

Think Carer – Building a Carer Friendly City

Carers Strategy



2026 to 2030

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Foreword

Introduction

This strategy aims to provide a framework for improving the lives of family and friend unpaid carers, through continuing to build a 'Carer Friendly City' – a city that sees carers, hears them, involves them and supports them.

A significant issue for supporting carers is the fact that many people don't always see themselves as a carer. They are family members, friends or neighbours, and therefore don't necessarily access assistance until they have experienced many of the negative impacts of caring. This strategy aims to reach out to carers as soon as possible to help reduce the known health inequalities carers face.

This document is aimed at 2 audiences: family and friend unpaid carers who want to see they are valued, potentially get involved in the implementation of this strategy, know their rights, and identify the support they could be accessing; and secondly, for services/ organisations who wish to show they are aiming to be 'carer friendly'.

Although this strategy is led by Brighton & Hove City Council's Adult Social Care team, mainly due to the statutory duties regarding carers being central to Adult Social Care responsibilities, the ambition is for any services within the city to adopt this strategy's framework and show their commitment to

family and friend unpaid carers, and so evolve into an 'all age carers strategy'.

Through the increasing integration of services, there will be inevitable connections with the other related service areas, and the hope is that both statutory and non-statutory services adopt the strategy framework and support all carers as defined within Section 1. As part of the original consultation for this work, carers specifically identified 4 key areas which are important to them and are the pillars of the Carer Friendly Strategy – Carer Friendly Social Care; Health services; Employers; and Education establishments.

Local carers requested that the main elements of this document are no more than 6 pages, to ensure concise information. However, for those who wish to review more detail on the key areas within this document, there are dedicated Carer Friendly City webpages on [the council's website \(ADD LINK\)](#). The core details of this strategy are within Section 2, and there are separate summary guides to the strategy for family and friend carers, and services who wish to be 'carer friendly'.



Section 1 – Why have a carers strategy:

Family and friend unpaid carers provide a vital role in our communities, and there is much evidence of the need to improve their lives and reduce the health inequalities they are known to be disproportionately facing.



Definition of a Carer:

There are many ways a person providing unpaid care can be defined, or define themselves, however for the sake of this strategy we will use the generic term, carer, as defined by NHS England:

“ A carer is a person of any age, adult or child, who provides unpaid support to a partner, child, relative or friend who couldn’t manage to live independently or whose health or wellbeing would deteriorate without this help. This could be due to frailty, disability or serious health condition, mental ill health or substance misuse.” (reference 1)

For further clarity, and definitions used within this strategy:

Adult carer – person over the age of 18 years old, providing unpaid care;

Parent Carer – caring for a child/young person with additional needs;

Young Carer – a child or young person under the age of 18 years old, providing unpaid care to an adult or child/young person; and Sibling Carer – child/young person who is affected, and/or caring for a child/young person with additional needs;

There is also increasing evidence based for:

‘Sandwich Carers’ – carers supporting children with additional needs and aging parents, which can place increasing pressure on the whole family dynamics, health and financial security.

This strategy predominately focuses on adult carers, caring for adults, as reflected in much of the supporting population data, and related research. However it is important to recognise that Parent Carers and Young Carers also have rights, and experience the same disproportionate health inequalities, and will potentially go through a transitional period as they reach 18 years old, or the person they care for does (or up to 25 yrs old for specific needs/disability). Brighton and Hove City Council's, Families, Childrens and Wellbeing Directorate support Parent Carers, and Young Carers, although as mentioned there is crossover in terms of support services. There is an ambition to evolve this strategy into an 'all age' carers strategy, and this will be part of the local co-production and implementation plans.



What do carers provide?

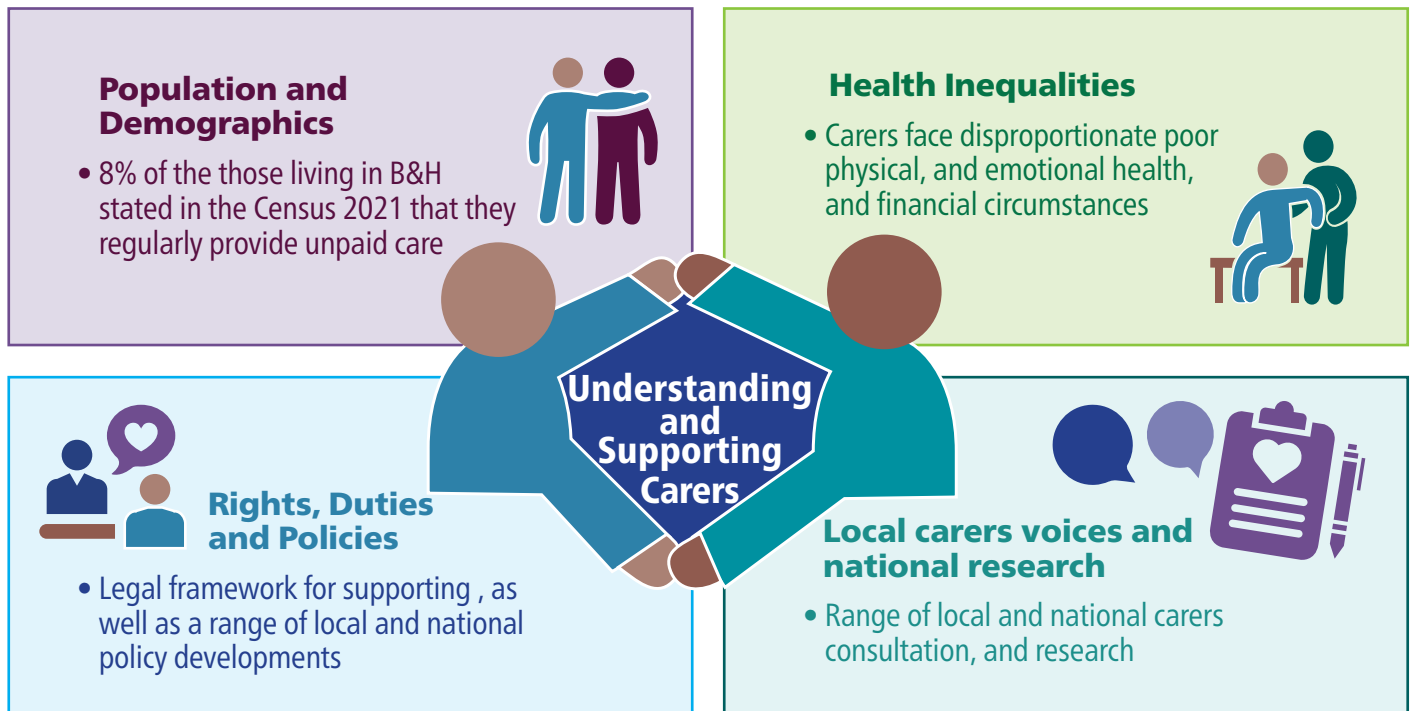
Caring is a unique experience, however for those who haven't experienced providing unpaid care, [research from The King's Fund](#) highlights the range of people being cared for and the care they provide.



Graphic from: Caring in a Complex World, Perspectives from unpaid carers and the organisations that support them. Kings Fund, May 2023, page 11

What is the rationale for supporting carers?

There is a moral, economic, and in some cases, legal duty for identifying, involving and supporting carers. This strategic framework provides the rationale for a Carer Friendly City, represented under these 4 key elements:



The above 4 areas provide the structure for an evidence base to enable services to access the relevant information for them to develop 'carer friendly' services. The detail of these themes is on the dedicated webpages BHCC Carer Friendly City, [\(add link – need to speak to Web design team\)](#), under each subject heading, which will be updated regularly.

Put simply, carers make up at least 8% of the population of Brighton & Hove and disproportionately face health inequalities. Local carers have provided an evidence base for needing to improve the identification, involvement and support required for them to continue to care (through a range of consultations), which is amplified by a wealth of national research, as well as a clear legal and policy structure regarding supporting carers – which all amounts to the need for a Carer Friendly City.

Population and Demographics

1,300 Carers
known to BHCC Adult Social Care

- reference Eclipse Assessment Database ASC, BHCC; and 5,200 Carers Hub (2025/26)
- reference Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove Charity Log Database



Brighton & Hove carers figures 2023 -

3,296 Adult Carers
registered with their GP within Brighton & Hove

- reference Brighton & Hove Health and Adult Social Care Annual Report 2023





5.8 Million carers in the UK,

of which **1.7 million** people are providing over **50hrs** of **unpaid care** a week; **9%** of the national population



20,084 carers in Brighton & Hove, of which



5,430 people are providing over **50hrs** of **unpaid care** a week;

8% of the Brighton & Hove population stated they provide regular unpaid care

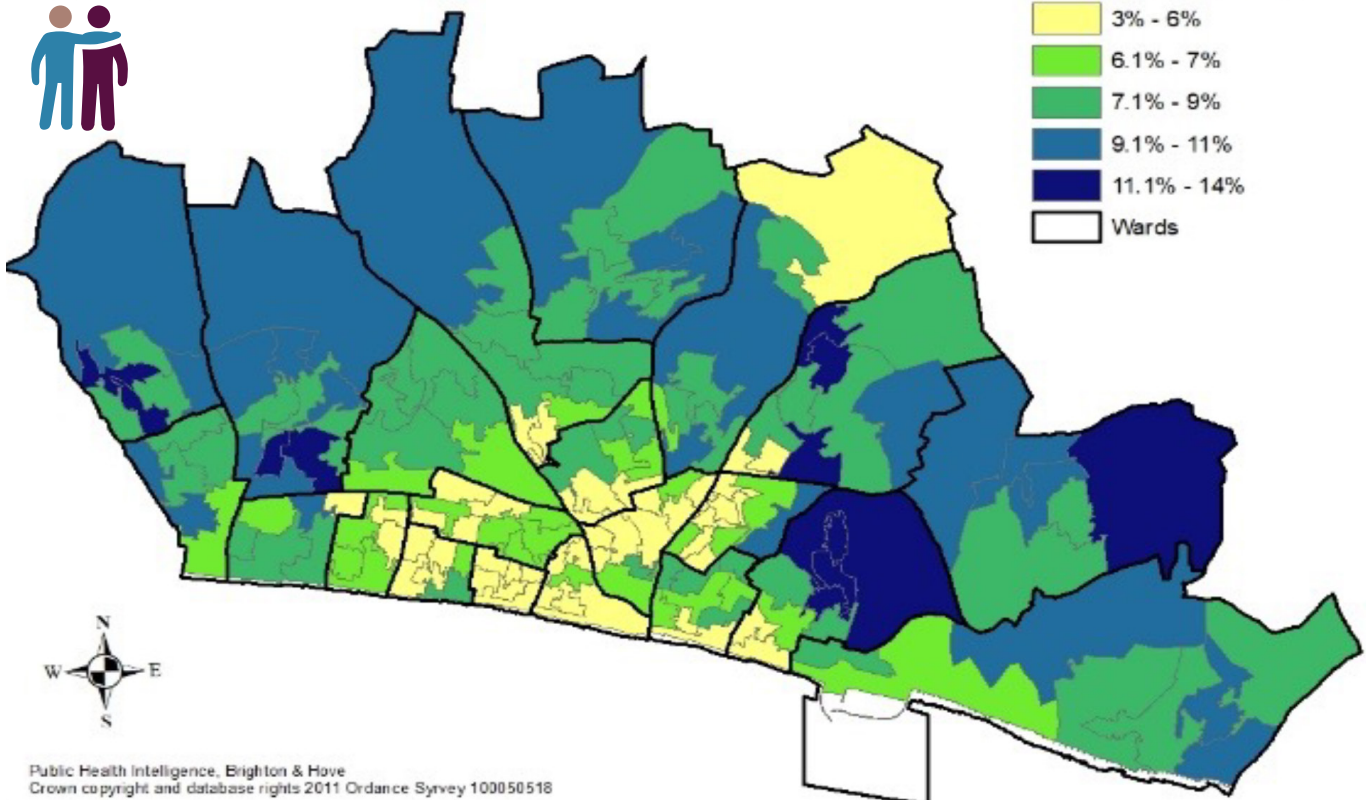


- reference, Key facts and figures | Carers UK last updated 2025

- reference, Unpaid carers in Brighton & Hove Census date 2021

Proportion of all residents who provided unpaid care

Source: 2021 Census.



Public Health Intelligence, Brighton & Hove
Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100050518

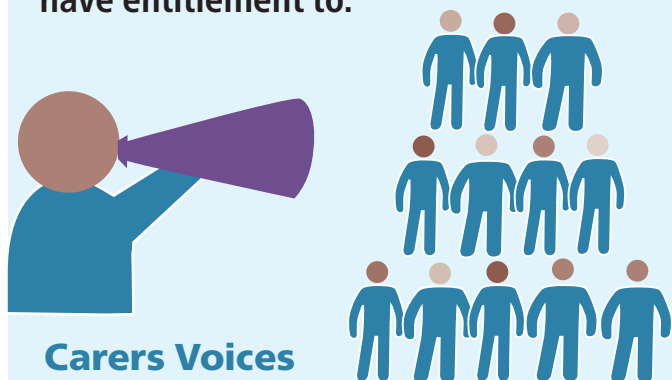
The Brighton and Hove: Unpaid Carers 2021 Census data, has been broken down by Council wards, with the highest % of residents who are carers, being in Woodingdean (11.7%), and Hangleton and Knoll (11.6%)



Legislative and Policy framework: Rights, Duties and Policies

Crucially, carers now have 7 overarching Rights

These are still not universally known and greater awareness is needed to ensure carers access the rights they have entitlement to.



Carers Voices

Recognising your Rights:

- The right to unpaid Carer's Leave
- The right to request flexible working
- The right to ask your GP practice to identify you as a carer
- The right (and choice) to request a free flu jab
- The right to protection against discrimination for harassment
- The right to request a carer's assessment
- The right to be consulted when the person you care for is discharged from hospital



In addition to the legislative framework shown in the following table, there are key national and local policies and guidance that are reflected within the remit of this strategy and aim to support carers.

This strategy incorporates the range of local and national policies and guidance related to carers, including:

- Fit for the future:
10 Year Health Plan for England 2025
- People at the Heart of Care:
adult social care reform, White Paper, 2021
- Better Care Fund framework
2026 to 2027
- Core20PLUS5 (adults) –
an approach to reducing health inequalities

Plus, locally:

- Brighton & Hove City Council Plan
2023 to 2027 –
A Better Brighton and Hove for all
- Brighton & Hove Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
2019-2030
- Health and Adult Social Care
Delivery Strategy
2023-2027
- Sussex Health and Care,
Improving Lives Together
- NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB's
5 Year Commissioning Plan
2026/27

The legislative framework for supporting Carers, includes statutory duties within:

Legislation	Importance for carers, and this strategy
The Care Act 2014	created legal parity of esteem for Carers, and those being cared for, and for Carers to be entitled to support in their own right. Additionally, it places duties on the LA to provide information and advice; carers assessments; eligibility criteria for support, including personal budgets. The Act additionally places a duty of co-operation, to increase integration with NHS partners.
The Health and Care Act 2022	created Integrated Care Boards, and extended the duty to consult and involve Carers, at both a strategic and individual level. Plus, a new specific duty to involve Carers in decisions and planning when discharging patients from hospital.
The Carer's Leave Act 2024	employees are entitled to one week's unpaid leave per year, to take flexibly, if providing or arranging care for someone with a long-term care need.
The Children and Families Act 2014	gave Young Carers and Parent Carers the right to an assessment of their own needs, and provision of support to reduce inappropriate care provision.
The Equality Act 2010	ensures that Carers are indirectly protected from discrimination, by association, resulting from the needs of the cared for person, so cannot be less favourably treated than someone else because they are a Carer.



https://www.magnific.com/free-photo/medium-shot-woman-wheechair_16621873. Image by freepik



Health Inequalities

Caring is increasingly recognised as a [social determinant of health](#), due to carers experiencing significant health inequalities compared to non-carers, including higher rates of long-term conditions, physical strain, and severe mental health challenges. These known impacts on carers have been described as the ‘carer burden’, covering the perceived emotional, physical and social hardships associated with caring, defining the effect of these multiple compounding issues on those who provide unpaid care.

The need to support carers, and so reduce their health inequalities, reinforces the message that carers provide a vital role. ADASS recently described unpaid caring as

“ a social infrastructure, as important as housing, transport and paid care – but it is taking too much from the carers themselves.”

[\(Unpaid caring – the hidden health inequality we can no longer ignore and why we must intervene to prevent ill-health in carers, 2025\),](#)

...and went on to say that carers


“ are the invisible infrastructure of our health and care system, enabling people to live at home and reducing pressure on hospitals, GPs, and local authority services. Yet the evidence is clear: caring itself is risking the health of those who provide it. ”

...and makes a ‘call to action’:


- Recognising carers as a **priority group in population health strategies**, alongside other inequality groups.
- Embedding carers’ **risk assessments** into social care and discharge planning.
- Offering **proactive health checks** for high-intensity carers, especially those aged 65+.
- Providing **targeted wellbeing support** – mental health programmes, MSK/back care, sleep support and respite.
- Embedding **carer health metrics** into ICS dashboards to make carers’ health visible.
- Leveraging entitlements such as Carer’s Allowance to unlock wider financial and health support

In addition to the physical and emotional impacts, there is a growing national awareness of needing to address carers financial wellbeing as a known health inequality. Carers within Brighton & Hove face increasing financial disadvantage as a result of their caring role, as well as the cost of living within the city. A recent inspection report published in December 2025 by the [Care Quality Commission of Brighton & Hove City Council’s Adult Assessment Services](#) stated that the local authority is a negative outlier in measures around employment and financial security, referencing BHCC annual Survey of Adults Carers 2023/24, showing that of the carers who responded to the survey, 53.68% of unpaid carers experienced financial difficulties because of caring, which is below the England average (46.55%).

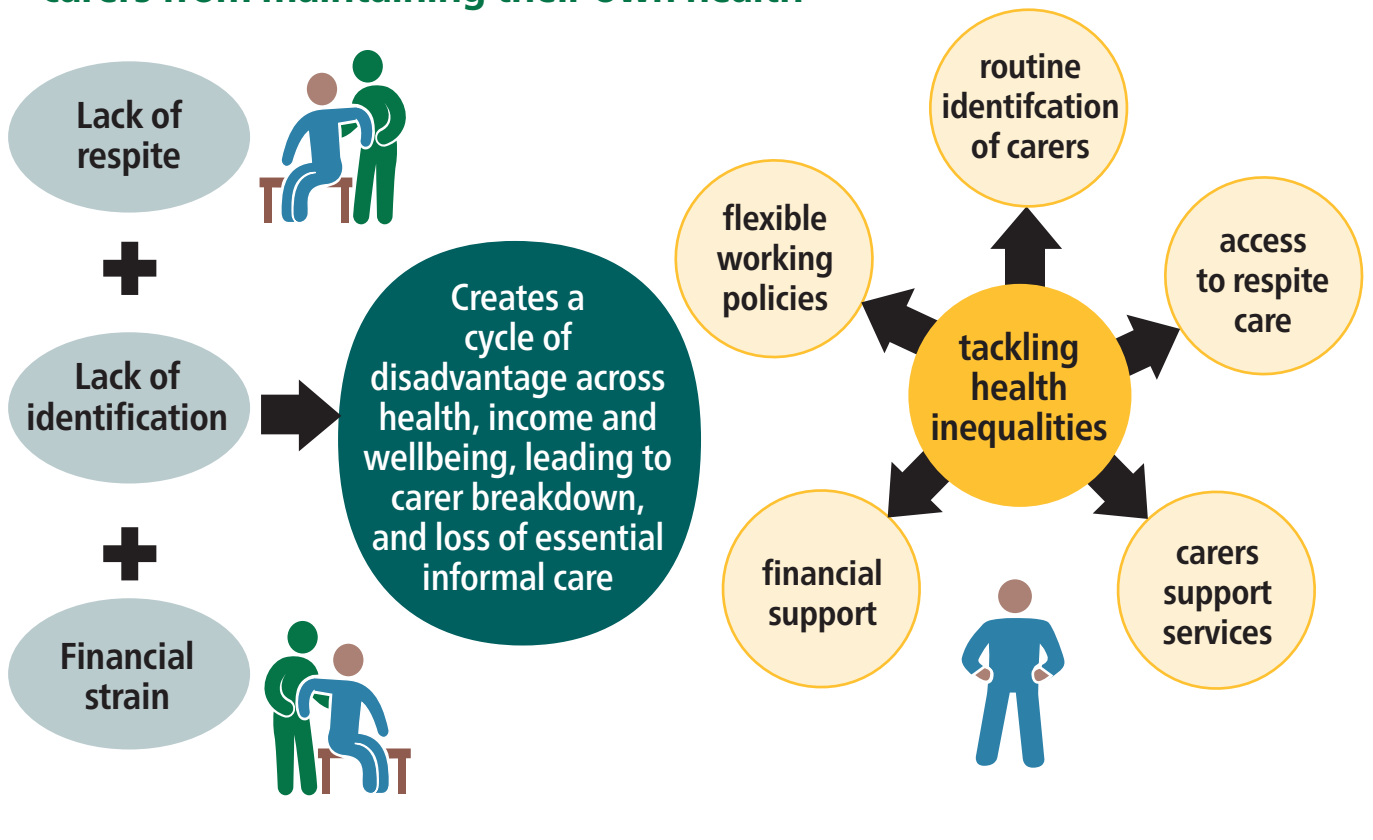
Key Areas of Health Inequalities facing Carers, through the experience of systemic health disadvantages:

Health Status	Poor Mental Health	Access to Care	Declining Poor Health	Socioeconomic Disadvantage
<p>60% of carers report a long-term health condition or disability, compared to 50% of non-carers. Those caring for 50+ hours per week are twice as likely to report poor health.</p> 	<p>81% report increased stress and anxiety, while 77% say their mental health has worsened due to caring. Loneliness and social isolation is prevalent, with 36% of carers feeling lonely 'often or always' vs. 6% of the general population.</p>	<p>40% of current carers have postponed or cancelled their own medical appointments (tests, scans, or therapy) because of their caring responsibilities. Difficulty navigating services while prioritising the needs of the person they care for.</p>	<p>Carers frequently experience physical strain from lifting, disturbed sleep (24%), and chronic exhaustion (33%). Increased risk of chronic conditions (back pain, fatigue, and cardiovascular issues).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many carers reduce working hours or leave employment; • financial strain contributes to stress and poorer health outcomes; • greater inequalities seen in carers from lower-income backgrounds
Reference Facts about carers (last updated October 2025, Carers UK 2025)	Reference Facts about carers (last updated October 2025, Carers UK 2025)	Reference Caring About Equality, Carers UK 2025	Reference State of Caring 2023, the impact of caring on: Health, Carers UK, 2023	Reference Exploring the relationship between unpaid carers and finances, Carers Trust, 2024

Intersectional Inequalities experienced by carers:

Ethnicity -	Gender -	Socioeconomic Status -	Sexual Orientation -	Age -
<p>Some minoritised groups report lower rates of recognition by healthcare professionals. For instance, only 76% of Asian carers and 78% of Black carers felt their mental health needs were understood, compared to 86% of White carers.</p>	<p>Women are more likely to take on intensive caring roles and report higher rates of mental and physical health deterioration (64% for women vs. 52% for men).</p>	<p>Carers with lower qualifications or living in deprived areas face the most severe "penalties." They are more likely to live in poverty and have significantly lower physical and mental health scores.</p>	<p>LGB+ carers report significantly higher rates of mental health conditions (36%) compared to heterosexual carers (13%).</p>	<p>Young Carers, impact on education and emotional development.*</p> <p>Older carers have higher physical health risks.**</p> 
Reference Carers Health and Experience of Primary Care, Carers UK, 2021.	Reference Facts about carers (last updated October 2025), Carers UK 2025	Reference Caring About Equality, Carers UK 2025	Reference Carers Health and Experience of Primary Care, Carers UK, 2021.	Reference * Caring and classes: the education gap for young carers, Carers Trust 2024; **Caring About Equality, Carers UK 2025

Tackling the systemic barriers known for preventing carers from maintaining their own health



The national Carers Week report for 2025, provides a cautionary summary that

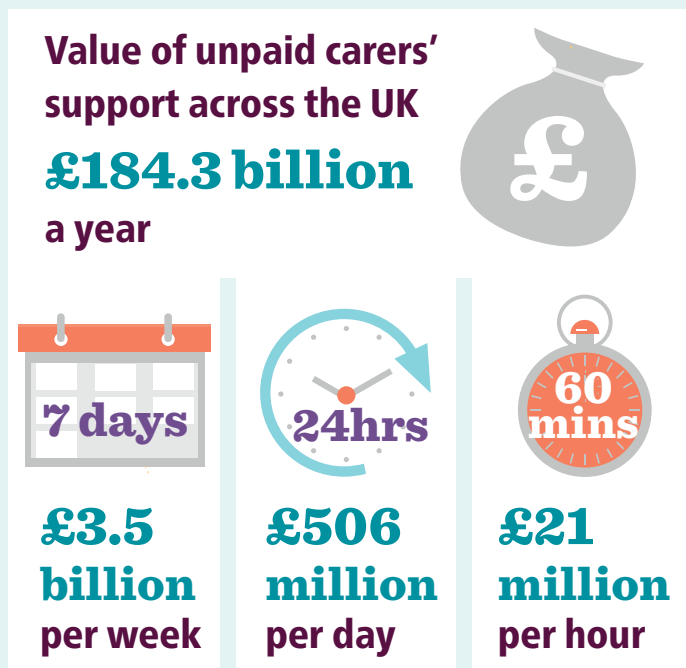
“ There is a risk, that if we do not proactively tackle the inequalities impacting unpaid carers, more people will face poverty, poor health, lower educational attainment and employment prospects, loneliness and isolation. ”

This statement echoes what local carers have told us, that proactive support must be central to services for carers.



Local carers voices and National Research

Despite the often-negative impacts of caring and the barriers carers face, national research has estimated that the annual economic contribution of family and friend unpaid carers is equivalent to the total national NHS budget per year. Carers UK, working with the Centre for Care, report [Valuing Carers 2021](#) which is based on the Census 2021 data, and calculating the average cost of paid care hours (£25) against the unpaid care hours, states:



Local carers have told us:

The views of local carers are represented throughout this strategy, and the details of specific carer engagements can be found on the dedicated webpages, including results from Brighton & Hove City Council's Adult Social Care Carers Survey (2023/24, and 2025/26), and a range of consultation reports produced by the Carers Centre Brighton & Hove (lead partner of the Carers Hub), as well as their comprehensive engagement plan, including direct contact with carers; carers responding to specific surveys and events; social media activity; use of LinkedIn for supporting working carers; quarterly publication of the Carers News newsletter; and partnership working across national and local services, including neighbourhood events.

The overarching themes include:

- Need for flexibility, cooperation and improved communication within services
- Services to take a holistic approach that considers the unique needs and challenges faced by unpaid carers, their families and those who receive support.



- Improved carer information
- Increase in respite provision
- Need for advocacy within hospital settings
- Need for a 'roadmap' of services for carers and those they care for.

The Carers Rights Day 2023 was a central event for engaging with carers regarding the refresh of the Carers Strategy. This day long event received a wealth of contributions from a diverse range of carers. The sessions focused on the **'4 Pillars' of the strategy – Carer Friendly: Health; Education; Employers; and Social Care.**

Key issues identified included the need for:

- Carer Awareness Training for professionals.
- Accessible information for carers, regarding key issues, such as education, health and care assessments, as well as carers assessments.
- Flexibility in terms of learning in school for young carers; GP appointments; assignment extensions in universities for people affected by caring; and flexibility in the workplace.
- Proactive support, reaching out to carers, support with identification and recognition, as well as ongoing support. Carers support services; social care; health services should 'check in' with carers, not wait till they make contact.
- Improved respite offer, as many carers expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of respite, both in terms of access and affordability. Having to pay for respite was a barrier to accessing it, even if it was available.

More information from the above session will be available on the Brighton & Hove City Council Carer Friendly City webpages, within the 'what local carers have told us' section.

In 2024 the Sussex Carers Partnership (made up of the 3 lead carer organisations within Sussex) published a report 'Unpaid Carers Insight – Hospital Discharge Process', which the local Integrated Care Board had requested, in order to review the hospital discharge recommendations previously identified.

This work focused on the experience of carers (through surveys, focus group, and interviews) and identified 8 key areas of concern regarding cared for people being discharged from hospital:

- Abrupt hospital discharge
- Lack of communication with carers
- Concerns regarding the readiness of the cared for person
- Challenges regarding the coordination of the hospital discharge
- Medical oversight issues
- Inadequate support services, and post discharge support arrangements
- Transport and logistical issues
- Impact on carers – this issue very much focused on how much the carer had to adapt/rearrange in order support discharge, often without notice and the above issues.





The Carers Centre Brighton & Hove (Carers Hub) carried out a [Carer Friendly City Survey \(March 2026\)](#) with local carers, and the findings of which (from 40 responses) identified a number of issues which reinforce the commitments of this strategy. The data shows an increase on the same survey in 2023 of carers stating that the city is increasingly carer aware, from 33% agreeing in 2023 to 45% agreeing in 2026.

However, with 3 further comparable questions with 2023, carers have stated there is room for improvement in order to support them:

- 50% of respondents (2026) disagreed that health, social care and voluntary sector services are integrated well enough; only 20% agree; which reflects a slight improvement from 2023, when 55% disagreed, and 19% agreed
- 40% agreed that there is effective information/advice available, leading to ongoing support, an increase on 2023, when 31% agreed
- 42.5% disagreed that support services for carers take a 'whole family' approach, which shows an increase in disagreeing, from 31% (disagreed in 2023)

The survey addressed a number of other areas, including:

- access to a range of respite services, with 37.5% currently accessing no respite support.
- carers stated they wanted respite through a range of options from homebased to overnight/residential setting. Including comments highlighting an interest in longer funded breaks, better information, and 'everyday respite' such as café discounts - sometimes preferring breaks that don't involve carer groups.
- Areas needing improvement repeatedly include:
 - o **More consistent carer recognition in NHS/hospital/GP settings, and better communication between hospitals, GPs and social care**
 - o **Quicker assessments and less delay** (for example carers card renewals, badges, processes)
 - o **Support that fits working carers' schedules** (not assuming daytime availability)
 - o **Clearer, proactive signposting** so carers aren't finding support 'by chance'.

Refreshing the Carers Strategy:

The strategy has been refreshed to build on the successful structures created by previous strategies (originally 2017) and now concentrates on assisting in providing greater understanding of caring and carers, encompassing new legislation, policies and evidence for supporting carers.

It is important to acknowledge there has been a delay refreshing the strategy due to a number of issues. However, much of the strategy related work has continued over the past few years, including developing new services and opportunities for carers, as well as integrating the identification, assessment and support of carers across essential services. This includes:

- the recommissioning of the Carers Hub,
- piloting new approaches, including dedicated support for carers within the Royal Sussex County Hospital, to ensure the identification and support for carers within the hospital discharge process.

Additionally, through consultations with carers the 8 new priorities have been developed to support the continuation of building a Carer Friendly City. These include direct engagement events in 2023/24 and more recent surveys in 2024/25; further detail on the outcomes of these are provided in section 2.

The Carers Hub:

The Carers Hub is a central resource for delivering the strategy. It was developed through the original strategy in 2016/17, it brought together key carers services in the city, and has continued to significantly increase integrated working, including the operational pathway for carers between the Carers Hub and the dedicated carer assessment services within Adult Social Care. The success of this model has resulted in it being recommissioned for a further 4 years from

March 2025, with a greater emphasis on 4 key functions to **raise carer awareness; ensure carer representation; carers single point of contact; and dedicated support services.**

The Carers Hub delivery model, has 4 distinct functions:



Carers -

- Identified,
- valued,
- improved quality of life,
- reduced health inequalities, and
- integrated support

Carer representation

Carer awareness

Carers single point of contact

Carers dedicated services



Young Carers

Young Carers Local Offer (carers under 18 years old):

Carers Hub Young Carers Service:

- Peer support in the form of after-school clubs across both primary and secondary school ages
- Workshops and respite events, usually during school holiday periods
- Assessments and one to one support for young carers significantly impacted by their caring role. These usually take place at the child/ young person's school/college.

The Carers Hub provides a single point of contact for carers, and promotes a systematic and consistent approach for all carers through the Carers Local Offer:

Carers Hub Carers Local Offer (2026)

A **single point of contact** for all carers, who live in the city or provide unpaid care to someone in the city. **The Carers Hub** provides the local carers offer:

- **Initial carers assessment** to identify the care being provided; impact of caring on the individual; promotes discussion regarding accessing services for the carer and/or the cared for; dedicated support and rights for carer. – onward referral pathway to Adult Social Care for a full carers assessment (which if eligible, can result in a carers personal budget), or joint social care assessment with the cared for person in order to access respite provision or regular package of care
- **Information and advice** range of resources including factsheets, and access to the Carers Digital Offer – part of Brighton & Hove City Council’s membership with Carers UK enables access to the Carers Digital Offer, which includes a suite of information and eLearning, plus access to the online forum, and free access to the Jointly App (providing comms between carers of an individual) Carers Card discount card for carers, Amaze manages the development of offers available, and has developed a dedicated App.
- **Carers Emergency Back Up Plan** contingency plans for if a carer who is unable to provide care in an emergency situation via CareLink
- **My Health Matters** free homebased respite (Crossroads Care) for carers who cannot leave the person they care for alone, to enable them to attend health related appointments.

- **Peer Support** a range of activities, face to face, or online, for localities or specific needs (mental health carers, working carers, etc)
- **Dedicated Projects** providing 1:1 support, group activities and peer support – caring for someone with mental health needs (Changes Ahead); life limiting condition; dementia; and young carers.
- **Activities/Events/Surgeries** a range of events including the Carers Festival; Legal Surgeries; training opportunities; and topic specific workshops



Adult Carers

Parent Carers Local Offer (parents of children/young people with additional needs):

Parent Carers can access much of the Carers Local Offer above, with the addition of Amaze and the Parent Carers Council (hosted by Amaze), who provide specialist support:

Amaze offers information, advice and support to parent carers of any child or young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0 to 25.



This includes:

- **Special Education Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) – Parent Carers can register with Amaze to receive information and advice tailored to their needs**
- **Additional support regarding accesses disability related benefits; neurodiverse family navigation and training; parent groups and befriending; access to Carers and Compass Card.**

Parent Carers Council, is a forum for parent carers of children with additional needs who work to help improve services and support, through representation of parent carers; and connecting events.



Section 2 – What is a Carer Friendly City?

The aim of this strategy is to build on the previous Carer Friendly City work, and provide a further framework for change.

Change for carers through increased identification; greater recognition; improved involvement; more understanding of the impact of caring; and dedicated services to support them, plus change for services within the City, to be aware of carers; the impact of caring; and how they can develop their services to support and empower all local carers, through a greater understanding of their rights, and access services.

This strategy's definition of a Carers Friendly City has been agreed through both the Carers Strategy Group membership, and a range of consultation events with carers. It brings together everything that carers have asked us to do and responds to the duties many services have in respect of carers.



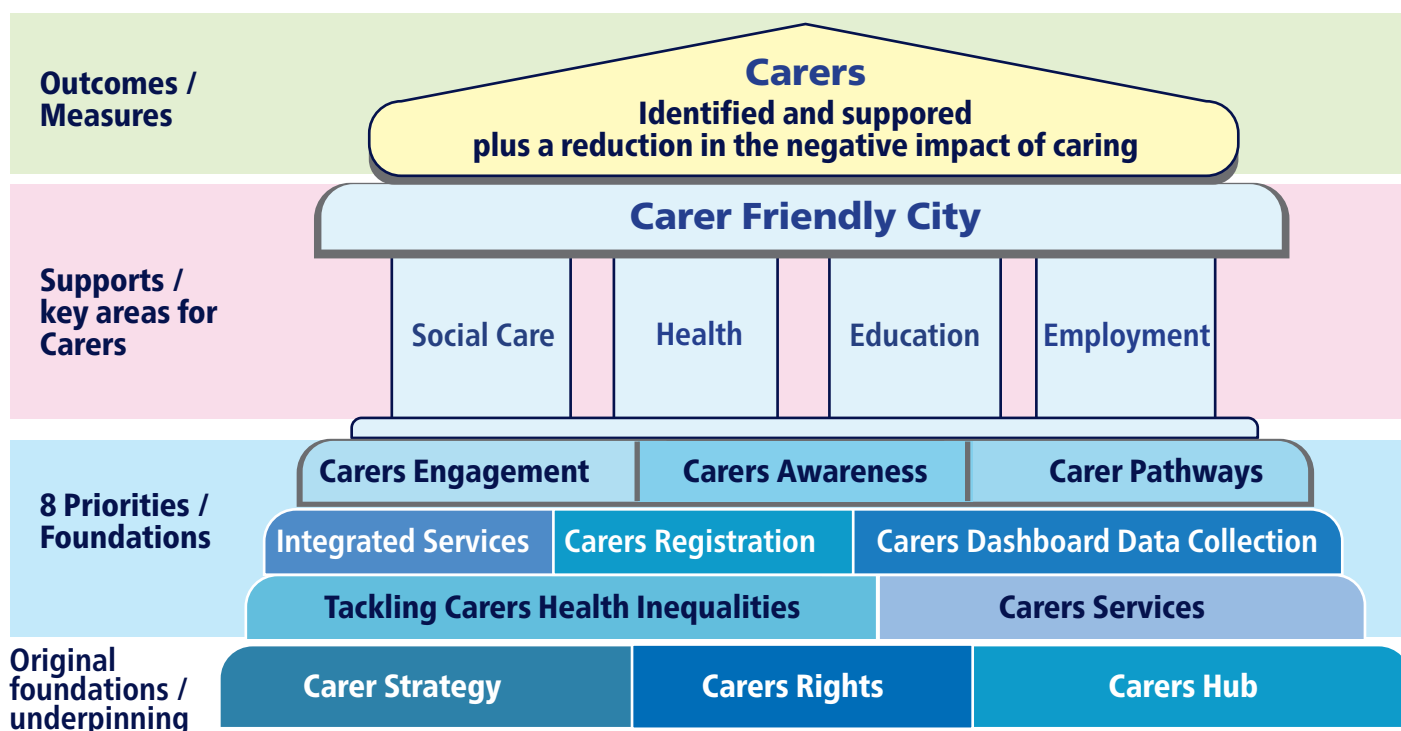
The City needs to Think Carer – reaching out to carers wherever we can by understanding the daily reality of caring, recognising that they are often under a lot of pressure, and tend to be hidden from view but must be involved in discussions and decisions regarding those they care for.

For the purposes of this strategy, the definition of a Carer Friendly City is:

A 'carer friendly' City encourages unpaid carers to speak about their experience and how caring affects them; it recognises their contribution; ensures that they can access information, advice, and support, that will both assist them with their caring role and enable them to have a life outside of caring. Supporting unpaid carers is everyone's business.

Through integrated, partnership working we can improve the lives of carers, assisting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle; make informed decision regarding their caring role; maintain relationships with friends and family; balance work and caring; participate in education; access essential services for both the person they care for and themselves; and reduce the known health inequalities disproportionately experienced by carers through poorer physical and emotional health, and negative financial impact.

A 'blueprint' for building a carer friendly city:



The definition reflects the need for an understanding of the care carers provide, the impact on the carer, and the impact on the city, particularly if carers were unable to care, the economic impact on the city would be considerable.

Underpinning and Foundations

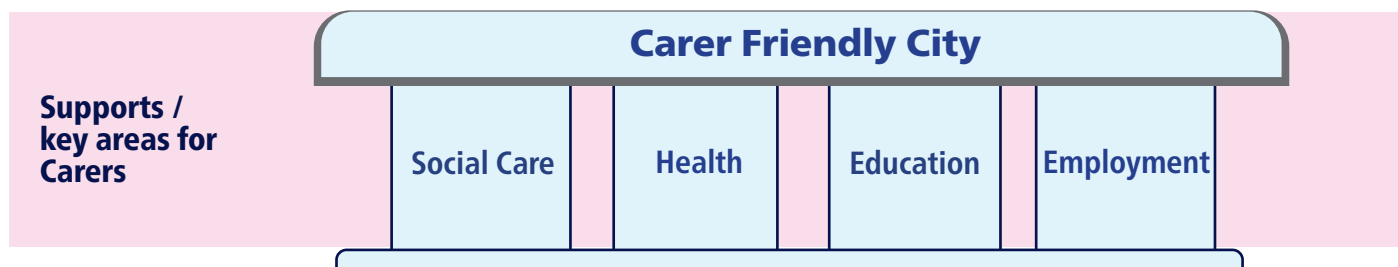
As seen from the above illustration, the Carer Friendly City is underpinned by the original **Carer Friendly Strategy; Carers Rights;** and the **Carers Hub.**

This strategy has been developed through a partnership approach, predominately through the multi-agency Carers Strategy Group; engaging with carers; key local carers organisations; health colleagues from commissioning; and adult social care assessment services, as well as drawing on national research which can support assumptions being made regarding the local carers population, in terms of impact, demographics, and best practice.

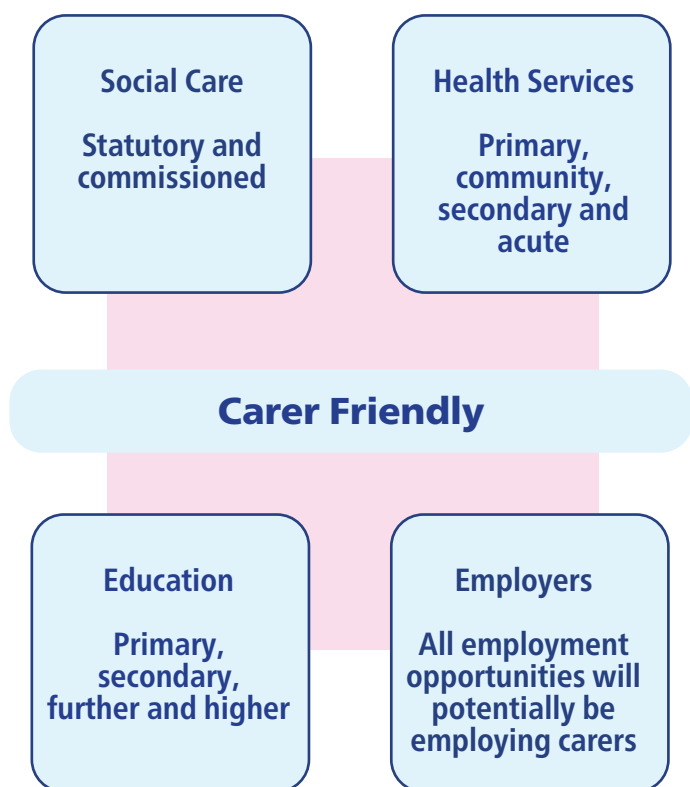
The **8 Priorities** have been developed through the above engagement and form the foundations for building a Carer Friendly City:

- **Carer Engagement** (co-production, carers voice, peer support);
- **Carer Awareness** (training and support);
- **Carer Pathway** (simple pathways, signposting and integrated systems);
- **Integrated Services** (Integrated Care System/Homes, and Adult Social Care/Carers Hub/ and related strategic and operational guidance);
- **Carer Registration** (identification and carers offer);
- **Data Collection** (including protected characteristics);
- **Tackling Health Inequalities** (system change including equitable access to respite, financial support and flexible working);
- **Carers Services** (dedicated information & advice, assessment and support for carers, promoting carers rights and proactive contact).

Pillars for Support = 4 key areas for supporting a Carer Friendly City



Above the 8 priorities are **4 supporting pillars** that carers have told us are the key areas which support a Carer Friendly City. Given what is known about the impact of unpaid caring and what carers have told us they want, carers have identified the 4 central areas critical for supporting them:



Each of these 4 areas are critical to identifying carers; reducing the health inequalities carers face; upholding their rights; and involving and supporting carers. Details on each of these areas will be on the council's dedicated webpages (in development).

Outcomes/Measures for a Carer Friendly City:



The outcomes measures for the Carer Friendly City reflect the 8 priorities, and these can be measured through a range of key performance indicators (KPIs), and carers lived experience.



Services can adopt a range of KPIs or develop their own. Potential examples are described below:

Priority	Examples for progressing the strategy	Potential Measures – KPIs and lived experience
Carer Registration	Increase the number of carers identified and registered, receiving the local carers offer.	% of carers identified by GP practices; number of carers registered with the Carers Hub; Adult Social Care Assessment records; number of young, and young adult carers identified within educational establishments KPI re carers offer
Carers Engagement	Continued involvement of carers, through co-production; carers voice; and peer support.	Feedback from carers involved in the strategy implementation, and co-production measure
Carers Awareness	Systematic process for encouraging the take up of the Carer Champion eLearning, and wider campaigns regarding Think Carer, and Prepare to Care	Number of Carer Champion eLearning completed (by service area); Survey measures for campaigns
Data Collection	Carer Dashboard, combining KPIs, and lived experience outcome, including equalities monitoring.	Carer registration data to be held centrally, including Brighton & Hove City Council equalities monitoring
Integrated Services/ Carer Pathway	Ensure clear pathways and communication between central services, to reduce duplication and provide a more effective response.	Referral KPIs re Carers Hub; Carers feedback survey
Tackling Health Inequalities	Understanding the known health inequalities that disproportionately affect carers, including poorer physical health; reduced emotional wellbeing, and poor mental health; and financial disadvantage.	Carers local survey, and national data from General Practice Patient Survey (GPPS) Services in place to address health inequalities
Information & Advice, Assessment and Support	Provision of dedicated, trusted, co-produced information, advice, assessment and support for carers, through proactive engagement with current or potential carers, raising awareness of carers rights, services, and opportunities. Review of accessible information.	KPIs - number of carers receiving a Carers Assessment; Number of carer reviews; Carers accessing the individual services within the Carers Hub; Carers Cards; Carers Card offers; Carers Emergency Back Up Plans; uptake of respite care services; and waiting times for support



Carers have expressed a desire to have upfront information regarding the expectations of services for family and friend unpaid carers, therefore this strategy encourages services to develop a Carers Commitment, and include performance measures, as well as details regarding support available. More detail on what should be within a Carers Commitment is covered in the following section.

The strategy builds on the national work of [Carers Week](#), a national organisation which supported Carers Week, an annual campaign focusing on building carer friendly communities. The organisation provides materials to support the annual national Carers Week, usually the second week in June, as well as developing resources to support services to be 'carer friendly'.

These include a range of dedicated resource packs developed through the national Carers Partnership (partnership of Carers Trust, and Carers UK), to improve the inclusion, support and involvement of carers, for example:

[Identifying and supporting unpaid carers in England to improve integrated system working](#) Carers Trust and Carers UK, 2025 – which covers the Legal responsibilities, and

resources to help support unpaid carers. These resources will be accessible for services to use to develop their Carers Commitments, as well as other relevant documents which will be held on the dedicated Brighton and Hove City Council Carer Friendly webpages.



Section 3 – What will this strategy do?

This strategy aims to counter the negative impact of caring on local carers, through raising awareness and increasing support within the framework of a Carer Friendly City.



The city needs to understand that carers are accessing services (for themselves and those they care for); or are working within those services, whilst juggling unpaid caring; or learning in the city's local educational institutions, therefore ensuring these areas recognise and support carers. The impact of caring knows no boundaries, anyone can become a carer, whatever their circumstances, potentially because of longer term issues related to ageing or disability of those they care for, or due to an unexpected situation, including a new diagnosis or traumatic experience, and suddenly you are a carer.

Provides a Framework for change

The framework promoted within this strategy is for services and organisations who wish to be 'carer friendly' and therefore part of the Carer Friendly City. The framework brings together the previously identified 8 priority areas within the 'blueprint' into a framework for change.



This strategy encourages services and organisations to complete a Carers Commitment. The creation of a template for these will be a priority once the strategy group has a clear mechanism for co-production.

Co-production

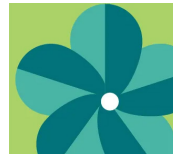
Carers and the Carers Strategy Group will work together to develop a robust mechanism for ensuring co-production within key areas of this framework for change. This strategy has adopted the Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) definition of co-production:



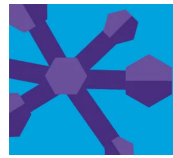
Think Local Act Personal

Co-production is when people come together as equals to make decisions or create services that work for them all. This always includes people who draw on care and support and/or carers, usually alongside people who work in care and support. It is based on the idea that those who draw upon care and support are the best placed to decide how it should work.

TLAP promotes 4 ingredients that are important for co-production:



Equality: Co-production starts from the idea that no one group, or person is more important than anyone else, and everyone has skills, abilities and time to contribute.



Diversity: Co-production should be as inclusive and diverse as possible. It is important to make sure that people from different groups are included, and especially people from groups that might not often be heard.



Accessibility: Making everything accessible is the way to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to work together in the ways that suit them best.



Recognition: People are contributing their time, knowledge and experience to work together, so this should be recognised and respected. This should include paying people for their time and expertise, but the respect also comes from the more equal relationships that develop between everyone involved.

Carers Commitments

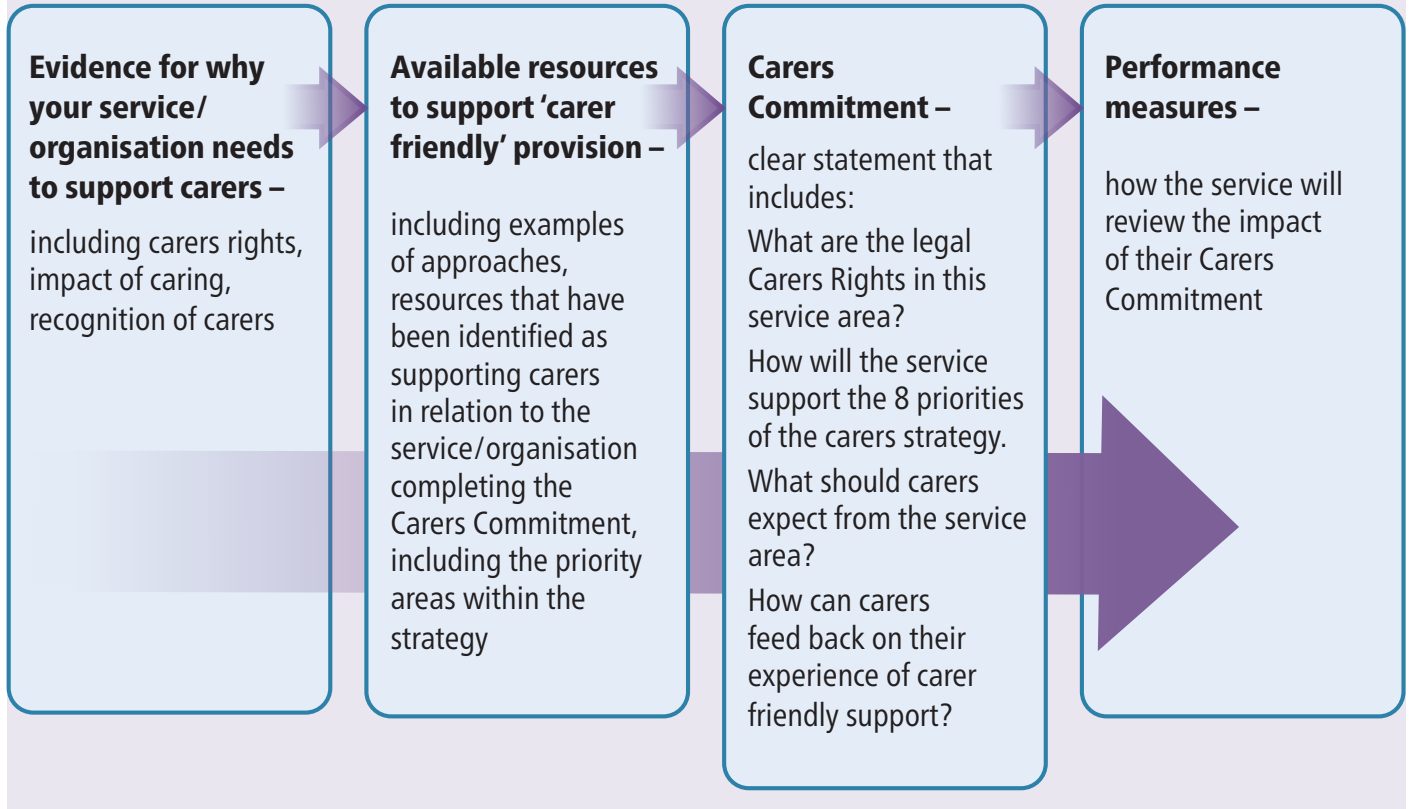
The mechanism for bringing together the 8 identified priorities and 4 key areas of support, to provide a Carers Friendly City, is through encouraging services and/or organisations to develop a 'Carers Commitment'.

The 'Carers Commitment' document, as suggested by carers, should include:

- ✓ easily accessible for those potentially using the service
- ✓ inform carers of what they should expect from the service
- ✓ identify any carer rights that the service is responsible for
- ✓ any carers card offers that are available
- ✓ a clear pathway to either direct support from the service, or indirectly via the Carers Hub
- ✓ data that maybe collected regarding carers, and why
- ✓ resources available that relate to the service and carers
- ✓ measures for identifying progress (KPIs and lived experience)
- ✓ feedback opportunities to enable carer involvement and potential links to future commissioning

Key areas to include in a Carers Commitment

a blueprint for building a carer friendly service/organisation, the final template will be developed through co-production, and may include a 'carer friendly award' process



The suggestion of 'Carers Commitments' is directly due to consultations with local carers, stating that they wanted evidence that a service recognises them, and has a clear process for supporting them, and working with them. The final template for the Carer Commitment will be developed within the first year of this strategy, through co-production with carers.

Additionally, services will be encouraged to publish Carers Commitments on the dedicated Brighton & Hove City Council Carer Friendly City webpages, and they will be requested to review them annually. This will enable the service to identify its progress regarding supporting carers, see how that feeds into the overall progress of the strategy, and identify if there are any new resources, research or legislation that needs to be embedded within a revised Carers Commitment.

Carers have also suggested the possibility of a 'Carer Friendly' award/logo that can be given to services who have a Carers Commitment. Examples of the diversity of services who could access this award include:

- A local coffee shop who provides a discount for carers through the carers card; makes a commitment for their staff to complete the Carer Champion eLearning; has a Carers Hub poster/information available; and potentially a mechanism for identifying how many carers use the coffee shop.
- A GP practice that commits to identifying carers (which is a carers right). Register/code carers; refer to the Carers Hub; offer priority vaccinations; and incorporate the Carer Quality Standards (NHS England)

The Carer Friendly City survey 2026, referenced in Section 1 of this document, made a number of suggestions from carers, including:

- **A visible, citywide “Carer Friendly” logo/ marker** (stickers in windows, clear signage) indicating that the Carers Card will be accepted for a discount.
- **A carer-friendly accreditation / rating scheme** (likened to food hygiene ratings)
- **Training** for frontline staff across venues/ services (cafes, transport, hospitals, banks, etc.) linked to the Carer Friendly Logo/Marker to enable carers to choose venues that understand their needs more effectively.



Three Carer Campaigns -

**Think Carer;
Think Carer = Think Carers Hub;
Prepare to Care**

This strategy will support the aim of a Carer Friendly City through a range of public information campaigns which will raise awareness of carers and the support they can access.

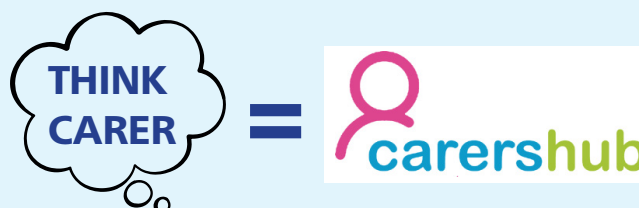
The Think Carer campaign references the need to view supporting carers as everyone’s business using the term **Think Carer**, first promoted by NHS England. Think Carer means always considering whether someone is a carer and what support they might need. Many carers don’t identify themselves as a carer and therefore miss out on essential support and remain invisible to services. Through missing out on support, their risk of facing health inequalities is increased. The Think Carer campaign supports the agenda of reducing health inequalities through making carers more visible.

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THINK CARER = THINK CARERS HUB

campaign takes the concept of Think Carer further by raising awareness of the central services of the Carers Hub, a simple way of promoting how to support carers once they have been identified.



Carers Dashboard

At the point of launching this strategy, there is already a range of data collected (KPIs and qualitative outcomes/lived experience of carers) that supports the ability to evaluate the impact of this strategy. The Adult Social Care Carers Dashboard provides a central resource for complying data from both the Carers Hub and Adult Social Care Assessments Services; bringing these together reflects the journey of support for carers.

The Carers Dashboard comprises of key KPIs from the Carers Hub contract, including monthly number of 'contacts' (interactions where information and advice are provided to carers); monthly Assessments completed by the Carers Hub; Carers Hub Assessments Outcomes, including Carers Emergency Back-up Plans; Carers Cards; referral to My Health Matters; and referral to Adult Social Care Assessment Services.

Adult Social Care Assessment Services data within the Dashboard includes referrals into the service; carers assessments; carers reviews; waiting times for assessments and reviews; and joint social care assessments. This data is then broken down further to reflect the specific carer activities by teams.

The Carers Dashboard can be built upon to provide a central data set for supporting the Carer Friendly City strategy, collating data from services' Carers Commitments, reflecting not only the number of Carers Commitments across the city, but also the relevant activity data. For example, an Integrated Community Team (ICT) could complete a Carers Commitment and share data related to the number of carers identified; referred to the Carers Hub; provided dedicated support from the ICT, and then the ICTs 'satisfaction or feedback' process which evaluates the experience of the service.

Additionally, NHS Surrey and Sussex use Sussex Integrated Dataset (Population Health Management tool) to count the number and proportion of carers registered with



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Thirdly, the **Prepare to Care** campaign focuses the fact that the numbers of carers will increase (due to the demographics of the population), and that carers have told us that once they are aware of the support available, it does make a positive difference to them. This strategy also promotes the concept of **Prepare to Care**, the need to provide information and advice to individuals who may become carers, potentially developing a 'checklist' approach, enabling individuals and families to consider the needs of those within their families and how best to support their needs, and ensuring that the potential carers look to 'protect' themselves from the known health inequalities carers face.

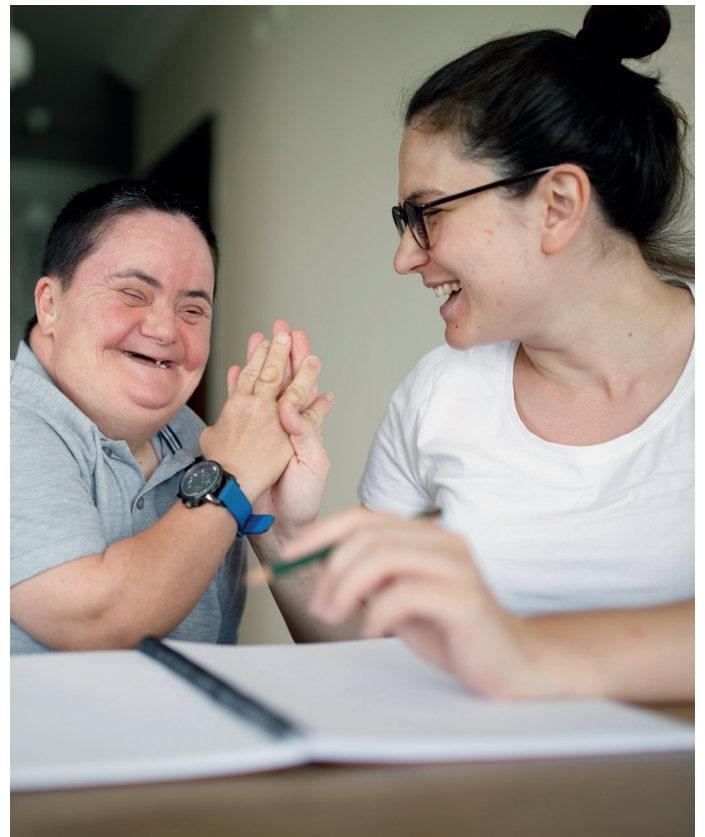
GP practices and Primary Care Networks in Brighton & Hove. This data could be used in the dashboard, alongside other population health data and insight to target resources to improve outcomes. For example, in 2025/26, in Brighton & Hove there has been a 16.9% increase in the number of unpaid carers registered with GP practices.

Also, wider services within the council could contribute to this data in order to target support for carers. For example, Brighton & Hove City Council's Housing Services have identified that they currently do not ask residents if they have a caring role. If this information was requested, then those carers who identify themselves could be referred to the Carers Hub to ensure they are receiving support, and the data could be held in the dashboard.

Future commissioning of carers support

The strategy will enable carers to be involved in the future development of services, through direct consultation, and via the data/evidence collected as a result of the Carers Commitment activities. The framework provided through the strategy (promoting the use of Carers Commitments by services to identify they are Carer Friendly) encourages services to seek feedback from carers. This strategy will provide a central resource (dedicated Brighton & Hove City Council webpages) to collate and theme relevant outcomes of consultations, both at a local level in terms of surveys and other feedback mechanisms, and national research where local assumptions can be drawn. This information will be publicly available for services to review as they develop or update their service provision.

In addition to the above information, the strategy endorses the development of a robust co-production approach, ensuring local carers are consulted effectively. The development of the co-production approach will be the



first priority for the Carers Strategy Group and will aim to work with current local structures, such as Parent Carers Council and Carers Voice Group.

The majority of services within Brighton & Hove which support adult and young carers are commissioned jointly by Adult Social Care (Brighton & Hove City Council) and NHS Surrey and Sussex, using the Better Care Fund (BCF). Additionally, some of the BCF is used for homebased respite for parent carers, however the main respite/short breaks services are funded through Children's Services.

Initially the BCF replaced the Carers Grant, which consisted of ringfenced funding from central government to the local area to support unpaid carers. The original aim of the BCF was to ensure all local areas had a plan for supporting carers which funded access to respite and dedicated support, as well as ensuring that the local authority complied with the carers statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, and the health system complied under the Health and Care Act 2022.

Better Care Fund

The Better Care Fund Framework, identifies 'specific factors to consider during planning' for the local Better Care Plan, these include: Supporting unpaid carers - Unpaid carers provide vital care and support for people. Carers should be actively involved as partners in planning care and support for those they care for, with their consent. In developing BCF plans, ICBs and local authorities should consider how pooled funding can help the NHS and local authorities meet their duties in relation to unpaid carers and help ensure that partners work together to: systematically identify unpaid carers and their responsibilities; and provide carer's assessments as required and support unpaid carers (for example, through respite support and peer support)

Although the Better Care Fund (BCF) has evolved year on year, its current aim is to "support integrated care boards (ICBs) and local authorities in designing and delivering more integrated and preventative care, particularly for people with more complex health and social care needs, helping people stay independent for longer". (Better Care Fund Framework 2026 to 2027). Unpaid carers clearly provide a critical role in preventative care, as well as needing to access preventative services to tackle the health inequalities they face.

Current carers services, funded via the Better Care Fund

The Supporting Unpaid Carers programme within the Brighton & Hove Better Care Plan funds several services and opportunities for carers:

In house provision	Spot Purchase	Commissioned Services
<p>Dedicated Carers Assessment Workers, now Assistant Social Workers (8), based across the ASC Assessment Services, to provide knowledge and experience of supporting carers within the teams, and supported increase in carers assessments and joint social care assessments.</p> <p>Carers Personal Budgets (Direct Payments) funding for carers with eligible needs under the Care Act to receive funding for a range of activities and breaks.</p>	<p>Funding for events including the Carers Festival; training opportunities for carers; membership of Carers UK (and related resources)</p>	<p>BHCC and NHS Sussex jointly commissioned services Carers Hub.</p> <p>Crossroads Care - homebased respite for carers, and parent carers</p> <p>Amaze - carers card development</p>

NHS Sussex Commitment to Sussex's unpaid carers 2026 provides a summary of the key duties for NHS Sussex under the Health and Care Act 2022, and identifies three central outcomes for carers:

- Carers physical and mental health is supported and carer breakdown is avoided through access to timely information and support
- Carers are actively included as part of 'public engagement' or involved with 'people and communities'
- Carers experience being treated as full partners in decision making about health and care services.

It is also important to recognise that Brighton & Hove City Council is part of the wider Integrated Care System working collaboratively with other local authorities, carers services and NHS colleagues, for example as part of the Sussex Carers Forum.



Integrated Community Teams (ICTs)

ICTs are central to the delivery of a new 'neighbourhood health service' set out in the NHS 10 Year Health Plan. In Sussex they are a key part of Brighton & Hove City Council's long-term shared ambition with the NHS: "joining-up ('integrating') health, social care, and health-related services across local communities in a way that best meets the needs of the local population, improves quality of services and reduces inequalities".

ICTs are made up of professionals working together as a 'team of teams' across primary care, community, mental health, local authority partners, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and other local partners.

Integrated Community Team, locality carer population

- West ICT has 16% of adults who are unpaid carers, 7% young carers
- Central ICT has 15% of adults who are unpaid carers, 7% young carers
- East ICT has 17% of adults who are unpaid carers, 10% young carers

Section 4 – How will the progress of this strategy be measured?

The aim of the Carer Friendly City strategy framework is to provide a system which incorporates progress measures.

This will be embedded within the development of Carers Commitments, as well as through the interface with other strategies, policies and duties, via the centralised Carers Dashboard.

This new data set will measure progress in terms of both KPIs and lived experience of carers, including the 8 Priority areas, the 4 pillars of support, and the Carers Commitments. The final 'dashboard' will be agreed through co-production with carers and the Carers Strategy Group. The aim is for the data set to be published annually and presented as part of Carers Rights Day (November). Suggested areas to record include:



Outcome	Measures/KPIs/lived experience
Identification and Visibility of Carers	% of carers identified by GP practices; number of carers registered with the Carers Hub; number of carers identified within the Adult Social Care Assessment records; number of Carer Champion eLearning completed (by service area); number of young, and young adult carers identified within educational establishments
Carer Wellbeing and Quality of Life	self-reported well-being (including Adult Social Care Outcome Framework); GP Patient Survey; My Health Counts survey; annual Adult Social Care carers survey; Carers Hub survey; any surveys completed via services 'carers commitments' and focus groups/interviews

Outcome	Measures/KPIs/lived experience
Access to Support Services	number of carers receiving a Carers Assessment; number of carer reviews; number of carers accessing the individual services within the Carers Hub; number of Carers Cards; number of Carers Card offers; number of Carers Emergency Back Up Plans; uptake of respite care services; and waiting times for support
Employment and Financial Stability	% of carers in paid employment; retention rates of working carers; employer participate in carers-friendly schemes; number of carers receiving Carers Allowance, and related benefits
Carer Friendly Health Services	% of GP practices with a carers register; carers receiving flu jabs or priority appointments; carers primary care quality markers; hospital discharge processes, how involved have carers felt.
System-level impact	Reduction in crisis situations (e.g. emergency hospital admissions), delayed need for formal care services, and overall cost savings to health and care systems.

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ICTs are made up of professionals working together as a 'team of teams' across primary care, community, mental health, local authority partners, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and other local partners.

Alternatively, the use of 'I statements', which the Care Quality Commission use, may be considered as an option for this strategy, including possible statements:

- 'I feel recognised'
- 'I can get help when I need it'
- 'I'm able to live my own life too'

Or, use of a Carers Scorecards, collating KPIs and lived experience, targets, and RAG ratings to evaluate the Carer Friendly City strategy.

The data received can then potentially be measured or benchmarked against comparator Local Authorities, or across the Integrated Care System.

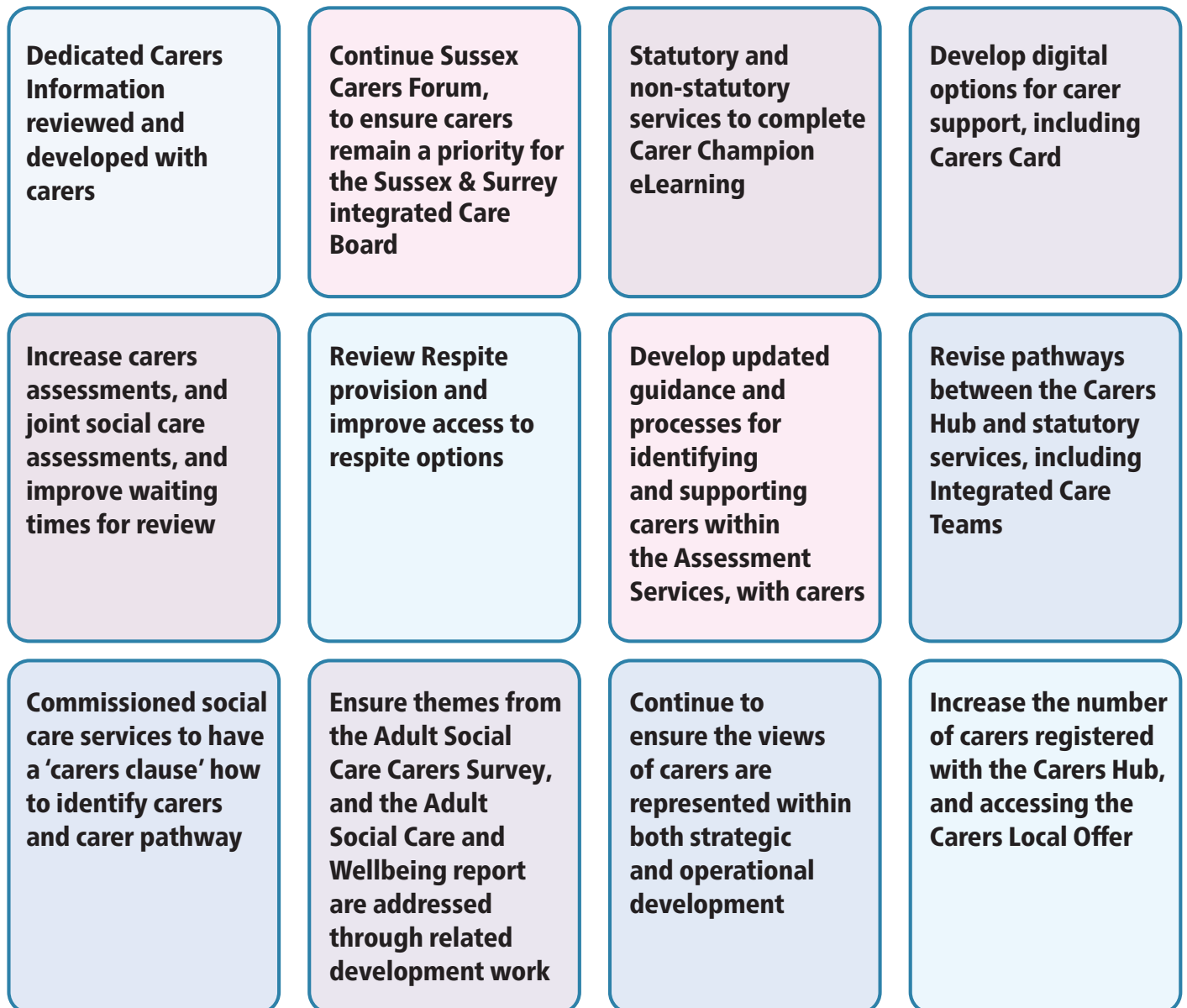
The decision regarding the approach to be used will be negotiated with key partners and carers through the Carers Strategy Group.

Examples of potential progress measures for Carer Friendly Social Care

Within Adult Social Care there are a number of current priorities that interconnect with this strategy and will be supported through the Carer Friendly Social Care workstream. These include:

Outcome	Measures/KPIs/lived experience
Adult Social Care (ASC) Carers Survey Action Plan	Emerging themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to Respite • Improve access to accurate Information for carers
Brighton and Hove City Council ASC Care Quality Commission Inspection Outcome 2026, 'requires improvement'. Action Plan.	Areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Assessment waiting times • Published Carers Strategy • Respite commissioning, review current provision and improve access
Commissioning led review of respite provision and policy development.	Areas for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Adult Social Care Carers Survey data • Including specific respite questions within the Carers Hub Survey • Survey Assessment and Commissioning colleagues regarding current respite offers, and process for allocation • Draw on other local authority policies and approaches
ASC Annual report, Carers section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a respite resource for consultation Carers Week
Carers Support Digital Development	Stated We Will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards delivering our priorities in the new Carers Strategy • Develop simple and accessible pathways for supporting carers • Improve assessment and review processes, to enable carers to access support more effectively • Launch new digital resources for carers, which will build on the new carers card platform and app. • Acceleration Reform Fund development – Carers Card digital platform, end date of project Nov'26
ASC Programme of learning from practice reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments/Reviews are audited through practice learning, focusing on carers experience, Care Act compliance and the wellbeing outcomes. • The learning from these reviews will provide a qualitative measure of impact and inform ongoing practice improvement.

Examples of Carer Friendly Social Care:



Phased implementation approach:

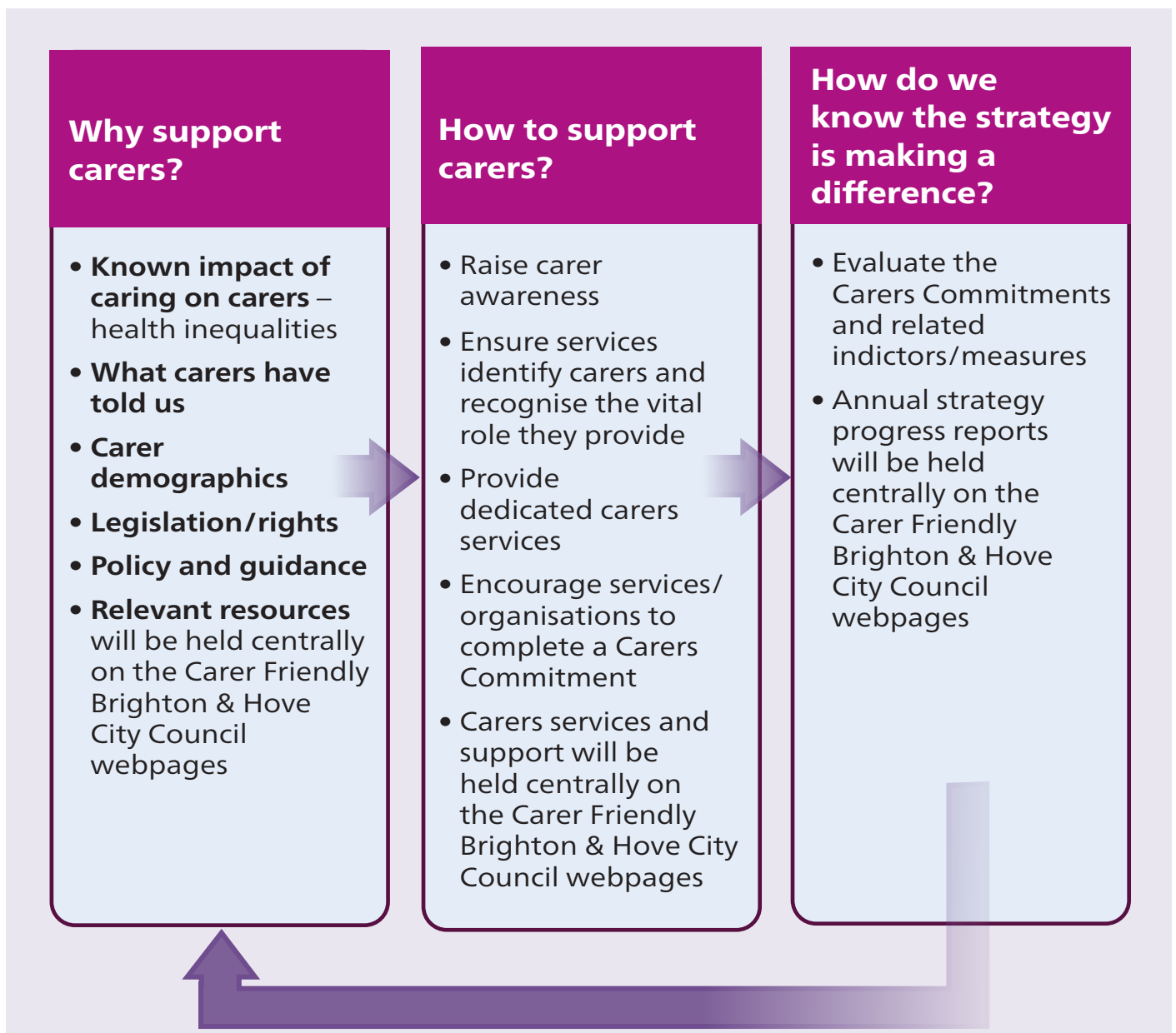
- ✓ Year 1 (July'26 to June'27):
 - ✓ Carers Strategy Group to agree co-production methods for the strategy implementation
 - ✓ Carers Strategy Group and carers to agree Carers Commitment template
 - ✓ Carers Strategy webpages go live
- ✓ Carers Strategy to agree working group for Carer Friendly Pillars of Support, and related progress measures
- ✓ Review Carers information across the Carers Hub and Adult Social Care, with carers
- ✓ Campaigns of carer awareness – Think Carer; Think Carer = Carers Hub; and 'Prepare to Care'
 - ✓ Explore the feasibility of developing this strategy into an 'all age' carers strategy



Conclusion:

This strategy's framework approach to creating a Carer Friendly City is building on and galvanising the success of the current carers services while also recognising there is a lot to be done to ensure carers are identified, recognised and supported. By creating a simple framework, the hope is that all services will aim to be 'carer friendly' and so assist in reducing the health inequalities that carers face, and enabling them to continue to care, if they wish to.

Pathway to building a Carer Friendly City:



ADD ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Carers within Brighton & Hove

The membership of the Carers Strategy Group

The staff team at the Carers Hub

Appendix for BHCC Carer Friendly City webpages: