new and different ways, providing more options that suit people's needs and individual circumstances
- a new national website to explain the upcoming changes, and at least £5 million to pilot new ways to help people understand and access the care and support available
- more than £70 million to increase the support offer across adult social care to improve the delivery of care and support services, including assisting local authorities to better plan and develop the support and care options available.

The White Paper states that this funding is from the £5.4 billion overall funding for reform which will come from the Health and Care Levy, which starts in April 2022. This funding would be spread over three years; £3.6 billion of funding would be allocated to implementing the cap on care, leaving £1.7 billion for social care reform.

Carers UK's view: We welcome these areas of funding, and we hope that this will also provide funding for local carers' organisations and others to innovate and support carers. Carers UK will be seeking further information on timings, amounts per year and what the criteria for these various forms of funding.

Our view is that all these funding streams will help carers and potentially improve outcomes in their lives. We are pleased that there has been a stronger focus on housing, key ambitions around data, digital and technology as well as looking at innovation.

10 year vision for adult social care

The White Paper states that the vision it sets out has been co-developed with the sector, people who use care and support and unpaid carers. Carers UK has fed into this process in a number of different ways. We have:

- Contributed carers' experiences and priorities gathered through our research e.g. over 8,000 carers told us about their priorities for social care and their needs
- Included carers directly in discussions with the Department for Health and Social Care where they have been at the heart of the discussion
- Direct engagement through our members' conference
- Provided expertise from our contact with carers on our helpline and online forum
- Provided insight and expertise from our work with employers through Employers
- Hosted a discussion with social care reform leads at our State of Caring conference including Minister setting out the ambitions for carers.

Carers top priorities for social care reform include the following:

In our State of Caring 2021 survey, we asked carers what their top priorities for social care reform were. They told us:

- Having access to more personalised and better quality care for the person I care for (70%)
- Having access to suitable breaks from my caring role (55%)
- Having access to care that is tailored to my needs (50%)
- Having a choice about caring and how much care I provide (41%)
- A reduction in charges to care (35%)
- Having access to good quality and appropriate housing, including the right adaptations (27%)
- Better access to replacement care (17%)

The White Paper states that the vision will be to embed personalised care. As shown above, this is carers' top priority for reform— for the person they care for and for themselves.

The paper has a series of “I” statements for people who use services, that would match carers’ outcomes for the priorities for the person they care for. There are also a series of “I” statements for carers (see below), which we welcome.

The White Paper states: *“We want unpaid carers to be able to say:*

- *“I am supported to provide care as I wish and do so in a way that takes into account my own access to education, employment, health and wellbeing.*
- *“I have a life outside caring and I am able to remain connected to the people who matter to me.”*
- *“I know my needs are equally recognised and my goals and aspirations are respected and fulfilled.”*
- *“I have the right information and advice to be able to make informed decisions.”*
- *“I have access to appropriate support, that suits my needs including respite care and carers’ breaks.”*

There are also a series of “I” statements relating to personalised care which promotes independence. E.g. *“I receive care and support that is safe, responsive to my needs and respects my rights.”*

Carers UK’s view: We welcome these statements, in particular those for carers.

In addition to the carers’ statements above we would add:

- “I have a choice about caring.”
- “I am identified, recognised and valued for the care that I provide and my contribution to the community.”
- “I am respected for the skills, experience and knowledge I have and to be treated as an equal partner in care.”

In addition to the statements for people receiving care, we would also add a series of “I” statements for carers:

- “That care and support identifies me as a carer and is tailored around my needs as well”. This is carers’ second priority for social care reform.

Delivering outstanding quality care and support:

To deliver outstanding quality care and support the White Paper states that government, local authorities, care providers and the wider sector will aim to make sure:

- Safeguarding and support standards are enforced.
- Assurance is strengthened so that outcomes are easier to identify.
- High quality and timely data are available to help identify best practice and address areas of improvement.
- Technology is fully utilised to enable pro-active and preventative care, and to support independence.
- Social care is recognised by the public as a valuable and high-quality service on a par with the NHS.

- Social care is provided by a qualified, professionalised and valued workforce, which has a low turnover to ensure continuity of care.
- All professionals involved in providing care have access to the right digitised information at their fingertips to provide safe, outstanding quality of care.
- Health, social care, and other services are joined up to provide a seamless care experience of person-led support, **which also recognises and supports unpaid carers.**

Carers UK's view: Any safeguarding measures need to include the welfare and wellbeing of carers since safeguarding for carers has been on the increase. Carers views are:

- Quality care is core to their wellbeing
- The majority want to use technology to support their caring responsibilities and there is potential growth for more. However, it's also essential that the needs of people who don't have technology are also supported or where its use is less effective for individuals.

People find adult social care fair and accessible:

The White Paper has the following statement...

"We want fair and accessible adult social care to mean that an unpaid carer can say:

- *I am able to navigate the health and care system with ease.*
- *I understand the support that is available to me in my area to support my health and wellbeing and achieve the outcomes that matter to me.*
- *I am provided with the necessary information and advice to make informed decisions about the care I provide*
- *I am provided with the tailored information and advice that I need to support and meet the needs of the person I care for."*

Carers UK's views: There are also a series of "I" statements for people who draw on care and support and we would apply these equally to carers. Some carers are charged for their own breaks, services and support and should be recognised as part of this section. We know that it is more cost effective and equitable for services to be provided free at the point of deliver for unpaid carers.

Driving integration of health and care services

The White Paper recognises that a lack of join-up can leave to "a lack of consistency identifying unpaid carers across health and care and providing them with the right information and support for caring." It states that the upcoming integration White Paper will outline proposals to improve person-centred care.

Carers UK's views: We welcome this statement and recognition that this is an issue. We believe it is essential that carers are at the heart of the Integration White Paper.

Empowering those who draw on care, unpaid carers and families

As well as being threaded throughout the White Paper, there is also a section dedicated specifically to carers (pages 51 – 64 on the PDF – see [here](#)). In this section, the White Paper recognises that while caring can be rewarding, it can also take its toll on health and wellbeing, personal and social lives and employment. The section states:

“The way that the adult social care system works in partnership with and supports carers is critical. Our vision for adult social care is one that places people at its heart – and that includes recognition and support for unpaid carers so that they are empowered to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.”

The chapter recognises that the Care Act 2014 is not always realised as intended, but that it provides a good foundation for support for carers. This is a position Carers UK agree with.

The White Paper also publishes a summary of the Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 progress at the end of the document (see annex B), but does not include all the outcomes of the different measures as this would be very lengthy.

The paper states it intends to build on the foundations of the Carers Action Plan. The strategic approach for carers has are three core strands :

1. Working with the sector to kick-start a change in the services provided to support unpaid carers
2. Identifying, recognising, and involving unpaid carers
3. Supporting the economic and social participation of unpaid carers.

We explore each of these issues in more detail below.

1. Working with the sector to kick start a change in the services provided for unpaid carers

The section recognises the fact that carers often put breaks as a key priority and uses evidence from Carers UK’s [State of Caring](#) survey which recognises that “the availability and accessibility of these services are not always as easy or straightforward as it should be. Specifically, it states:

“To address this, we will invest up to £25 million to work with the sector to kick-start a change in the services provided to support unpaid carers. We expect that this funding will identify and test a range of new and existing interventions that support unpaid carers, which could include:

- *respite and breaks*
- *peer group and wellbeing support*
- *new ways to combine these to maximise their impact*

The projects initiated through this funding will build commissioner and service provider understanding of what support works best for those with different caring circumstances, acknowledging the wide variety in caring experience and need among carers.

There will be extensive impact and process evaluation conducted to generate evidence on efficient and effective ways to support unpaid carers. By continuing to build and share the evidence, our aim is to drive the development of a strong investment case for commissioners, and therefore stimulate the growth, development and roll-out of services across the country.

We have heard that respite is a particular area of concern and so, during development of the policy, we will work with the sector (including local authorities) to further explore:

- *the different models of respite*
- *how respite services are accessed by carers*
- *any barriers to accessing these services that carers might experience*

At the core of our approach is recognising that people who provide care are diverse and varied – different services and interventions are likely to be effective for different groups of carers depending on individual circumstances. For example, the rates of depression are higher among those who provide care for people with dementia than among caregivers of people with other chronic illnesses. Another example might be unpaid carers from ethnic minorities, where there is a particular lack of self-identification as an unpaid carer.”

Carers UK's view: This is critical in supporting the innovation and development of services to support carers and this, along with a robust evidence and evaluation basis, is warmly welcomed.

2. Identifying, recognising, and involving unpaid carers

This section of the White Paper highlights the importance of recognising and involving carers. It states that data relating to unpaid carers can be difficult to collect and use, and yet it is critical for policy making, but also understanding and improving local service delivery.

The White Paper states that they will:

- Look to increase the voluntary use of unpaid carer markers in NHS electronic health records by simplifying current approaches to data collection and registration.
- Introduce a new marker indicating the presence of a contingency plan, where one is available, that describes the actions to take if the carer is no longer able to provide care.

Carers UK's view: The first measure is related to the GP Quality Markers, but simplifying the current approaches to data collection is new, but has been under review for some time. The marker indicating a presence of a contingency plan is also new.

Carers UK feels that these measures would be better accompanied by a duty on the NHS to identify carers and to have regard to their health and wellbeing. This would lead to more systematic consideration and identification. We look forward to more detail on both of these measures.

There will be a move away from aggregate data collections on carers towards client level data which will take place over the next 3 years (*see more information below in the data section*).

3. Other measures:

The White Paper also includes a number of other measures to support carers, including:

- Health and Care Bill provisions which includes a duty on Integrated Care Boards to involve carers in commissioning decisions and equivalent provisions for NHS England. Carers UK has already set out these in our [Bill briefings](#).
- Recognising social and economic participation of carers including the importance of the empowerment of carers.
- Mentions a piece of work being undertaken by Carers Trust and Carers UK as part of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance on social prescribing.
- Consultation on day one rights to request flexible working – see Carers UK’s detailed response [here](#).
- Government’s commitment to legislate for up to one week’s unpaid Carer’s Leave – see Carers UK’s detailed response [here](#).
- Mentioning the level of Carer’s Allowance – which is rising to £69.70 from April 2022.
- A new provision which mentions a programme underway to modernise the way Government delivers Carer’s Allowance.

Carers UK’s view:

The new provisions on the Health and Care Bill mentioned above are welcome, but Carers UK also believes that this needs to go further.

Carers UK is very supportive of the employment provisions that have already been announced although we would prefer Carer’s Leave to be paid, unpaid leave would still represent an improvement for many carers.

We welcome the commitment to modernise the way that Carer’s Allowance is delivered as this is something that Carers UK has recommended, in order to improve carers’ experience and speed of decision-making and receiving the benefit – as well as helping to reduce overpayments which are extremely distressing.

Carers UK is, however, disappointed that the social care White Paper did not take the opportunity to look at the fact that Carer’s Allowance remains the lowest benefit of its kind. Carers will feel that they have been let down because this has not been included.

Carers UK is also disappointed not to see any commitment to review the earnings limit with a view to aligning it with 16 times the National Living Wage and rising year on year. Despite the £4 increase in the weekly earnings limit, the number of hours a carer is able

to work and still receive Carer's Allowance has fallen yet again and this time below 14 hours per week.

4. Young carers

There is a separate section on young carers which Carers UK welcomes, since adult social care has a responsibility towards young carers under the Care Act 2014. For the first time, the Department for Education will include young carers in the school census at their earliest opportunity.

The section on young carers also mentions their inclusion in school's education recovery programmes – the recovery premium and pupil premium guidance as well as the list of vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings.

Carers UK's view:

The inclusion of young carers in the schools census is a very welcome measure because the process of its introduction will raise awareness along with the data it delivers to be able to understand and target support better to children who need it. This is a piece of work that Carers Policy Network of the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) also supported several years ago.

5. Additional areas: new ways to navigate local ASC systems, national website providing explainers about social care reform.

The White Paper also details several additional areas, including:

- Invest at least £5 million over 3 years to test and evaluate new ways to help people navigate local adult social care systems. This would allow local organisations to pilot and evaluate new ways to provide personalised advice to help people navigate local adult social care systems.
- A new national website providing information and simple explainers about social care reform: <https://engage.dhsc.gov.uk/social-care-reform/>
- Oversight of local authority information and advice offers
- Providing people with the basic information they need to compare providers, which might require providers to be more transparent about fees. This would need a change of regulations.

Carers UK's view: We welcome all these measures, as carers rate information and advice very highly. The work that local organisations do to support carers is invaluable, through guided conversations and helping connect carers to local appropriate support. We will continue to provide update and information about all of these areas.

Providing the right care in the right place at the right time:

There are a number of "I" statements which apply equally to carers as well as to people using care. This includes carers in key areas. This section covers:

- Making every decision a decision about housing and choice with access to adaptations or technologies to help them live well.
- Using the full potential of digital technology to support people's lives and aspirations including:
 - Digital tools in the homes and hands of people who use care as well as carers.
 - Equipping the social care workforce with the digital tools, knowledge and confidence they need to deliver outstanding care.
 - Creating the digital and data infrastructure to drive transformation in care delivery.
- This would include:
 - £300 million over next 3 years to 2026 to connect with housing and drive stock of new supported housing.
 - At least £150 million additional funding for digitisation across the sector unlocking the potential of care technology.
 - £30 million Innovative Models of Care Programme to support local systems to build the culture and capability to embed into the mainstream innovative models of care.
 - Fund a new service to make minor repairs and changes in people's homes.
 - Increasing the upper limit of the Disabled Facilities Grant – new guidance is going to be published. A further £570 million from 2022 to 2025 will be provided through local areas through the DFG.
 - Investing in the Care and Support Specialised Fund with £210 million for 2022 to 2025.

Using the full potential of technology to support people's lives and aspirations

This is an important section with part of it dedicated to people, families and unpaid carers. There is also a drive to make sure that the social care system, including care providers and information and advice providers understand the potential of tech and digital. This includes carers having:

- The confidence to select and use the most appropriate digital support
- Knowing their needs and preferences are shaping transformation
- Have access to a comprehensive up to date social care record
- With discharge from hospital that the right technology would be put in place
- Routinely use technology to enjoy greater reassurance

Adult social providers working in the sector are expected to:

- Understand the benefits of digital technology and have the confidence and capability to drive digitisation in their own organisation, sharing learning and best practice.
- To be confident to recommend and use appropriate technology to deliver high quality care.
- Work as part of a multi-disciplinary team able to communicate and collaborate securely so that all professionals have access to the information they need
- Take informed steps to protect against cyber risks.

Carers UK's view: We welcome these principles, including for adult social care providers, and we feel that this applies equally to organisations who provide information and advice to carers as well as providing social care. This also means that adult social care providers should also be identifying carers and key family members and ensuring that the first set of goals are delivered.

Carers UK's recent State of Caring 2021 results show that there is great potential for improving the use and knowledge of digital technology which could enhance carers' lives. However, we also recognise that some people don't use technology and it's essential that this remains a firm part of any procedures.

Care technology, digital social care records and digital skills

Care technology is mentioned in the White Paper but not in great depth. One example is digital social care records; there is an ambition to digitise this quickly and link to the shared care record. There will be investment and leadership in digital skills for the workforce under the workforce section.

Carers UK's view: We welcome the drive to digitise records and share appropriately. All digital records must include a data field that identifies the carer, clearly states permission to share information (permissions) on the record of the person being cared for. Carers' own care record (as a result of a Carer's Assessment) should also be linked to the person needing care and any contingency planning. These are carers' top priorities.

Innovative Models of Care programme

This is separate to the funding for £25 million to kick start support for unpaid carers. This would invest up to £30 million in new Innovative Models of Care to trial and embed ambitious new services for key priorities such as:

- Prevention
- Reablement
- Better support for unpaid carers (for example through respite provision)
- Key enablers – such as local community capacity building or outcomes-based commissioning

Carers UK's view: We welcome this fund and will be providing further information as it becomes available, including how it fits with the £25 million fund for carers.

Strategy for Workforce:

There is growing concern about the rise in the care worker shortages and Carers UK's research in [State of Caring 2021](#) and previous reports ([Caring Behind Closed Doors](#)) show the pressures that this places on carers.

This section in the White Paper highlights the £500 million (that was already announced earlier this year) over three years to invest in knowledge, skills, health and wellbeing.

There are a range of different measures to support the workforce including skills based, transferability of the Care Certificate, new policies to identify and support best recruitment. There will also be a universal Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and greater portability of skills.

Carers UK's view: We welcome the focus on skills but are disappointed that there is not a similar recognition of unpaid carers who need support to be able to juggle work and care. It is very noticeable by its absence given the positive activity and work in the NHS to ensure that employees juggling work and care are still able to continue working.

Given the age and gender structure of the workforce, it's likely that between one in four and one in three workers in the NHS will be an unpaid carer. Our recommendation is that the support being delivered through the NHS plan is mirrored in this work.

Supporting local authorities to deliver reform:

This section of the White Paper includes a number of measures already set out by Government.

For organisations supporting carers, the main ones are:

- Reform of the charging system from 2022 to 2025; enabling all local authorities to move towards paying providers a fair rate for care and prepare local care markets for implementing reform.
- Strengthening market shaping
- Assessment of local authority performance by CQC
- Establish an adult social care data framework by Spring 2022

Carers UK's view: It's vital that in setting up the charging system that the role of carers is well understood. We will be liaising with Government over this as we did when the Care Act 2014 was about to be implemented.

We welcome the market sharing work but have always stated that these existing duties **must** consider the wider self-funder market, particularly in domiciliary care. They must also deliver the Care Act s. 5 duties in full – an element that Carers UK campaigned for and welcomed.

Under the assessment of how far local authorities meet individual's needs by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) includes "meeting the needs of unpaid carers".

Important areas to note:

Direct payments and personal budgets:

This section of the White Paper noted that direct payments were made to family and friends when usual care workers were unable to work. The Paper reiterates the current direct payments regulations.

However, it also goes on to say that they will explore how direct payments could be used as a mechanism for making payments once the new care cap (as recently announced) has been reached. It notes different international models and how other countries make use of direct payments, including Germany. This has a series of different levels and recipients can opt for cash payments to pay family members, albeit that these levels are lower than receiving the services in kind.

Carers UK's view: Carers UK welcomes this debate, but also notes the complexity as well. We have a range of views of carers gathered several years ago.

Data:

The White Paper has a section on data. It includes the following:

- Establish an adult social care data framework by Spring 2022.
- Update the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework by Autumn 2022 – this collects key data on carers.
- Client level data (anonymised) to bring social care data collection in line with NHS collections using the NHS number as a unique identifier. This will allow data collection of personal outcomes, waiting times for assessments and services and care hours provided. It will link health and care data. Client level data has been collected on a voluntary basis and will move to mandatory from 2023.
- Core provider set of data.
- Revise the Survey of Adult Carers in England and the Adult Social Care Survey broadening reach and refreshing collection mechanisms.
- Easy data sharing solution between local authorities and providers.
- Research and evidence to underpin evidence.
- Co-design a suite of standards for social care to support and underpin data specification and inter-operability.

Carers UK's view: We have been working on a wide range of data issues and welcome this overarching approach. Our key measures of success will include: the inclusion of data flags and measures for carers, the systematic identification of carers and clear codification in relation to support, the inclusion of voluntary organisations supporting carers within this strategic approach. Finally, the broadening and modernising of the Survey of Adult Carers we feel is positive for local authorities. There is an opportunity to also include the information from the Census 2021 in all of these approaches, to match local data sets with anonymised data from the Census.

What will Carers UK be doing next?

- Working with the DHSC and with local authority representatives in the sector and others to understand the next key steps for implementation.
- Engaging carers and Affiliates in looking at how these areas will be implemented.
- Working to ensure that carers are recognised in areas of roll-out and delivery.
- Raising with DWP issues around Carer's Allowance.
- Continuing to work our Employers for Carers members and with BEIS around their consultation on flexible working and Carer's Leave

- Providing detailed briefings on key areas that matter to Carers UK Affiliates and to carers.
- Continuing to campaign on the areas that have not been included in this paper i.e. integration and carer recognition, the overall level of funding for social care and the level of carers' financial support.

Contact us

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