



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

**Adult Social Care and Health  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Support for Unpaid Carers in  
West Northamptonshire  
Scrutiny Review**

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## **Chair's Foreword**

I am pleased to present this report resulting from the work of the Task and Finish Panel set up by the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise how unpaid carers are supported in West Northamptonshire.

The choice of this topic for scrutiny reflects West Northamptonshire Council's corporate priority to make our area a place where people are supported to live independent, self-sufficient lives and where everyone has the best life chances. 10 per cent of our residents are looking after another 10 per cent, their contribution to the overall health and wellbeing of our communities often unseen. Thousands of them do not recognise themselves as carers and the Council needs to be better informed as to who and where they are and how best to support these carers who support others. Caring takes its toll – on health, wellbeing and financial security. Many are unable to work or reach their full economic potential due to their caring responsibilities and struggle on low incomes. It's a sobering fact that the cost of their replacement care in our county would be £1.3 billion every year.

The scrutiny review has looked into how the Council as an employer supports staff members with caring responsibilities and its preparedness for the new requirements of the Carer's Leave Act 2023; the support currently provided to unpaid carers as part of the Council's statutory responsibilities for adult social care; and the aims of a new Carer Strategy being developed by the Council whilst the scrutiny review was underway. I would like to thank all councillors who made up the Task and Finish Panel, and the professionals who provided information and views to it, for their commitment.

The Task and Finish Panel has been reassured by the range of services already available for carers to access. Some of its final recommendations support key actions set out in the proposed new Carer Strategy. Other recommendations reflect opportunities to augment and enhance future plans that the Panel identified. In all cases, I hope that the Panel's work will contribute to improving the support that is available for unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire. Our carers deserve the best possible support this Council can give.



**Councillor Rosie Humphreys**  
**Chair, Support for Unpaid Carers Task and Finish Panel**

### **Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Scrutiny Review:**

- Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Azizur Rahman, Alan Chantler, Janice Duffy, Andrew Grant, Rosie Herring (to May 2024) and Sue Sharps who sat with me on the Task and Finish Panel.
- Michael Hurt, Better Care Fund Service Manager, who assisted the Panel with subject knowledge and expertise throughout the scrutiny review, as well as outlining current provision, the proposed new WNC Carer Strategy and other areas of corporate work.
- Ashley LeDuc, Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance, who provided further information on WNC's approach to support for carers.
- Alison Golding, Assistant Director Workforce and Transformation, and Rose Kavanagh, HR Specialist – Strategy and Projects, who provided information on WNC's policy and approaches on staff members who are carers.
- Mark Major, Chief Executive Officer, and Jemma Cafe, Assistant Director, from Northamptonshire Carers, who gave the Panel an overview of current carer support services provided in the county.
- Professor Jacqueline Parkes, Professor in Applied Mental Health at the University of Northampton, who spoke to the Panel on carer health and wellbeing.
- Dr John Harrison (Chair) and members of the Northamptonshire Frailty Leads group who gave the Panel views from GPs' perspectives on matters relating to support for carers.
- James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager, who supported the Panel.

## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the scrutiny review was to consider and provide constructive challenge on how West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) seeks to support unpaid carers (also referred to as 'informal carers'). NHS England describes an unpaid carer as "...anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid."

The scrutiny review links to WNC's corporate priority to make West Northamptonshire a place where people are supported to live independent, self-sufficient lives and where everyone has the best life chances. This includes the following specific aims:

- to support adults to live independent and self-sufficient lives for as long as possible
- to provide support needed by people who are vulnerable or lack a support network
- to work with the health sector in more integrated ways, ensuring our residents can "chase well, stay well and live well."

The scrutiny review was carried out by a Task and Finish Panel of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee across seven meetings from January – June 2024.

The Task and Finish Panel considered the following key lines of enquiry:

- WNC's preparedness to meet the requirements relating to support for employees with caring responsibilities introduced by the Carer's Leave Act 2023 due to take effect on 1 April 2024.
- The effectiveness of the support provided to unpaid carers as part of WNC's statutory responsibilities for adult social care, including respite care.
- The aims of the new WNC Carer Strategy to be developed during 2023/24.

The information and comment that expert advisors provided to the Task and Finish Panel is set out in section 6 of this report below.

After all of the evidence was collated the Task and Finish Panel reached the following conclusions:

### **Support for WNC staff members with caring responsibilities**

The Task and Finish Panel was generally reassured that WNC had taken appropriate action to meet the requirements introduced by the Carer's Leave Act 2023 concerning statutory leave for carers. The Panel was advised of a proposed update to WNC's existing Carers Policy intended to reflect the new requirements, noting that this had been informed by input from a carers' representative and would be subject to consultation with trade unions before being issued. The Panel commented that the updated Carers Policy needed to make clear that both the definition of a dependant and of long term care needed to apply for a staff member to claim statutory carer's leave. The definition of a dependant should make clear that it applied to people caring for parents as well as caring for children. It also needed to take into account the complexity of family relationships such as, for example, a grandchild providing care for a grandparent.

The Task and Finish Panel questioned how much impact the introduction of statutory leave for carers was likely to have on WNC's capacity as an organisation and potential risks to business continuity that might arise as a result, particularly given that requests for carer's leave might arise at very short notice. The Panel was advised that directorates were used to dealing with changes to overall leave entitlements. There was also a range of existing leave options that staff members could use to meet caring responsibilities that already formed part of business as usual, including flexible working arrangements, dependant's leave and purchasing additional annual leave. Historically, WNC had not experienced a high take up of unpaid leave options. The Panel sought assurance that WNC was well-informed about the number of staff members with caring responsibilities. It was advised that WNC did not propose to ask staff members to confirm if they were an unpaid carer, on the basis that a person's situation could change virtually overnight and so this information would become out of date very quickly. Instead, WNC would use the ERP system to monitor the future take-up of carer's leave to identify if any trends arose, such as demand on particular directorates or seasonal demand. This information could inform a future review of the operation of statutory carer's leave. The Panel accepted this approach and supports a review 12 months after implementation.

### **Current and future support for unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire**

The plan for this scrutiny review included separate key lines of enquiry as to the support currently provided to unpaid carers as part of WNC's statutory responsibilities for adult social care, and the aims of WNC's proposed new Carer Strategy. In practice, the Task and Finish Panel has considered these as one. This reflects the context for the scrutiny review, given that the existing contract for the provision of carer support services in Northamptonshire is due to end in March 2025. The new contract commissioned by WNC will cover West Northamptonshire only and will reflect the strategic direction and priorities set out in the Carer Strategy 2024-2029. This Strategy is due to be adopted in the immediate future.

The information gathered by the Task and Finish Panel has brought home that a central challenge involved in providing support to unpaid carers is the ability to identify, and communicate with, all of the people who may be carrying out this role in the community. A person with caring responsibilities may not think of themselves as a carer but as a partner, relative or friend. A person who does acknowledge that they are carrying out an additional caring role still may not see the need to make this known to the local authority. They may not think they are eligible for any support, be concerned about privacy, or there may be a range of reasons for not seeking support. This can risk a situation in which a carer only seeks information or support when they reach a crisis point. At the same time, the local authority is less informed about the number of unpaid carers in its area and is less able to engage with carers to help them to help themselves and prevent potential needs from escalating.

Addressing this situation involves considering both what WNC offers to carers and how it seeks to communicate this to them. The Task and Finish Panel is broadly supportive of the offer set out in the draft Carer Strategy 2024-2029. The Panel felt that the Strategy appeared comprehensive, fresh and accessible and to address areas for improvement that WNC had identified through a self-assessment carried out at the end of 2023. It was also apparent that it had been informed by people with lived experience. The Panel particularly endorses the

proposals in the Strategy for a one-stop shop function that will provide advice, support and signposting to carers, moving around the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) in West Northamptonshire, and for a WNC carers directory and app. The Panel had previously highlighted the potential role of LAPs in providing information and support to carers. It considers that this approach could also assist in addressing barriers to engagement with carers noted by the Panel, including the need to engage effectively with people in smaller rural communities and with people from BAME community groups.

The Task and Finish Panel has, however, identified some additional actions that it believes would augment those proposed in the Carer Strategy. The Panel proposes that a carer should be able to request that the carer assessment process be paused, for example if dealing with issues in their wider life, and resumed at a later date rather than needing to start again from the beginning. At a very practical level, this principle should be incorporated into WNC online forms so that if a user who indicates they are a carer only partially completes a form their information is retained for them to return to later. The Panel considered that this would avoid adding to demands on carers' time that could also discourage people from seeking assistance. The Panel would ideally want this provision to apply to all WNC online forms in time but recognises the need to focus initially on forms specifically relating to carers.

In addition, the Task and Finish Panel encourages WNC to pursue the development of a carer passport scheme for the area, working with relevant partners as necessary. Carers UK defines a carer passport as "a record that identifies a carer in some way and sets out an offer of support, services or other benefits in response. A carer passport helps carers to be identified, recognised and supported as part of the day-to-day life of an organisation or community." The Panel saw the ways that such a scheme might assist carers in managing the demands on their time, for example, if used as a basis for giving carers a higher priority for processes such as collecting medication. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to encourage the national adoption of carer passports in health settings. The Panel was advised that WNC had had positive discussions with the NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and with North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) about introducing a local carer passport scheme in electronic form. The Panel hopes that this can be progressed.

The Task and Finish Panel considers that it would enhance proposed methods of communication on advice and support for carers if WNC also offered a physical, business card sized promotional card. This card could direct carers on to information sources, using a QR code or other appropriate method. The Panel feels that the benefit of an promotional card in this format is that it could be so readily circulated: by WNC officers going out to the meetings with community groups, by councillors and by other partners. In this way it could represent a lighter touch approach that could help to address the challenge that some carers may not want extensive information but should not be left with no recourse should their situation change.

During its work the Task and Finish Panel has been conscious that unpaid carers as a whole include people across different ages, with different employment situations, who may provide different types of care for cared-for people with different needs. The Panel recognised the need for WNC to prioritise support, for example to reflect the high number of carers in older age groups. However, the Panel wishes to caution WNC against taking an approach to communicating and implementing the Carer Strategy 2024-2029 that could have the

unintended consequence of making it seem less relevant to some of the target audience. This could occur if, for example, support for unpaid carers appeared to be seen as an age-related issue. Carers may not seek available information and support if the way it is presented and delivered does not seem relevant to them or actually made them feel diminished in any way. Striking the right balance is not easy but it must be considered. WNC's approach to communicating and implementing should also not be solely online.

Lastly, the Task and Finish Panel has looked at broader partnership working in relation to supporting carers. The Panel considered that GPs should ideally be well-placed to play a key role in supporting the health and wellbeing of carers, as locally based service-providers in a position to identify if a person was carer, respond directly to medical needs or help to direct them to other information and support. The Panel was advised that support for carers was part of the national priorities for GPs. However, it was not clear about the extent of their role in practice. The Panel recognised other demands on GPs' capacity and that their priorities are a matter for NHS commissioners. However, the Panel encourages WNC, as a member of the Northamptonshire ICB, to work with NHS partners where there is an opportunity to develop more joined up local services for carers, in addition to other types of services supporting the health and wellbeing of West Northamptonshire residents.

Based on these conclusions, the Task and Finish Panel makes the following recommendations:

- A) The Cabinet agrees that West Northamptonshire Council should review the take-up of statutory carer's leave 12 months after its implementation and consider whether any changes to the corporate Carers Policy are necessary as a result.
- B) The Cabinet agrees to implement the one stop shop function for carers and the carer guide proposed in the draft Carer Strategy 2024-2029.
- C) The Cabinet agrees that online forms for processes relating to unpaid carers operated by West Northamptonshire Council should enable information entry to be paused and resumed, rather than having to be completed at once or started again from the beginning.
- D) The Cabinet agrees to develop a Carer Passport Scheme for West Northamptonshire, working with partners where it would support this aim.
- E) The Cabinet agrees to develop a physical promotional card directing to sources of information and support for unpaid carers for use in West Northamptonshire.
- F) The Cabinet agrees that the communication and promotion of support for unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire should be reflective of the following:
  - People of all ages can be carers and it could be off-putting to some if support for unpaid carers seems to be presented as an age-related issue
  - Communication and promotion must be able to reach people who are not online.
- G) The Cabinet agrees to work with health partners through the NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to pursue opportunities to develop more joined up services for unpaid carers.
- H) The Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to review the impact of the scrutiny review six months after the presentation of the final report to decision-makers.



## West Northamptonshire Council

### Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Report of the Support for Unpaid Carers Task and Finish Panel

#### 1. Purpose and Rationale

- 1.1 The purpose of the scrutiny review was to consider and provided constructive challenge on how WNC seeks to support unpaid carers (also referred to as ‘informal carers’). NHS England describes an unpaid carer as “...anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.” The scope of the scrutiny review included both adult and young carers, reflecting that WNC has a common strategy and contract for the support provided to both age groups.

#### 2. Key Lines of Enquiry

- WNC’s preparedness to meet the requirements relating to support for employees with caring responsibilities introduced by the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 due to take effect on 1 April 2024.
- The effectiveness of the support provided to unpaid carers as part of WNC’s statutory responsibilities for adult social care, including respite care.
- The aims of the new WNC Carer Strategy to be developed during 2023/24.

A copy of the Plan for the Scrutiny Review is attached at Appendix A.

#### 3. Context

- 3.1 This scrutiny review originated in a motion on support for unpaid carers that was presented to the Council meeting on 29 June 2023. The full text of the motion is attached at Appendix B. Upon a vote the Council agreed to refer the motion to the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The Committee considered the matter at its next meeting on 14 September 2023 and agreed to include in its 2023/24 work programme a scrutiny review to look at how WNC supports carers and to assist with the development of a new WNC Carer Strategy. A Task and Finish Panel was established for this purpose made up of Councillors Rosie Humphreys (Chair), Rufia Ashraf, Azizur Rahman, Alan Chantler, Janice Duffy, Andrew Grant, Rosie Herring (who stepped down after being appointed to the Cabinet) and Sue Sharps. The Panel carried out its work across seven meetings, on 23 January, 7 February, 5 and 25 March, 9 April, 14 May and 4 June 2024.

#### **4. Corporate Priorities**

4.1 This scrutiny review links to the Council's corporate priority to make West Northamptonshire a place where people are supported to live independent, self-sufficient lives and where everyone has the best life chances. This includes the following specific aims:

- to support adults to live independent and self-sufficient lives for as long as possible
- to provide support needed by people who are vulnerable or lack a support network
- to work with the health sector in more integrated ways, ensuring our residents can "chase well, stay well and live well."

#### **5. Unpaid carers – some headline information**

##### **Numbers**

5.1 The annual Family Resources Survey carried out by the Office of National Statistics estimated that in 2021/22 around 7 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom were providing informal care. This equates to 4.9 million people.

5.2 Information from the 2021 Census indicates that there were approximately 31,000 people in West Northamptonshire who identified themselves in a caring role. This represents 7.5 per cent of the local population. Women make up 51 per cent of carers. Carers aged 50-64 years make up the largest age group, at 37 per cent of the total; 23 per cent of carers are aged 35-49 years; 22 per cent of carers are aged 65 years and over. In West Northamptonshire 20 per cent of carers provide 20-49 hours of unpaid care a week; 28 per cent provide 50 or more hours a week.

##### **Potential effects of caring responsibilities**

5.3 The NHS Long Term Plan states that carers are twice as likely to suffer from poor health compared to the general population. This is ascribed primarily to a lack of information and support, finance concerns, stress and social isolation.

##### **Statutory support for carers**

5.4 Carers are entitled to a statutory assessment of their support needs by the local authority responsible for adult social care in the area. The assessment must consider factors such as what assistance the carer needs to continue providing care, their independent needs and, in the case of young people, whether it is appropriate for them to provide care. Where a carer's support needs meet national eligibility criteria the local authority has a duty to meet those needs. Local authorities also have discretionary powers to provide support to carers. Young carers do not need to meet national eligibility criteria and local authorities must only consider their assessment in deciding whether to provide support.

5.5 In Northamptonshire, WNC and NNC currently commission Northamptonshire Carers to provide carer support services and carry out carer assessment and reviews for the county as a whole. The contract for this function commenced in October 2022 and is due to run until March 2025. It will then be delivered on an individual authority basis. WNC is developing the specification for the future service that it commissions.

**Support for carers as employees**

5.6 Employees with caring responsibilities have access to the same rights and flexibilities that apply to employees generally, such as the right to reasonable unpaid time off to assist a dependant who becomes ill or the right to request a flexible working arrangement. This provision was developed further by the Carer’s Leave Act 2023, which created a dedicated statutory leave entitlement for unpaid carers. As implemented by the Carer’s Leave Regulations 2024, an employee who has a dependant with a long term care need may take up to one week of unpaid leave per year in order to provide or arrange care. This entitlement came into effect from 6 April 2024.

**6. Information Collection**

6.1 The Task and Finish Panel considered and was informed by the following written information:

- Informal Carers – House of Commons Library Research Briefing (June 2023)
- Draft Carer’s Leave Regulations 2024 and Explanatory Memorandum
- WNC Carers HR Policy
- Working draft text on implementation of Carer’s Leave Act 2023 requirements for addition to the WNC Carers HR Policy
- Current service specification for the provision of carers support services in Northamptonshire
- Consultation draft WNC Carer Strategy 2024-2029
- Data from the national Survey of Adult Carers in England
- Local information on the number and make-up of unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire and current support

6.2 Expert advisors provided information and comment to the Task and Finish Panel across its meetings as follows:

Panel meeting	Focus
#1 (23 January 2024)	Development of plan and key lines of enquiry Statutory requirements relating to support for unpaid

Panel meeting	Focus
#2 (7 February)	WNC response to new carer leave requirements introduced by the Carer's Leave Act 2023
#3 (5 March)	Current carers support services in Northamptonshire – WNC perspective
#4 (25 March)	Current carers support services in Northamptonshire – Northamptonshire Carers perspective
#5 (9 April)	Draft WNC Carer Strategy 2024-2029
#6 (14 May)	Carer health and wellbeing
#7 (4 June)	Confirmation of conclusions and recommendations

6.3 The Task and Finish Panel also heard information and comment from local GPs via a meeting of the Northamptonshire Frailty Leads group on 16 May 2024. The Panel was made aware of the possibility of engaging with GPs through this group, which agreed to include time for a discussion with Panel representatives at a scheduled meeting.

6.4 The remainder of this section of the report sets out comments made by expert advisors to the Task and Finish Panel in each of the main areas considered during the scrutiny review. The Panel's own conclusions and recommendations are set out in section 7 of the report.

### **WNC response to new carer leave requirements introduced by the Carers Leave Act 2023**

#### **WNC Assistant Director Workforce and Transformation and HR Specialist – Strategy and Projects**

- The 2023 Act was intended to protect employees with caring responsibilities by making similar provision to other family-related leave.
- Statutory carer's leave had to be used to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long term care need. An employee was not required to provide evidence.
- An employee was required to give notice that they wanted to take statutory carer's leave of three days or twice the number of days' leave requested, whichever was the earlier.
- An update to the WNC Carers Policy covering statutory carer's leave had been drafted based on the draft Carer's Leave Regulations 2024, due to the tight timescale before the 2023 Act came into effect. The draft update had been shared with a carers' representative, who had been content with it. WNC would consult with trade unions before issuing the updated Carers Policy.
- Good communication with staff members about arrangements for carer's leave would be important.
- Carer's leave should form part of WNC's overall arrangements to provide a supportive workplace culture.

- It was estimated that 59 per cent of the economically active unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire were women and 37 per cent were 50-64 years of age. This represented a significant crossover with WNC's workforce.
- WNC was giving attention to potential risks arising from the requirements of the 2023 Act. Directorates were already used to absorbing changes to leave entitlements. Historically, WNC had not experienced a high take-up of existing unpaid leave: since 6 April 2021 staff members had taken a total of 870 days' unpaid leave and 20 staff members had taken 71 days' parental leave.
- There were various existing options that staff members might choose to use to meet caring responsibilities ahead of carer's leave. Staff members could take up to 5 days' paid compassionate leave. Flexible working arrangements were available. It was possible to purchase up to 30 days' additional annual leave using a salary sacrifice arrangement. Staff members could take unpaid dependant's leave to meet short term needs relating to care for their dependants.
- WNC had taken the view that it would not be helpful to ask staff members to confirm if they were an unpaid carer, as a person's situation could change virtually overnight and so this information would become out of date very quickly. WNC would use the ERP system to monitor the future take-up of carer's leave to identify if any trends arose, such as demand on particular directorates or seasonal demand. WNC would review its approach to carer's leave at the end of the year and change it if necessary.
- WNC had various options for managing time-limited staffing pressures that could arise, including secondments, acting-up arrangements and using agency staff. The nature of the service area and the role to be covered would be considered when identifying the approach to be used.

### **Current carer support services**

#### **WNC Better Care Fund Service Manager**

- Services were provided by Northamptonshire Carers (NC) under a contract that had commenced on 1 October 2022 and was due to end on 30 September 2024. The contract would normally run for longer but in this case the duration had reflected the situation of the two new local authorities in the county.
- The current service model was commissioned jointly by North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and WNC but led by NNC.
- NNC had requested a six-month waiver to go beyond the contract end date to allow more time to develop a new carers strategy. WNC was prepared to agree to this but would require a contract variation in the two areas of assessment and personal budgets / direct payments to be more compliant with the Care Act 2014.
- The current service model provided countywide support for adult and young carers. The service provider had delegated authority to carry out the two local authorities' statutory duties relating to support for carers.
- The broad objectives for the current service model were to identify carer needs through the carer assessment process; support carers to remain in their caring role if that is what they wanted; ensure carers' outcomes were achieved; and to support carers to maintain their wellbeing.

- The service provider was working to improve the number of reviews of carer support plans that were completed.
- Carer training was an area for development by introducing more specific training for particular needs, for example on caring for a person with Parkinson's disease.
- The provision of a Carer Support Payment (CSP) scheme was not a statutory requirement under the Care Act 2014, which referred to direct payments.
- The service model recognised the diverse needs of all carers and made practical provisions to support carers with particular needs, such as providing interpreting and translation as required and producing material in different formats for people with sensory impairments.
- The service model maintained a register of carers, which produced the figure of 11,000 identified carers in Northamptonshire.
- The service model required the provision of a range of respite services, to include a community companion service, a crisis response service and a planned breaks service.
- WNC was seeking funding for two projects that would help to encourage people to recognise themselves as a carer and to raise awareness of available support.
- CSP of up to £400 was currently paid to carers on a one-off basis to cover a specific cost, such as attending a training course or buying a washing machine. This did not reflect the intention of the Care Act 2014. The current contract did not allow for an annual payment to carers but introducing this was better than the additional demands on acute care or social care that could result from the lack of it. The Care Act 2014 did not set an upper limit on direct payments, which were intended to reflect individual need. However, it was not considered that introducing direct payments would lead to a significant increase in costs.
- Arrangements to deliver training to carers would ideally involve providing some support for the cared-for person whilst the carer was away. Peripatetic training could be another option, possibly delivered via Local Area Partnerships.
- NC received £350K - £400K funding from WNC and NNC through the Better Care Fund to deliver carers support services. This budget had not been increased for the past four years. There was also £300K additional funding over 18 months for projects relating to carers.
- The current contract for carers support services included provision for home visits. Carers were entitled to an assessment and a support plan intended to meet their needs: home visits could be a part of this. Home visits were easier to conduct in some parts of the authority than others. NC would require more funding to increase the overall number of home visits it conducted.

#### **Chief Executive Officer and Assistant Director, Northamptonshire Carers**

- NC won the System Led Support for Carers award in the Health Service Journal Awards 2022. The award had highlighted the exemplar role of NC within system level planning and in driving transformation programmes.
- The Northamptonshire ICB acknowledged the importance of carers' contributions to the integrated care system in the county. A range of services and support for carers was commissioned across NHS organisations and local authorities. NC provided expertise and leadership to this, bringing the system together through

the carers thematic partnership and co-producing service improvements with carers and cared-for people.

- NC delivered an extensive range of services to carers:
  - Statutory carers assessments on behalf of the local authority, in line with the Care Act. This looks at holistic needs and ongoing support needed.
  - Support line – advice, information and a listening ear.
  - Long term health condition support. Multi layered to include education, advice, access to clinician, exercise and wellbeing input.
  - Dementia pathway – wide input from partners across health and social care. Establishment of several memory hubs.
  - Support within multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) that sit in primary care networks offering person centred support to patient and carer – identifying need and actioning there and then.
  - Inclusion and diversity
  - Managing crisis and helping prevention – by way of workshops for carers, groups and 121 support. The main aim is to help people stay at home for longer, be happy and prevent unavoidable escalation of condition leading to presentation at a hospital.
  - Young Carers Service and Young Adult Carer Service
  - Community Companions
  - Carers Café Sessions and Lunch Clubs
  - Carers Support Groups / Drop-ins
  - E-learning
  - Telephone befriending service
  - Volunteers
  - Trips and activities
  - Monthly news bulletin
  - Support for working carers, carer friendly employers
  - Horizons: Former Carers and Bereavement
  - Raising carer awareness within GP surgeries and pharmacies
  - Hospital support
  - SPRING – social Prescribing in Northamptonshire
  - Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN)
  - Ageing Well
  - Regulated / Overnight Care
- The scale, breadth and reach of these services should be emphasised. Carers were a huge demographic, representing 10 per cent of the population looking after another 10 per cent. The cost of replacement care in Northamptonshire would be £1.3 billion. Services for carers related to all areas of health and social care, all ages and needs including physical disability, elderly and frail people, dementia, mental health needs and children with disabilities.
- Northamptonshire was unique in that it had delegated the statutory responsibility for identifying carers and completing carers assessments to NC, initially on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council and more recently for WNC and NNC. Patient and carer feedback had identified that support was most successful when designed

to meet the needs of both parties. NC had been asked to extend its remit in recent years to provide direct patient support, including regulated care hours as well as expanding the range of services which provide joint support, such as long term condition groups such as Breathing Space, Pumped Up and memory hubs.

- Numbers of statutory carer assessments showed a rise in completed assessments in 2021 aligned to the pandemic and the expansion of Ageing Well Primary Care Network teams identifying significant initial unmet need. Analysis showed that a number of carer assessments were completed where the outcome was not at level to access statutory level support. A new screening approach adopted in 2023 to seek to filter those where full assessment was not required, resulting in new targets for 2023 and 2024. Actual full assessments needed were significantly above the contract target level and overall numbers of carers supported was higher. Demand was generating a waiting list currently averaging 270 people.
- 20,220 adult carers and 1,620 young carers were registered in Northamptonshire: 10,030 and 864 respectively were in West Northamptonshire.
- From October 2022 to September 2023 NC had received 1,599 adult carer referrals online, excluding telephone and community outreach referrals, for West Northamptonshire. This included 1,320 professional referrals and 279 self-referrals. There had been 3,137 online referrals for the whole of Northamptonshire and 384 young carer referrals. There was an increasing trend overall.
- NC's service contract with WNC and NNC included a year one target to deliver 1,625 new adult carers assessments, raising to 1,950 in year two. The contract was subject to quarterly reporting to both local authorities. 2,887 adult carers assessments had been delivered in the county in year one, with 1,528 in West Northamptonshire.
- At the end of year one 90.47 per cent of carers assessments in West Northamptonshire were completed within 28 days from the point of referral. The £100,000 budget to deliver Carer Support Payments was 83.5 per cent spent at time of reporting.
- A carers conversation was a snapshot overview of their caring role and their current pressures. NC used the "what will help you today" method of discussing this with them and then making relevant referrals, signposting and information and advice at initial contact. NC had delivered 1,379 carers conversation in year one of the contract.
- Current areas of challenges and opportunities included the level of demand, capacity, complexity; Accelerated Reform Funding; hand to mouth funding arrangements in the health sector; and carers support payments.

### **Draft Carer Strategy 2024-2029**

#### **WNC Better Care Fund Service Manager**

- The Strategy was intended to cover a period of five years, which had been suggested by the experts by experience involved in its development. There would be a review after three years.
- The Strategy used the Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP) definition of a carer. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) also used TLAP material.



- The government had not produced a national strategy for carers for some years.
- The strategic priorities identified in the Strategy had been chosen by the experts by experience. The Strategy identified supporting actions to deliver the strategic priorities.
- An overarching theme of the Strategy was to deliver joined up services that meant carers did not need to have multiple conversations with different organisations.
- The outcomes framework in the Strategy would be used to test the difference it made to carers' lives. WNC would be held to account using an 'I statement' model, which was an approach used by the CQC, and two patient reported outcome measures (PROMS) on carer burden and quality of life.
- Photos used in the draft Strategy were the best ones from the selection available to WNC Communications.
- An effective initial assessment was the key to dealing with complex cases. It had not yet been decided how the assessment function would be carried out in future: WNC might take it back in-house or might use an external provider.
- Services delivered under the Strategy would be co-produced. The co-production board involved in this work would include members recruited to the role after contacting the WNC Complaints function.
- A flexible, person-centred approach would be taken to the assessment process. The one-conversation model should also support a good relationship with service-users.
- WNC was not an outlier in the challenges it experienced in relation to providing support for carers.
- A more joined-up approach with health organisations would assist with communication about support for carers. The NHS Long Term Plan required GPs to maintain a list of carers in their practice areas but people could be missed if they did not identify themselves as a carer.
- There was scope for the Northamptonshire ICB to increase the priority it gave to carers. The ICB lead commissioner for carer services was also responsible for urgent care, which therefore became the focus of their attention. WNC had offered to act as a lead commissioner for carer services.
- The idea of a carer friendly community, similar to the dementia-friendly community scheme, could be a helpful approach.

## **Carer health and wellbeing**

### **Professor in Applied Mental Health, University of Northampton**

- Carers effectively represented an unpaid 24-hour care system. Some unpaid carers took up the role intentionally; some found themselves in the role, sometimes alone. The needs of carers were often overlooked compared to those of the cared-for person.
- As the overall age of the population continued to increase there would be more older carers, who might have health issues themselves.
- Increasing numbers of people living with complex health conditions could mean carers felt less equipped to support a cared-for person.
- There seemed to be an assumption that people knew how to navigate the health and care system and knew how to provide care.

- If a carer became unwell the cared-for person often ended up in full time care, often earlier than they should. This resulted in increased demand on statutory services.
- Carers were entitled to a needs assessment. It was not clear why there was not more take-up of these and, for example, whether GPs could do more.
- There were now 12 memory hubs operating in Northamptonshire, providing support for people with dementia and their carers.
- There should be a tiered approach to providing support for carers.
- Support for carers should be an integral part of support for cared-for people.
- Challenges in Northamptonshire connected with identifying unpaid carers were likely to be the same as in other areas: this was a national issue.
- GPs had previously been paid for carer assessments but it was not clear whether this was still the case.
- There needed to be a senior representative to give impetus to action on support for unpaid carers.
- Most primary care networks now had a social prescribing team. They could provide support and information to carers: this did not have to be done by GPs. There should be a case manager function, which serve as a contact point for carers.
- Feedback from recent focus groups with people from BAME community groups conducted for WNC had included the importance of support being located close to home within communities.
- Information about navigating care systems and co-ordinator roles would help to join up services. Directories for carers were also useful.
- There needed to be some recognition that different types of carers required different types of support. People could also benefit from contact with others in the same situation as them. There was common ground across caring in general but differences as well.
- A carer could become isolated as a result of caring responsibilities. If these responsibilities then changed, or ended completely, it could be difficult for a person to re-establish connections. Carers should be able to remain engaged in society and keep up interests and networks whilst caring. It would also be beneficial to have a strategy to make use of former carers' skills and experience.

### **GP perspectives on support for unpaid carers**

#### **Members of the Northamptonshire Frailty Leads group**

- Primary care MDTs would benefit from having a specific contact (in adult social care / health) to use in cases when additional support was needed for a patient to maintain independent living. This would include support for a person or a couple because the carer was ill.
- MDTs would benefit from having access to a small amount of money that could be used to deal with issues that might affect a patient's ability to remain in their own home whilst dealing with ill-health, such as paying for a family dog to be put into kennels.

- Frail people at risk of falls could find it difficult to get to services offered by the Falls Prevention Service intended to reduce this risk. It was questioned whether there was scope to offer more transport.
- There was likely to be a considerable number of ‘hidden’ carers, who did not think of themselves as carers, or who recognised that they were carrying out the role but did not want to be defined by it.
- GPs often saw cases where elderly or frail partners were each listed as a carer for the other. People often tried to muddle through, did not ask for help and did not take it up if offered, but delving into their situation could show real issues.
- Co-caring couples could include cases of one partner having a physical impairment and the other a mental impairment. They might be able to manage between themselves but the whole situation could become untenable if one partner became unwell.
- A case was mentioned where grandparents were the carers for a grandchild with learning disabilities. The grandparents had fallen into this role and did not have much support.

## **7. Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 7.1 After all of the evidence was collated the Task and Finish Panel reached the conclusions set out in this section of the report.

### **Support for WNC staff members with caring responsibilities**

- 7.2 The Task and Finish Panel was generally reassured that WNC had taken appropriate action to meet the requirements introduced by the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 concerning statutory leave for carers. The Panel was advised of a proposed update to WNC’s existing Carers Policy intended to reflect the new requirements, noting that this had been informed by input from a carers’ representative and would be subject to consultation with trade unions before being issued. The Panel commented that the updated Carers Policy needed to make clear that both the definition of a dependant and of long term care needed to apply for a staff member to claim statutory carer’s leave. The definition of a dependant should make clear that it applied to people caring for parents as well as caring for children. It also needed to take into account the complexity of family relationships such as, for example, a grandchild providing care for a grandparent.
- 7.3 The Task and Finish Panel questioned how much impact the introduction of statutory leave for carers was likely to have on WNC’s capacity as an organisation and potential risks to business continuity that might arise as a result, particularly given that requests for carer’s leave might arise at very short notice. The Panel was advised that directorates were used to dealing with changes to overall leave entitlements. There was also a range of existing leave options that staff members could use to meet caring responsibilities that already formed part of business as usual, including flexible working arrangements, dependant’s leave and purchasing additional annual leave. Historically, WNC had not experienced a high take up of unpaid leave options. The Panel sought assurance that WNC was well-informed about the number of staff

members with caring responsibilities. It was advised that WNC did not propose to ask staff members to confirm if they were an unpaid carer, on the basis that a person's situation could change virtually overnight and so this information would become out of date very quickly. Instead, WNC would use the ERP system to monitor the future take-up of carer's leave to identify if any trends arose, such as demand on particular directorates or seasonal demand. This information could inform a future review of the operation of statutory carer's leave. The Panel accepted this approach and supports a review 12 months after implementation.

- 7.4 The Task and Finish Panel placed a message on the WNC Carers Network online forum to invite views about carers' experience of working for WNC. However, no comments were received.

Recommendations:

- A) The Cabinet agrees that West Northamptonshire Council should review the take-up of statutory carer's leave 12 months after its implementation and consider whether any changes to the corporate Carers Policy are necessary as a result.

#### **Current and future support for unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire**

- 7.5 The plan for this scrutiny review included separate key lines of enquiry on the support currently provided to unpaid carers as part of WNC's statutory responsibilities for adult social care, and on the aims of WNC's proposed new Carer Strategy. In practice, the Task and Finish Panel has considered these as one. This reflects the context for the scrutiny review: the existing contract for the provision of carer support services in Northamptonshire is due to end in March 2025; the next contract commissioned by WNC will cover West Northamptonshire only; this contract will reflect the strategic direction and priorities set out in the Carer Strategy 2024-2029 that is due to be adopted in the immediate future.
- 7.6 The information gathered by the Task and Finish Panel has brought home that a central challenge involved in providing support to unpaid carers is the ability to identify, and communicate with, all of the people who may be carrying out this role in the community. A person with caring responsibilities may not think of themselves as a carer but as a partner, relative or friend. A person who does acknowledge that they are carrying out an additional caring role still may not see the need to make this known to the local authority: if they do not think they are eligible for any support; if they are concerned about privacy; or for a range of other reasons. This can risk a situation in which a carer only seeks information or support when they reach a crisis point. At the same time, the local authority is less informed about the number of unpaid carers in its area and is less able to engage with carers to help them to help themselves and prevent potential needs from escalating.
- 7.7 Addressing this situation involves considering both what WNC offers to carers and how it seeks to communicate this to them. The Task and Finish Panel is broadly supportive of the offer set out in the draft Carer Strategy 2024-2029. The Panel felt that the Strategy appeared comprehensive, fresh and accessible and to address areas for

improvement that WNC had identified through a self-assessment carried out at the end of 2023. It was also apparent that it had been informed by people with lived experience. The Panel particularly endorses the proposals in the Strategy for a one-stop shop function that will provide advice, support and signposting to carers, moving around the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) in West Northamptonshire, and for a WNC carers directory and app. The Panel had previously highlighted the potential role of LAPs in providing information and support to carers. It considers that this approach could also assist in addressing barriers to engagement with carers noted by the Panel, including the need to engage effectively with people in smaller rural communities and with people from BAME community groups.

- 7.8 The Task and Finish Panel has, though, identified some additional actions that it believes would augment those proposed in the Carer Strategy. The Panel proposes that a carer should be able to request that the carer assessment process be paused, for example if dealing with issues in their wider life, and resumed at a later date rather than needing to start again from the beginning. At a very practical level, this principle should be incorporated into WNC online forms so that if a user who indicates they are a carer only partially completes a form their information is retained for them to return to later. The Panel considered that this would avoid adding to demands on carers' time that could also discourage people from seeking assistance. The Panel would ideally want this provision to apply to all WNC online forms in time but recognises the need to focus initially on forms specifically relating to carers.
- 7.9 In addition, the Task and Finish Panel encourages WNC to pursue the development of a carer passport scheme for the area, working with relevant partners as necessary. Carers UK defines a carer passport as "a record that identifies a carer in some way and sets out an offer of support, services or other benefits in response. A carer passport helps carers to be identified, recognised and supported as part of the day-to-day life of an organisation or community." The Panel saw the ways that such a scheme might assist carers in managing the demands on their time, for example, if used as a basis for giving carers a higher priority for processes such as collecting medication. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to encourage the national adoption of carer passports in health settings. The Panel was advised that WNC had had positive discussions with the Northamptonshire ICB and NNC about introducing a local carer passport scheme in electronic form. The Panel hopes that this can be progressed.
- 7.10 The Task and Finish Panel considers that it would enhance proposed methods of communication on advice and support for carers if WNC also offered a physical, business card sized promotional card. This could direct carers on to information sources, using a QR code or other appropriate method. The Panel feels that the benefit of an promotional card in this format is that it could be so readily circulated: by WNC officers going out to the meetings with community groups, by councillors and by other partners. In this way it could represent a lighter touch approach that could help to address the challenge set out in paragraph 7.6 of the report above, that some carers may not want extensive information but should not be left with no recourse should their situation change.

- 7.11 During its work the Task and Finish Panel has been conscious that unpaid carers as a whole include people across different ages, with different employment situations, who may provide different types of care for cared-for people with different needs. The Panel recognised the need for WNC to prioritise support, for example to reflect the preponderance of carers in older age groups referred to in paragraph 5.2 of the report above. However, the Panel wishes to caution WNC against taking an approach to communicating and implementing the Carer Strategy 2024-2029 that could have the unintended consequence of making it seem less relevant to some of the target audience. This could occur if, for example, support for unpaid carers appeared to be seen as an age-related issue. Carers may not seek available information and support if the way it is presented and delivered does not seem relevant to them or actually made them feel diminished in any way. Striking the right balance is not easy but it must be considered. WNC's approach to communicating and implementing should also not be solely online.
- 7.12 Lastly, the Task and Finish Panel has looked at broader partnership working in relation to supporting carers. The Panel considered that GPs should ideally be well-placed to play a key role in supporting the health and wellbeing of carers, as locally based service-providers in a position to identify if a person was carer, respond directly to medical needs or help to direct them to other information and support. The Panel was advised that support for carers was part of the national priorities for GPs. However, it was not clear about the extent of their role in practice. The Panel recognised other demands on GPs' capacity and that their priorities are a matter for NHS commissioners. However, the Panel encourages that WNC, as a member of the Northamptonshire ICB, works with NHS partners where there is an opportunity to develop more joined up local services for carers, as much as for other types of services supporting the health and wellbeing of West Northamptonshire residents.

Recommendations:

- B) The Cabinet agrees to implement the one stop shop function for carers and the carer guide proposed in the draft Carer Strategy 2024-2029.
- C) The Cabinet agrees that online forms for processes relating to unpaid carers operated by West Northamptonshire Council should enable information entry to be paused and resumed, rather than having to be completed at once or started again from the beginning.
- D) The Cabinet agrees to develop a Carer Passport Scheme for West Northamptonshire, working with partners where it would support this aim.
- E) The Cabinet agrees to develop a physical promotional card directing to sources of information and support for unpaid carers for use in West Northamptonshire.
- F) The Cabinet agrees that the communication and promotion of support for unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire should be reflective of the following:
  - People of all ages can be carers and it could be off-putting to some if support for unpaid carers seems to be presented as an age-related issue

- Communication and promotion must be able to reach people who are not online.
- G) The Cabinet agrees to work with health partners through the NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to pursue opportunities to develop more joined up services for unpaid carers.

### **Assessing the impact of the scrutiny review**

- 7.13 It is good practice for Overview and Scrutiny to revisit issues that have been the subject of in-depth work, to assess how its recommendations have been implemented and what have outcomes they have produced.

#### Recommendations:

- H) The Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to review the impact of the scrutiny review six months after the presentation of the final report to decision-makers.





## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

### TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY REVIEW – PLAN

<b>Topic title</b>	Support for unpaid carers in West Northamptonshire
<b>Scope</b>	<p>The scrutiny review will consider and provide constructive challenge on how West Northamptonshire Council seeks to support unpaid carers (also referred to as ‘informal carers’). NHS England describes an unpaid carer as “...anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.”</p> <p>The scope of the scrutiny review will include both adult and young carers, reflecting that West Northamptonshire Council has a common strategy and contract for the support provided to both age groups.</p>
<b>Link to the Council’s Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The scrutiny review is intended to support the Council’s vision to make West Northamptonshire a place where people are supported to live independent, self-sufficient lives and where everyone has the best life chances.</p> <p>The scrutiny review relates to the Council’s corporate priority to support adults in West Northamptonshire to live independent and self-sufficient lives for as long as possible. Where they are vulnerable or lack a support network the Council will provide the support they need. The Council will work with health in more integrated ways ensuring our residents can “chose well, stay well and live well.”</p>
<b>Key objectives and measures of effectiveness</b>	<p>Key objectives</p> <p>The scrutiny review will seek to understand where existing services work well and where plans for the future appear robust. It will seek to identify where there are areas for improvement and make evidence-based recommendations intended to address these.</p>

	<p>Measures of effectiveness</p> <p>The scrutiny review is intended to result in the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee making practical, timely recommendations intended to enhance the support provided to unpaid carers, including young carers, in West Northamptonshire, which are presented to the Cabinet and/or other responsible decision-makers for consideration.</p>
<b>Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)</b>	<p>The scrutiny review will consider the following key lines of enquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Northamptonshire Council’s preparedness to meet the requirements relating to support for employees with caring responsibilities introduced by the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 due to take effect on 1 April 2024.</li> <li>• The effectiveness of the support provided to unpaid carers as part of West Northamptonshire Council’s statutory responsibilities for adult social care, including respite care.</li> <li>• The aims of the new West Northamptonshire Council Carers Strategy to be developed during 2023/24.</li> </ul>
<b>Outlining stakeholders</b>	<p>The scrutiny review will seek information from the following stakeholders:</p> <p>Internal expert advisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration</li> <li>• Executive Director People Services</li> <li>• Assistant Director Human Resources, if necessary for a further discussion of WNC’s preparedness to meet the requirements of the Carer’s Leave Act 2023.</li> </ul> <p>External expert advisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Jacqueline Parkes, University of Northampton</li> <li>• Local GP(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Outlining evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information on national policy and requirements</li> <li>• Information giving an overview of WNC’s preparedness to meet the requirements relating to support for employees with caring responsibilities introduced by the Carer’s Leave Act 2023.</li> <li>• Information on the number of adult and young carers in West Northamptonshire and the number already receiving support.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information giving an overview of the current support for unpaid carers available in West Northamptonshire and how this is obtained.</li> <li>Details of the developing draft West Northamptonshire Carers Strategy</li> </ul>										
<b>Risks</b>	<p>There could be a risk to the progress and impact of the scrutiny review if the focus was to broaden beyond unpaid / informal carers as defined in the scope above.</p> <p>Planning of task and finish panel meetings and related activity with this scope in mind will help to maintain focus and to make best use of time and resources committed to the scrutiny review.</p>										
<b>Membership</b>	<p>The task and finish panel will have the following members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cllr Rosie Humphreys (Chair)</li> <li>2. Cllr Aziz</li> <li>3. Cllr Rufia Ashraf</li> <li>4. Cllr Alan Chantler</li> <li>5. Cllr Janice Duffy</li> <li>6. Cllr Andrew Grant</li> <li>7. Cllr Rosie Herring</li> <li>8. Cllr Sue Sharps</li> </ol>										
<b>Timeframe</b>	<table border="1" data-bbox="592 1256 1374 1850"> <tr> <td>Scene-setting meeting</td> <td>23 January 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evidence-gathering (specific dates for meetings and other activities to be set by the Task and Finish Panel)</td> <td>February – May 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agreement of draft report by the Task and Finish Panel)</td> <td>June 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agreement of final report by the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</td> <td>24 June 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Presentation of final report to the Cabinet</td> <td>9 July 2024</td> </tr> </table>	Scene-setting meeting	23 January 2024	Evidence-gathering (specific dates for meetings and other activities to be set by the Task and Finish Panel)	February – May 2024	Agreement of draft report by the Task and Finish Panel)	June 2024	Agreement of final report by the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	24 June 2024	Presentation of final report to the Cabinet	9 July 2024
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## MOTION TO COUNCIL – 29 JUNE 2023

Proposed by: Cllr Sally Beardsworth

Seconded by: Cllr Rosie Humphreys

### Background

Last month, the Carer's Leave Bill, championed by Liberal Democrat MP Wendy Chamberlain was passed and will shortly become law. Millions of people care for loved ones, doing everything from day-to-day physical caring, washing, dressing and feeding for those who cannot care for themselves, to things like shopping for a household elderly relative. Yet far too many unpaid carers go without adequate support and struggle to balance caring responsibilities and work.

Earlier this month (5th June – 9th June) it was Carers Week.

Research has revealed that 19 million people in the UK have provided unpaid care but have not been identified as carers. Many simply see themselves as a parent, partner or friend.

This means millions of carers could have missed out on vital support. This figure equates to approximately 73%.

Research also shows that providing unpaid care has had a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of 8 million people in the UK. Too often caring comes at the cost of carers own health. 31% of those who have provided unpaid care have said that their own health and wellbeing had suffered as a result of their caring role. This is an issue that has been flagged through the engagement process of the Health & Wellbeing strategy in our own area of West Northamptonshire.

More must and needs to be done both at a national and local level.

### Resolution

This council therefore resolves to convene a roundtable, during Parliament's Summer recess, with our local MPs, a cross-party members group, unpaid carers from across our council area and WNC council officers to understand the problem specifically within our own area and explore what further can be done to recognise and improve the situation for unpaid carers who ultimately save local authorities and the state millions of pounds.