



Sefton All Age Carers Strategy

2025 - 2028



**CARERS
TRUST**
Sefton Carers
Centre



Cheshire and Merseyside

Sefton Council 

Contents

Did you know there are different types of carers?	4
Equality & Diversity	6
Foreword	8
Acknowledgements	10
Introduction	11
Improving care through collaboration	12
Understanding Caring in Sefton	14
How carers are supported in Sefton	15
Strengths and Assets	16
The Vision for Carers in Sefton	17
Priorities	19
Priority 1 Early Identification, Recognition & Appreciation of Carers	20
Priority 2 Information & Advice	21
Priority 3 Young Carers	22
Priority 4 Empowering Carers	23
Priority 5 Health & Wellbeing	24
Priority 6 Carers Assessments	25
Safeguarding	26
Action Plan	27
How will we ensure this strategy and action plan make a difference?	33
Appendix 1 - National Legislation	34
Appendix 2 - Local Policies & Strategies	35

“Many people do not realise how time consuming and stressful the job of caring can be. The strategy will give carers a voice and support for their health and wellbeing needs whilst looking after their loved ones”.

Sefton Carers Annual Survey 2024



Did you know there are different types of carers?

It is important to distinguish between the roles of paid care workers and unpaid carers, sometimes also called informal carers or carers.



Paid care workers

are employed by organisations or people to meet specific care needs.



Unpaid carers

are people of any age who provide care and support to a child, relative, partner, or friend in need of assistance due to illness, disability, frailty, mental health conditions, or substance misuse issues without compensation.

This strategy is intended for unpaid carers; the term carer will be used throughout.

Carers may undertake various personal, practical, emotional, financial, or supervisory support activities. Examples of carers include a 15-year-old girl who supports a parent struggling with alcohol dependency, a 40-year-old man who cares for his partner diagnosed with terminal cancer, and an 80-year-old woman who looks after her husband living with Alzheimer's disease.

The term carer includes:



Young carers

A young carer is someone under 18 who provides care.



Young adult carers

A young adult carer is between 18 and 25 years old and cares for other adults.



Adult carers

An adult carer is an adult who provides care for other adults.



Parent carers

A parent carer is someone who has parental responsibility for a child under the age of 18 with additional needs.



Working carers

A working carer is an adult who combines working with caring responsibilities.

It's important to note that a person can fulfil multiple caring roles simultaneously. For instance, someone might be classified as a young adult and a working carer.

Equality and Diversity

Carers come from a variety of backgrounds, including different cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and disabilities, whether mental or physical. In Sefton, we recognise that each carer's needs and circumstances are unique and that the support they receive should be personalised to meet those needs.

This Carers Strategy seeks to ensure fair access to care and support and to address any barriers that may have been identified. In Sefton, we value the work that carers do and want to ensure they have the support they need for themselves and their caring role. This includes providing information about promoting their general health and wellbeing, employment, involvement in activities outside of their caring role, training opportunities, having regular chances for a break and keeping in contact with friends and family members.

The term hidden carer describes carers who do not recognise themselves as carers. This strategy and accompanying action plan commit to identifying carers early in their caring journey.

Seldom-heard carers, sometimes also described as 'hard to reach', are carers who are often known but are less likely to seek support or have their voices heard, for example:

- Carers from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Carers who are lesbian, gay, bisexual
- Carers with mental health concerns, including those with dementia
- Carers who support someone who misuses drugs or alcohol
- Male carers

Carers from seldom-heard groups may encounter numerous barriers that impact their access to care and support. All partners must take responsibility for identifying and reaching out to these carers, ensuring their voices are heard. Sefton has a strong commitment to co-production, which facilitates seldom-heard groups exploring issues on their own terms and having their perspectives recognised.

In February 2023,
the **Office for National Statistics**
released a report exploring the relationship
between being a carer, age, sex and deprivation.

The key findings included:

- Females were more likely to provide unpaid care compared to males.
- The Northeast has the highest number of carers, whilst London has the least.
- There are approximately 120,00 young carers in England.
- There is the highest number of carers providing care in the most deprived areas compared with the least deprived areas.



In April 2023,
the **Office for National Statistics**
released a report highlighting the number
of carers with protected characteristics.

The main points identified include:

- Carers are more likely to be living with disabilities compared with the broader population.
- The most common religion was Christianity.
- Carers aged 16 years and over were more likely to be married or in a registered civil partnership than non-carers.
- Carers aged 16 years and over identified themselves as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) sexual orientation compared with non-carers.



In Sefton, data is collected from carers to inform the commissioning cycle and target care and support, e.g., the number of carers known, their age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, the number of care hours provided, the health condition of the person they care for and the carer if appropriate and the wards where carers live.

Foreword

Unpaid carers play a vital role in the lives of those they care for. They help to keep their loved ones well for longer, both physically and mentally. The last Census highlighted that 29,000 people in Sefton recognised themselves as an unpaid carer. By doing so, they also provide an enormous amount of support to our wider health and wellbeing services. Without the contribution of unpaid carers', the services that we all rely on would be overwhelmed. The care and support provided by carers can have a significant impact on their own health and wellbeing, and other aspects of their life. Therefore, it is important that they can access support themselves to help them in their caring role and their own lives.

I am pleased to see the published All Age Carers Strategy for Sefton and would like to thank carers for sharing their experiences to inform the development of this Strategy. It is important that the Sefton continues to develop its support for carers and this Strategy provides a sound foundation for that with clear priorities and actions across all sectors.

We need to continue to work with, and listen to, all our carers throughout the implementation of this Strategy, keeping track of where we are making progress via the development of the Action Plan and identify where we need to do more, as well as responding to new challenges and emerging needs.

I am committed to continuing to amplify the voices of carers and drive change so that the aspirations and actions of this Strategy become a reality over the next few years.



Vicky Keeley

CEO, Sefton Carers Centre

North Regional Chair, Carers Trust

Foreword

We are pleased to present our all-age Sefton Carers Strategy for 2025 –2028. This document has been developed based on national and local priorities and data. It incorporates insights and feedback from various partner organisations, including Sefton Carers Centre, Sefton Healthwatch, Sefton Parent Carer Forum, Sefton Council Voluntary Service (CVS), Sefton Advocacy, Young Carers Project, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, and Alzheimer’s Society Sefton. Most importantly, the voices of adult and young carers have been central to the strategy’s development. Nearly 1,000 carers of all ages shared their opinions between November 2023 and July 2024. When developing this strategy, different caring experiences have been considered to ensure that it includes the evolving needs of all carers who live in or provide care in Sefton. This strategy highlights the key themes identified by all carers and outlines the actions that Sefton Council and its partners are committed to taking in support of both adult carers and young carers.

Caring can be an uplifting experience for many young people, especially when they receive the right support to balance their responsibilities with their personal lives. Caring roles empower young people to cultivate important skills and values, fostering pride and boosting their self-esteem. By encouraging this balance, we can inspire young carers to thrive in their roles and achieve personal growth. It’s heartening to see that carers of all ages have identified young carers as one of the six priority areas within this strategy. We will ensure that the voices of young carers continue to be heard and the support they need to access education and reduce the impact of their caring role through tailored support will be at the forefront of delivering the action plan that runs alongside the strategy.

In Sefton, we recognise the essential role that carers play in supporting both those they care for and the community. Early identification of carers is crucial to ensure they are acknowledged and valued as partners in care. This proactive approach enables them to access personalised advice and support that caters to their specific needs and circumstances, ultimately decreasing the likelihood of crises for carers and those they support. The health and wellbeing of carers are central to this strategy and action plan.

To achieve the vision outlined in this strategy, we must maintain the strong partnership established among all stakeholders in Sefton. This includes collaboration with the carers themselves.

Deborah Butcher

Executive Director
Adult Social Care
and Health (DASS)
and Cheshire and
Merseyside NHS Place
Director for Sefton




Risthardh Hare

Executive Director
Children’s Social Care
and Education



Ian Moncur

Cabinet Member -
Adult Social Care
and Health and
Deputy Leader



Diane Roscoe

Cabinet Member -
Children Schools
and Families



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who supported the development of this strategy, particularly carers who took valuable time to share their views.

We are grateful to the following people, services and organisations:

- Carers Voice
- Sefton Carers Centre
- Sefton Healthwatch
- Sefton Parent Carer Forum
- Sefton CVS
- Sefton Advocacy
- Young Carers Project
- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Alzheimer's Society Sefton
- Carers in the Community
(via surveys, social media, consultation events, peer support and activity groups).



Carers Craft Group

Introduction

Millions of people care for family members, friends, or neighbours, often balancing these responsibilities with their jobs and family lives. According to a report by the **Centre for Care 2022**, on average, 12,000 people in the UK become carers each day, approximately 84,000 new carers every week. Carers contribute significantly to those they support and the wider community. Research suggests that the financial value of unpaid care each year in England and Wales is estimated to have reached 162 billion (**Valuing Carers 2021: England and Wales**).

It is accepted that without carers' support, health and social care agencies would struggle to provide the level of care vulnerable people and children need to live in their own homes and communities. Supporting people in their caring role is crucial to thriving communities and vital to promoting people's health and independence.

Using the building blocks of previous strategies, carers from across the borough, our system partners and Sefton Council have come together to coproduce our new All Age Carers Strategy 2025 – 2028. Carers developed the vision, and the strategy's six themes have emerged through talking and listening. This strategy closely aligns with national and local policy drivers and has early intervention and prevention at its heart. It is intended for carers of all ages and sets out what we will do together to improve the health and wellbeing of carers living in Sefton.



Improving care through collaboration

Involving people who draw on care and support, their families, carers and the broader community in the design and delivery of social care enables more collaborative approaches and better person-centred outcomes. The Care Act 2014 is one of the first pieces of legislation to include co-production in statutory guidance. It emphasises how co-production should be used to develop preventative, strengths-based approaches, support assessments, develop information and advice services, and shape the local care market.

Carers in Sefton who have lived and learned experiences are central to this strategy. Their insights have been crucial in identifying the priority themes and actions. It is fundamental that these carers' perspectives are heard, respected, and valued and that they have a central role in shaping the services that meet their needs. Two surveys have gathered views from a wide range of carers in Sefton.

The first survey was conducted between November 2023 and March 2024 and received 153 responses.

The most responses were received from adult carers

33%

The majority of respondents identified their gender as female

73%

56%
described themselves as Christian

57%
of carers reported as having a disability

80%
described their ethnic origin as British





The second survey that helped shape this strategy is the Carers Centre Annual Survey, which took place throughout July 2024 and received 757 responses.

The survey was emailed to all registered carers at the Carers Centre, and a link was added to their website. Additionally, 500 paper copies were made available, and other local community and voluntary organisations supported and promoted the survey.

The majority of respondents were from South Sefton
63%

The highest proportion of carers were those aged between
50-60
at **33%**

62%
reported caring for a parent/partner or spouse

80%
described their ethnic origin as British

80%
of respondents lived with the person they cared for

Of the 20% who did not live with the person they cared for,
61% travelled less than a mile,
25% travelled between 1 – 5 miles, and
14% travelled more than 5 miles

53%
of carers provide more than 50 hours of care and support each week

Understanding Caring in Sefton

On census day (21 March 2021), the total population of Sefton had increased by 2%, from approximately 273,800 in 2011 to 279,300. Of those, 29,000 were providing care to another person. This equates to almost 11% of the population and is higher than England and Wales's national average of 10%.

Approximately 12,000 carers are known in Sefton, leaving around 17,000 to be identified. Many people who provide care are not recognised and are often called hidden carers. It can take some time for people to see themselves as carers, especially when looking after a family member, as they may not realise, they are fulfilling a caring role. Carers are essential to the community and must receive adequate support. Often, individuals do not choose or plan to become carers; instead, they find themselves in this position.

Below is a summary of our current information about the carers identified across Sefton.

Ethnic Origin	
Other Mixed background	22
Other White European	77
Other White non-European	12
Unknown- Prefer not to say	2305
White - English	9320
White - Gypsy/Roma	3
White - Irish	41
White - Portuguese	5
White - Scottish	23
White - Traveller of Irish Heritage	0
White - Welsh	14



75% self-reported their gender as female



128 carers are under the age of 12 (1%)

The majority of carers in Sefton are between the ages of 65 – 79

24%



259 carers are aged between 12 – 19 (2%)



25% of carers report having a **disability** or **long-term condition**

Just under 1 in 40 people (**2.4%**) reported providing between 20 and 49 hours of **unpaid care each week**, compared with **1.9%** in 2011



4.9% of Sefton residents (aged 5 years and over) reported providing up to **19 hours of unpaid care** each week. This figure decreased from **7.8%** in 2011



The proportion of Sefton residents aged 5 years and over) that provided at least **50 hours of unpaid care** remained at **34%**

11% are in **full time employment**



How carers are supported in Sefton

Sefton Carers Centre has worked to establish a range of support and services for carers, aiming to identify, advise, and support carers in maintaining their caring role and having a life outside of caring.

Services on offer include:

- ✓ Information, advice and guidance
- ✓ Peer support groups
- ✓ Activity groups and coffee mornings
- ✓ Training and courses
- ✓ Low level Advocacy
- ✓ Parent Carer Support
- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Listening Ear
- ✓ Welfare Benefits Service and Tribunal Support
- ✓ Carers Emergency Card
- ✓ Carers Emergency Planning
- ✓ Support with future planning (wills, trusts & POA)
- ✓ Carers Assessments and reassessments
- ✓ Carers Voice Project
- ✓ Young Carers Service
- ✓ Young Adults Service
- ✓ Direct Payments and Payroll Service
- ✓ Personal Health Budgets Service
- ✓ Newsletter
- ✓ Living Well Sefton Carers Support
- ✓ Emergency Savings Service



Strengths and Assets

To support the development of this strategy, we have examined the strengths and assets we have in Sefton's to support carers.



Partnerships

- There are strong partnerships within the voluntary, community and faith sector to support carers.
- Strong partnerships exist across services that support young carers, including local schools, colleges, and early help teams.
- National and Local Partners support carers, including the Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Sefton Advocacy, and Sefton CVS, which all provide support and services to carers in the borough.



Specialist Carer Services

- ✓ Sefton Carers' Centre is a partner of Carers Trust, a local charity supporting carers in the borough of Sefton for over 30 years. This experience has equipped them with a wealth of knowledge.
- ✓ The Carers Support Team at Sefton Carers' Centre conducts assessments to identify the needs of carers. It aims to address these needs through tailored support plans that are regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness.
- ✓ Carers in Sefton can access a range of free, personalised services from Sefton Carers' Centre.



Independent Support Services

- ✓ Sefton Healthwatch is the independent organisation in each local authority area championing health and social care issues. Sefton Healthwatch is supportive and champions carer issues, with designated carer representation on its steering group.

The Vision for Carers in Sefton

The vision for carers in Sefton was developed by listening to carers and collaborating with Sefton Carers Centre.

To deliver this vision, our local carer support system needs to be comprehensive, universal, accessible, and flexible enough to respond to the diverse and changing needs of all carers in a person-centred way. Therefore, creating a whole-system approach that supports everyone in delivering on these responsibilities to carers is paramount.

Our Vision

Carers of all ages in Sefton will receive support for their physical, mental, and wellbeing needs while meeting the needs of the person they care for, ensuring that their own life choices and ambitions are acknowledged and **supported.**

As a result of the carers' strategy and action plan, all carers will:

- ✓ Feel valued for their contributions.
- ✓ Be recognised as expert partners in care.
- ✓ Have improved access to information and advice.
- ✓ Receive better support to stay in work, education, training, and leisure activities.
- ✓ Be better supported in maintaining their health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Gain more confidence in and access various quality services and support catering to their needs and preferences.
- ✓ Be identified and appropriately assessed.
- ✓ Ensure that young carers and their siblings have the same life opportunities as their non-carer peers.
- ✓ Be supported throughout the journey of caring as the cared for persons needs change.



Priorities

Feedback from both consultations and key messages from national and local legislation, strategies and policies have been analysed. We can review the findings under the 6 Priorities:

Priority
1

Early Identification, Recognition & Appreciation of Carers

Priority
2

Information & Advice

Priority
3

Young Carers

Priority
4

Empowering Carers

Priority
5

Health & Wellbeing

Priority
6

Carers Assessments

Priority 1 Early Identification, Recognition & Appreciation of Carers

Why is it important?

We need to encourage people to recognise themselves as carers so they can access the support available if they choose to. Acknowledging the expertise of carers and involving them in the planning and decision-making processes for the individuals they care for is essential.

All partners including voluntary sector and health have worked hard to identify hidden and seldom-heard carers (men, young carers, minority ethnic groups, LGBTQ). National events, including Carers Week and Carers Rights Day, have been promoted to raise the profile of caring in Sefton. The accumulation of our collective efforts to date has resulted in the identification of 12,000 carers across the borough. However, we accept that there is still room for improvement.

In both consultations, carers highlighted the importance of identifying, recognising, and supporting carers early in their caring journey as a key priority. Additionally, early intervention and prevention are foundational to both national and local policy drivers.

Next Steps

We will continue to work collectively to identify the estimated 17,000 and possibly more hidden carers across the borough and encourage them to register with the Sefton Carers Centre. This work will focus on building on our current understanding of the demographics of carers in the borough and targeting carers from seldom-heard groups to ensure that they are identified and supported in a personalised way.

We will develop targeted marketing for health and social care professionals, focus on hospital discharge and work with schools and universities to recognise, understand and support carers.

What success looks like

Carers identify as carers earlier in their caring role and access information, advice and support.

Health and care staff identify carers early and raise awareness of available support.

Carers will be recognised as expert partners in care.

Carers will feel valued for their contribution.

Priority 2 Information & Advice

Why is it important?

Access to information, advice, and advocacy is an essential form of early intervention and prevention. It empowers people to make informed decisions about their lives, explore different choices and options, and express their wishes and needs. By prioritising early intervention and prevention, we can achieve better outcomes for people who access services, carers, and families. By addressing issues early on, we can be proactive, avoid crises, and reduce the need for long-term care.

Health and social care practitioners should take every opportunity to inform carers about their right to access information and support. Feedback from carers in both surveys emphasises the importance of receiving the right information at the right time. This enables carers and the individuals they care for to build resilience and access self-care options. In the second survey, carers reported finding information difficult or confusing. The first survey also highlighted information as a key theme, emphasising the need for clearer, up-to-date information available in various formats, especially for those who may not be as confident with technology.

Sefton Carers Centre will be implementing a new website that is easier to navigate and has links to relevant information. Additionally, their telephone system has been upgraded to make it easier for those who prefer telephone contact. We need to monitor the success of these changes and continue to consider new ways of improving and providing information and advice across all partners.

Next Steps

We will continue to work in partnership to make information and advice services effective, focusing on prevention and early intervention. We will also work with community and third-sector organisations to achieve better outcomes for carers and those they support.

What success looks like

The number of carers in Sefton who report knowing where to access up-to-date, clear information and advice has increased.

The number of carers reporting that information is accessible, displayed and readily available in different formats increases.

A wide range of information is readily available, including local support services, health, finances and social activities.

Priority 3 Young Carers

Why is it important?

As many as one in five children and young people are young carers; there are around 166,000 in England and Wales (**2021 census**). Many young carers often feel isolated as peers lack the understanding of what being a carer means or why they may have less free time to socialise; 23% of young carers in the UK said that their caring role had stopped them from making friends (**Action for Children 2021**).

A young carer can become vulnerable when the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care becomes excessive or inappropriate, risking impacting his or her emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement, and life chances.

Carers of all ages in Sefton who participated in both surveys emphasised that young carers should be prioritised in this strategy. In the first survey, 81% of respondents wanted more support and awareness from schools for young carers. The second survey highlighted the necessity for future planning and support for non-carer goals for young carers transitioning to adult carers, along with tailored education, employment, and health and wellbeing assistance. Young carers reported they needed to be acknowledged and supported in education settings and children and young people's services.

Young carers make a vital contribution in helping to care for parents, siblings, or other relatives both physically and emotionally. Across our partnership, we will ensure that young carers are recognised, valued, and supported to live the lives they want to lead and have access to the right help in the right place at the right time if they need it.

Next Steps

We need to recognise the important role schools, colleges, and universities have in improving the identification of young carers, supporting them in education, and enabling them to access the right help and support. Health and social also have a role in preventing future needs and considering whether a caring role could negatively impact the young carer's wellbeing.

The young carers team will continue to engage and proactively work with schools and further education settings to ensure they have carer champions, policies, procedures, and working practices supporting young carers. The focus will be on encouraging the identification of young carers and offering support to ensure young people maintain attendance and educational achievement while caring and are supported to have good physical and mental health and good overall wellbeing. The young carers team will also support national and regional initiatives such as the Young Carers in Schools award.

What success looks like

Young carers will be supported to have the same life chances as their non-carer peers.

Young carers are supported to be able to focus on their lessons, participate in school activities, and feel fully part of their school community.

Young carers are protected from providing levels of care that negatively impact their wellbeing.

Transition between young carers and adult carer services is seamless and incorporates e.g. university and apprenticeship opportunities.

Priority 4 Empowering Carers

Why is it important?

Empowerment is not a one-size-fits-all concept. It varies greatly depending on a carer's circumstances, needs and contexts. At its core, empowerment involves providing carers with the support, tools and opportunities to lead the lives they wish to lead. This concept can be applied at multiple levels, including individual, community, and organisational.

Sefton Carers Centre provide a range of support that aims to empower carers, e.g. Carers Voice, advocacy, peer support, information and advice and carers into employment. These services provide strong building blocks and opportunities for future development. Through both consultations, carers said there was still some work to do, particularly regarding supporting carers in the workplace and education, valuing their contributions, involving them in decision-making, and designing care and support for the person they care for.

Next Steps

We will continue to work in partnership to support carers to have the control and confidence to make their own choices and contributions. The voices of carers will be heard and listened on all levels, including their personal situation and decision-making, shaping services that they and those they care for access, and strategically informing the commissioning cycle and how budgets are spent.

What success looks like

More carers report being involved in the decision-making and design of care and support packages.

Carers have access to information and advice, enabling them to make decisions that are right for them.

Empowering carers through age specific information and feedback opportunities.

Carers tell us they are more confident and supported in their workplace.

Carers are involved in the commissioning of services.

Priority 5 Health & Wellbeing

Why is it important?

When caring for someone else, a carer can sometimes neglect their physical and mental health. This can cause a deterioration in the carer's health and wellbeing, impacting their ability to look after the person they care for. Sefton Carers Centre works in partnership with local healthcare Trusts and organisations to ensure the best health and wellbeing outcomes for Sefton Carers.

Sefton Carers Centre is commissioned by health and social care to provide a range of services that can support carers to maintain their health and wellbeing. Services help carers relax, socialise with other carers, build peer support networks, and explore employment opportunities if they want to. In the second survey, 63% of carers said these services helped them balance their needs and caring role. Additionally, 85% of respondents agreed that there should be an increased range of alternative carer break options, facilities and services, as well as more traditional options.

The Department of Health and Social Care launched the Accelerating Reform Fund in 2023. In Sefton, this fund has been allocated to support carers taking a break from their caring role. Sefton Council is working with Sefton Carers Centre and Carefree to provide opportunities for carers to access overnight breaks in hotels nationwide. It is anticipated that the Accelerating Reform Fund will continue next financial year.

In the first consultation, 94% of carers agreed that it was important for the strategy to recognise how caring can affect carers' physical or mental health. Loneliness and social isolation were identified by 85% of respondents as a significant issue facing carers. Carers said they can feel overwhelmed and don't have time to think about themselves and their needs. Services such as homecare, day opportunities, and replacement care can be organised for the cared-for person through their social worker to allow the carer to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

Next Steps

We recognise that most carers are supported by a range of generic health, housing, leisure, and employment services, all of which have a role in maintaining carers' wellbeing and providing ongoing support. Together, we will focus on supporting carers across the borough in maintaining their health and wellbeing. We will continue to listen to carers and work collectively to provide innovative support mechanisms to meet their varied needs.

What success looks like

Increased awareness of the carer services available for physical and emotional wellbeing, social, education and employment activities.

Increased understanding of services for the cared-for person that will enable a carer to take a break from caring.

Carers are confident using technology, have benefitted from self-development opportunities, and can use these skills to enhance their wellbeing.

Organisations supporting carers unite, ensuring a holistic and impactful approach to meet the diverse needs of carers.

Priority 6 Carers Assessments

Why is it important?

Sefton Carers Centre is commissioned by health and social care to provide a range of preventative services as detailed on page 15. For many carers, these services can meet their needs; accessing them does not require a carer's assessment. However, some carers may need additional support beyond these preventative services. A carer has a right to request a carer's assessment, and a local authority has a duty to undertake an appropriate and proportionate assessment if there is an appearance of need. Sefton Council works closely with Sefton Carers Centre to meet this duty.

The Care Act 2014 states that carers are best placed to judge what is important to their wellbeing. A carer's assessment is an opportunity for a carer to lead in exploring their current circumstances and what is important to them and for them. Sefton Council commissions Sefton Carers Centre to undertake carers assessments on their behalf. During 2024 an average of 96 assessments per month have been completed. Sefton Carers Centre adopts a strengths-based approach and person-centred practice in supporting carers with their assessment. Carers are offered a variety of ways to experience their carer's assessment, including face-to-face, telephone, and Teams, and soon, a new online Carers Self Review form will be added to the Sefton Carers Centre website.

While significant progress has been made to enhance the delivery of carers' assessments in Sefton, survey results indicate that further work and investment are needed. We have observed increased adult carer assessment referrals and a growing need for reviews. This has led to delays in adult carers receiving assessments, with an average wait time of 46 days. To address this, we aim to reduce the wait time by increasing resources to meet the rising demand and exploring innovative assessment methods. The feedback from both consultations highlighted parent carer assessments as an area requiring further development. Sefton Council is working with Sefton Carers Centre to review all aspects of these assessments and plans to refresh the process.

Next Steps

Sefton Council will work closely with carers and Sefton Carers Centre to continue improving access to and the experiences of carers of all ages during assessment.

What success looks like

Carers are informed of their right to a carer's assessment and how to request one.

The wait time for a carer's assessment is reduced.

A refresh of the parent carer assessment and process is undertaken.

A parent carer transition assessment and pathway are developed.

Our Safeguarding Commitment

Safeguarding means protecting people's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It involves promoting their health, wellbeing, and human rights. The Care Act 2014 outlines clear organisational responsibilities, with councils, the police, and the NHS playing key roles in overseeing local arrangements.

When individuals are at risk of abuse or neglect, we take action to prevent harm and collaborate with them to develop a protection plan. We strive to ensure that adults with care and support needs are at the centre of any support plans. Carers are essential partners in safeguarding because they are key in supporting adults with care needs. They are often in the best position to protect against abuse, and their unique understanding of the individuals they support can help manage risks effectively, ensuring a positive and personalised approach that maximises wellbeing.

The Care Act acknowledges situations where carers may:

- ✓ Experience intentional or unintentional harm from the adult they support or from professionals and organisations they interact with.
- ✓ Unintentionally or intentionally harm or neglect the adult they support, alone or with others.
- ✓ Suspect or witness abuse or neglect of the adult.

When carers express concerns, they must be heard. If necessary, a safeguarding enquiry will be conducted. All professionals must recognise the complex dynamics of caring relationships and be aware of the pressures that carers face.

If a carer experiences intentional or unintentional harm from the person they support, or if they unintentionally or intentionally harm or neglect the adult, it is important to seek help. Professionals should handle such situations with sensitivity and proportionality. Early responses can prevent situations from deteriorating.

If you're worried about an adult, call **0345 140 0845** to report it. Even if you're unsure, it's okay to call. All reports are checked, and no action is taken unless necessary.

Are you a carer?

If you are in a caring role or know someone who is, you can find more information about support available for carers in Sefton at **Sefton Carers Centre**, call **0151 228 6060** or email **help@carers.sefton.gov.uk**

Action Plan

Collaboration in partnership is essential to achieving our vision and priority areas for action. The three-year action plan for carers outlined below has been developed to address these priority areas. The timeframe for each action will be determined by the Partnership Board.

Priority 1 Early Identification, Recognition & Appreciation of Carers

Action	By Whom
Increase the number of carers identified or self-identified each reporting period across Sefton.	Carers Partnership Board
Increasing marketing and awareness raising of carers.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Develop targeted campaigns for seldom-heard carers.	Sefton Carers Centre
The 3 main carer awareness days will be supported, raising the profile and image of caring in Sefton. 1. Young Carers Awareness Day 2. Carers week 3. Carers Rights Day	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Increase the number of carers registered with Sefton Carers Centre each quarter.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre
Develop new and innovative options to train and influence our health and social care workforce and their practice to identify and support carers.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Increase the number of carers referred to Sefton Carers Centre by health and social care officers.	Sefton Council ICB
Continue to build the positive image of being a carer, including amongst our carer population.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Ensure carers are recognised, valued, and supported as expert care partners.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Sefton Carers Centre trains schools and professionals to recognise, understand, and support carers. However, we have identified a gap in this training provision around Parent-Carers Professional Awareness and will look to develop this area.	Sefton Council Education

Priority 2 Information & Advice

Action	By Whom
The success of the new website launched by Sefton Carers Centre is monitored.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre
The success of the upgraded telephone system launched by Sefton Carer Centre is monitored.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre
Identify referral points where Carers seek information and advice (touch points for carers).	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre
Develop an information and advice task and finish group to review the breadth and quality of information provided at each touch point.	Carers Partnership Board
Partners who are identified as providing information and advice develop a plan for regularly reviewing their offer and ensuring it is up-to-date, clear, and available in various formats, with particular attention to carers who do not use technology.	Carers Partnership Board
Information and advice are available in a variety of formats.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB Education

Priority 3 Young Carers

Action	By Whom
We will work with partners to increase awareness and identification of young carers and promote the benefits of supporting the whole family.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre ICB Sefton Council Education
Offer a transition assessment for young carers and adult carers of a young person to identify the carer's needs for support after the young person turns 18.	Sefton Carers Centre
We will continue building on relationships with schools to ensure the progression of young carer support in education, including adopting the Young Carers in Schools award.	Sefton Carer Centre Education
We will work to develop our young carer's offer, including scoping other areas of best practice, to ensure carers are offered a suite of activities and training that is relevant to their needs and accessible.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre ICB Sefton Council Education
The new Carers Voice and Involvement project will support Young Carers Voice.	Sefton Carers Centre Carers Voice
Young and young adult carers are protected from providing inappropriate care that negatively impacts their health and wellbeing.	Sefton Council
The young carers team will support national and regional initiatives.	Sefton Carers Centre
Improve young and young adult carers' health and wellbeing through appropriate support, including access to timely support, chance for a break, access to GP and counselling.	Sefton Carers Centre ICB Sefton Council

Priority 4 Empowering Carers

Action	By Whom
Carers cocreate information materials with and/or for carers, through insights projects or market research projects.	Sefton Carers Centre
Work with local partners to encourage employers to recognise and support their employees who are also unpaid carers, including promoting the benefits of carer ambassadors to improve 'carer-friendly' flexible working practices.	Carers Partnership Board
Carers feel informed and involved in important decisions about the person they care for.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Co-produce care and support plans by involving carers in developing the cared-for person's care package when the cared-for person consents to this, or it is in their best interests to do so if they cannot provide consent.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB
Include carers in the review and future commissioning of support services.	Sefton Integrated Commissioning Team
Promote the availability and utilisation of Direct Payments. Improve guidance and support on Direct Payments.	Sefton Council Sefton Carers Centre
The Adults and Children's Safeguarding Teams will work to improve carers' understanding of how to spot abuse and raise a safeguarding alert with the council.	Safeguarding Team
Create carer case studies to demonstrate the need to identify and support carers and showcase them as expert care partners.	Sefton Carers Centre
Celebrate the excellent outcomes many young carers achieve.	Carer Partnership Board

Priority 5 Health & Wellbeing

Action	By Whom
There is a need to improve the registration and assessment of carers, including young carers, in primary care so their needs can be identified quickly before their health and wellbeing deteriorate.	Sefton Carers Centre ICB Sefton Council Education
Encourage carers to request NHS health checks http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check	ICB Sefton Council Education
Promote the wellbeing benefits of commissioned and universal services, including gyms, adult learning, museums, libraries and galleries.	Carers Partnership Board
Support carers in maximising their physical and emotional health and wellbeing by promoting training opportunities in partnership with social care, health, and service provider staff.	Sefton Carers Centre
To help reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing, promote digital technology and develop an increased digital offer.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre ICB Sefton Council Education
Carers are involved in designing and delivering the range of preventative services provided.	Integrated Commissioning Team Sefton Carers Centre
Carers will have access to 1:1 activities and group support in their communities.	Sefton Carers Centre
Review the current Counselling and Listen Ear services provided at Sefton Carers Centre.	Integrated Commissioning Team Sefton Carers Centre
Promote the use of Carers Smart card	Sefton Carers Centre

Priority 6 Carers Assessments

Action	By Whom
Ensure that all carers providing or intending to provide care are offered the opportunity for a carers' assessment. The process is flexible and tailored to allow carers' full involvement.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB Education
Work to develop the out-of-hours and weekend support offer to ensure carers can be appropriately supported at a time that is suitable for them.	Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council ICB Education
Monitor the impact of the increased assessor resources on reducing the waiting time for adult carers assessments.	Carers Partnership Board Sefton Carers Centre Sefton Council
Explore new and innovative methods to support undertaking carer assessments, e.g., increasing the use of technology.	Sefton Carers Centre
Review the performance indicators and audit to monitor the delivery of carers' assessments and the delivery of support to ensure it is happening, is effective, meets carers' needs, and achieves carer outcomes.	Integrated Commissioning Team Sefton Carers Centre
Review the current Parent Carer assessment and process.	Sefton Carers Centre Children's Services

How will we ensure this strategy and action plan make a difference?

To ensure that this strategy and action plan improves the lives of Sefton carers, a Sefton Carers Partnership Board will be established to drive forward and monitor progress.

Key partners will be invited to join the Board, including but not restricted to carers, Carers Voice, Cabinet Members with responsibility for adult and children's social care, Sefton Carers Centre, Sefton Healthwatch, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations who support carers, integrated commissioner for carers, safeguarding, representatives of health and social care. All partners will develop terms of reference, and the membership, frequency, and scope of the Board will be defined.

The leads for each action will be agreed upon, and the leads will be expected to update the Board on progress and any barriers to progress at each meeting. We consider this strategy a living document, and actions will be reviewed annually, updated, and amended as the Board considers appropriate.

The Sefton Carers Partnership Board will report on the progress of this strategy and action plan to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Strategic Joint Commissioning Board for Health and Social Care in Sefton.

Monitoring and evaluating the impacts of this strategy and action plan is vital in ensuring that our efforts continue to focus on the cared-for and carer experiences. This, in turn, will be considered in every commissioning decision.



Appendix 1

National Legislation

The law relating to carers differs across the United Kingdom and covers a wide range of issues, including learning, working, carers' assessment, and equality. In this section, you will find a brief introduction to key pieces of legislation and links to further information.

The Care Act 2014 became operational in April 2015, heralding a landmark in carers' rights. For the first time, carers are now on an equal legal footing as those they care for. The Care Act 2014 emphasises maintaining or regaining people's health and wellbeing and preventing deterioration where possible, e.g. the breakdown of a caring relationship. The Council is committed to working in this way. It works closely with the Carers' Centre and other organisations to support carers, e.g. information, advice, peer support, holistic therapies and counselling.

The Children and Families Act 2014 builds on the Children Act 1989 to improve how young carers and their families are identified and supported. It extends the right to an assessment to all young carers under 18 regardless of who they care for, what type of support they provide or how often they provide it. The Local Authority must consider how any identified needs can be met.

The Children Act 1989 sets out a duty to assess whether a parent carer within their area needs support and, if so, what those needs are. A local authority in England must take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which Parent Carers within their area need support.

Under the Equality Act 2010, no person should be discriminated against in the provision of services, employment, or education because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, or religious belief. Further, a carer cannot be discriminated against based on their association with a disabled person.

NHS Long Term Plan 2019 sets out ways to ensure the NHS is fit for the future over the next 10 years, focusing on starting well and helping communities live and age well. In relation to carers, the plan sets out several measures to better identify and recognise carers, provide better support for carers in an emergency, and provide better support for young carers.

A strategy for tackling loneliness was introduced in 2018. To support this strategy, the government has introduced a Building Connections Fund, investing £1.3m to fund several projects that will increase support for carers.

The Health and Care Act 2022 came into force on 1 July 2022 in England. There are four key provisions in relation to carers.

Section 10: Places a duty on NHS England to consult carers and other relevant representatives affecting commissioning or policy decisions affecting services.

Section 25: Places a duty on Integrated Care Boards to promote the involvement of each carer, where appropriate, in relation to decisions about prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care.

Section 25: Places a duty on Integrated Care Boards to consult carers in commissioning or policy decisions affecting services.

Section 91: Places a duty on NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts to involve carers, where appropriate, in planning for hospital discharge as soon as is feasible.

The Act seeks to strengthen the involvement for carers on a strategic level but also individual level about things that will affect them because they are caring for a patient receiving health services.

Appendix 2

Local Policies & Strategies

Imagine Sefton 2030 engaged with thousands of people, local businesses, and potential investors to create a vision for Sefton that collectively promotes shared prosperity, coordinated public investment, and a healthy environment and population. The vision guides long-term planning, helping to stimulate growth and prosperity, set new expectation levels, and help focus on what is important for Sefton.

This co-produced vision for Sefton, looking ahead to 2030, reflects our commitment to listening to the borough's residents and prioritising what matters most to them in all our actions. The Sefton Vision 2030 strategy outlines our common goals for the future. Key pledges identified in the accompanying **Outcome Framework** for carers include:



- Work with partners to unlock the borough's collective resources for the benefit of all.
- Support robust and equal partnership working between public, private and voluntary sectors and the communities they serve.
- Work together to encourage the community to be involved in shaping the delivery of services in local neighbourhoods.
- Work together to strengthen community voices.
- People influence decisions that affect them, and communities work with partners to deliver effective change.
- People are not socially isolated.
- Work together to develop clear commissioning policies that promote and encourage health and wellbeing.
- Work together to promote and encourage independence.
- People access an integrated, efficient, sustainable health and social care system.
- Work together so Sefton becomes a digital borough and improves access to digital technology.

Carers Charter Cheshire and Merseyside

The **Carers Charter** has been developed by Cheshire & Merseyside Strategic Carers Partnership Group. We will continue to engage with carers and feedback will be reflected in further updates of the charter. Your feedback is welcome here communications@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk

