

Appendix 9 Our approach to supporting unpaid carers in Gloucestershire

[Gloucestershire Carers Hub](#) are our commissioned provider for adult carers and are a one stop shop for information and advice for carers supported by a comprehensive [council website](#)¹. We have worked with the Carers Partnership Board to develop a [co-produced action plan](#) focussing on improvements to support carers to be:

Be heard & Supported – to identify, support and act on feedback.

Be recognised – to be carer aware.

Be informed – to have relevant information and advice

Be prepared - to have plans in place for the unexpected

Be connected - to help reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing

Be reached – to provide the right methods of communication and help to access online support.

This action plan was further ratified at our last face to face Carers Partnership Board in November 2023, when we went back to basics and heard from a variety of carers and cross referenced their experiences with the action plan.

[Carer Aware](#)² was born after feedback from a carer who wanted some identity during the Covid period. It is a discreet way of identifying that someone is an unpaid carer so professionals can support them. Part of Carer Aware development is the Carer aware discount card, which aims to encourage local businesses to provide concessions/discounts for carers in their local communities. Further information about the campaign can be [found on this website](#). All of our key documents relating to this can be found on [our GCC Website](#).

The [Gloucestershire Carers Hub](#)³ (GCH) is a jointly funded contract between the ICB and County Council and it delivers a variety of services to support carers including our Care Act Carers Assessments. We know we need to improve how well this is integrated with our inhouse operational assessment teams to avoid de-skilling and improve how carers needs are integrated into the Care Act assessment of the person with care and support needs. We are proud of the short wait times (on average 16 days) for a Carers Assessment. We have provided Care Act Training to GCH Staff to ensure they are familiar with their responsibilities under the Care Act when conducting Carers Assessments. In addition our ASC Operations Carers Lead and Commissioning Managers ensures the GCH team remain up to date with changes and consistently share information from national services such as Carers UK and also highlight training opportunities on sites such as SCIE. There are many more areas of work and development, but our key aims are to identify, register, support and value each and every carer in Gloucestershire. Carer Feedback: ***“You’ve saved my life; in the last few months you’ve been the only constant that I could rely on. You’ve got things done and managed a situation that felt so unmanageable. You saved my life”.***

While there are over 9,500 carers registered with Gloucestershire Carers Hub, we recognise that this does not translate to our ASCOF performance, and we have an improvement plan in place to improve the data flows from our provider.

We have Locality Carers Champions who meet regularly share qualitative intelligence and best practice within their teams, these champions provide a conduit for their teams on what is happening at a Countywide level and between GCH. In addition, we have in place a digital Carers portal which enables two-way communication between GCH and GCC to enable feedback on work/support with specific carers and this information is available to our operational teams through LAS.

We have a Quality Assurance Audit programme in collaboration with GCH to ensure compliance with the Care Act Assessments. Each quarter a random sample of assessments are jointly reviewed between GCH and GCC staff. A follow up meeting is then attended to discuss any areas of interest or development. In addition, the GCH Keyworker team manager completes a QA “listen in” on the Carer conversation/ assessment meeting. The written assessment is then completed by the assessor and reviewed by the team manager for accuracy. Where there is a provision of service such as a short break the assessment and support plan are forwarded to ASC operations via the LAS portal for secure upload. In the situation where there are needs identified which cannot be met by the GCH and with consent of the Carer the assessment and support plan would be sent along with a referral for ASC review and action.

GCH produce a [regular newsletter](#)⁴ and email updates to carers and to professionals to share information to a wide stakeholder list.

Specific advice and support for [Young Carers](#) in Gloucestershire is provided from a different provider to [adults](#). GCH work closely with Gloucestershire Young Carers (GYC) and have regular meetings about transition from either organisation. GYC offer a wide variety of support for carers up to 24. As part of our improvement work, we liaise closely with [Glos Parent Carer Forum](#) (PCF) to ensure what we develop in this area is co-produced. GCH, GYC, PCF and a commissioner meet monthly to share updates and discuss any issues.

GCH offer the Carer STAR (an outcomes based tool to support carers to optimise their quality of life and wellbeing). to help track carers wellbeing. (Gloucestershire Carer Hub, 2023),. During 2022, 659 and during 2023 578 Carer Star tools were completed and of those completed 80% had a positive movement in at least one outcome area.

We offer Carers Wellbeing payments to improve the carer’s quality of life via creative solutions to individual needs. See the overview of the [GCH achievements during 2023](#). GCH supported 5408 carers and have had over 10,000 carers register with them, with over 2500 being registered new in 2023. 11,511 outgoing calls have been made to carers and they received on average 836 calls per month from carers asking for help and advice. This has resulted on average to 157 assessments being completed a month.

We can offer short breaks to give informal carers/family undertaking caring duties the chance to rest and recharge. We also run a [carers emergency scheme](#)⁵ (CES) for informal carers/family to sign up to so if an emergency arises e.g. they become seriously ill, or unexpectedly go into hospital, or are delayed due to unexpected travel

issues, for example an accident, then the scheme can be activated with the assurance that services will be aware of the need to respond. We also encourage all carers to have their own contingency plans in place.

We use the CQC assurance framework and its links to support guidance and good practice resources to guide our preparations for assessment. Our Carers Action Plan and the Glos Carers Hub specification has been written with the NICE ([NG150](#)) Guidelines and Carers UK reports in mind, as well as the [GP Quality Markers for Carers Framework](#). We have been successful in our application for the Accelerated Reform Fund and from March 2024 will be commencing with 4 short term projects which focus on unpaid carers and solutions to support them using a co-production approach.

Case Study: Carers Hub (GCH)

Simon is a carer who supports his partner who has mobility and personal care needs. At the time of the call to GCH, they had moved into a new property, which Simon was finding overwhelming. Supporting his partner and moving house were pulling him in very different directions, and he felt that they were not able to manage the house, or the caring role effectively. Simon was having to do all unpacking, sorting, and organising in the house, which meant that there was little time left to spend with his partner. A wait for OT equipment to be installed also meant that the caring role was more difficult.

Simon was upset at the start of the call, and the advisor listened to why they were so upset, letting him talk in their own time. The lack of time for being with partner led to feelings of guilt, and of letting them down. The advisor talked through with him some coping strategies and managing techniques, such as making lists, prioritising the tasks, and pacing the days to not tackle everything at once. By the end of the call, Simon felt able to ensure that they were scheduling in breaks throughout the day for time for self, and time to spend with partner. Simon felt calmer, felt listened to and felt relieved that someone had been able to give simple solutions

To further enhance the training support GCH offer they have developed "Be Empowered" Training sessions for carers. They are interactive sessions to provide carers with knowledge, skills and strategies to navigate their caring journeys with greater resilience and confidence. The feedback from participants has been positive... *"With no support around me prior to going along to the sessions, I found I wasn't on my own." ... "As a Carer, you are thrown into what can be an extremely difficult and stressful situation with no prior training. After Be Empowered, things felt clearer and I have more confidence, not just in my caring role, but to be heard."*

GCH offer a wide variety of training sessions for carers virtually, face to face and via You Tube offerings, many of which can be accessed when a carer has some free time. In addition to this they also engage and develop local Peer support groups to encourage informal support from others in similar situations to them.

In addition to our contract with the Carers Hub, we offer Carers grants to support carer communities, some examples of the grants offered to diverse ethnic communities are outlined below;

- Black Elders/Ebony Carers – includes carers who were linked to the Golden years carers support who folded during Covid. Numbers of carers supported varies, approx. 40-50 carers via Ebony carers. Black elders waiting on a review date with them.
- Friendship café – carers support groups including Bangladeshi carers group, a male carers group and open carer groups. Numbers of carers supported varies, approx.

40-50 women carers, approx. 20 Bangladeshi carers, male carers group is fairly new and support 6-10 male carers.

- Chinese Women's Guild – support male and female carers. Numbers of carers supported varies, approx. 40-50 carers
- Polish community – support the Polish community in particular carers who do not speak English. Numbers of carers supported varies, approx. 40-50 carers

In addition, The GCH aim to offer all services to all carers with help around website translation, leaflets in other languages, translation support, drop in at key community venues, Faith groups, churches, events (e.g. Pride, Ebony Carers exercise group, Polish Carers Group etc).

GCH have a pool of volunteers who support carers. There are approx. 9.2% from minoritized ethnic communities- over the next six months the volunteer coordinator has been tasked to increase this to 15% and they hope to have Carer community champions as a recognised volunteering opportunity.

Our In House (IH) respite services offer unpaid carers and family the opportunity to obtain some short-term rest, essential to maintaining their own mental health and well-being. There are lots of respite care options in Gloucestershire, however our IH services provide service the following support:

Three learning disability respite service bedded units (Cathedral View, The Vicarage and Longhouse), Multiple IH learning disability, physical disability and older people day services.

As part of the preparations for our self-assessment for CQC Assessment, we have engaged widely on all aspects of adult social care delivery. We have engaged with the Carers Hub, Carers Partnership Board, staff groups and representatives from the VCSE as well as NHS Partners on matters affecting carers as well as inviting the Local Government Association in to undertake a Peer Challenge (September 2023).

We heard that it is not easy to navigate the services available to unpaid carers across the Gloucestershire system, a message which was reinforced from carer feedback in the 2023 Healthwatch report on Adult Social Care. We also heard that our approach to coproduction could be improved so that people feel we have genuinely coproduced and designed services that matter to people. This was a consistent message from many people with lived experience and has been re-enforced by our Partnership Boards. The further development of our carers action plan through the Accelerated Reform Fund projects, especially how we can hear from those carers who are seldom heard or reached is a key action on our improvement plan.

¹ Gloucestershire County Council Webpages for Unpaid Carers
<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/carers/>

² Carer Aware Branding <https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/x0hk1w4m/carers-aware-acronym-poster-final.pdf>

³ Gloucestershire Carers Hub <https://gloucestershirecarershubb.co.uk/>

⁴ Gloucestershire Carers Hub News <https://gloucestershirecarershubb.co.uk/our-groups/hub-news/>



Gloucestershire County Council Adult Social Care
CQC Self-Assessment
Appendices

⁵ Gloucestershire County Council, Carers Emergency Scheme,
<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/carers/the-carers-emergency-scheme-ces/>