



*#Making Caring Visible*



**Highland Carers Strategy**

**2020 – 2023**

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## 1. Introduction

We have attempted to keep the details of the strategy straightforward and understandable with the main contents comprising 4 elements:

1. A Local Pathway that simply outlines the ways that carers can expect to receive support.
2. Outcome Triangle– this is a visual representation that shows how the 'High Level Outcomes' identified for carers can be delivered. Firstly, by identifying what needs to improve and be developed? This will ensure future services that are developed are appropriate to what carers have told us they need and want to maintain their health and well being and continue to manage effectively in their unpaid caring role.
3. The detailed work plan outlines the activities necessary along with planned timescales to deliver the Implementation Plan
4. The Service Delivery Outcome Indicators evidence where and when we expect to have completed the identified activities. It has the capacity to record where or when such activities have not been met, ensuring that there is accountability to the commitments drawn up in the strategy.

Space for Introduction

Space for introduction

### 1.1 Terminology

During the development and consultation on the Highland Carer Strategy, unpaid carers told us they wanted the document to be clearly understandable and for any jargon to be explained so that no one reading the document felt disadvantaged by the language used.

We are aware that a range of terms can be used to describe someone who supports or cares, unpaid for a family member or friend who is affected by illness, disability, frailty, mental health or alcohol or drug misuse. This can be complicated further by the use of the word 'carer' used to describe a member of Staff who is paid to offer carer or support. Outlined below is other carer related terminology that should assist the reader to understand the context of the strategy.

| term                  | definition                                                                                                                                                                                         | term                  | definition                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NHSH                  | NHS Highland                                                                                                                                                                                       | THC                   | The Highland Council                                                                                                                            |
| Access Services       | Use services that have been discussed with lead professional or carer link worker                                                                                                                  | Waiving of Charges    | There should be no charge where support is provided to meet the identified personal outcomes of individual carers                               |
| Section 28 of the Act | Carers are actively involved in the person they care for's planned discharge from a hospital stay                                                                                                  | Short Breaks          | An opportunity for a carer to find time for themselves away from their caring role.                                                             |
| Carers Charter        | Document produced by Scottish Government outlining what carers are entitled to.<br><a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter">https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter</a> | Commissioning Process | The activity which involves deciding what kinds of services should be provided in Highland, who should provide them & how should they be funded |

| term                                    | definition                                                                                                                   | term                   | definition                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High Level or Service Delivery Outcomes | Positive Benefits delivered through engaging with service and the differences or changes made through engaging with services | Improvement Objectives | Is a business strategy approach that ensures plans are regularly reviewed and improved                                         |
| Lead professional                       | Person who has been assigned to lead or co-ordinate services for a cared-for person                                          | Self-directed Support  | Is a way of providing social care support that empowers individuals to have informed choice about how support/care is provided |
| Stakeholders                            | Persons/organisations with an interest in carers                                                                             | Young Carers           | A young person under 18 who cares, unpaid for a family member, friend or neighbour                                             |
| CIG                                     | Carers Improvement Group- meets bi-monthly to discuss carer related topics                                                   | Cared-for person       | The person you care for                                                                                                        |
| CSDO                                    | Carer Services Development Officer                                                                                           | CPSO                   | Carers Practice Support Officer                                                                                                |
| ASC Teams                               | Adult Social Care Teams                                                                                                      | YCS                    | Young Carer Statements                                                                                                         |
| ACSP                                    | Adult Carer Support Plans                                                                                                    | Third Sector           | A word to determine organisations (usually voluntary and not-for profit) that are neither public or private sector             |



## 1.2 Highland Carer's Pathway March 2021

This chart shows what support an unpaid carer can expect living in the Highland Council area. It outlines the pathway via the carers centre. It is anticipated other organisations who work with carers will signpost to Connecting Carers as they are currently contracted to support carers to develop adult carer support plans and act as the local Carers Centre.

Who is an unpaid carer? 'An unpaid carer may be a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is caring for someone because of illness, disability, a mental health condition, drug or alcohol misuse or frailty.

Connecting Carers are the carer's centre in Highland, open week days 10.00 -

Staff are currently working from home due to covid19.

Connecting Carers are able to signpost caers on where to go and what to do in crisis or emergency

what type of support can carers expect?

You will be supported by a Carer Link Worker. They will help you to access support and discuss how your caring role can be prevented from escalating. You will be offered preventative support relevant to your caring role. This includes the right to an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP), emergency & future planning, counselling, information & funding on short breaks, training & events relevant to your caring role as well as signposting to other supporting organisations. [www.connectingcarers.org.uk](http://www.connectingcarers.org.uk)

what timescales can carers expect?

You can expect to receive the Connecting Carers Welcome Pack within 5 working days of your query . Once you have received your Welcome Pack a member of the team will aim to support you to complete your ACSP within 4-6 weeks. If your caring situation is an emergency you can expect support from the service within 48 hours

contact us

If you are unhappy about any Connecting Carers service, please speak to the relevant Staff member, or a manager. Please write to us at Connecting Carers, Glen Orrin House, High Street,

Dingwall, IV15 9TF or e-mail;

Roisin Connolly, Manager of Connecting Carers [rconnolly@connectingcarers.org.uk](mailto:rconnolly@connectingcarers.org.uk)

Tel: 01463723560

A more detailed complaints policy is available on request.

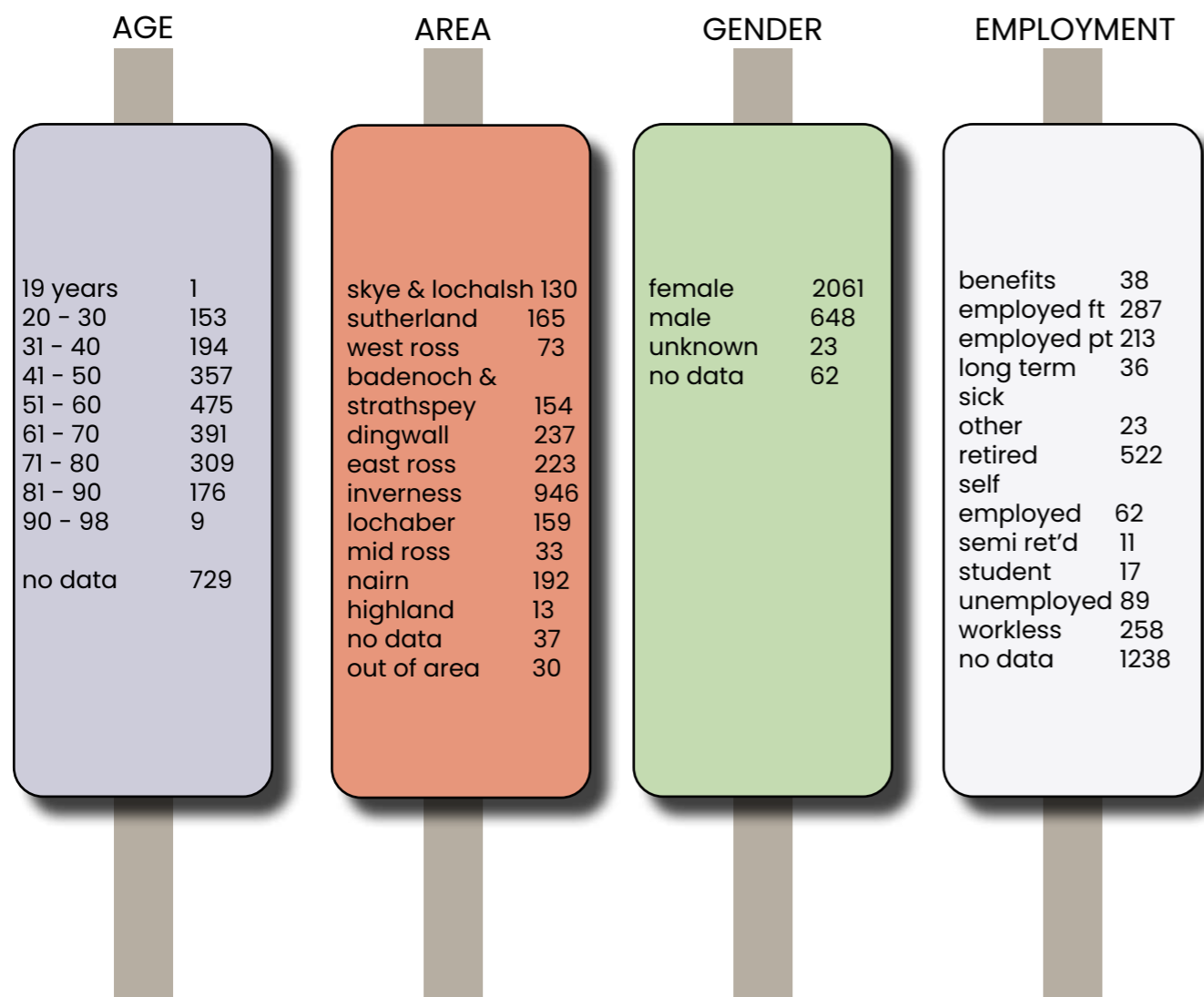


### 1.3 Why do we Need a Strategy?

The latest Highland Carers Strategy was published in May 2014. It provided the very clear vision of Carers as 'Equal Partners in Care'. Although the ethos of the strategy still remains; things have changed significantly in the intervening years. The Carers (Scotland) Act came into force in April 2018 placing additional duties on local authorities to support carers.

In 2019 Carers Scotland [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) told us that there were 759,000 carers in Scotland (17% of the adult population). However, in 2020 this number has risen significantly with the estimate that there are now over 1.1 million unpaid carers in Scotland. Many more people have undertaken an unpaid caring role during the Covid pandemic. Over 250,000 people juggle caring responsibilities whilst holding down a job, with 3 out of 5 of us becoming carers at some time in our lives. More females undertake a caring role than males (59% to 41%) and most significantly 8 out of 10 carers say their health is worse because of caring responsibilities.

In 2018 it was estimated there were around 32,000 carers in Highland with only 2794 known to Connecting Carers, the local carer's centre and their attributes are outlined below: This would suggest that not all unpaid carers in Highland are identified or accessing services. Therefore the main focus of developing this strategy will be to increase the number of carers known to and accessing services in their own right over the next three years.



### 1.4 Developing the Strategy

Using a partnership approach we have consistently consulted and discussed the content of the strategy. We have worked with carers themselves, carer organisations who have a proactive role in supporting carers and frontline Staff across NHS Highland and Highland Council who may come into contact with carers. We are mindful of the significant role that national organisations have in supporting carers particularly around specific conditions. We have engaged at a local and national level with many organisations to ensure the content of the Highland Carers Strategy is consistent with others across Scotland. As the only area in Scotland to have adopted the lead agency model, NHS Highland leads on adult services and Highland Council on children's services. To ensure the voice of young carers is heard and fully understood we have developed a separate strategy for them. We have also been mindful of ensuring the approach is similar to that of the adult strategy. It is critically important that we maintain a focus on parent carers too, whose involvement, because they care for children, spans both organisations. Their input needs to be recognised across the main strategy and the young carer's strategy. We recognise and welcome the support that individual carers, organisations and frontline Staff have provided in the development of this strategy. Given that the strategy has been developed as we moved through the phases of the Covid pandemic, we recognise the importance of community led support through Asset Based Community Development.



After discussion at the Carers Improvement Group in August 2020 a small working group was developed to pull together questions that would be used to consult with carers around the strategy. A short survey which went live in September 2020 allowed carers to provide information on what they felt should be included in the strategy. We then shared the draft strategy with carers via the NHS website and provided a printed copy on request. This consultative process has allowed the development of a clear and concise document. A report on the survey can be found on the Carers page of NHS Highland website or as a printed copy on request. <https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Services/ASC/UnpaidCarers/Pages/welcome.aspx> As the strategy is a living document we anticipate undertaking further surveys during the life of the document.

#### 1.4.1 Financial Underpinning

The total resource available for the implementation of an adult carers programme in 2021/22 is around £1.80m (this is made up, in part, by £0.85m of funding by Scottish Government to implement the Carers (Scotland) Act which comes via The Highland Council as part of an overall grant settlement, (this agreed amount is not uplifted annually), and £0.95m of identified NHS funding).

In addition to this, expenditure of around £1.9m is dedicated to the provision of Home-based Respite and Residential Respite in both in in-house and independent sector Care Homes (albeit the impact of Covid-19 will have significantly altered expenditure profiles throughout 2020/21).

At time of writing, current commitments remain in place in relation to our existing services for carers (delivered via Connecting Carers etc.) until new services are tendered for (again Covid-19 has had an impact here). On top of this an independent Project Team - with reporting arrangements in place to the Carers Improvement Group - has been working to use available resource to stimulate a range of services across Highland which can mitigate at least some of the adverse impacts of Covid-19 on carers. Resources of around £0.25 have been earmarked for projects which were successful in an open bidding process.

Finally some work has begun to describe the desired shape of services going forward. The CIG has given some consideration to developing a high-level "shape" of services to commission

and support into the future. The Group considered that the following breakdown should guide our work in the progression of any future tendering processes:

**1.4.2 Information and Advice Service**

- Highland-wide
- High-level advice and information in respect of meeting needs of carers
- Specific advice in relation to accessing services for carers
- Advice in relation to SDS, specifically Option 1
- Advice in relation to accessing personalised and planned Short Breaks (particularly through the use of SDS monies); and
- A programme of practical education and training for carers

**1.4.3 Local Carers Link workers**

- District based
- Provide emotional, social and practical support to identified carers
- Provide Adult Carer Support Plan as requested
- Identify eligible need in respect of SDS
- Co-ordinate the provision of short-term (reactive) practical help for carers
- Identify the need for the provision of planned (proactive) short breaks
- Utilise local budget, or identified provision, to implement carer support
- Be accountable for the use of support resource;
- Be involved in the authorisation process for the use of Self Directed Support (across all options, including Option 3 – traditional respite services).

Make available resource for Self Directed Carer Support

- Available resource (realisable through SDS Options 1 and 3) to be accessed by carers who have been assessed as eligible for a planned Short Break.

**1.5 Legislation**

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect on 1st April 2018 and enhances the rights of carers across Scotland to help improve their health and wellbeing so they can continue to care if they so wish. The Act places duties on Health Boards and Local Authorities to ensure that carers feel adequately supported in their caring role.

In North NHS Highland /Highland Council area (known as Highland for the remainder of the document) we had planned to take time during 2020 to work in partnership with carers, carer organisations and frontline Staff (who have a specific involvement with carers) to plan and consult on the strategy. Unfortunately the Covid pandemic impacted on our initial plans – therefore we brought a first draft of the strategy to the Carers Improvement Group in August 2020. In the first, instance for comments, advice and guidance. We then shared the details of the draft document with a wider group of carers, gathered information via a survey on carer’s thoughts on the format, style and content. We then shared the draft with carers before developing a final version for submission to Highland Health & Social Care Committee for final sign off in early 2021

Producing a carers’ strategy at this time we are mindful of its value as a living document as plans will alter as we navigate our way through the Scottish Government’s route map post Covid.

The main emphasis of the strategy is to ensure that::

- We increase the number of carers engaging with services in their own right
- Carers are identified and recognised for the work that they do
- Carers are informed and involved in decisions which affect their caring role and
- Carers are valued and supported
- Carers have a life out with their caring responsibilities



We would appreciate ongoing feedback on this ‘living’ document. If you would like to make any comments about the content of the document, then get in touch:  
**[nhsh.unpaidcarers@nhs.scot](mailto:nhsh.unpaidcarers@nhs.scot)**

1.6 The outcome triangle

