

STORY OF CHANGE TEMPLATE

Reporting Period	Quarter 2 Financial Year 2023-2024
Strategic Partnership	West Glamorgan Regional Partnership
Programme Name	West Glamorgan Carers Programme
Programme Reference	

Programme Overview

The Regional Carers Strategy defines our five-year strategy for carers in West Glamorgan. The co-produced strategy was approved by RPB in February 2021. The strategy establishes a clear, concise vision statement and mission statement which will guide our regional plans and actions over the next five to seven years (originally a 5 year strategy but the Covid Pandemic delayed implementation commencing). It also describes the values which we will uphold throughout our efforts to deliver the strategy and the subsequent Action Plans.

The West Glamorgan Carers Partnership has been existence for a number of years and in 2021 established a Carers Liaison Forum to facilitate more regular engagement and coproduction with carers.

One of the key priorities of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership is supporting unpaid carers.

During 2019-2021 the West Glamorgan Carers Strategy was co-produced through the West Glamorgan Carers Partnership. This strategy represents the commitment to a long-term strategic mission for meeting carers' needs. The aim of the strategy is to drive the changes needed to continuously improve services to enhance the well-being of carers consistently across the region.

The vision in the carer's strategy is:

Carers are identified, recognised, and supported to care. They have a life alongside caring and have a feeling of well-being throughout their caring journey.

The Area plan and Action Plan priorities have been informed by the following priorities in the co-produced Carers Strategy:

- Balancing priorities - Carers have flexible and responsive respite opportunities; Carers have support with developing contingency plans; Carers have access to wellbeing workshops; Carers have workplace and educational support.
- Supporting each other - Carers have opportunities to meet each other; Carer led groups are commonplace.
- Information and advice - Carers are informed of their rights; Carers have dedicated and tailored information and advice portals/places across all statutory providers; Carers have information and advice about contingency planning; Carers are informed about Assessments and how they can be of benefit; Easy read options and minority languages are catered for appropriately.
- Identified and recognised - Carers are recognised even if they do not self-identify; Carers are actively identified by organisations and staff supporting them; There is shared responsibility across and within organisations for identifying carers.
- Dignity and Respect - Carers are recognised as experts by experience; Awareness of Carers is commonplace; Standard approaches across department's e.g., schools, IAA services, hospital discharge; There are consistent approaches across and within organisations.
- Support services - New developments and changes are co-produced with carers; Carers services are funded sustainably; Carers are actively offered direct payments; Carers' positive and negative experiences are used to inform service improvements; Carers have responsive and flexible access to mental health and well-being services.

Priority Population Group

The Programme supports all unpaid carers across the region. This includes older people, adults, young carers, parent carers and carers who themselves have learning or physical disabilities, mental health issues or fall under another population group. Any person living in the region who provides unpaid care is considered as a priority.

This Programme works closely with the other Programmes in flight across the West Glamorgan Regional Programme.

Delivery Partners

The programme brings together statutory services such as Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council with non-statutory services, people with lived experience and carers across the region.

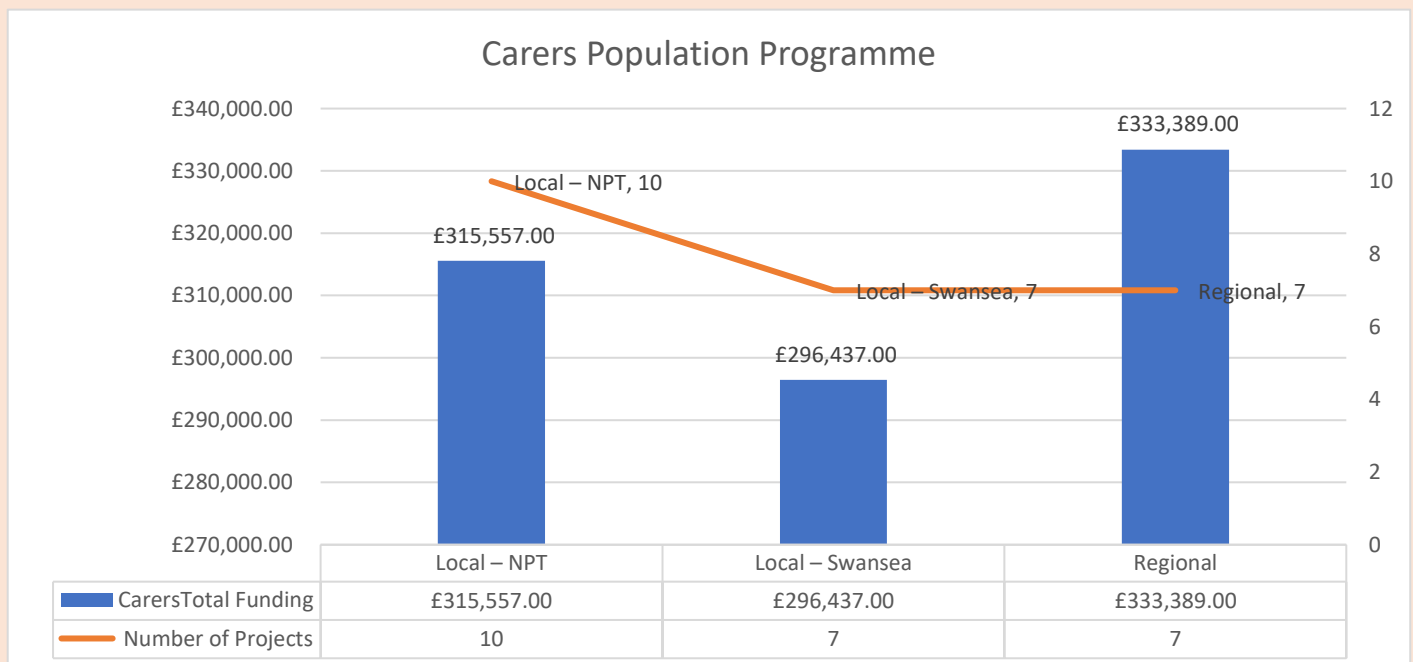
The Carers Partnership Board, Workstreams and Task & Finish groups all have Chairs/ Leads from partner organisations and membership reflects the partnership working and engagement taking place. We endeavour to include people with Lived Experience and carers in all levels of our governance as we believe their voices need to be integral to the work we deliver.

We have established a Regional Carers Liaison Forum to capture the voices of carers and coproduce work.

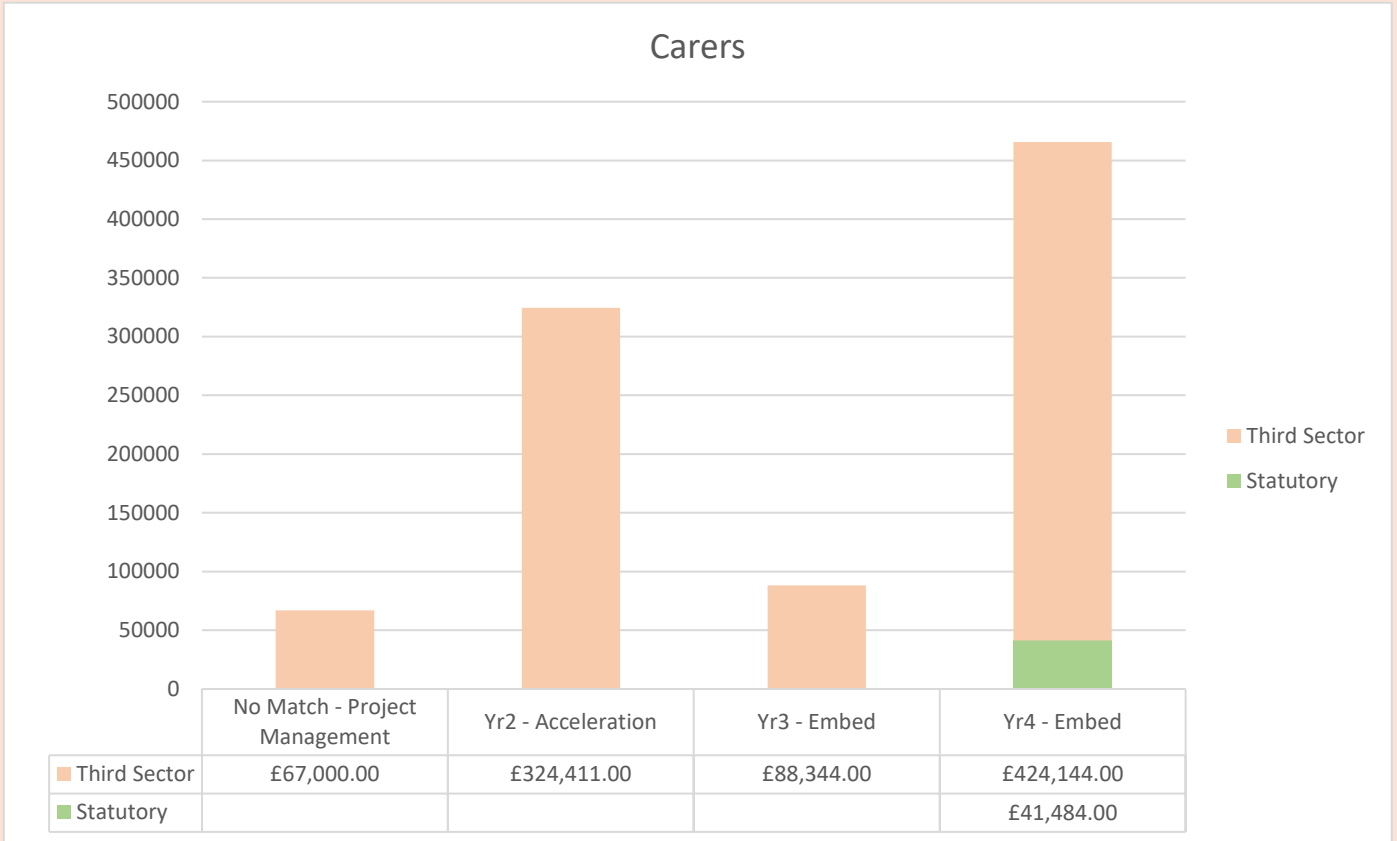
We promote partnership working, and independent working where required.

Funding Utilisation

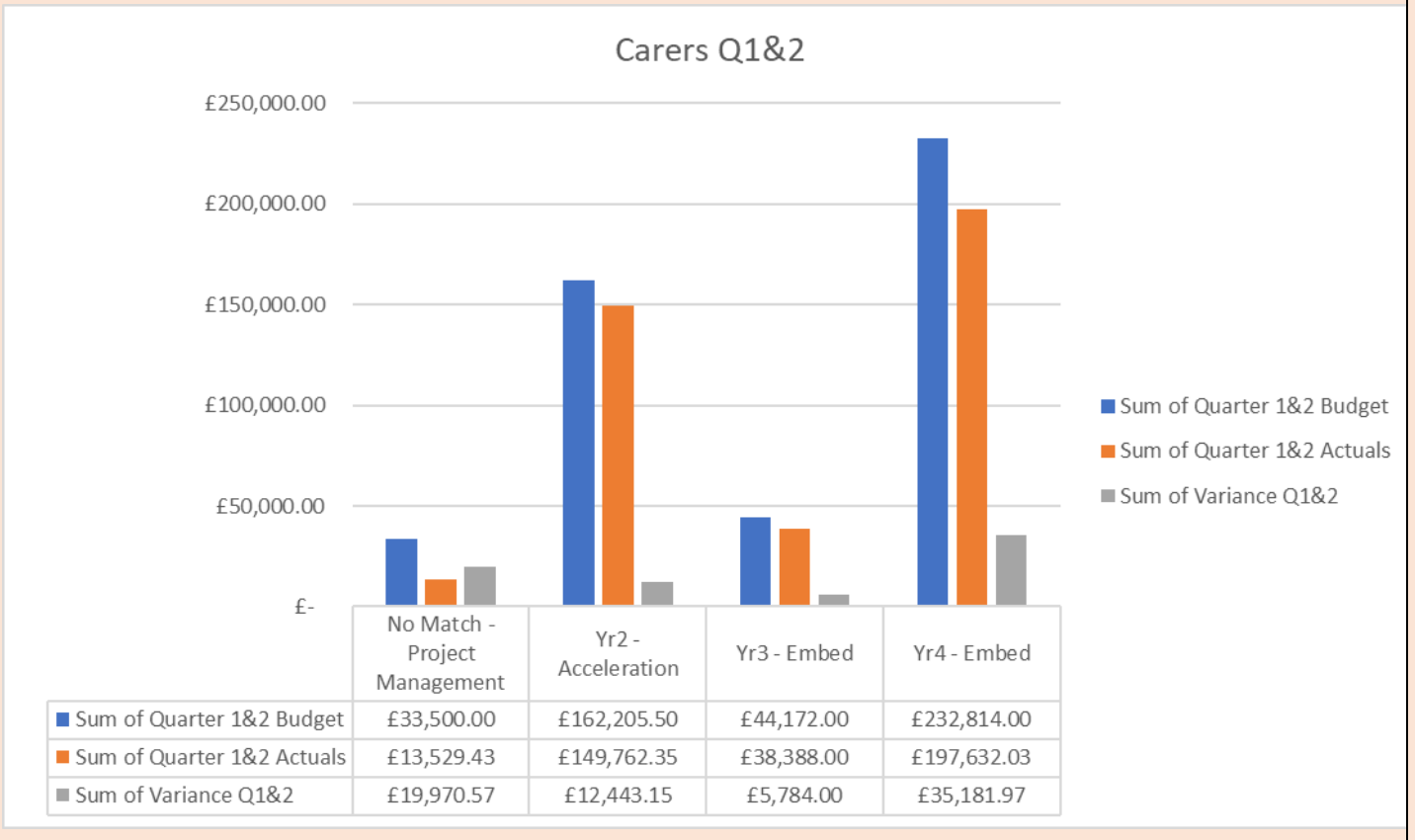
Agreement through the partnership that 5% of the RIF would be ring-fenced to carers, in addition to the WG carers of £129,000. There are 22 carers projects funded via the RIF and the RIF WG carers funding under the national priorities, of which there is 21 third sector schemes and 1 statutory scheme, split as follows:



Carers RIF Allocations 23-24



RIF Budget/Spend Position at end of Quarter 2



In quarter 1 and 2, £399,312 has been spent out of the projected budget of £472,691. Some adjustments need to be made to allow for budget reprofiling due to delays in committed costs in quarter 2.

Carers Trust Funding for Short Breaks and Respite - £168,370

Significant engagement has taken place with Carers and Young Carers to understand what respite/short breaks matter most to them. The engagement took place through a carers event in July 2023 and carers were also asked to respond to a survey.

The information collated through the event and the survey told us that the preferred option is that carers and young carers want to have flexible, personalised, short break options given what matters to each carer is different. Partners therefore agreed to allocate £120,000 of the funding to a flexible grant scheme paid directly to carers so they are able to apply for funding to pay for a range of items or activities that will provide them with a break from caring. This has been administered through a commissioned process, utilising Swansea Council's procurement processes. There are 2 separate grant schemes, one for young carers and another for adult carers. The grant is expected to start in December 2023, so no costs have been incurred in quarter 1 or 2.

Given there are clear messages coming through from carers and partners that we need to improve communication around the available respite and short break provision, partners agreed that the remaining funding be allocated to 2 part time carers co-ordinator posts in Swansea and NPT. These local posts will work with the regional carers development officer, working as a regional virtual team to co-ordinate and promote the short break and respite provision offer in the region.

Assessment of Delivery

The Carers Strategy has not had a formal implementation plan in place due to the Covid pandemic interrupting the delivery of transformational change. As we move away from responding to the pandemic we have facilitated an engagement session with Carers to understand what outcomes of the Strategy are most important to them. What they told us has informed the order in which we will implement the Carers Strategy. They told us that the priority areas for the immediate future are: -

- 1) Improving **recognition and understanding** of carers, in primary care settings, educational establishments and the workplace
- 2) Improving how carers can **access services across the region** such as Carers Assessments and Direct Payments to ensure carers are able to access the right support, at the right time, in a stress-free manner.
- 3) Improving the **provision and flexibility of Short Breaks** for carers
- 4) Enhancing the **support available** to carers.

These priorities have enabled us to coproduce the Implementation Plan. We have established 4 delivery streams to take this delivery forwards, each has its own terms of reference and membership. The delivery streams are:

- 1) Access to Services
- 2) Communication & Engagement
- 3) Information, Advice, and Assistance
- 4) Young Carers

Each of the delivery streams has an action plan and is in the process of setting up key priorities for the next 12/ 28 months. It is noted that there is a lot of cross over between the delivery streams and therefore actions are allocated to where they best fit in order for there to be ownership and oversight.

All partner organisations and carers are invited to participate in the delivery streams with a lead elected from within the membership. Carers Liaison Forum and Carers Partnership Board are updated regularly of progress.

Key Enablers

The whole programme is enabled by the following key pieces of work:

Integrated planning and commissioning

The supporting programme, Commissioning Processes for Complex Care ensures partners work together to take forward jointly agreed priorities. This commitment is informed by the findings in the Regional Market Stability Report for 2022.

Technology and Digital Solutions

This work sits under the Digital and Data Programme. One of the aims will be to consider technological developments to enable people to live within their own homes with increased independence.

Promoting the Social Value Sector

A number of RIF projects are from third sector organisations. Given the strategy is focussed on prevention, investing in the voluntary sector will be crucial. The approach outlined in the Carers strategy is around how we join up the third sector services within our communities, together with the statutory services that they are supporting. There is a risk however in relation to the current financial pressures. Inflation and the cost-of-living crisis are impacting voluntary organisations that support the most vulnerable in society. Partners who need to make difficult decisions in order to balance the budgets, could result in local funding being cut which will impact on the overall service offer across the region. This will then impact on those service users who rely on these essential community services, which could result in escalating needs, which in turn impacts on the statutory services. At the same time some of these voluntary organisations are seeing record high service demand together with escalating complexity of service user needs. This will need to be considered as part of the strategy going forward.

Integrated Community Hub

The development of Hub's is being led by the Regional Strategic Capital Group.

Workforce Development and Integration

One of the supporting programmes is Workforce.

Successes and Progress

- 1) Coproduction – the programme successfully coproduced the Regional Carers Strategy and recognises that it is essential to coproduce the implementation plan to ensure that we are delivery the Strategy in a way that is meaningful to carers. The Carers Liaison Forum is held regularly and attended by carers across the region who coproduce and engage with transformational change.
- 2) We have made some significant progress in identifying what carers want us to focus on, what is important to them and understanding where we should start with strategy implementation. We have a clear implementation plan for delivery of the strategy which has been coproduced

with carers across the region. We have held a successful carers engagement event which carers have told us they would like to be repeated annually.

- 3) We have made progress in building and developing relationships with carers and professionals across the region. An example of this is the work being undertaken in the Primary Care Clusters, there is work underway, particularly in the Penderry Cluster to improve the experience of Carers in Pharmacies, Optometrists, GP Surgeries and Dentists. This is being developed and will be rolled out across the region as part of the Access to Services delivery stream.

Challenges

- 1) The Carers Development Officer post has been vacant for the majority of the year. This has been challenging as the duties of this role have been picked up by staff in NPTCVS and WGLAM team in addition to other work. There is a clear need for this role however we have been unable to attract the right candidate. An example being one interviewee who had no understanding of the role of unpaid carers, thinking the role was for those in the caring profession. We have since had to rethink the role on offer and are now in the process of preparing a slightly different role for advert; a Carers Liaison Officer. The Liaison Officer will be responsible for bridging the gap between the regional partnership programme and carers across the region, they will encourage more carers to take part in the Carers Liaison Forum and help progress the delivery of the Carers Strategy in a coproduced manner.
- 2) The poor awareness of the carers role across the region has emerged as a challenge. Carers are unfortunately it seems that carers are often an afterthought. Whilst statutory services are getting better at recognising carers needs there is still so much that can be done. Paid professionals still forget that the rights and needs of carers are something to be considered. This is improving but there is still so much to do.
- 3) A significant challenge has been the short termism funding across the 3rd sector.

Quantitative Measures

There are **23 community based third sector projects** that are grouped into the following key themes under the models of care Promoting Good Emotional Health and Wellbeing, Prevention and Community Coordination and Home from Hospital.

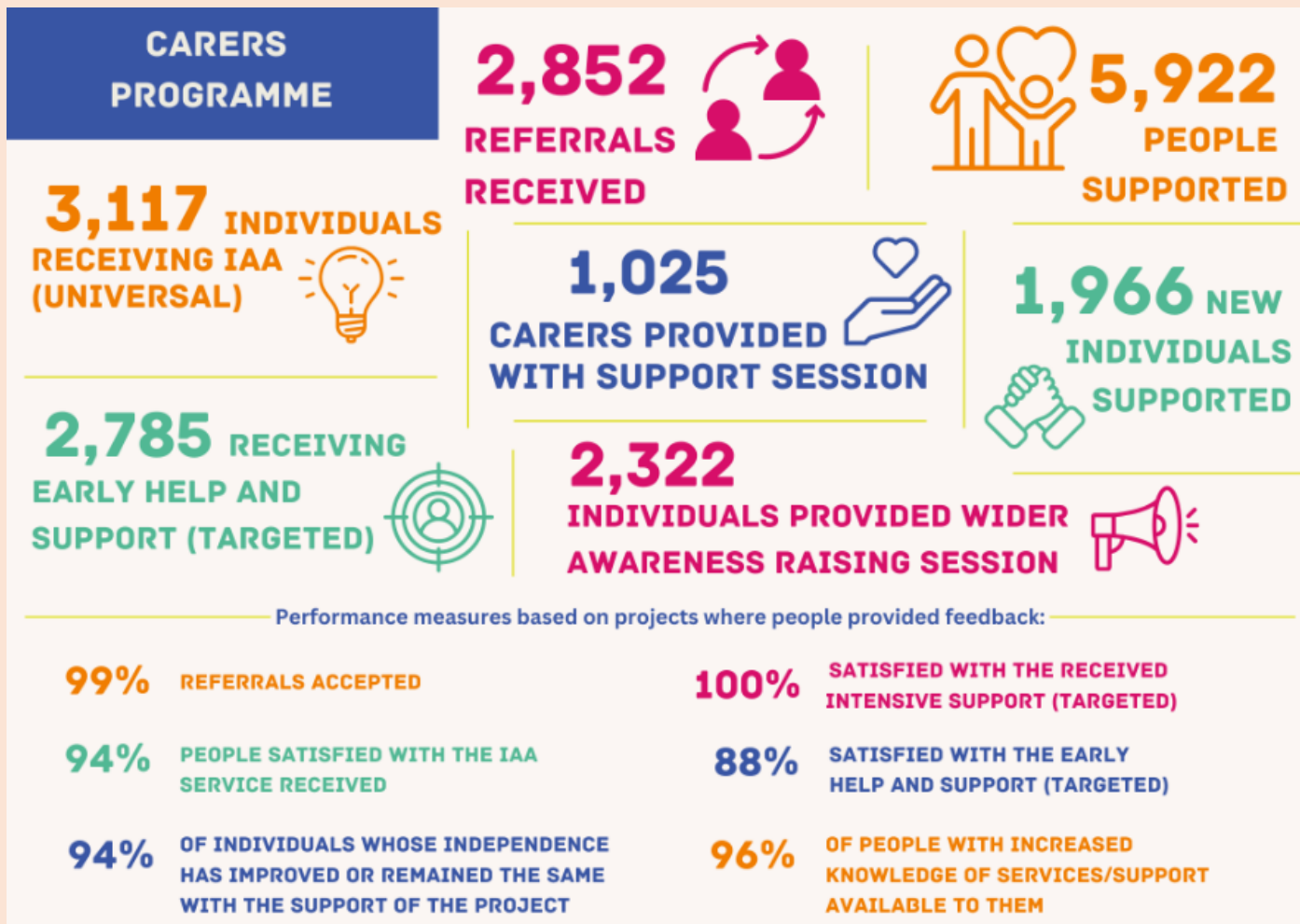
The projects have been grouped under the following themes:

1. Support for Carers to balance Priorities and maintain good emotional wellbeing (including short breaks)
2. Building resilient communities (support for Carers in the community including IAA)
3. Community Support for Carers – Targeted

The total investment of carers projects is **£1,182,030** funded via Regional Integration Fund (5%), Welsh Government carers and Carers Trust Funding. A total of **5,922** carers were supported through the different RIF funded projects so far in 2023-2024.

RIF	£945,383
Short Break for Carers	£236,647
Total	£1,182,030

Please refer to attached infographics which provides a summary of the performance measures for all the carers projects.



1. Support for Carers to balance priorities and maintain good emotional wellbeing (including short breaks)

There are 7 projects grouped under this theme which have supported **1195** of people in 23/24. These projects offer a wide range of support for different groups of carers including young carers, parent carers, dementia carers and older people carers. **1175** people received Early Help and Support and there were a total of 1248 referrals received in this period.

A significant area of supported provided as part of this theme is flexible respite/ short breaks as we know that this support significantly improves carers emotional wellbeing and mental health. Under this theme there a range of projects which offer a flexible respite / short breaks options. These include sitting services, emergency respite, giving you time back schemes, which offer help at home, home improvement, handy person services, decluttering, gardening, and cleaning support, vouchers for short breaks, grants to fund short breaks, short breaks for parent carers and residential trips for young carers. Feedback from carers through the Carer’s Liaison Forum and the engagement event ‘Turning Vision in Action’ event we held said they wanted a wider range of flexible options; different carers want different options and want to be able to choose a beak which suits their individual and varying needs.

245 carers received respite and short breaks excluding residential stays so far in 2023-2024. Additional 127 carers received respite support via other projects not included in this theme as these are specialising on other important elements. These includes **30 carers from BAME community, and 84 young carers** were supported with a short break / residential trips to enable carers to have a life alongside caring and maintain their own health and wellbeing.

Project **Unwind Wellbeing Breaks for Parent Carers**, which supports families to stay safely together and prevent the need for children to enter care. These families have children with complex health and/or additional learning needs. The project provides a bespoke short break for parent/carers either on their own, or with the whole family, including either the child with additional needs and/or their siblings. This gives parents the opportunity to recharge, to have a break from constant care, to have time to relax, to reconnect with partners or even get a night of uninterrupted sleep. In the reporting period this project has:

- Enabled **416** individuals to access this project
- Enabled **208** individuals to access this project for the first time
- Provided **416** individuals with Early Help and Support.

2. Building resilient communities (support for Carers in the community including IAA)

Ensuring that carers have a feeling of wellbeing throughout their caring journey is a priority for the Carers Programme. Under this theme, the RIF funds 7 projects to provide community counselling and wellbeing support, provided to a range of carers. **1,020** referrals received for all projects; **1,215** carers have been supported through the following range of support:

- Regular wellbeing calls with links to professional networks if further support is needed
- Bereavement support
- Support at the end of the caring role, including workshops and one-to-one mentoring/coaching to support carers to return to employment or education
- One to one counselling sessions
- Group counselling sessions

These projects support the prevention and community co-ordination model of care, with most projects including a focus on information, advice and assistance, signposting carers to the services that can support them and ensuring a seamless more streamlined service with different sectors working together. These projects are aimed at building community resilience, ensuring the relevant information, advice and assistance is available to those who need it at the right time.

The **Swansea Carers Extended Hours – Helpline and Counselling** project has provided **793** carers with a seamless first point of contact for Carers, ensuring they are provided with the right information at the right time. The extended hours team act as a point of contact for information, advice and conduit to Swansea Carers Centre Services and relevant other services in the community delivered outside of normal working hours (4pm – 8pm Mon – Fri) at a time when most other telephone information lines would be closed. It enables those who can otherwise not call at any other time due to being a working carer for example to gain equal access to the support they are able to get during normal working hours.

The staff covering the phonenumber have a breadth of knowledge, not limited to just the services of Swansea Carers Centre (which include Dementia Support, information about welfare benefit rights, family carer support, how to access shortbreaks, family support, training, information about accessing nursing care and residential support) but also services that exist via the LA with strong links to the Local Area Coordinators, they can refer to foodbanks, explain the process of accessing

a Carers Assessment or needs assessment, they are aware of services delivered by other Third Sector partners such as Care and Repair, Age Cymru.

This project has:

- Received and accepted **793** referrals
- Supported **248** new individuals
- Provided 3rd sector assessment for **577** carers.

3. Community Support for Carers – Targeted

It is recognised that many carers require targeted support which is specific to their unique circumstances or position on the journey as a carer. For example, supporting and identifying young carers is a key priority. In NPT and Swansea there are projects that deliver awareness raising sessions within schools, colleges, and community groups and aims to ensure young carers are identified, recognised, and supported. The Project aims to ensure our society are aware of who young carers are, what challenges they may face and how they can be supported, with training provided to professionals and staff in schools. It is essential for society to have knowledge and skills to identify and support young carers to ensure they receive the help they need. **178 young carers** have been supported and **2,695 children and young people** have had awareness raising sessions in schools, colleges and community setting across West Glamorgan. The project in NPT reported 93.2% (555/595 evaluated) of children and young people attending awareness raising sessions stated they know where to go for information, advice, and assistance in the future.

It is recognised that poorer health inequalities are deepening among unpaid carers and in particular carers from ethnic minority backgrounds. There is a key project for 'Community Support for Carers - targeted groups' which identifies carers, brings them together, finds out their needs and provides support in order to equip BAME carers with coping strategies and the confidence/ assurance in their ability and skills in providing care, whilst looking after their own wellbeing. This project offers specialist support for BAME carers, recognises different cultural nuances, and is aware of the issues associated with language barriers, to gain the trust of carers in different communities. The project supported **109** BAME individuals and **44** BAME carers in 2023-2024. Projects in this theme also provided targeted support to carers when the person they cared for is coming out of hospital.

All 9 projects have:

- Supported **3,461** individuals.
- Supported **1,328** individuals, who accessed those projects for the first time.
- Provided **2,912** individuals with IAA.
- Provided **611** individuals with Early Help and Targeted Support.
- Provided **2,260** individuals with wider awareness raising sessions

Qualitative Indicators

What we did and why (Input and Outputs in the last 6 months)

1. Support for Carers to balance priorities and maintain good emotional wellbeing (including short breaks)

Provision of such a wide range of flexible respite and short breaks options helps to ensure that unpaid carers have the opportunity to take breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their own health and well-being and have a life alongside caring. It also recognises the need to provide bespoke services to individuals as carers have different needs and want different types of support.

The **Emergency Respite Service in Swansea** reported that 100% of carers, who completed survey, stated that the respite reduced the impact of an emergency on the whole family, and many said it saved them from experiencing a breakdown in their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Quotes from service users:

“Firstly, I would like to say a huge “thank you” for the support I have received to date. The respite has been so helpful - just for a break to recharge my batteries. When my mother was diagnosed with dementia- it was a huge shock and a minefield trying to get support from different agencies. However the Swansea care association has been a tremendous support. Thank you again. Kindest regards, Mark”

“Just thank you, it will such a help to have a sitter and give a breathing space. I have found everyone very helpful and supportive thank you everyone.”

“Haven't gone away yet as still waiting for social services to arrange direct payment for Ian's care. Always helpful.”

“The Swansea Carers Centre Dementia Team caring are amazing. They are caring, helpful and share their wide knowledge gladly with Carers. They are dependable and I certainly don't know where I would be without them. Knowing I have a few hours respite a week will definitely relieve some of the stress I'm under. I am very grateful for their help and support.”

Provision of a respite service in terms of emergencies or crisis are a key element of the model and a further scheme was prioritised through the carers trust funding in the latter part of 22-23 to provide more emergency placements. Swansea Council block booked 1 care home bed at 2 separate dual registered (nursing and personal care) centrally located care homes in Swansea which are prioritised for people who need it most or as a response to emergency or crisis situations.

A regional project for **Carers 'Care and Repair: Giving you Time Back'** provides help at home, home improvement and handy person services which includes decluttering, gardening, cleaning support. In a 6-month period between April 2023 – September, we have completed **866** different work requests for **681** clients. The regional approach ensures equality of access and outcomes for clients and eliminates the postcode lottery of services. **93,6%** of those responding to a client satisfaction questionnaire have indicated that their independence has improved or remained the same with the support of the project.

The Young at Heart, A Life Alongside Caring Project enables Unpaid carers to take a break from their caring role. This project supported **16** carers and received **9** new referrals in this reporting period. Quotes that we have received *“Everything has been excellent, and I look forward to it” “Gives me a chance to get out and have an hour to myself, I am very grateful”*. *“Something to look forward to, the service is excellent”*. Unpaid carers attending this project report an improvement in their health and wellbeing as a result of the service.

Volunteers report to us that they really enjoy the role and find it very rewarding.

2. Building resilient communities (support for Carers in the community including IAA)

The RIF funds 7 projects which provide a wide range of counselling and wellbeing support for carers within the community along with provision of Information, Advice and Assistance.

A **Carers Wellbeing and Health Liaison Worker** project in NPT provides a link between them and counselling service for carers. Part of the project is to provide wellbeing calls to carers. This can be as often as the carer wishes. Weekly or fortnightly calls with a support worker to express their feelings and often frustrations. Carers feel they can't do this with their “cared for” or family members. The support worker is there to listen and understand how the carer is feeling and offer practical support if needed. Carers often say, *“it has been great to just talk to someone who understands my situation”*. Other quotes from carers are:

'Thank you for taking the time to listen to me'.

"I am absolutely delighted; the counselling is working well and the calls with you are helping and thank you for everything you have done for me."

A Single point of contact - Gateway for Carers projects support for carers, who either self-refer, be referred by a family member or by a referral from a health or social care professional. The support worker will gather all the information from the referral or by contacting the referrer for more information. This prevents the carer having to repeat themselves during the initial contact with the support worker. The support worker will contact the carer within 4 days of the referral being received by us. During this initial conversation the carer will explain their current situation. The support worker can then establish what support the carer needs currently. The support worker will explain what package of support is available to the carer. NPT Carers service offers professional counselling, a carers assessment, wellbeing activities and events and a sitting service. The support worker will act on the carer's behalf and make referrals to other organisations if needed and signpost to other organisations and charities for example The Stroke Association U.K or Parkinson's UK. The aim of this process is to ensure carers are identified at the earliest point and receive the correct information and support rather than having to contact several different organisations or health professionals. This project provided support to **205** individuals in the reporting period, with **65** individuals accessing this project for the first time and **62** individuals have been provided with wider awareness raising sessions. **100%** of people completing a survey report having an increased knowledge of services or/and support available to them.

A regional project, **Connecting Carers**, has provided support carers across the region at the end of the caring role; including workshops and one-to-one mentoring/coaching, including supporting carers to return to employment or education. This project supported **71** individuals and **61** individuals received Early Help and Support. 98% of Carers reported finding the project beneficial to them and 95% of Carers reported having improved access to support networks, opportunities and peer and professional support, as a result of the project.

Another example of a building resilient and supporting communities is project the **Swansea Male Carers Project** which has supported **65** carers and they received wellbeing support by a professional. This is the first project in the region to provide targeted support to male carers. This project has also provided training to **15** carers in how to administer medication and manual handling. A quote from service user: "the service is very much appreciated as I no longer feel alone". This short clip gives some further information on the project from carers.

[Male Carers V.4.1 \(vimeo.com\)](#)

3. Community Support for Carers – Targeted

There are 9 projects offering more targeted community support to carers. One of these, **Carers Journey Project**, was launched in October 2002 and provides a wide range of support which includes a carers community transport scheme, one to one counselling and trips for groups of carers. This project has supported **35** BAME carers to date and provided respite to **30** BAME carers.

The **Swansea BAME Carers Pilot Project** was set up given BAME carers are reluctant to access services such as welfare benefits, carers allowance, carer support and advice. It is apparent that cultural differences are the key factor in people not wanting to be thought of as a carer. From an early age it is instilled in people that you look after your own family and not rely on external organisations. This pilot project has worked with **109** carers offering IAA, signposting, support sessions, training, specialist support. Support provided to one carer who cared for her husband who was disabled in a road traffic accident: She was grateful for the help offered. Finally, someone could talk the same language reassure her and help her manage her situation. "May Allah bless you for helping". **100%**

of all those who completed a survey report feeling less isolated, maintaining or improving their emotional health and wellbeing.

What is being done differently?

As we work to implement the Carers Strategy, we are seeing that carers require support within the community in which they live. Carers want to feel heard and recognised by the people they come into contact with on a day-to-day basis. We recognise that we still have so much to do in this regard, but we are changing the way we work with Carers and other stakeholders to ensure that carers needs are at the heart of what we do, to make a real difference to carers across the region.

An example of how we are working differently is the approach we are taking to implementing the strategy. We are asking carers to lead the way in terms of the order in which we make change across the region. Prioritising what is important to carers and ensuring resources are made available to implement change that will be effective.

We intend to make some significant progress in the second half of the financial year in raising the recognition and understanding of carers across the region.

We are taking a different approach to offering and administering respite and short breaks for carers across the region. As stated above, we want to make respite and short break provision as flexible as possible for carers, meaning that carers can access support, which is more meaningful to them, making a greater, more positive impact on their lives.

Reach: Who we worked with (priority population groups – older people including people with dementia, children and young people with complex needs, people with learning difficulties and neurodevelopmental conditions, unpaid carers, people with emotional and mental health wellbeing needs).

The Carers Partnership Programme specifically supports Unpaid Carers across the West Glamorgan region, however by its very nature the programme is cross cutting as the unpaid carers supported will undoubtedly support individuals across all of the other population cohorts. The tables below outlines the estimated population of unpaid carers across West Glamorgan

Carer	All categories: Provision of unpaid care	Provides no unpaid care	Provides unpaid care: Total	Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week
Age						
All categories: Age	138,682	118,322	20,360	10,379	3,273	6,708
Age 0 to 24	39,513	37,885	1,628	1,158	256	214
Age 25 to 49	45,565	38,580	6,985	3,890	1,171	1,924
Age 50 to 64	28,416	21,393	7,023	3,797	1,185	2,041
Age 65 and over	25,188	20,464	4,724	1,534	661	2,529

Swansea

Carer	All categories: Provision of unpaid care	Provides no unpaid care	Provides unpaid care: Total	Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week
Age						
All categories: Age	234,363	204,083	30,280	17,290	4,489	8,501

Age 0 to 24	72,956	70,480	2,476	1,805	384	287
Age 25 to 49	76,359	66,357	10,002	6,147	1,514	2,341
Age 50 to 64	43,783	33,263	10,520	6,506	1,532	2,482
Age 65 and over	41,265	33,983	7,282	2,832	1,059	3,391

Source: Nomis - 2011 Census LC3301EW - Provision of unpaid care by general health by sex and by age

How have people felt about what has been delivered

Please see quotes throughout the report.

What have we learned about things that went well? What have we learned from any challenges that occurred?

What has gone well:

- 1) **Improvement of short break/ respite provision across the region** – We have worked with carers to better understand what carers want from respite/ short break provision across the region. We have agreed a different approach to the future delivery of these services, seeking to appoint a short breaks ‘broker’ role in both Council areas which act as a ‘travel agent’, linking carers to the most appropriate short breaks projects or schemes to meet their needs. We will provide further detail on this in the end of year report.
- 2) **Delivered a Regional Carers Event which linked carers to carers and carers to services** – This event was extremely well received by carers across the region. Feedback told us that carers learned so much from the event and were made aware of services that they can access which they didn’t know existed. Carers have asked that this is repeated annually. We are scheduling a similar event in the Spring for young carers across the region. We will provide further detail on the young carers event in the end of year report.
- 3) **Coproduction with Carers** – We are developing strong relationships with carers across the region and promoting the Carers Liaison Forum in all of our events and workshops. A recent ‘Join Us’ Campaign was run across the region which has attracted new carers to the Forum. We intend to run this again in the future and ‘push’ the forum in primary care settings.

Challenges – things that can be improved:

- 1) **Regional projects often only for Swansea** – During the review of the RIF funded projects we have noted that many projects originally stated that the project would be offered on a regional basis to carers across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, however as the projects have evolved, it has been apparent that the majority of projects are predominantly offered to Swansea residents alone. As a result we have contacted project leads, referring to their original project bid, reminding them of the commitment to provide projects across the region. We will understand why some projects have not fulfilled the original commitment and work with these projects to ensure they broaden their scope to reach carers in Neath Port Talbot going forwards. In the future we will capture data from all RIF funded projects which shows the breakdown of those supported by region to develop a greater understanding of what support is on offer/being utilised.

2) Organisations receiving funding for more than one project – During the review of the RIF Funded projects we have noted that there are a few organisations which receive funding for more than one project. These projects are sometimes similar in their scope and therefore their Stories of Change can be very repetitive. Going forwards we need to consider grouping similar projects together under a broader scope with one pot of funding and one set of data/ story of change to complete. In addition to this we have noted that different organisations are offering very similar services, especially IAA, going forwards we will explore joining these up to create ‘partnerships/ alliances’ which can work together to pool funds and skills to reach a wider cohort.

3) Still not reaching all carers – During the last 6 months we have noticed, especially since facilitating the ‘turning vision into action’ event, that we are still not reaching many carers across the region. There are many carers who are unaware of their basic rights, the need for Carers Needs Assessments or their eligibility for Direct Payments for example. We need to do more to raise awareness of the role of carers, increase those who identify as carers and ensure more carers are aware of their rights and support services available to them.

Changes to System

System Outcomes/Benefits

Having carers representatives within all our meetings, including RPB, Transformation Boards, Programme Boards and Workstream meetings has been instrumental in raising the importance and value of carers across the region and has enabled a stronger community voice from carers. Agendas for Board meetings include a digital / case study story at the beginning, to help set the scene of the meeting, ensuring it is people focussed.

Engagement with carers takes place through the Carers Liaison Forum. The Forum has approved its co-produced terms of reference, explored how to support Carers involvement, and discussed the regional Carers strategy themes in more detail. This information contributed to the qualitative evidence for the Population Needs Assessment. Planning is underway to involve carers more in the prioritisation of RIF funding to ensure they have more control on where investment is directed.

Work continues to develop the key priorities informed by our Carers Strategy so we can focus our resources, funding opportunities and collaborative efforts on delivering the changes that best meet the needs of carers in our region, through a co-productive approach. The aim is to ensure there is parity of carers services across both NPT and Swansea and through the new regional integration fund create sustainable services for the future.

We are implementing the Strategy in an order which has been decided by carers. Ensuring that recognition and identification of carers is a priority.

A significant amount of investment is targeted around promoting good emotional health for carers given it is recognised that supporting carers’ wellbeing is vital for them to continue in their caring role and to enable them to have fulfilling lives.

A mapping exercise has taken place to collate all the carers schemes funded across the region, which includes the schemes which are locally funded. This mapping exercise helps us to review the full investment of funding that goes into carers services both locally and regionally and allows us to monitor the overall investment year upon year to ensure that the overall investment is increasing. The mapping exercise also helps to identify any overlap of funding and any gaps in service with an aim to ensure a consistent offer of services across the region, removing any ‘post-code’ lottery of services.

Further work is needed around the data sets within the mapping to enable richer intelligence to move towards a commissioned approach using a tender process rather than an application process, given this should provide more targeted services which are meeting the needs of carers.

Longer term ambition is to develop a pooled fund for community services for carers which will help to support more sustainable and longer-term funding.

Programme Progress

This will be reported in the annual end of year reports.

Lessons Learned

- 1) Communication and promotion
- 2) Joining up projects and encouraging partnerships
- 3) Carers are still not being recognised – more work to be completed around recognition

These are elaborated above in “**What have we learned about things that went well? What have we learned from any challenges that occurred?**”

System Constraints

- 1) Short termism of 3rd sector funding is a common theme throughout the whole programme. The 3rd sector is facing increasing financial and workforce pressures as the cost of living rises. The sector is unable to offer job security and competitive salaries to retain staff and attract new staff. The sector is facing unprecedented challenges. Without a review of how the 3rd sector is funded many organisations may fail to survive the next few years which in turn places significant pressure on statutory services and will fail so many members of the public.
- 2) Lack of awareness and prioritisation of carers places a considerable constraint on the progress of the Programme. There is a lot to do to raise awareness of carers and their role across the region, and give them the recognition and respect they deserve. Employers are, in the main, not providing sufficient support for unpaid carers. Similarly, carers do not receive the understanding they deserve from public services. This needs to be addressed as the programme progresses.
- 3) Competing priorities of paid professionals is a theme which reoccurs through the wider West Glamorgan Programme. It is often the same staff involved in the regional transformational agenda, and this is often in addition to a ‘day job’. This leads to competing priorities and extremely busy schedules and an overstretched workforce. These issues are reflected in the supporting programme ‘Workforce’.

National Models of Care (NMoC)

NMOC: Prevention & Community Co-ordination NMOC – Outcome Statements:

1. People's well-being is improved through accessing co-ordinated community-based solutions
2. Local prevention and early intervention solutions support people to avoid escalation and crisis interventions

The Programme recognises that if carers are provided with the right IAA and support at the earliest opportunity there is a reduced risk that their needs will escalate or that they will reach burnout. This Programme has a number of projects which aim to provide such support to carers.

Going forwards the programme will consider ways in which we can provide support for carers which will prevent escalation of need, focusing on community-based care which builds stronger, more resilient communities.

If we were starting this programme now, we would want to ensure a focus is on building resilient communities which offer preventative support to carers. This is a theme which all partner

organisations are working to implement across services as it is recognised that developing local community-based resilience and strong, efficient, effective supportive and preventative services to reduce the demands on statutory services.

NMOC: Emotional Health and Wellbeing

1. People are better supported to take control over their own lives and well-being
2. People have improved skills, knowledge and confidence to be independent in recognising their own well-being needs

Programme Contribution

The Programme recognises that carers require support to ensure good emotional health and wellbeing. This support needs to be both generic and targeted as there will be some groups of people who will require more specific support.

The Programme seeks to offer carers across the region with support which promotes good emotional health and wellbeing by:

- recognising carers and the role that they undertake,
- providing accurate IAA to carers which will enable them to be in control of their lives
- supporting carers to look after their own emotional and physical health
- supporting carers to balance their competing priorities.

Additionally, targeted support ensures that carers in specific cohorts receive the additional support that they require such as the BAME community, young people and carers who themselves have additional needs.

NMOC: Home from Hospital

1. People go home from hospital in a more timely manner with the necessary support in place at discharge
2. People have a better understanding of the discharge process and are more involved in pre and post discharge planning

Programme Contribution

The Programme recognises that carers can influence the timeliness a cared for person can be discharged from hospital. It is well recognised that one of the delays in discharging people from hospital is the need for ongoing packages of care to be in place. Where carers are able to support the cared for in returning home, this can increase the pace of this, thus freeing the hospital bed in a more timely manner.

Carers are supported to work with statutory professionals in hospitals to plan for discharge, not just committing to caring for their loved one but also to administer medication.

Financial and Economic Data

Economic Data

Supporting carers by promoting good emotional health is recognised as crucial in supporting carers to continue in their caring role. Providing a range of wellbeing support and flexible respite options will help support carers to remain resilient. At the same time, it is important that carers feel valued and are recognised for the valuable role they do.

'New findings from Carers UK and the University of Sheffield show that unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute a staggering £445 million to the economy in England and Wales every day – that's £162 billion per year.'

Source: Carers UK 3rd May 2023

There would be significant costs if a carer was unable to carry on their caring role and therefore supporting carers to remain resilient should help to avoid any breakdown in caring. The cost of a breakdown in caring could be measured by the following estimated average statutory costs:

Older People

- Residential care cost per week: £826

Learning Disability

- Residential cost per week: £3,100

Mental Health

- Residential cost per week: £2,164

Therefore, if one carer decided they were unable to continue their caring role and the person they care for needed alternative accommodation, then the estimated average annual costs would be as follows:

Older People

- Residential care cost per annum: £42,952

Learning Disability

- Residential cost per annum: £161,200

Mental Health

- Residential cost per annum: £112,528.

Programme Case Studies

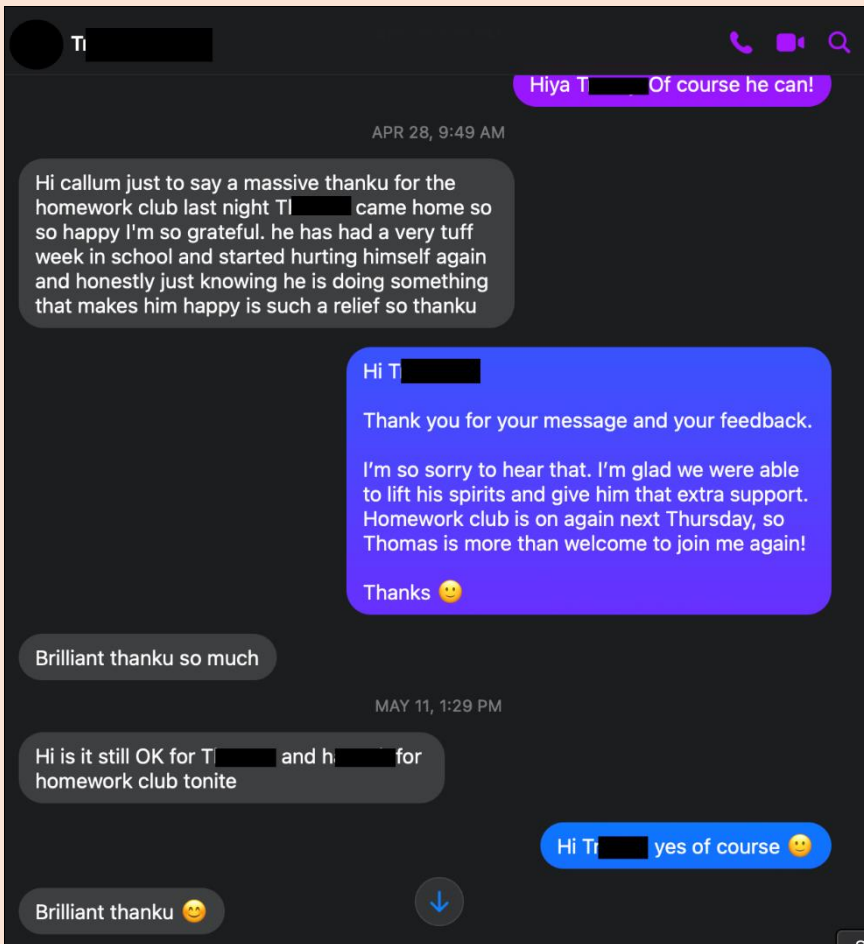
Project “**The Homework Club Drop-In**” takes place on Mondays, during term-time, 5pm till 7pm. The drop-ins offer a chance for young carers to have a quiet/calm space in which to do homework, access computers and materials, as well as access additional support from a Youth Worker. The drop-ins take place in the Young Carers Room at YMCA Swansea. During one of the first few drop-ins, a young person named T attended. His sister joined the week after.

Youth Worker describes one of the cases, he recently worked on below:

“T provides care to his mother, who has Fibromyalgia, Arthritis and associated hip and joint pain. T’s sister, H, was identified through the Schools Awareness Programme, and through her referral form, it was identified that her siblings (including T) were also Young Carers. Because of this, T was assessed by one of the Young Carers Team and deemed eligible for the service.

During the first drop-in session he brought along with him his maths revision, as he had a 'hot task' soon (like a test) which he finds out the day before. He also brought with him his Welsh homework, in which he needs to use the Wordal game app, allowing him to practice and note down what he got correct and incorrect. He finished the drop-in by reading his book 'How to train your dragon' for his English work. He left the drop-in in very high spirits and was keen for attending the following week.

The next day I received the following Facebook message from his mother:



Receiving this feedback from T's mother made me feel positive about the drop-in provision. Balancing their school life and caring role is already a challenge for Young Carers, so with T's added issues of bullying, his school life is even more challenging for him. By the drop-in being available to him, he was able to find a safe space in which to do his homework, with a trusted and known Youth Worker. For me this was a successful experience as we achieved exactly what we set out to do, even for just that young person."

Another case study comes from a project, which provides carers with the support they need to continue with their caring role including a sitting service to allow them to tend to their own health needs and have a break from their caring role. The project lead explained:

"I spoke to the carer to establish what support she needed. It was established that she wanted a couple of hours a week to enable her to her food shopping. I arranged for a sit to be put in place after carrying out a risk assessment and visiting the carer in her home. A regular two-hour sitting call was arranged once a week. The carer now goes with her son once a week to do her weekly shopping." As of the lady, who was receiving the service she said "I look forward to having this break to do my shopping. It improves my health as I need time out of the house. It helps me to de-stress".

Further the project lead added that "many carers neglect their own health and wellbeing because they are unable to leave the cared for alone, this is detrimental for all, if the carers lose their health, then they lose the ability to care."

Project **Hospital Outreach** provides another good example of what difference it made to this carer live. The project lead explains:

“Carer looking after her father. Referral came from social worker at the hospital. Her father was in ward B2 in NPT hospital following heart attack and stroke. This affected his functioning, his cognition, and his speech. A best interest meeting at the hospital had identified that nursing placement was needed.

The carer lives with her father, and it is his house. She is very concerned about being able to remain in the house if he goes into placement. The project worker sent her information on deferred payments. There was no LPA in place, and he cannot now consent, so she also needs guidance on applying for deputyship. The carer was not able to afford big third-party top ups.

She was finding the whole situation difficult and there was a lot of pressure from hospital for a fast discharge.

SCVS hoarding service helped clear the house. Path For Care is also helping. The carer had help with the rent arrears. The carer has hired a container to house things she may want to sell not put on the skip, we discussed that if/when her father comes home to apply through our office for AA & benefit check for him although she will check to see if he is already in receipt of it, discussed appointee for benefits through DWP and if it is established that he has capacity to discuss LPA with him.

The outcome was that the carer felt in a much better place and that she could move on. The importance of partnership working between health, social services, and the voluntary sector.”