

Surrey Carers Strategy 2021-2024



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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce our Surrey Carers Strategy 2021-24.

Surrey partners recognise caring is an important part of life and it is unpaid carers (daughters, sons, partners or friends, for example) who hold families together and often fill the gaps statutory services are unable to provide.

Although carers make an enormous contribution to our health and social care system, caring can be frightening and isolating and have a serious impact on the carer's own health and wellbeing. Many carers say their mental health suffers and they worry about the future, and it is recognised that caring can affect health outcomes.

We want to do everything we can to enable carers to live well. It is crucially important that carers are identified at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are recognised and respected as partners in care, and to allow access to advice and support that is responsive and appropriate to their needs and circumstances.

Taking on a caring role should not mean people have to face financial hardship and social exclusion or give up work. Carers who want to should be enabled to work and should not be discriminated against, yet the reality is that many find juggling work with caring responsibilities challenging. Supporting carers to remain in the workplace is important to avoiding financial hardship and social exclusion.

This strategy has been developed during the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought the role and experience of carers into sharp relief. Carers UK research during the first wave evidences that there has been a 28% increase in the number of carers resulting from the pandemic. For those already caring, we know they have struggled to manage additional hours of care and many have felt the impact of anxiety, isolation, loss and loneliness. The pandemic has exposed fault lines of existing inequalities that many carers experience.

This Carers Strategy 2021-2024 presents an opportunity to reset our carers agenda in Surrey, to reaffirm our recognition of the vitally important service that carers provide and to make specific commitments to how we will ensure that the support for carers is continually developed and improved.

This strategy has been developed in line with 'Together for Carers', a memorandum of understanding between health and social care and a wide range of partners to work together to enhance support for carers of all ages (the memorandum of understanding is available in full on the Surrey Heartlands website www.surreyheartlands.uk.)

This strategy covers the general principles that apply to all adult carers. We want carers supported across the whole system, and for carers to be seen as everybody's business.

Our vision

“Surrey should be a place where carers are recognised, valued and supported, both in their caring role and as an individual. Carers will be respected as partners in care, will have a strong voice that influences improvement, and will be able to access the support they need, when they need it, and in the way that works best for them. This support will be available equally to all carers.”



To make this happen, we will:

- Make sure carers are identified, recognised and offered support if they need it, at the earliest opportunity;
- Make sure carers with different needs are able to access the right support and information when they need it, in the way that works best for them;
- Make sure carers are aware of their rights, and remain willing and able to care;
- Make sure carers and families are able to thrive and develop educationally, personally and socially, and are protected from excessive or inappropriate caring roles;
- Make sure we work together with carers and those being cared for to develop services that are reflective of their needs and communities;
- Make sure that carers are able to express their views, share their experiences, and have their voices heard through an independent route;
- Make sure we have strong governance in place to support effective and responsive decision-making, and to oversee this strategy and carers services.

Carers in Surrey should be able to expect to:

- Be identified as a carer as early as possible and be assessed in the context of a whole family approach;
- Be encouraged to recognise their role and rights;
- Have their rights and those of the person/s they care for championed and protected;
- Have access to high quality information, advice and support that is personalised and which they can trust;
- Have choice and control in their caring role;
- Be informed, respected and included as expert partners in care;
- Be able to stay healthy and live well themselves, including accessing breaks to support them to maintain their own wellbeing;
- Have their own needs and wishes as an individual recognised and supported;
- Be supported to remain in work, training and/or education;
- Be supported in getting financial advice, including about welfare and benefits;
- Have access to support and training that will enable them to feel confident in their caring role;
- Have meaningful opportunities to have their voices heard, and be empowered to share their lived experience which will influence learning and change; and
- Be socially connected and not isolated.

Our values

Carers have told us about the values they believe should underpin all action and we have put them at the heart of the strategy. They have also been shaped by contributions from our partnership of NHS and social care, children's services, our borough and district councils, education, voluntary, and community and faith sector, comprising many local charities and groups.



1**Carer focused**

Carers will be considered in everything that we do. We recognise that carers have different needs, including those stemming from or related to mental ill health; learning disabilities; and age. It is essential that there is a personalised, holistic approach to information, advice and support. Services across Surrey will respect individuals' aspirations, personal circumstances and choice, and be accessible to carers in the way that works best for them.

Greater awareness of carer rights and universal recognition of the contribution that carers make is integral to ensuring we value and empower carers.

2**Inclusivity**

Partners in Surrey will continue to work together to support carers to achieve the outcomes they have said make a real difference to them. Carers will be involved in all aspects of designing services and measuring how these services perform, and will be recognised as expert partners in care.

It is acknowledged that inequalities exist across our communities and that these can affect access, experience and outcomes. All partners and services will value and evidence inclusivity, proactively reaching in to and engaging with the diverse range of communities in Surrey to help ensure that appropriate support is accessible and contributes to improved outcomes.

3**Whole family**

It is important that the carer's family context is respected, and that a whole family approach to caring is embedded across Surrey. Carers will be assessed in this context. The whole family will be supported in the caring experience, with ready access to information and appropriate support services when they need them.

4**Collaboration**

We will promote and continually grow collaboration and closer co-operation across health and social care, borough and district councils, and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

This will harness the potential of organisations that can link together to better understand and support carers, sharing information about local need and provision to develop joined-up approaches to designing and delivering services.

5**Every contact counts**

Caring has a significant impact on individuals' physical, mental and financial health and wellbeing: it is therefore vital that carers are identified and recognised at the earliest opportunity. We will make every contact count by proactively seeking to better understand carers' individual circumstances and needs, and enable timely access to services.

6**Continuous improvement**

We will strive to continually do the best we can for and with carers, working to deliver excellence in everything we do. We will be open and we will listen. Carers will be empowered to influence the design and provision of services. Health and social care will work together to commission services, seeking to develop the market and enhance our offer. This will help ensure that high quality, flexible and reliable services for carers are available across Surrey.

Strategic priorities 2021-2024

The six priorities below build on progress made against the 2016-20 strategy, and have been developed with feedback from carers and the varied organisations supporting them, and with partners across Surrey.



1. Commission high quality services

We commission a range of services to ensure that carers are supported in their caring role and to have a life outside of caring. Carers have told us that a priority must be ensuring that services address important needs, and that the pathways between services are as easy as possible to navigate.

The particular commitments for commissioning high quality services are:

1.1 Carers breaks

Carers have told us that being able to have a break from caring is very important to them. It is therefore vital that we provide a range of carer breaks services. In line with our commitment to personalisation and being carer focused, breaks can take a number of different forms based on the need of the carer. Breaks can also benefit the person/s with care needs. We are reviewing the range of short breaks available to ensure they offer an attractive choice and meet carer needs.

Our health and social care practitioners will promote the value of having a break from caring and explain the options available.

1.2 Improve the health and wellbeing of carers

We will support our health and social care practitioners and provider partners to ensure that the importance of carer health and wellbeing, and the information and support available, is included in every conversation with carers.

We will co-design with carers accessible training programmes that are designed to improve carers' knowledge and coping skills, and help enable them to carry out their caring role safely and confidently for as long as they choose to.

We will work in partnership to ensure carers have access to information and programmes that support wellbeing and physical activity, including developing stronger links with social prescribing.

We will commission services that provide appropriate information, advice and support regarding the potential financial impact of being a carer, including welfare and benefits.

1.3 Ensure that the pathways into and between services is clear

Carers have told us that the pathways between healthcare, social care and third sector provision need to be easier to navigate. In response, a 'Carers Pathway' has been co-designed by the Carers Strategic Partnership Board. This will be embedded and promoted (see pages 20-21), and adjusted as necessary.

1.4 Emergency planning and Carer Passport

Emergencies for carers can be overwhelming and stressful. Having a plan in place can help ease carers' worries and ensure that those they look after continue to be cared for in an emergency. We will work with carers and stakeholders to develop a new Surrey Carer Emergency Planning Service. This new service will build on our existing Surrey Carer Emergency Card Scheme as well as our carer's assessment process.

The development of a Carer Passport will be an integral part of this service, and supports our commitment to improve carer identification and recognition. This programme of work will contribute to our delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan.

2. Promote carers' rights

The Care Act 2014, and Department of Health and Social Care's care and support statutory guidance, seeks to substantially strengthen the rights and recognition of adult carers within the social care system.

The particular commitments for promoting carers' rights are:

2.1 Carer's assessments

The Care Act 2014 entitles carers to an assessment in their own right, together with information and advice to help them make the best choices about support for their own health and wellbeing.

We will work to ensure that carer's assessments are undertaken for all eligible carers using personalised strength-based approaches, and that the carer's assessment process is accessible.

We will actively seek to identify carers and ensure that they know about their right to a carer's assessment, the benefits of having one and how to obtain one. We will ensure that this information, advice and support is available equitably to all carers.

We will ensure that assessments are reviewed regularly, including carer health and wellbeing, and are updated to reflect changing needs.

Where a carer does not want or need a statutory carer's assessment, we will ensure that they are still offered information about how to access support.

2.2 Promote inclusivity and diversity

We will ensure that our services for carers are inclusive, culturally appropriate, and address the needs and preferences of diverse groups and communities.

People being cared for, their families and carers will be involved and recognised as equal partners in care. This includes identifying people's cultural needs and their choices and preferences, and looking at how these needs are met.

We will ensure our services and their uptake is representative of our communities and their needs. To support achieving this, we will build equality monitoring into all service specifications and contracts, and will monitor activity and outcomes, including workforce.

All partners and services will value and evidence inclusivity: with support from the Giving Carers a Voice service as needed, they will proactively reach in to and engage with the diverse range of communities in Surrey to help ensure that appropriate support is accessible and contributes to improved outcomes.



2.3 Training for carers

There is a wide range of evidence suggesting that training can offer an opportunity for carers to gain important skills and confidence, and to help them to remain safe and well themselves.

We will co-design with carers accessible training programmes that are designed to improve their understanding of the health condition, disability or needs of the person they care for.

We will commission carers training services based on local need and which enables carers to provide care safely. Training for carers will be accessible through a number of routes.

We also recognise the value of peer to peer support, with professional involvement and guidance as needed. We will ensure that peer support continues to be an element of what we commission.

2.4 Championing carers' rights through communications

We will identify and make the most of opportunities to raise awareness of carers' rights, including aligning to and participating in national campaigns and events (for example: Carers' Week, Carers' Rights Day). These activities will be inclusive of all partners and providers.

We will encourage and work with partners and providers across the system to identify, train and empower Carers Champions who will help raise the profile of carers within their organisations and support local work for and with carers.



3. Increase visibility of carers

Identifying carers is the first step to providing the support they need to maintain their own mental and physical health and wellbeing.

People may not see themselves as carers, rather seeing caring as an extension of their familial role: daughters, sons or partners, for example, doing what families and friends do. As such, the term carer does not always resonate with them. In addition, becoming a carer can be a gradual process, and carers may not recognise the changing nature of their relationship with the person they support. Similarly, many carers are not identified by health and social care practitioners. These are commonly termed 'hidden carers': they do not access the support available, often because they do not know it is there.

The particular commitments for increasing visibility of carers are:

3.1 Ensure early identification

We will actively seek to identify carers at the earliest opportunity.

We will develop materials and communications to help those with caring responsibilities recognise their caring role and to understand the benefit of identifying as a carer and accessing the support services available to them. We will embed carer identification into practice across Surrey, and ensure robust mechanisms for this information, with consent, to be recorded and used to enable access to services.

Recognising that carer identification is likely to happen in the GP setting, we will continue to build strong relationships with GPs through Primary Care Networks and make use of mechanisms such as the national GP carer quality markers to develop consistent carer friendly practice.

3.2 Whole family approach

In line with our 'Whole Family' value, it is important that the carer's family context is respected, and that a whole family approach to caring is embedded across Surrey.

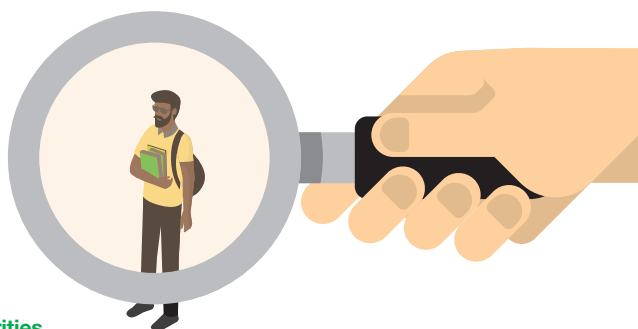
Carers will be assessed using a whole family approach. Assessments and services should be co-ordinated to support the person with care needs and their family, including any young carers. The whole family will be supported in the caring experience, have ready access to appropriate information, and be able to access appropriate support services.

3.3 Young adult carers

Young adult carers (carers aged 18-24 years, inclusive) are likely to be in school, college, university and/or the workplace.

It is important that we recognise the specific needs of young adult carers, particularly at key points in the caring journey, such as entering or leaving college, university and/or work. Providers and partners will work together to help ensure that young adult carers are recognised, and are aware of and feel able to access the information and support available to them. This will include proactively identifying where specific information, support and services should be made available to and developed for young adult carers.

We will identify opportunities to proactively reach and work with young adult carers, for example in partnership with education institutions and employers. We will explore opportunities to provide focused support for young adults seeking to move into or develop in their employment.



3.4 Training for professionals

It is vital to ensure that all partners and providers have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary in effectively identifying, supporting and working with carers.

We will develop and make available a range of training materials to suit the needs of different providers and professional communities. All professionals will be offered carer awareness training, including understanding and promoting carer rights.

Surrey County Council will ensure that the right specialist resource is available to support social care staff to identify carers and to undertake carer's assessments. Additionally, Surrey County Council will ensure that staff who carry out assessments for an individual with care and support needs are fully supported and trained to recognise the needs and aspirations of carers.

Healthcare commissioners will ensure that practitioners who carry out or contribute to carer's assessments have training and skills in that role, and access to specialist advice. We will ensure all staff are aware of the benefits of carers having a statutory carer's assessment.

3.5 The Surrey NHS Carers Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

This is just one of a range of mechanisms to improve our response to identifying and supporting carers. Although 70% of carers come into contact with health professionals, only one in ten carers is identified through this route.

The Surrey NHS Carers Key Performance Indicator (KPI) was co-produced in response to carers telling us that we need to:

- improve outcomes for carers, reducing unwarranted variation;
- normalise caring within our standard NHS systems and processes;
- ensure the sustainability of carers work through a systems response; and
- prepare the ground for the introduction of Carer Quality Markers in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.

The Surrey NHS Carers KPI is a 'direction of travel KPI' to allow for incremental improvements to be made collectively across the healthcare system and will be reviewed and refreshed annually.

3.6 Local carer KPIs for social care providers commissioned by Surrey County Council

These have been established and will be embedded in all health care and social care provision during the life span of this strategy. The process of embedding the KPIs and monitoring providers' delivery will raise the visibility of carers with providers whose core business does not necessarily include providing support to carers.



4. Strengthen carer voice

We have a strong commitment to ensuring that all carers should have regular and meaningful opportunities to have their voices heard, share their experiences, and contribute to developing, evaluating and improving services and support in Surrey. Carers will have the opportunity to be involved as much as they want to be.

The particular commitments for strengthening carer voice are:

4.1 Commission an independent Giving Carers a Voice service

This service will:

- provide a trusted route for carers to feed back in their own words on their lived experience of caring in Surrey;
- support delivery of our commitment to co-design and co-production;
- support developing and maintaining effective reach across and into communities in Surrey, recognising diversity and individuality; and
- take a strategic, co-ordinated approach so that carers feel empowered to voice their views and share their experiences, without being overwhelmed by different and/or multiple asks.

4.2 Ensure equitable and accessible routes to sharing feedback and experience

It is important that carers are able to share their views and experiences through a range of regular, meaningful and diverse opportunities. We will ensure that, across the system, there are accessible routes for carers to have their voices heard, taking account of their diverse needs and preferences.

In addition, we will proactively reach in to communities and groups across Surrey, and harness feedback from the diverse range of sources available.



4.3 Build on our Carers Strategic Partnership Board

We will also improve on the way in which carers' views shape services through our governance structure. During the life span of the previous strategy (2016-2020), we established the Carers Strategic Partnership Board (previously known as Carers Partnership Group) that has met regularly and informed the development of this strategy. We will build on this Board, ensuring that:

- it is better able to engage a wider range of carers in co-design of specific initiatives;
- it is better placed to shape the ongoing development of services, reflecting the voices of a greater range of carers; and
- has clear routes into the decision-making structures in both health and social care.

5. Support working carers

Taking on a caring role should not mean that people have to give up work, and having to do so might lead to financial hardship and/or social exclusion. Carers who want to work should be enabled to do so and should not be discriminated against. Carers should be supported in the workplace to maintain their employment status.

The particular commitments for supporting working carers are:

5.1 Embed carer awareness training for staff

All employers must ensure no carer is missed through lack of awareness on the part of its staff. We will undertake a complete review of all existing training materials and work with the local NHS Academies to seek new approaches to staff carer awareness training, whilst ensuring that the 'lived experience' of caring remains integral to our programme.

5.2 Establish a system-wide response to supporting working carers through the Surrey-wide Multi-Agency Carers Workforce Task Group

This group was established in July 2020. Its aim is to work collaboratively, using an integrated approach, to provide a system-wide response to supporting those staff who are juggling work with care.

The task group has developed a work plan based on feedback and experiences of working carers, which will be delivered against the life span of the Surrey Carers Strategy 2021-24. The task group will continue to explore opportunities to strengthen support for and learning from staff carers, including staff carer networks.

5.3 Develop and embed a Working Carers Passport and staff carer contingency planning

We will improve support to staff with caring responsibilities, promoting the new Working Carers Passport to ensure that all employers have timely, compassionate conversations about what support would be helpful, including establishing and protecting flexible working patterns, and support staff carer contingency planning.



6. Effective communication and engagement

Communications with and for carers should be easy to navigate, tailored to individual needs, with information provided in a format that carers can access and understand.

There are a number of mechanisms in place to communicate and engage with carers. We recognise that it is important to regularly review and refresh these; to evaluate the impact of all communication and engagement activity; and to respond proactively when carers tell us what is and isn't working well.

The particular commitments for developing effective communication and engagement channels are:

6.1 Diversity of communication and engagement

Partners across the system should ensure that there is a diverse range of communication channels, engagement opportunities, and ways for carers to get involved if they want to. This must take account of and respect different needs and communities, and enable messages to be tailored appropriately.

All communication and engagement activity must take account of the needs of carers from vulnerable and 'lesser heard' communities, and adapt approaches as needed to ensure that there is effective reach in to different communities.

6.2 Improving accessibility

Providers and partners across the system should have a specific, consistent approach for identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of carers. As part of this, carers should be supported to access information in the format that best meets their needs.

Partners across the system should proactively seek to understand any barriers to communication and engagement, and provide appropriate support to enable carers to be part of the conversation.

6.3 Person-centred approach to communication

Advice, information and support activities will be readily available, and tailored to the needs of individuals.

We will continue to use and develop a range of approaches, seeking to understand from carers how they would like to communicate with us, and the best ways for us to communicate with them. This will include recognising that different approaches will work better for different people.





Delivering our strategy

This document presents the commitments of Surrey County Council, Surrey Heartlands CCG, and Frimley CCG (for the areas of Surrey within this CCG). These partners will develop an action plan to ensure delivery of the strategy and the commitments made for 2021-24.



The Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (which is responsible for setting the high level ambitions across the area and overseeing how partnerships are performing against these) will work together with local service providers and other partners, including borough and districts councils, to look at how they can best meet the aims of this strategy and how they can work together to improve carer services and outcomes for their local populations. Agreed actions will be regularly monitored, updated and reported on locally. The Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System will monitor progress through the Carers Strategic Partnership Board and the Joint Carers Strategic Commissioning Group.

Leadership, and a commitment from local partnerships to deliver these ambitions, will also be key, as will the continued input from staff, partners, local people, carers and those they care for, to help make sure the right services and the right support are in place.

Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by the Carers Strategic Partnership Board. The group is an effective way to ensure that the support available to carers in Surrey is shaped by all partners and by carers themselves. This partnership board will review the strategy to see if it is effective in achieving improved outcomes in a timely manner, and will propose areas that need to be refreshed to ensure that they reflect the future landscape.

Measuring outcomes: how we will know the strategy is making a difference

A joint ‘carers dashboard’ is in development, in co-production with the Carers Strategic Partnership Board, which will draw together performance data to monitor progress. Health and social care will develop a joint local Carers Outcomes Framework that addresses national performance measures and those identified locally.

Each partner in Surrey will use an agreed set of key performance indicators (KPIs), to include those developed to monitor outcomes specific to their service/s. These will be reported on using their local governance procedures, with oversight through contract monitoring arrangements.

Carers should be routinely involved in performance monitoring and evaluations. We will revisit with carers the commitments we have made, including what we have said they can expect as part of our Vision, and whether the strategy is making a difference to them.

We will continue to ensure that carers are involved through existing routes, such as the Carers Strategic Partnership Board, Carers and Providers Network, and through partnership and engagement with other provider and independent forums. It is important that all carers are able to contribute should they wish to: we will develop links with local partnerships to broaden our reach, and will explore the creation of a carer-led Carers Co-production Action Group.



The Surrey Carers Pathway



Identification

Carer is identified at the earliest possible stage and their details recorded on the patients record.

Carer confirms they are willing and able to care.

Any children in the household who might take on a caring role are identified.



Welcome

Carer is welcomed. The carer is given advice and information.

Carer is given the name of a member of staff who they can speak to when needed.



Assessment and Support

Carer is informed they have the right to a statutory Carer's Assessment of their own needs (the benefits of this are explained; and the support needs of the family and the children are identified as part of the assessment process).

Carer is referred for support using the Surrey Carers Prescription Service.

Staff ensure carers are given the practical skills and training to allow them to care.



Involvement

Advice is given to carer about the partnership approach to delivering care where the patient, carers and health and social care professionals are all seen as equal partners.



Transition

Carers have a seamless experience when moving through service.



If you require this document in another format (for example, large print, Braille or easy read) or other community languages, please contact the Surrey County Council Adult Social Care information and advice service:

Availability: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Phone: 0300 200 1005

Email: contactcentre.adults@surreycc.gov.uk

Textphone (via Text Relay): 18001 0300 200 1005

SMS: 07527 182 861 (for the deaf or hard of hearing)

VRS: Sign Language Video Relay Service

Fax: 020 8541 7390

For more information about carers support and services in Surrey, visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/carersupport

