

The Luton Carers Strategy

2023 to 2028

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Luton



Foreword from Councillor Javed Hussain

We are pleased to bring you the All Age Carers Strategy for Luton Council. The strategy aims to support anyone who is providing unpaid care. This could be for an elderly loved one, a neighbour, a parent looking after a child who has additional needs or a young person who spends a lot of time looking after members of their own family.

We have worked closely with carers and a range of organisations, including those from the voluntary and community sector who deliver services and help represent the views of people they support. This includes BLMK, ICS, Carers Central, Healthwatch, The Alzheimer's Society, CHUMS and ELFT (Community Mental Health Services).

We know how important it is to ensure that all carers are seen as a priority and that their needs are paramount. Within Luton, there are over 20,000 carers but so many do not identify themselves as carers and therefore do not come forward for information and support.

We really value the significant role carers play in our local communities and recognise the level of responsibility often felt by carers to care for their loved ones. However, we do not feel that this caring role should be at the detriment of carers' own health, employment opportunities and aspirations to live the life they choose.

The priorities of this strategy are to ensure carers feel valued, listened too and respected, to identify carers, support them to stay well and healthy in their role, provide them with the resources they need to keep connected and to give them a voice in services that are being developed and need developing.

With partners, we will continue to build on the work we have started with carers to ensure that, throughout the implementation of this strategy, carers continue to feel heard and have every opportunity to provide feedback on our progress.



Cllr Javed Hussain

Foreword from James Knight

My name is James Knight and I am a carer. I became involved with the Carers Strategy and panel in 2021 with a number of other carers.

We have been able to give valuable feedback about our experiences as carers, both positive and negative. My own personal experience and that of others carers, is that of neglect. We are now being heard and able to make a positive impact on all carers.

We feel we have been listened to and our issues and experiences taken on board. We are hopeful that this will be the case going forward and we can continue to drive positive change for all carers in Luton.

My hopes for the future are that Experts by Experience are involved in all future planning for all services that carers may access.



James Knight

Introduction

This strategy has been co-produced with local organisations and Luton carers to ensure their views and expertise have shaped it. It is for anyone who regularly supports another person on an unpaid basis, whether that be a friend, a child with additional needs, a relative, a loved one, or a combination of these people. This is not the same as someone who provides care professionally or through a voluntary organisation.

The [National Carers Strategy](#) defines a carer as someone who spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, a partner or a friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.

Many carers do not see themselves as carers, as for them, the caring relationship is simply part of the everyday normal life of being a wife, a husband, a partner, a son, a daughter, a parent, a friend. However, being recognised as a carer can provide access to support, services, information and advice, which can help make care more manageable.

There are a range of services and support options available in Luton for carers, although we recognise that there are gaps and we need to work together to improve this. Therefore, this strategy sets out the vision for Luton's offer to carers and the actions that we will take over the next five years in order to achieve this.

An implementation board will be established to implement and monitor this strategy. An implementation plan has been developed, which will be reviewed annually to identify priorities for each year.

There are almost seven million carers in the UK, equivalent to one in ten people and this number is rising. Of the UK's carers, 42% are men and 58% are women. The economic value of the contribution made by carers in the UK is estimated at £119 billion per year, with:

- 3 in 5 people will care for someone in their lifetime.
- Over 1 million people care for more than one person.
- 1.4 million People provide over 50 hours of care per week.
- There will be 9 million carers in the UK by 2037.

2021 Census

In England and Wales, an estimated five million ordinary residents aged five years and over provided unpaid care in 2021, in age-standardised proportions (ASPs) of 9.0%, a decrease from 11.4% in 2011.

The proportion of people providing 19 or less hours of unpaid care a week decreased from 7.2% in 2011 to 4.4% in 2021.

The proportion of people who provided 20 to 49 hours of unpaid care a week increased from 1.5% in 2011 to 1.9% in 2021.

The proportion of people who provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week increased slightly from 2.7% in 2011 to 2.8% in 2021.

A larger proportion of people provided any amount of unpaid care in Wales (10.5%) than in England (8.9%) in 2021; in Wales, a larger proportion of people provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week (3.6%, compared with 2.7% in England).

Caring in Luton

There are an estimated 20,000 carers in Luton, nearly 10% of our population.

The 2011 Census identified 18,256 carers in Luton, of whom 4,886 are providing 50+ hours of unpaid care each week. This is an increase of 13% on the number of carers identified in the 2001 Census. If a 13% increase were to be applied between 2011 and 2021 there would be an estimated 20,629 carers in Luton. However, we know from national data that the pandemic saw a significant increase in the number of carers across the country.

According to carersuk.org the [State of Caring 2021](#) they estimate 4.5 million additional people caring for older, disabled or seriously ill relatives or friends since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Between 2021 and 2022, in Luton, 1,260 adults were identified as carers on Liquid Logic (Adult Social Care Case Management System). Of these, 690 had received a carer's assessment. It is a statutory requirement that carers be offered a carers assessment, they may choose to decline their assessment. From the assessments, 416 were offered a carers grant to support people with an identified need.

Although providing care and support can be rewarding, we know that many carers struggle at times. We also know that carers often put the wellbeing of those they provide care for first, resulting in their own health and wellbeing issues being ignored for longer. Some carers have been disproportionately affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing increased social isolation, a reduced network of support and a lack of wider services and respite.

Feedback and engagement with Luton's carers have helped us identify issues they face. Key areas of note on how caring affects mental wellbeing are the following:

- 45% are significantly affected by poor mental health.
- 52% are significantly affected by isolation.
- 35% are significantly affected by lack of access to statutory services.
- 47% are significantly affected by exhaustion.
- 45% are significantly affected by a lack of access to health services.
- 44% are significantly affected by limited access to respite.

Support for carers in Luton

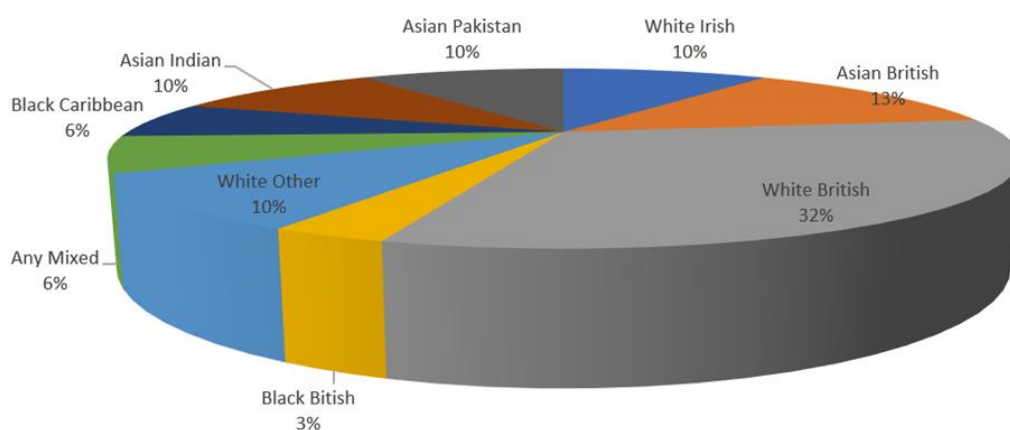
Luton Council commissions Carers Central who offer a range of support for unpaid Luton carers including:

- Website: Carers Central runs a dedicated website, allowing access to social and welfare advice. There are emergency numbers listed on the website along with access to self-help information and links to specialist support.
- Helpline: A trained team of staff and volunteers are available from 10am to 4pm every weekday and every Tuesday evening until 7pm.
- Face-to-face appointments
- Web chat: open for instant help from 10am to 4pm weekdays and until 7pm on Tuesday evenings.
- Community based activities including coffee mornings for carers.
- Training: Care skills training for unpaid carers and free workshops, mini-courses and 1-2-1 coaching programmes
- Peer support and local community groups

In October 2022,

- 1778 Luton carers were registered on the Carers Central distribution list. Recipients receive information newsletters on carer's information, support, and activities
- 1807 visits to the Carers Central website supported Carers with to access self-help information
- 32% of Carers Central clients identify themselves as white British. (See table 1 for a further ethnic breakdown.)

Ethnic breakdown of unpaid carers registered with carers central



Dementia carers

The [Alzheimer's Society](#) is a commissioned service offering one-to-one support for carers and people with dementia. It provides specialist information (including managing difficult behaviour and planning for the future) advice and emotional support. The Alzheimer's Society also delivers a range of groups and activities that carers can access both individually and with the person with dementia.

Age concern

[Age Concern, Luton](#) promotes a strapline of 'Making Luton a wonderful place to live and grow old' and offers advice, information, and advocacy support for practical help in the home and social activities, including lunch clubs.

East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) carers, friends and families strategy 2022 to 2026

This [strategy](#) recognises the needs of carers of people using ELFT services, including community services, mental health, learning disabilities, autism and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). The strategy identifies five priorities:

- To improve the identification and recognition of carers including young carers
- Staff should be aware of carers and trained to engage with carers effectively
- To ensure clear pathways to access support for carers and help in a crisis
- Ensure carers voice and involvement is present
- Ensure the right support is in place for young carers

The ELFT website advises carers to contact the care coordinator or named health professional for the person they are caring for to talk about their own health and social needs in the first instance. The health practitioner will carry out a carer's assessment and contact the carer monthly to see how they and the person they look after are doing.

Healthwatch Luton

[Healthwatch](#) is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services and has a statutory role to represent the views of patients and influence the delivery and design of local services.

Other services for carers

In addition, there are voluntary and community-sector organisations that provide a range of services for older people and people with disabilities and support for carers. Many of these

organisations are small local organisations including Headway Luton and Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Mind.

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Carer's breaks

Luton Council offers respite; 'Shared Lives', 'Sitting Services' and short breaks for older people with a disability to carer's. Further information can be found at [Carer's breaks: So you can take time out from caring](#)

Direct payments for carers

The [Carers Direct Payments Scheme](#) provides one-off payments to carers to promote their own health and well-being, pay towards a short break for them or purchase equipment that will ease their caring role.

Luton Council information and guidance

Luton Council provides online information and resources titled '[Being a Carer](#)' including information on [getting a carer's assessment](#) allowances, benefits and legal rights for carers and information on [local concessions](#) available to carer's.

Support for young carers

Support for young carers is commissioned by Luton Council and delivered by [Chums](#). The young carer's service supports children and young people aged 5 to 25 years in Luton who have a practical caring role for a parent or sibling, including caring for someone with a disability, chronic or serious illness, mental health condition or learning difficulty.

- Young carers are supported via a mixture of group and individual support
- The young carers team visits schools across Luton each month to offer both group and 1:1 support, giving young carers access to mentoring with a dedicated person to talk to

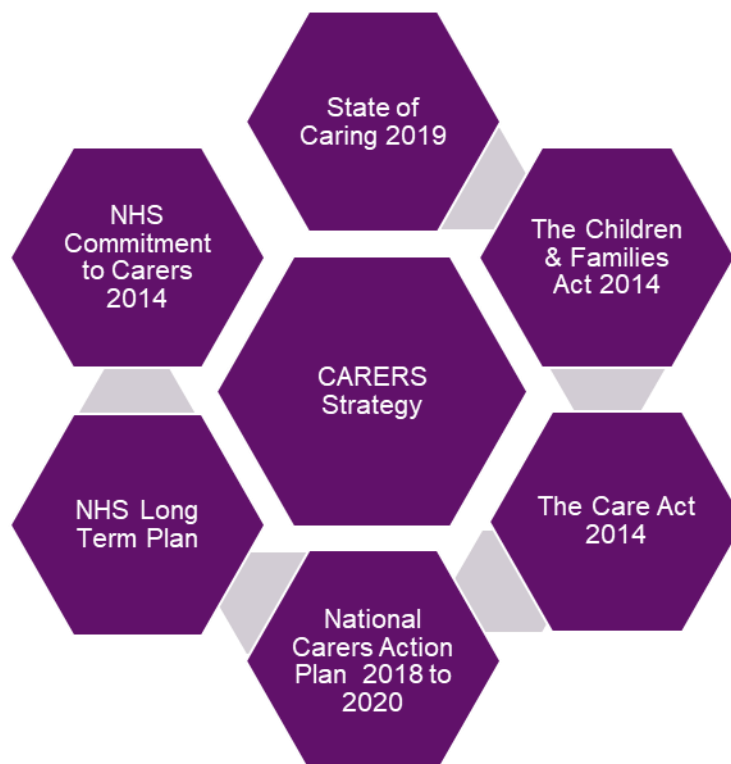
- Drop-in sessions are available, both in person and online, to give young carers the opportunity to mix with others in a fun and relaxed environment
- By way of trips and activities, young carers are invited to attend trips, including to theme parks and theatres and annually are offered the opportunity for a couple of days away from home on a group residential trip

Healthy conversations really do matter

[Making Every Contact Count](#) (MECC) Healthy conversations really do matter. An MECC conversation can be used to signpost and offer support on health-related issues in any setting and it only takes a few minutes. Anyone can have a MECC conversation, an individual doesn't need to be a clinical professional to empower someone to make a change for the better. Using a MECC approach in our day-to-day conversations can have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and their carers.

MECC is designed to help people: be confident in talking about key areas of health and wellbeing. Areas such as; stopping smoking, reducing alcohol intake, increasing physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight and diet and promoting emotional wellbeing.

National and local policy context



The Care Act 2014, the Children and Families Act 2014, the National Carers Strategy 2008 to 2018, the Carers Action Plan 2018 to 2020 and the NHS Long Term Plan 2019 all contribute to a significant shift in how carers are supported, acknowledging the important contribution they make. These documents place carers on the same footing as the person they care for when it comes to accessing services they may need. This strategy has been developed in response to the needs of carers in Luton and the statutory requirements. Locally, this strategy supports the priorities of the [Luton 2040 Vision](#) for Luton to be a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the following linked strategies:

- [Adult Social Care Strategy 2021 to 2026](#)
- [Population and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 to 2024](#)
- Luton Housing Strategy (in development)
- Luton’s Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2022 – 2025 (in development)
- New Discharge to Assess (D2A) Arrangements, supporting people leaving the hospital and their families/carers. The D2A model aims to discharge individuals from hospitals as soon as they no longer need acute care but may still require care services, by providing them with short term, funded support in their own home or other community setting.

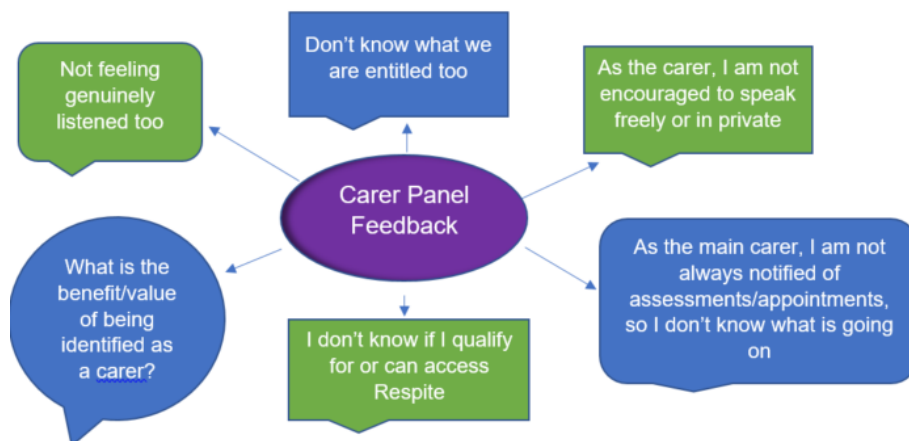
Priorities for 2023 to 2028

Feedback from our Luton carer’s panel

Our Luton Carers Panel was established in July 2021, with 6 to 8 carers who met ‘virtually’ over ten sessions. The panel considered carer feedback and two national reports:

- [Supporting Adult Carers, NICE Quality Standards 19th March 2021](#)
- [TLAP ‘Making it Real’ I and We statements 2018](#)

Issues raised by carers in co-production sessions this strategy seeks to address



The panel identified five key outcomes based on the issues that mean the most to carers and will make the biggest difference to the lives of local carers:

1. Luton carers are identified, assessed and reviewed in a timely manner (see Priority 1 below).
2. As a carer, I am able to exercise choice and control and make informed decisions about care for myself and, where appropriate, the person(s) I support, through the provision of accessible information and advice (see Priority 2 below).
3. As a carer I understand my role and rights, I have the opportunity to discuss what matters most to me and the person(s) I care for (such as my own health, wellbeing and social care needs, and work, education, or training and I have access to peer support) and this is something that is reviewed regularly as my needs can change over time (see Priority 3).
4. As a carer, I am regularly given the opportunity to discuss with health and social care practitioners the value of having a break from caring (see Priority 3).
5. Luton carers are offered supported workplaces by employers (see Priority 4).

We have used the five outcomes to develop four strategic priorities for implementation. To implement and monitor this Strategy an Implementation Board will be established to oversee and monitor progress against the Plan.

Priority one: The early identification of carers

To increase awareness and identification of carers of all ages:

- We will continue to work with partners across the local system to ensure more carers are proactively identified in the early stages of caring.
- We will promote the value of local services working together to support families as a whole
- We will use the framework set out in the quality markers to develop and promote carer-friendly GP practices and endorse the benefits of supporting carers through primary care.
- We will continue to reach out to carers from under-represented and vulnerable groups to ensure they are identified and supported in a personalised way.

Priority two: carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring role

To ensure carers of all ages can find information and advice they need easily:

- We will work with carers to produce the right information and advice in new and accessible ways. We will continue to provide paper based information alongside the digital information platforms and encourage take-up of this on a wider scale
- We will continue to invest in training and learning for carers to ensure they can carry out their role safely and with confidence
- We will ensure carer assessment is timely, proportionate and personalised so carers feel it is of benefit
- We will equip partners with the skills and knowledge to provide accurate information that supports carers

Priority three: Carers are recognised and valued as equal partners in care

To ensure services and systems work for carers of all ages:

- We will continue to raise awareness and promote best practice amongst health and social care professionals to identify value and support carers effectively.
- We will increase the involvement of carers in the care of the people they look after and ensure their role is recognised, valued and respected.
- We will work with all partners delivering frontline services to help them work alongside carers as part of a team.
- We will influence initiatives and partnerships in Luton so they explicitly include carers and better meet the needs of carers.
- We will continue to strengthen emergency planning and crisis support for carers in emergencies.

Priority four: Improving the health and wellbeing of carers

In order to support carers of all ages and their families:

- We will work to ensure more carers are able to balance work and care with support to return to work alongside or after caring.
- We will support carers to minimise the financial impact of caring, through the promotion of good employment practice and awareness of benefits and linkage into the LBC People Plan (Workforce and Organisational Development) in order to support carers of all ages and their families to support working carers more consistently.

- We will work with the ICS through GP networks to identify carers, offering health checks, vaccinations and information about support services.
- We will ensure the LBC website and carers Central provide information on support, wellbeing, finance and signposting to key partner websites.
- We will ensure carers have appropriate respite from their caring role, as and when required.
- Services join up to support carers and the family as a whole in a 'team around the family' approach.