

# Solihull Carers' Strategy 2022-2027

2025 update



# Foreword

Welcome to the Solihull Carers' Strategy 2022-27 (2025 update).

Carers in Solihull play a huge role in our community. At least 1 in 10 of our residents provides support to a family member or friend, giving them essential support to enable them to live a good life. Carers can be any age, and so can those that they support.

In Solihull, we want to champion the role of carers of all ages and demonstrate our support to them in their caring role, and also for carers as individuals.

We know that carers offer a lot of their time and energy to provide the support that they do; we want carers to be able to live a good life alongside their caring role.

We have worked with carers to set out a vision through this strategy of how we aim to improve the lives of carers in Solihull, and an action plan to show how we will deliver the changes needed.

We hope that by working together across the Integrated Care System we will be able to strengthen and improve our support to carers, and by doing so improve their lives and the lives of the people they care for.

Cllr Karen Grinsell – Leader of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Professor Patrick Vernon OBE – Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board Chair

# Introduction



We understand carers in Solihull face significant challenges and supporting carers of all ages is a priority for the Council



We recognise the difficulties that many faced and continue to face as we emerge from the pandemic



We have worked with carers to understand the support we can give to improve their lives



This strategy sets out how we are going to make changes in order to improve our support to carers of all ages

# Solihull carers' vision for the future:

*We worked together with carers in Solihull to create a vision for the future, that all carers are able to:*

- Recognise that they are performing a caring role;
- Carry on caring if they choose to;
- Have access to good quality information and advice when they need it;
- Live a life of their own alongside being a carer, and after the caring role is over;
- Be able to thrive in work or education alongside their caring role;
- Be supported to remain physically and mentally well;
- Know that if they are suddenly unable to provide care that there is a plan in place;
- Feel confident that the person they care for is getting the right support;
- Feel safe doing their caring role

# Young Carers Promise 2019

In addition to our vision for the future, we continue to honour the Young Carers Promise we made in 2019.

- Help you to care
- See you and listen to you
- Make sure you are safe
- Provide opportunities for family time
- Make sure you can be children and young people first
- Support you in education and/or work
- Help you to be healthy and happy

# What do we mean by carers?

A carer is anyone who provides unpaid\* support to a family member, child of any age, or friend who needs help because of illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem, or addiction. There are young carers, parent carers, and adult carers, and the support they provide may be:

Emotional support (for example listening to worries / concerns, supporting a person to manage their mental wellbeing)



Supporting with financial tasks – helping a person make their bill payments, access cash, manage their money, and make purchases



Supporting with household tasks – for example cooking, cleaning, and minor repairs



Supporting with personal care – washing, bathing, supporting the person to use the toilet or manage their continence



Supporting a child with additional needs, to be included and have the same chances to live their best life



\*Excluding carer's allowance

# What support can carers access?

All carers are entitled to a carer's assessment. This assessment will support discussion about options available, and if you are eligible for funding from the Council.

If you are caring for an adult and are entitled to Council-funded support you may be offered services such as respite (replacement) care for your loved one, or even one-off payments for you to spend on your own wellbeing.

All carers can approach the Carers Trust Solihull, funded by the Council and ICB, and can access support groups, training and a whole range of activities for carers of all ages.

If you are caring for a child with a disability, there are carers services that can provide support for you or offer your child short break activities, without the need for a social care assessment.

If you are a young carer, you may be offered a range of activities and support following your assessment, including liaison with your school so that they are aware of the impact that your caring responsibilities have on you.

Sometimes caring relationships can become difficult, with risks of abuse and neglect. Solihull safeguarding teams can provide support to keep you and the person you care for safe.

# Why do we need a strategy?

We recognise the crucial role of unpaid carers in Solihull and the support carers need to enable them to maintain their caring role.

The law places a duty on the Council to support all carers in Solihull young carers, parent carers, and those caring for another adult.

This duty includes supporting carers' wellbeing as well as access to information, advice and assessments. We work to statutory timescales for providing assessments and services.

This strategy sets out how we will meet our duty and develop our offer to carers.

This is a joint strategy between the Council and the NHS, working closely with commissioned carers support service.

It shows our commitment to working in partnership with carers

## What this strategy does

Describes what we know about carers in Solihull.

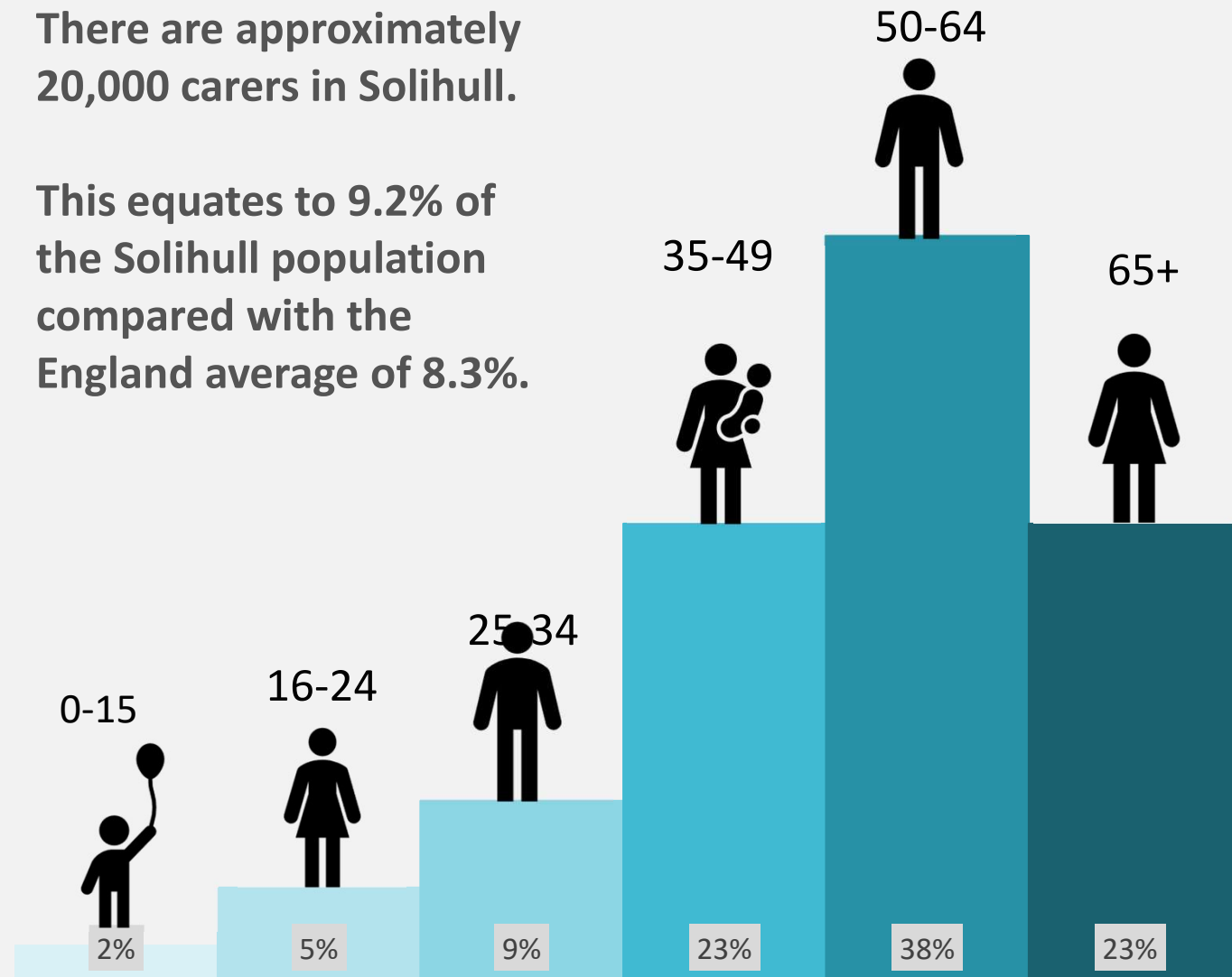
Explains what carers in Solihull have told us is important.

Plans out what changes we will make to improve our support to carers.

# Number of carers in Solihull

There are approximately 20,000 carers in Solihull.

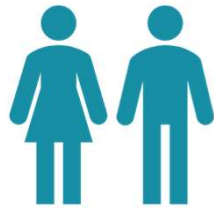
This equates to 9.2% of the Solihull population compared with the England average of 8.3%.



Data based on 2021 Census

# Carers in Solihull

Data from 2021 Census



The caring population of Solihull is 60% female and 40% male. 11% of women in the borough provide unpaid care compared with 8% of men.



26% of carers aged 5 or over are disabled under the Equality Act, compared with 17% of non-carers aged 5 or over. 26% of carers in Solihull say they are not in good health.



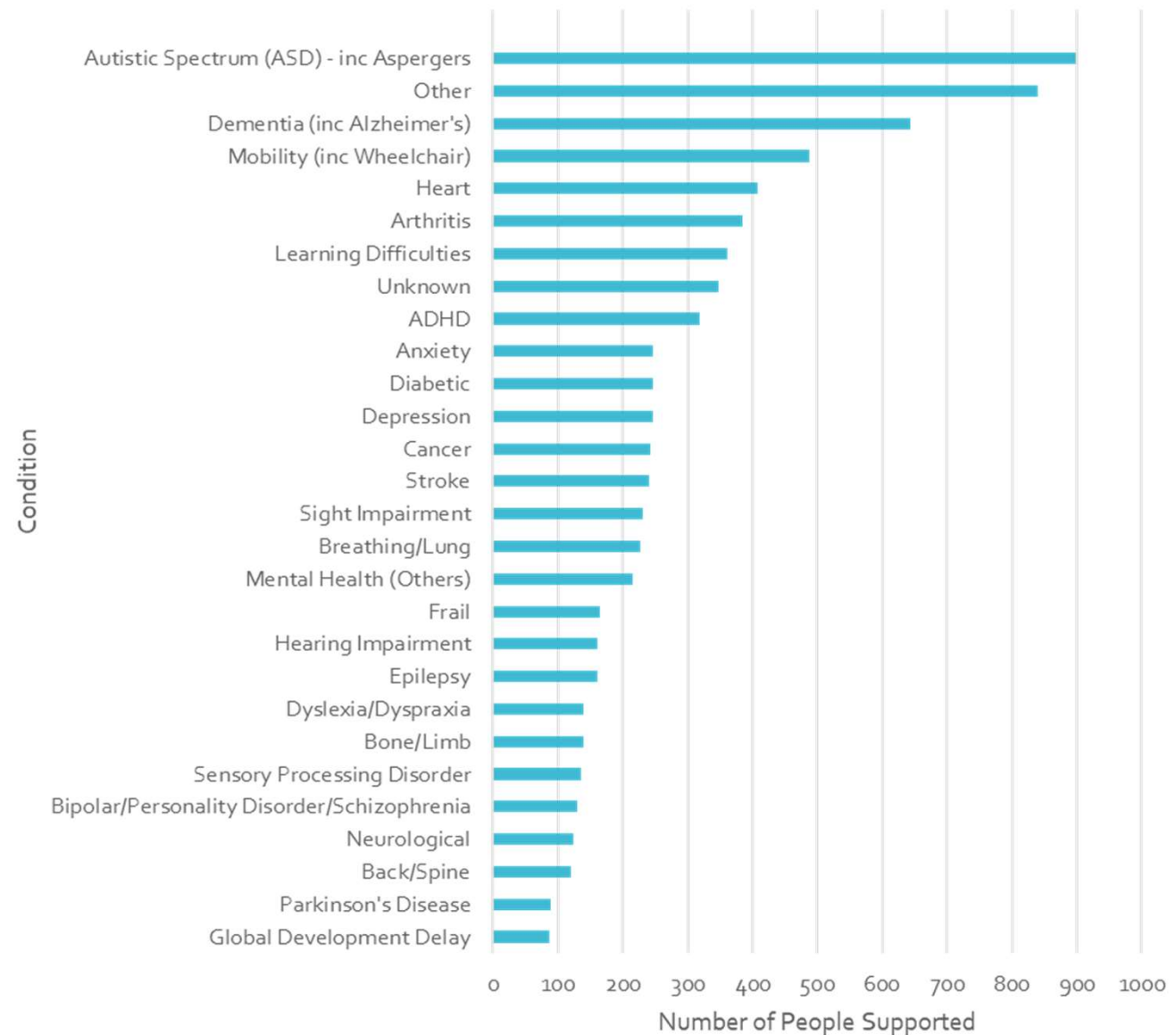
Fewer people from ethnic minorities report themselves as carers (7%) than the general population of Solihull (10%), however this could be due to people under-reporting their caring role and is something we are continuing to develop our understanding on.



A disproportionate number of people providing 50 hours or more of care per week live in the most deprived areas of Solihull. In 2016, 8,400 carers were known to be in full time employment and 4,700 in part time employment in Solihull.

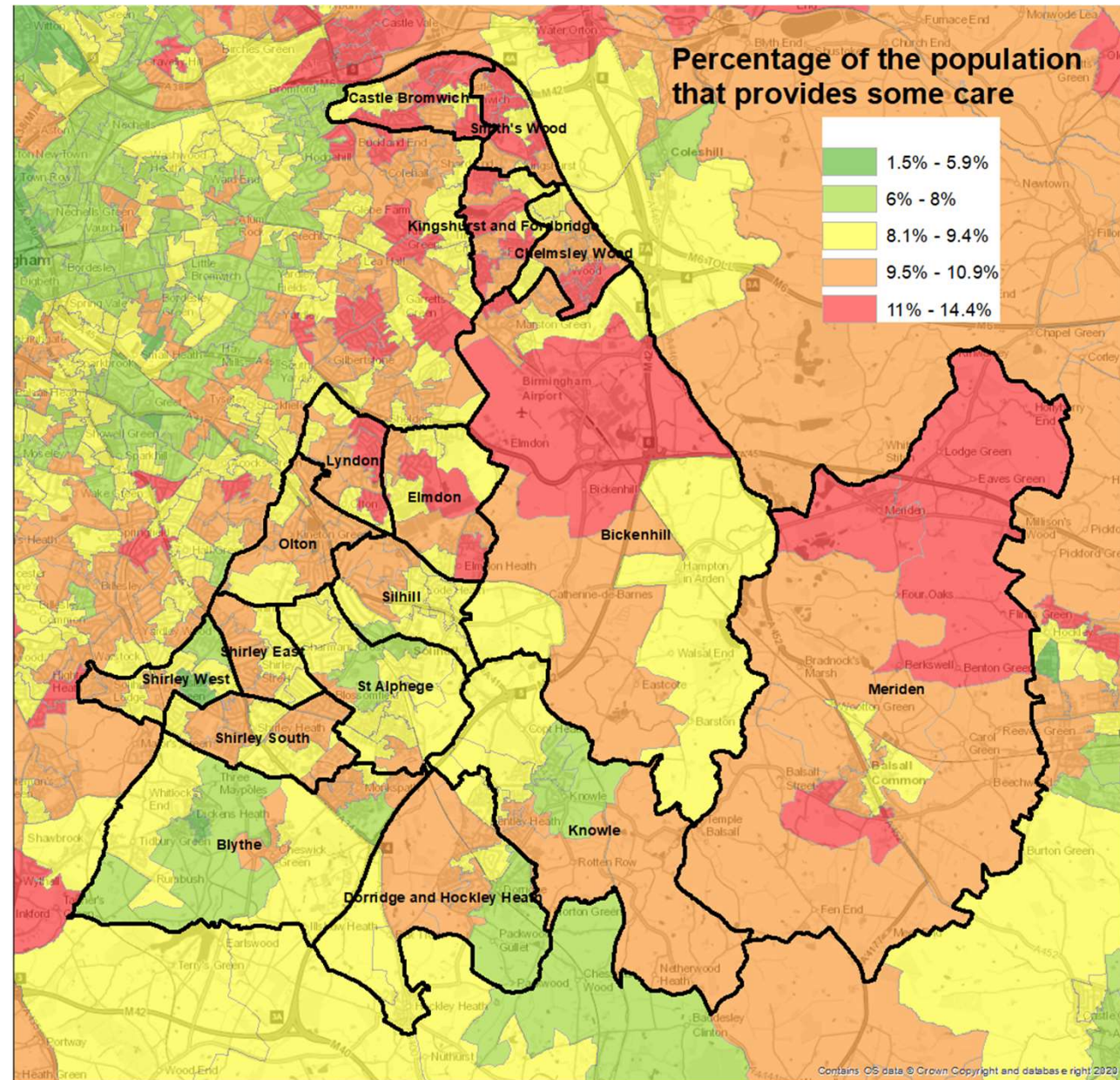
# Conditions of people who are cared for

Carers Trust Solihull surveyed carers in 2025 to ask about the condition of the people they care for. These are the top 50% most common conditions given.



# Map of Solihull carers\*

This map shows the proportion of the population in Solihull who are carers. The darker the colour, the more carers live there. This is important for us to know so we can understand any other issues, such as access to transport and resources for carers in Solihull.



\*Taken from 2021 census data

# Future demand

In Solihull, the number of carers is set to grow, meaning there will be increased need for carers support.

The Solihull population aged 65+ who will need help with a domestic task is projected to increase by 27% from around 13,700 to 17,300 between 2020 and 2040. Similar increases in a range of needs are projected including a 39% rise in the number suffering from dementia from 3,444 to 4,777\*. This is likely to mean we have many older carers, who are likely to have their own health issues

For younger and parent carers, we know that people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities are now living longer, thanks to advances in health care, therefore we expect the number of young and parent carers to increase in line with the population. We also expect an increase due to improved awareness and more parents identifying themselves as carers.

The 2021 census data showed a decline in the number of people who identified as a carer in Solihull, however methodology changes and the pandemic were identified as factors artificially reducing this number.

# What carers told us....

We have been speaking to our Carers Forum as part of the mid-way refresh of this strategy, about what they need from support

Young carers want more activities and breaks, and more support in school.

Flexible working arrangements made balancing work and caring less problematic for some.

Carers are very worried about what happens if something happens to them.

Carers need more access to flexible respite.

Carers' own mental and physical health is affected by caring responsibilities.

Families often have complex caring arrangements- made more complex where they are the person they care for are in different local authority areas.

Accessing the right health support for themselves and the person they care for can be challenging.

Social opportunities to connect with others are still lower than before Covid.

# Carers' Survey 2023/24

In 2023/24, a national carers survey of adults carried out. The responses here from Solihull carers mirror the national picture of challenges and downward trends.

58% of people found information and advice easy to find compared with 54% in the previous survey. Nationally, this was 59% this year, up from 58% in the previous survey.

87% of people found the information and advice received helpful compared to 86% in the previous survey.

63% of respondents felt they were sufficiently involved or consulted in discussions about the services provided for the people they cared for, the same as in the previous survey.

86% of Solihull respondents lack time spent doing things they enjoy, 81% lack control over their daily lives, 74% lack social contact, and 74% lack encouragement and support.

95% of Solihull respondents say that their health was affected by their caring role in the previous 12 months, up from 93% in the previous survey.

Nationally, 39% of those who say that they feel socially isolated have developed a health condition in the last 12 months.

# What we have done so far: 2022 – 2024 Key achievements

Launched a Respite at Home service to support more breaks for carers

Increased the number of carers assessments and direct payments, and made the direct payment process more flexible

Household support and hardship funds used to support carers who are struggling

Improved the information and advice available online and as leaflets with a clear carers' offer

Clear respite / breaks offer for adults and children's social care

Increased flexibility in Disabled Facilities Grants and Technology Enabled Care supporting carers

Created a Carers' Lead role within our social work function and revisited and updated all social work practice guidance

Implemented a Carers Forum and refreshed the Carers Partnership Board to ensure carers' voices are central to improvements

Brought in an audit process to ensure consistency of standards of carers' assessments

## How we will make improvements

Through listening to carers, we have collected their feedback and developed 'priorities for action'.

For each priority we will have a plan of activities which will help improve the lives of carers.

This plan will show what we will do, who will lead the work, and when we aim to complete it.

# Priorities for action

These are the areas we will work on with our partners. By doing so we aim to improve the support available to carers and achieve our vision.



## Identification

Not enough people understand what a carer is, and many don't realise they are a carer. We need to help identify as many carers as possible



## Information

Some carers told us that they can't find the information they need to support them. We need to provide information that reaches **all** carers.



## Respite/Short Breaks

Fewer people had respite care for their loved ones during the pandemic, and many say they need more respite care (short breaks). We need to increase access and availability.



## Wellbeing

Carers have been through an intensely stressful period. As we emerge from the pandemic, we must support all carers' mental and physical health.



## Isolation

Many of our carers feel isolated and would like more support to connect to others and maintain connections with friends and family



## Digital

Many of our carers don't have the digital skills or equipment that could help them. We need to ensure all carers, from under 16s to over-80s can benefit from technology.



## Contingency Planning

Carers tell us they want to know there is a plan for what happens if something happens to them

# Our plan: what we will do differently



We have set out an outline delivery plan to deliver our vision and make improvements in our priority areas.



This plan shows what we and our partners will do to improve the lives of carers in Solihull.



We will work with young, adult and parent carers to make improvements to information and services



We will review the plan annually, listening to our carers in the Carers Partnership Board and the Carers Forum to determine the priorities



We will use this plan to measure our progress.

# Identification: actions 2025 - 27

Action	Impacted Carer Group	Intended Impact
Roll out new carer support packs to Primary Care Networks	All	Improved carer identification and information in primary care
Outreach to community groups to promote carers messages	All	Improved carer identification through working with trusted partners
Share thematic intelligence / feedback with partners to help identify likely carer groups	Adult carers	Partners understand areas for improvement. Improved carer identification.
Borough-wide voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise networking event with carers support focus annually	All	Improved carer identification through working with trusted partners
Embed the carers offer within the wider Council workforce to support those who may have a caring role or come across carers as part of their role (could include lunch and learn or production of simple resources for other directorates)	All	SMBC workers are aware of the carers offer and can provide information to all potential carers they interact with. More positive wellbeing for carers as well as early identification of caring role / concerns.
Explore with Birmingham City Council on BSOL system staff accessing weekly carer drop ins	Adult carers Parent carers	Staff feel supported in their caring role
Establish working group with Human Resources to review policies and ensure best practice and share learning with other employers	Adult carers Parent carers	Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and appropriate for carers
Refresh membership of Carers Partnership Board to ensure this is representative of carers with a current caring role and of demographics of Solihull carers (includes linking with Community Development Team to help identify members)	All	There are voices representative of the Solihull carers population.
Delivery of Carers Week events programme	All	More carers know how to access support and feel valued in their role. More carers identify themselves as a carer.
Explore and link with Occupational Therapy team for OTs to complete carer's assessments	Adult carers	
Promoting young carers in schools award take up, and making links to mental health schools' team	Young carers	Young carers are supported in schools
Explore the feasibility of adopting 'No Wrong Doors' in Solihull	Young carers	Young carers can access support wherever they present
Ensure a clear link between parent carer assessment and disabled child's social care assessment and support plan	Parent carers	Support for parent carers is joined up with wider family support.

# Information: actions 2025- 27

Action	Impacted Carer Group	Intended Impact
Solihull Council carer webpages kept up to date with information, advice and signposting	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Carers to be included on the Faith Forum agenda at least annually	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Ensure inclusion of carers as a priority area in relation to Here2Help financial and non-financial support	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Establish further links and networks through Solihull Community Housing (SCH) with carers - agree programme of carers messages with SCH	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Coproduction of new web page and leaflet in relation to cross boarder eligibility for support	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Later life events and working with GPs to promote support available to carers	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Promotion to carers of the new Solihull directory as a resource, as well as other sources e.g. waiting room	All	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Promote Family Hubs offer to relevant carers	Young carers Parent carers	Carers understand local available support
Voices of parent carers are used to inform service delivery and strategic delivery	Parent carers	Carers voices are central to future developments
Employment and Skills Outreach team to explore with Children's a direct referral route for young carers to risk of NEET( not in education, employment or training) programme	Young carers	Young carers are supported to access education, employment, skills and training
Explore options for bereavement support for young carers	Young carers	Young carers receive ag- appropriate support if facing bereavement
Reviewing the content of young and parent carer Council webpages with carers to ensure they are relevant and appropriate	Young carers Parent carers	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.
Link with Preparing for Adulthood pathway to ensure parent and young carers have the right information about how they can access support	Young carers Parent carers	Carers have access to clear, accurate and quality information.

# Respite and Short Breaks: actions 2025-27

Action	Impacted Carer Group	Intended Impact
Solihull Council to commission and offer additional overnight respite provision for adult carers	Adult carers	Carers can take a break from their caring role with peace of mind.
Continue to promote use of Respite at Home	Adult carers	Carers can take a break from their caring role with peace of mind.
Review existing respite offer and further develop future requirements	Adult carers	Respite offer meets the requirements and needs of carers and the people they care for.
Clear & targeted plan of engagement & communication for young carers for the year, including key areas of focus.	Young carers	Young carers receive a support offer that matches their needs
Increase the number of young carers participating in groups and support	Young carers	Young carers get opportunities for breaks and social activities
Further development of parent carer short breaks offer	Parent carers	Respite offer meets the requirements and needs of carers and the people they care for.
Solihull Council to review overnight respite provision for parent carers with a view to improving the offer	Parent carers	Respite offer meets the requirements and needs of carers and the people they care for.
Ensure all relevant teams across the Council are aware of the Short Breaks offer	Young carers Parent carers	Carers can take a break from their caring role with peace of mind.

# Wellbeing and Isolation: actions 2025- 27

Action	Impacted Carer Group	Intended Impact
Continued Carers Forum regular meetings and updates	All	Carers can give their feedback and inform services and priorities for action.
Encourage engagement of wellbeing support through links with Solihull Active and other Public Health support	All	Carers support their own wellbeing
Ongoing promotion of one-off direct payments to new and existing carers	Adult carers	Carers have flexibility in their support and get support in their own right
Make sure carers support plans include wellbeing measures and risk management	All	Carers can take care of their own wellbeing and are aware of how to manage risk
Ensure consistency of bereavement support across the Council web offer	All	Carers are prepared for and know how to access support for when their caring role ends
Commission a new Carer Support Service	All	Support for carers meets the needs of carers.
Refresh and update the Carers Strategy	All	Plans are appropriate and fit what carers say they need.
Develop and maintain menu of activities directly supporting carers	Young carers Parent carers	Carers are aware of the options available
Young carers to be given free access to Holiday Activity & Food Programme (HAFP) activities and events	Young carers	Young carers receive support during school holidays
Implementing new wellbeing outcome measures as part of the new carer support contract to understand impact	All	Carers support their own wellbeing
Birmingham and Solihull (BSOL) working group to understand carer feedback from national survey and development of BSOL wide improvements	Adults Carers	Carers are able to give their feedback and inform services and priorities for action.
Seek ways to improve carer awareness as an employer and then share that learning with local businesses	All	Carers are aware of tools to support peace of mind and increase independence for the people they care for.
Continued Carers Forum regular meetings and updates	All	Carers can give their feedback and inform services and priorities for action.
New carers service specification to include requirement for the provider to establish carer peer support groups	Adult carers	Carers can speak to other carers about challenges and feel supported by peers

# Digital: actions 2025- 27

Action	Impacted Carer Group	Intended Impact
Expansion of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) offer through implementation of Home Improvement Agency and promotion to carers of support available.	All	Carers are aware of tools to support peace of mind and increase independence for the people they care for.
Mapping of the sources of digital support including upskilling support and promotion to carers	All	Carers can identify and access support to become digitally enabled
Online adult carer assessment live and promoted to carers	Adult carers	Carers can self-assess in their own words at a time that suits them.
Include carers and their cared for and offer drop-in sessions for carers to come and demonstrate TEC	All	Carers are aware of tools to support peace of mind and increase independence for the people they care for.
Implement new online carers offer as part of the contract changes	All	Carers can self-serve for support and tools wherever possible

# Contingency Planning: actions 2025- 27

Action	Impacted Carer Group	Intended Impact
Development of an emergency community response to support when carers go into hospital / crisis	Adult carers	Carers have a peace of mind and assurance and people who are cared for can continue to be supported in a crisis.
Promotion of and gathering of resources to provide carers with information on how Technology Enabled Care (TEC) can support carers	All	Carers have a peace of mind and have tools to manage risk.
New contract expectations on supporting detailed contingency planning with local carers	All	Carers have a peace of mind and have tools to manage risk.

## How we will measure progress

We will measure progress on our action plan in a number of ways:

- For adults we will use the results of the National Carers' Survey which tells us about carers' wellbeing and how easy it is to find information.
- For young carers and parent carers we will utilise the proposed surveys to monitor the Additional Needs Strategy to measure and understand impact. We will also measure the numbers of carers accessing assessments and support, as well as seeking feedback from carers.
- We will also monitor when the actions in the plan are completed and will use measures such as numbers of people using respite, attending courses, or accessing holiday clubs.

## Useful links

- [Solihull Council website](#)
- [Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board \(ICB\)](#)
- [Carers Trust Solihull website](#)
- [Solihull Parent Carer Voice](#)
- [Age UK Solihull website](#)
- [Community Advice Hubs in Solihull](#)
- [Carers UK website](#)
- [GOV UK Carers Benefits](#)

## 2025 update: changes made

- Data updated to reflect the 2021 Census
- Updates to what we have heard from carers to reflect the most recent feedback
- Additions to the vision around confidence in the care the person they care for is receiving and around emergencies
- Additions of isolation and contingency planning to the priorities
- Reflections on the delivery from 2022-25
- Refreshed action plan for 2025-27