

**ADULT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2024**

DARLINGTON'S COMMITMENT TO CARERS 2023-28

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide information regarding Darlington's Carers' Strategy (Darlington's Commitment to Carers 2023-28) and progress in implementing it.

Summary

2. Darlington's Commitment to Carers was launched on 17 April 2024 at a well-attended launch event, during which presentations were given by Darlington Carers Support, Family Action Darlington Young Carers and Darlington Borough Council outlining Darlington's Commitment to Carers and the support available to all groups of carers in Darlington. Attendees were also asked to identify actions they would take as their own Commitment to Carers, including participation in the social media campaign.
3. Good progress has already been made in implementing the actions identified.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members note the content of the report and consider how they can support the delivery of the actions identified in Darlington's Commitment to Carers.

Christine Shields
Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance And Transformation

Background Papers

- (i) People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- (ii) Darlington's Commitment to Carers 2023 – 28 Darlington's Commitment to Carers 2023-28

Council Plan	This report contributes to the priorities agreed in the Council Plan
Addressing inequalities	Caring affects all groups of people in Darlington.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no implications arising from this report.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Research published by Carers UK in 2023 indicates that unpaid carers in Darlington provide support to the value of £329 million.
Health and Wellbeing	Carers can experience poor health as a result of their caring responsibilities. Identifying and supporting carers contributes to supporting their health and wellbeing and the health and wellbeing of the people for whom they care.
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications arising from this report.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	Carers are the group primarily affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no implications arising from this report.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Darlington’s Commitment to Carers identifies actions under 4 key objectives, which are designed to raise awareness of carers in Darlington and to ensure that they are recognised and supported for their invaluable contribution to the wellbeing of the people they care for and their contribution to society a whole.
 - (a) **Recognising and supporting Carers in the wider community and society** – identifying carers; providing information for carers; engaging and involving carers; identifying and working with harder-to-reach groups of carers; social and community support for carers.
 - (b) **Services and Systems that work for Carers** - working with Health; assessing carers’ needs and identifying ways to meet them; training to provide care and support; psychological and emotional support for carers; support during changes to the caring role; support for carers during end-of-life care and after the person dies; safeguarding carers and the people they care for.
 - (c) **Employment and Financial Wellbeing** - helping carers to stay in, enter or return to work, education, training and volunteering; working with employers; benefits and grant support.
 - (d) **Supporting Young Carers** - raising awareness of young carers within the community, schools and other agencies; supporting the transition from young carer to adult carer.

6. Darlington's Commitment to Carers was launched on 17 April 2024 at a well-attended launch event, during which presentations were given by Darlington Carers Support, Family Action Darlington Young Carers and Darlington Borough Council outlining Darlington's Commitment to Carers and the support available to all groups of carers in Darlington. Attendees were also asked to identify actions they would take as their own Commitment to Carers, including participation in the social media campaign.
7. Progress has already been made in relation to the actions identified including:
 - (a) Continued increase in the number of carers registered with Darlington Carers Support, with a total of 3,089 carers on the register as at 19 September 2024. 26.33% of the carers registered were male and 70.48% were of working age.
 - (b) The development of a 'Commitment to Carers logo' for use by all partners.
 - (c) The commencement of a social media campaign to raise the profile of carers in Darlington. This is being coordinated by the Digital Inclusion worker at County Durham Carers Support and has been recognized as Great Practice by the ADASS Supporting Carers Hub. Darlington's Commitment to Carers Social Media Campaign | ADASS – Supporting Carers Hub.
 - (d) Development and implementation of a plan to identify and work with harder-to-reach groups of carers. There has already been a focused campaign on male carers resulting in a 24% increase in male carers registering with Darlington Carers Support. Further campaigns have focused on refugee carers (during refugee week) when there were 968 interactions on social media and LGBTQ+ carers during Pride in August when there were 1033 interactions.
 - (e) Partnership working has been developed with CDDFT, including the employment of a Hospital Discharge Worker by Darlington Carers Support. 61 referrals have been received since the service started on 1 January 2024, 48 of whom were not previously known to Darlington Carers Support. Joint work has also taken place with CDDFT HR in relation to CDDFT employees who are also carers. In addition, there is a Durham County Carers Support Carers and Employment page Durham County Carers Support – Training Site (dccarers.org)
 - (f) A new Young Carers Service (Young Carers Darlington) provided by Family Action commenced on 1 April 2024, which strengthens the support available to Young Carers up to the age of 25. The service is co-located with Darlington Carers Support, which supports the strengthening of work around transitions and with Young Adult Carers. Progress has already been made in establishing the new service in Darlington, including developing links with schools in order to raise awareness of young carers and their needs and the production of a leaflet jointly with Darlington Carers Support regarding the support available to Young Adult Carers.
 - (g) A new Parent Carers Support Worker has recently been employed by Darlington Carers Support and the Carers' Strategy Steering Group (CSSG) has renewed links with the Parent Carer Forum. A piece of work on transition planning is due to start soon.

- (h) Work is taking place with Mobilise Support for unpaid carers in Darlington (mobiliseonline.co.uk) which is a digital platform to identify and support carers. This has been commissioned regionally through Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) monies from central government to look at innovative ways of providing support. From contract implementation on 1 April 2024, a total of 282 carers were engaged by Mobilise and 182 supported. 74% of the carers using the service were of working age and 35% were men. 81% had not accessed support before.
- (i) A survey is being developed to identify what support carers need to enable them to take a break.
- (j) Four factsheets are currently being developed setting out how carers can access financial support; training available for carers; opportunities available to enable carers to take a break from their caring role and details of local and national energy efficiency schemes.

Outcome of Consultation

8. Darlington's Commitment to Carers was co-produced by members of the Carers' Strategy Steering Group (CSSG) and family carers in Darlington and takes into account feedback received throughout the development process. The CSSG will continue to oversee progress in relation to the Action Plan and to seek feedback from carers and other partners.