



North Tyneside
Carers' Centre



Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2029

Caring for Carers in North Tyneside

Our Vision

Carers are able to thrive. They are healthy, happy, safe and recognised for their role.

Our Mission

To improve the quality of life of carers in North Tyneside.

Our Values

Our values help us establish the culture of the organisation and how we conduct our relationships with all key stakeholders. We will be:



Approachable

We will be caring and compassionate.



Empathetic

We will listen to understand carer's individual journeys.



Responsive

We will deliver individualised support to meet needs and ensure carers, and the people they care for, are safe.



Empowering

We will support carers to have a voice in decisions that impact their lives.



Aspirational

We will support carers to be ambitious, whilst being leaders in our field.

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“

I wish to let you know how beneficial your service has been to me, and most importantly, the help I have received has been inspirational in helping me out of a very dark place with some practical advice and guidance.

(Adult Carer)

”

Introduction

Our Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2029 comes at a vital time for unpaid carers and the services that support them.

Identifying and supporting carers is critical: as the health and social care system struggles with increased demand and limited resources, the needs of carers are often overlooked. The pressures on the NHS resulting in long waiting lists for treatment, and the availability of care packages, further impacts on the wellbeing of carers and the people they care for.

In the absence of a National Carers Strategy, we relied on national and local research and guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) to develop areas of support. This included support for working carers and for carers living in poverty.

681 carers responded to a North Tyneside Carers Survey in January 2023. 44% of carers reported providing significantly more care in the last 12 months, due to a deterioration in the condition of the person cared for. The main issues identified by carers throughout the survey were: feeling overwhelmed and struggling to cope with their caring responsibilities; lack of services and respite; the impact of cost of living rises; feeling lonely and isolated (41% said they felt more isolated); poor mental wellbeing; juggling work and caring and dealing with increased levels of challenging behaviour. This is further supported by data from local GP practices in 2024, which indicates that many carers have multiple health conditions including stress, anxiety and depression.

In response to the Carers Survey, we moved premises and changed our model

of service delivery in July 2023. We opted for an office base only, and, to improve access to carer support we worked with North Tyneside Council to secure space in the six community hubs across the borough. From October 2023 we began to deliver one-to-one appointments, wellbeing and training sessions from within the community hubs - to ensure carers could access support closer to home.

As we approach our 30th anniversary, this strategy sets out our priorities for the next 5 years in improving identification and support for carers. It builds on what we have already achieved and shares our aspirations for the future. It is bold and ambitious, recognising areas of success, lessons learnt and has been informed by all stakeholders.

We would like to thank our amazing team of staff, trustees and volunteers, who go above and beyond to ensure we make a difference to the lives of carers we support. Despite the huge challenges we faced following the pandemic with increased demand and less resources, they have pulled together as a team and continued to care for carers.

To our funders, who support our work and allow us to develop and thrive, thank you for believing in us.

To our partners across health, social care, education and the voluntary sector, thank you for your continued support and we look forward to working in collaboration with you over the next 5 years.

Claire Easton

Chief Executive

David Baldwin

Chair of Trustees

Carly's Story

Situation before involvement from North Tyneside Carers' Centre

Carly is 16 years old. She lives with her mum, step-dad and 5 siblings. Her younger brother has additional needs and challenging behaviour. Carly's mum suffers with poor mental health, she is unemployed and struggles to engage with professionals.

Carly helped around the house, helped to tidy up after the younger children and helped during meal times. On the days that mum particularly struggled, Carly also took her younger siblings to school and did additional chores around the house after school.

Carly struggled at school and her behaviour escalated. She was often challenged when late after dropping her siblings off at school, she did not like to ask for help and felt unable to talk to staff. She was later permanently excluded from school and an alternative provision was found in the local area. This provision offered a more nurturing environment.

Carly settled at first but due to an increase in anxiety levels she began to display challenging behaviour in the alternative provision and her attendance levels declined. At the point of the referral to the Carers' Centre, Carly was NEET – not in education, training or employment.

Actions and support provided by North Tyneside Carers' Centre

A Family Support Worker arranged to meet Carly in the community. The worker undertook an impact assessment to help

Carly identify her caring responsibilities and the impact they were having on her life. Together they developed a support plan to achieve the outcomes Carly wanted to work towards.

A range of interventions were provided to reduce inappropriate levels of care. The worker slowly developed a relationship with Mum and identified other family members who could support her, to build a network of support around the family. The worker encouraged Carly to be independent and gave her confidence to step back and encourage mum to take on her parental role when she was feeling well.

The worker delivered weekly one to one sessions in a safe community space to allow Carly the opportunity to offload. Carly was encouraged to express her thoughts and feelings and not to keep them to herself.

Carly was encouraged to return to the alternative provision unit for a visit. Following this she agreed to attend weekly visits to the unit, accompanied by the worker. These visits were successful, and Carly was entered for her GCSE exams.

The worker transported Carly to and from her exams and arranged with staff that Carly could complete her exams in a quiet room with an invigilator, to reduce her anxiety and allow her to concentrate.

The worker supported Carly to identify time for herself and the strength and confidence in knowing she could socialise with her friends without feeling guilty about having fun. She also supported her to secure a course at college.



The difference we made

- Carly and her family recognised the impact of her caring responsibilities and support was put in place to reduce inappropriate levels of care.
- Carly felt less isolated as a result of creating time and confidence to socialise with friends.
- Carly realised her own potential and importance of her education. She returned to school, sat her exams and attended her prom.
- Carly's mental health improved as she was able to share her feelings and emotions in a safe space with the Family Support Worker.
- Carly's relationship with her mum improved as they are able to discuss feelings more openly and set aside time each week to spend together.
- Carly was able to explore her aspirations and attended a college course 3 days a week. She also started to look for a part time job alongside this.

Stephen's Story

Situation before involvement from North Tyneside Carers' Centre

Stephen is 58 years old and cares for his partner and son. His partner was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and his son misused drugs. Stephen has poor physical health which is impacted by his caring role.

Stephen had an intense caring role which was mostly taken up by his son. His son displayed challenging behaviours and was often verbally abusive, resulting in a toxic relationship with the family. His son constantly asked him for money and became very distressed when denied, which led to enabling behaviours. Stephen also withheld the extent of his son's drug use from his partner.

Stephen's partner displayed challenging behaviours and mood swings which caused conflict within their relationship. Stephen did not understand his partner's mental health diagnosis fully and struggled to cope with her issues on a daily basis. Stephen felt exhausted mentally and physically, he had no-one to offload to and struggled to prioritise his own health. Stephen also hoards as a stress release, he was buying objects from online auctions and cluttering up the home, causing further problems in his relationship with his partner.

Actions and support provided by North Tyneside Carers' Centre

A Mental Health Carers Wellbeing Worker provided Stephen with one-to-one weekly support focusing on emotional wellbeing, understanding the diagnosis of his partner

and recognising enabling behaviours within the relationship with his son.

Together they worked on Stephen's hoarding issues, using the clutter image rating scale, identified support helplines and resources through the mental health charity MIND.

Stephen was encouraged to attend various wellbeing events and training sessions run by North Tyneside Carers' Centre including: Putting Healthy Boundaries in Place, Decider skills (emotional regulation), art sessions, massage sessions and an emotional wellbeing retreat. This helped improve Stephen's understanding of the conditions of the people he cared for.

The worker referred Stephen to a local 'Men's Shed' and a 'Men's Pie Club' to offer a confidential space to offload and share advice and information and made a referral to VODA, as he felt he had a lot of experience he could share and support people in a voluntary capacity.

The worker delivered resilience sessions in managing his stress levels, setting and maintaining boundaries and coping strategies. Stephen was supported to develop his own Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and worked on this to support his own wellbeing and mental health.

The difference we made

- Stephen felt less isolated as he connected with other carers who were going through similar issues by accessing North Tyneside Carers' Centre wellbeing events and sessions.

- Stephen was more confident and reported a clear understanding of the challenging and enabling behaviours displayed by his son and partner.
- Stephen armed himself with a complete toolkit of coping strategies and distraction techniques for handling challenging behaviour and setting boundaries.
- Stephen referred himself to Talking Therapies, recognising his hoarding could become a problem.
- Due to increased confidence and self-esteem Stephen started to volunteer and talk about his aspirations to return to work.
- Stephen's mental health improved, he gained control of his life and reassured that he had contingency plans in place in the event of an emergency.



Building on Our Work

Over the last 5 years we made significant progress in delivering our strategic plan, despite the challenges faced because of the pandemic.

At the start of our last strategic period in 2018 we supported 2,500 carers with 18 staff. We ended the period in 2023 with over 7,000 carers and 25 staff. Carers identified GP practices and schools as priority areas to improve identification and support for carers. The following are examples of the progress we made:

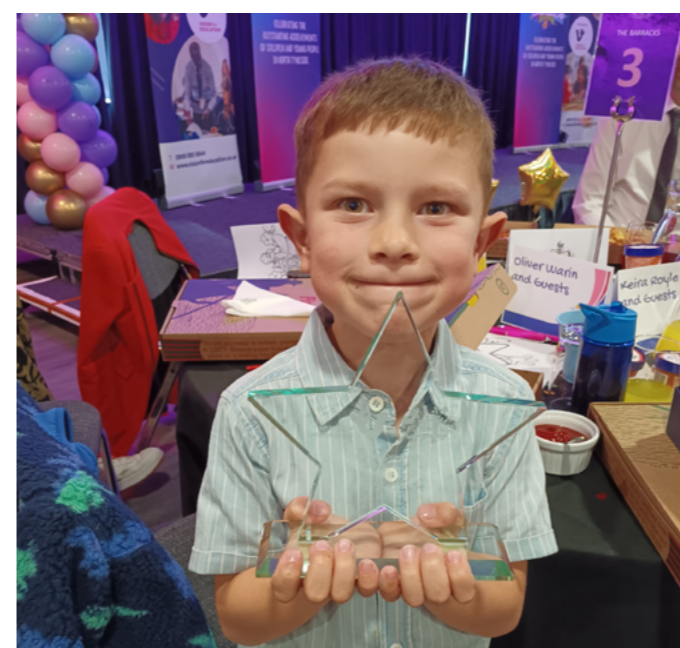
'Carer Friendly GP Award Scheme'

We worked with the Integrated Care Board to develop and implement a 'Carer Friendly GP Award Scheme' in March 2022, to change the culture and improve identification and support for carers in primary care. All 23 practices in North Tyneside signed up to the scheme: 14 practices were awarded bronze level and 3 silver level. Practices were provided with ongoing advice and support, including facilitating a GP Carers Champion network.

Impact:



2113% INCREASE
in carer referrals
from GP practices



Young Carers in Schools

We secured funding and implemented a Young Carers in Schools Programme in September 2023 and recruited a programme lead and young adult carer apprentice. We worked with 9 schools in the first seven months, to improve identification and support for young carers. This included the delivery of whole school workforce development training, assemblies across all year groups, support to implement carer friendly policies and the development of peer support networks.

Impact:



351 STAFF

in schools accessed training and report having an improved understanding of young carers and the impact of caring

3,046 PUPILS

attended young carer awareness assemblies



12 PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

were established across 9 schools

Supporting Carers During the Pandemic

We are particularly proud of the resilience of our front-line staff and the organisation, in responding to the needs of carers during the pandemic. We were faced with the challenges of staff working remotely, digital working and redesigning service delivery to ensure we could still deliver vital carer support to carers. We recognised the pressures lockdown would place on carers and ensured that our services didn't stop. We led on registering carers for their Covid vaccination, this resulted in an additional 3,500 contacting the Centre for support.

Impact:



Support in/into Employment

We also focused on improving support for carers in employment and those looking to return to work. We worked in partnership with Carers Northumberland and Newcastle Carers to deliver the Carers into Work Project across the North of Tyne area. We supported 299 carers during the period resulting in the following:

Impact:



Carers Assessments

We worked with North Tyneside Council to review the statutory carers assessment pathway and documentation. We co-developed and co-facilitated training for Adult Social Care staff to improve awareness of the impact of caring, the new pathway and the support offer for carers in North Tyneside. We also worked with the Council to develop a pathway for 'Carers of all Ages', including key transition stages.

Impact:



Carers Partnership Board

We worked as a lead partner in the development and delivery of the North Tyneside's Carers Partnership Board with North Tyneside Council and the Integrated Care Board (formally CCG). The board is made up of key decision makers from health and social care and has responsibility for delivering North Tyneside's Commitment to Carers. We regularly fed in carers views and experiences to help shape support for carers in North Tyneside. This led to additional investment in both adult and young carers services.

Impact:





Strategic Priorities

To help fulfil our purpose and work towards our vision, the following strategic priorities will underpin everything we do until 2029. All priorities are of equal importance and are underpinned by a digital strategy.

Maintaining and Growing a Strong and Sustainable Organisation

We will be led by the needs of carers and provide innovative solutions in supporting carers. We will secure funding and resources to support the sustainability of the organisation and invest in our staff team to deliver high quality services.

Goals

1. Led by the needs of carers

To consult with, engage and be influenced by carers, ensuring we are attuned to their emerging needs. We will co-produce information and models of service delivery with carers for carers.

2. Secure core contracts

To make a compelling, evidence-based business case for commissioners to secure the required level of financial support to deliver vital services to carers of all ages.

3. Diversify funding streams

To identify and secure new funding for projects that deliver added value above the work of our core contract.

4. Develop our people

To invest in and develop our staff, volunteers and governance structure to meet the needs of carers. We will provide opportunities for training, development and progression to support high performing teams to deliver long lasting outputs.

5. Demonstrate impact

To review and update our monitoring and evaluation framework to demonstrate carer outcomes, impact and share best practice.

Increasing Carer Involvement

We will work with partners to ensure carers voices are heard and improve the recognition of carers so they feel valued. We will support carers to contribute as expert partners in planning individual care and in designing local service provision.

Goals

1. Champion the needs of carers

To identify opportunities to work with partners on joint campaigns to raise awareness of the significant contribution unpaid carers make to society, and the impact on their wellbeing.

2. Represent carers

To be a voice for carers and ensure their views and experiences influence local policy decisions and service developments.

3. Critical friend role

To leverage our specialist knowledge, as a leader in carers services and trusted partner, to positively challenge partners to improve identification and support carers.

“

I am so pleased to have found you as the support has been a massive help and I no longer feel like I am floundering. The regular calls during this (lockdown) have really helped

(Adult Carer)

”

Working Effectively with Partners to Improve Identification and Support for Carers

We will work in collaboration with other organisations to ensure that those with caring responsibilities are recognised and supported in a timely manner.

Goals

1. Increase awareness

To work with key stakeholders, partners and the community to educate and improve identification and support for carers.

2. Deliver coordinated support

To work with a range of partners to ensure carers access the right support at the right time, through joined-up support and accurate information sharing across services.

3. Develop specialist partnerships

To ensure that carers who are unable to leave the person they care for have opportunities to access face to face support. We will work with specialist organisations to ensure support is available for the person cared for at the same time as carer support.

Providing Accessible and Reliable Services

We will provide timely, accessible support to carers, deliver targeted support for minoritised groups of carers and ensure we complete the actions we agreed to undertake with individual carers.

Goals

1. Target priority groups

To identify minoritised groups of carers through research and local data to deliver accessible services and support.

2. Deliver high quality information and support

To provide clear and consistent information and support to carers which is individually tailored to meet their needs.

3. Feedback to carers

To complete the actions we agreed with individual carers on their support plan and to update them accordingly.

4. Adapt and change

To enable continuous improvement that delivers accessible and innovative support to carers, influenced by the needs and views of carers.

Developing Opportunities for Carers of all Ages to Thrive and Have a Life Outside of Caring

We will empower and support carers to pursue their individual aspirations, maintain their wellbeing and have a life outside of caring.

Goals

1. Empower carers

To ensure all carers are supported to have aspirations and access the same opportunities as their peers.

2. Improve the wellbeing of carers

To deliver a range of interventions which support carers to focus on their own wellbeing and develop coping strategies.

3. Connect carers

To connect carers to access emotional support, reduce their isolation and share experiences.

4. Improve digital offer

To improve our digital offer to ensure that carers who cannot attend face-to-face sessions, can access the information and support they need to continue caring e.g. training sessions.



I find it very calming and a nice place to come to. A place where I can express my feelings at once and I can talk about everything and find ways to cope with it.

(Young carer)



Delivering our Plan

A five year strategy action plan is in place to support the delivery of our goals within our strategic priorities. This clearly sets out the specific actions, timescales, leads and performance measures.

The strategy action plan will be reviewed 6-monthly by the Board of Trustees, to assess progress towards the fulfilment of our strategic priorities.



How Can You Help?

As we begin to deliver our new strategic plan with the vision to make North Tyneside a place where carers can thrive, there are many ways you can get involved:

Donations help us to deliver vital services to young and adult carers. To donate to North Tyneside Carers' Centre please click the link below:

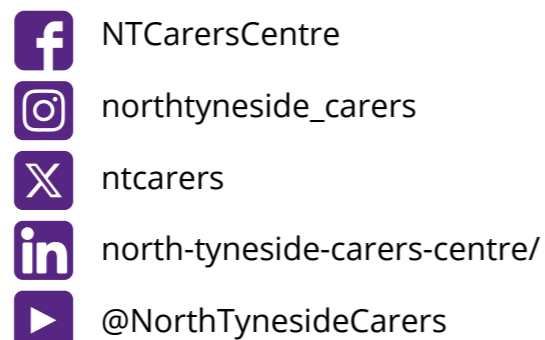
www.justgiving.com/northtyneside-carerscentre

Volunteering helps us to extend our reach in North Tyneside and support more young and adult carers. Volunteering opportunities across the organisation include:

- Becoming a trustee
- Supporting at peer support groups
- Training and wellbeing sessions
- Administration support and many more.

To learn more about our work, volunteer or donate please visit:

www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk



“

S has grown in confidence and can cope better because of young carers, it's a big part of her life. It helps her understand she's not alone but also helps her understand that she can still do stuff for her brother, be his little sister but it's okay to take a step back when it gets too much for her. I think she will just spread her wings more and more over time.

(Parent)

”



www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk

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