

Darlington's Commitment to Carers 2023-28



Darlington's
Commitment
to Carers



Foreword

We are pleased to support Darlington's Commitment to Carers which sets out key actions to be taken to raise awareness of carers in Darlington and to ensure that they are recognised and supported for their invaluable contribution to the wellbeing of the people they care for and their contribution to society as a whole.

We welcome the Commitments made and look forward to increasing awareness of carers and their needs in Darlington and an improved support offer to them in their diverse caring roles.

Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Cabinet Member for Adults

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Introduction

Darlington's Commitment to Carers has been co-produced by members of the Carers' Strategy Steering Group (CSSG) (Appendix 1) and family carers in Darlington and sets out how Darlington will identify, recognise and support both the approximately 9800 people who identified themselves as carers in the 2021 census and the many other people who take on caring responsibilities every day but don't necessarily recognise themselves as carers, seeing themselves primarily as a mum or dad, husband or wife, brother or sister.

A breakdown of the 2021 census information about carers and other information about the numbers of carers supported by Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care and Carers Support Services in Darlington is provided in Appendix 2.

Our aim is that all people in Darlington have the information they need to recognise themselves as a carer at the earliest opportunity and that they are then able to access the advice, information and support they need to carry out this role whilst minimising the impact on their health, wellbeing, work and other personal commitments.

It should be noted that although some people may become a carer overnight, for other people becoming a carer is a more gradual process with caring responsibilities increasing gradually over several months or years.

In many cases the full-time caring role ends suddenly, due to the person being cared for either dying or going into long term care.

Darlington's Commitment to Carers considers the needs of all groups of carers, including young carers, young adult carers and parent carers and where 'carers' are referred to in the Action Plan, this includes all groups of carers as appropriate.

The process to develop the Strategy is set out in Appendix 4 and it has been developed taking into account the findings from the North East ADASS Regional Carers Survey (Appendix 5) and a follow up survey completed by carers in Darlington (Appendix 6), with some key comments highlighted in carers' own words.

Darlington's Commitment to Carers also takes into account previous and current national strategies and guidance, as set out in Appendix 3.



In carers' own words

What has been working well for you? / What makes you glad?

"The carers service has been very helpful, and with their help I feel I can carry on looking after my Mam"

"Having a Carer break which has allowed me time for myself".

"Once support begins the Social Workers at Adult Social Care have been superb".

What have been the challenges? / What makes you sad or mad?

"That we are left to our own devices, and no one seems to care after they leave education and if I ask for help people just say I'm an amazing parent carer who is coping just because I try and be positive".

"My Mam was in hospital for a week, and she was discharged without any support, so I had to pick up the burden while I work full time".

"Finding my way around the maze of services, benefits etc".

"Balancing looking after my mum while working full time and finding time for me".

What needs to happen going forward?

"More understanding from professionals, it would help if they had lived experience. Support groups for those that also work, as all current services seem to run within working hours. More funding for social care and more provisions for carers to get some respite."

"Darlington carers keep up the good work get out and about get known in the community".

"Better communication with social care"

Are you worried about anything?

"I worry about my son if something happens to me, I worry constantly about benefits for him I worry about my health as I don't sleep with worrying".

"What will my child have access to after he leaves Education."

"My own health and mental wellbeing"



Support available for carers in Darlington

All organisations that are members of the Carers' Strategy Steering Group offer support to carers in Darlington. Contact details for each organisation are given in Appendix 1.

There are two commissioned Carers Support Services in Darlington, one for young carers up to the age of 25 and one for adult carers, including parents of disabled children.

There is open access to both services, which provide information, advice, support and group activities for carers.

There is also a commissioned Dementia Advisor Service which supports individuals living with dementia and their carers.

In addition, carers can access support via Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care Services.

Support available from Adult Social Care includes:

- **provision of tailored information and advice**, including signposting to the commissioned Carers Support Service
- **completion of an assessment of the carer's needs under the Care Act 2014**, which considers the impact and sustainability of the caring role and can enable the carer to access services from Adult Social Care to support their wellbeing (such as gym membership) and/or the provision of practical care such as housework and gardening to enable the carer to continue to provide personal care, if this is their wish.
- **provision of respite care services to the person cared for**, such as day opportunities, sitting services or short stays in residential care to enable the carer to take some time out from their caring role.
- **support from Occupational Therapy**, including the provision of equipment and adaptations, and advice to promote safe caring and encouraging the person cared for to remain independent where possible.

Support available from Children's Social Care includes:

- **provision of tailored information and advice** through the designated Children's Front Door, who will facilitate links for young carers and their families to the most appropriate service or support, this may include signposting to the commissioned Young Carers Support Service or onward referrals into one of children's social care teams. The information, advice and support will be tailored towards the individual needs of the young carer.
- **Whole family support** The Building Stronger Families Service offer co-ordinated help for children and families with a range of needs through an early help assessment or targeted programs.
- **Parent/Carer Assessments** for Parent/Carers of children open to the disabled children's team.



Key Achievements from the 2020-2022 Action Plan

- Maintenance of support for carers during the covid 19 pandemic and development of remote ways of meeting need, including via increasing access to digital support for carers
- Part time Connecting Carers Development Worker employed by Darlington Carers Support to support carers with digital access issues
- Building on and enhancing relationships with GP surgeries to enable carers to be identified to enable them to access covid 19 vaccinations.
- Ongoing training offer by Darlington Carers Support to enable organisations to identify and support carers.
- Continued increase in the number of carers registered with Darlington Carers Support, despite some decreases in referral numbers during lockdown periods.
- Part time Carers in Employment Development Worker employed by Darlington Carers Support for a 1 year period to explore how best to support employers to identify and support their employees who are also carers
- Carers able to access Household Support Fund monies via Darlington Carers Support to assist with cost of living increases, such as food and utility bills
- Allocation of a small amount of additional carer break funding to Darlington Carers Support to enable additional support for carers most affected by covid.



Darlington's Commitment to Carers Action Plan

Carers' needs for support are acknowledged within the 10-year vision for adult social care set out in [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/people-at-the-heart-of-care) which states that 'we want unpaid carers to be able to say:

- "I am supported to provide care as I wish and do so in a way that takes into account my own access to education, employment, health and wellbeing."
- "I have a life outside of caring and I am able to remain connected to the people who matter to me."
- "I know my needs are equally recognised and my goals and aspirations are respected and fulfilled."
- "I have the right information and advice to be able to make informed decisions."
- "I have access to appropriate support, that suits my needs including respite care and carers breaks."

Darlington's Commitment to Carers Action Plan sets out how we will support all groups of carers to achieve these overarching outcomes under the following headings as agreed by members of the CSSG -

- Recognising and supporting Carers in the wider community and society.
- Services and Systems that work for Carers.
- Employment and Financial Wellbeing.
- Supporting Young Carers.

Leads are identified for each Action to be completed.

The timescales given relate to the first year of the Action Plan and further timescales will be identified as the Plan is reviewed and updated.



Objective 1: Recognising and supporting Carers in the wider community and society

- Identifying carers
- Providing information for carers
- Engaging and involving carers
- Identifying and working with harder-to-reach groups of carers, including carers from ethnically diverse communities, LGBTQ+ carers, Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) carers, veterans, male carers and carers from socially excluded groups, including carers living in poverty and carers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Social and community support for carers

Action	Lead	By when
All partner organisations to identify carers at the first point of contact – each organisation to identify the action(s) they will take, to include consideration of direct referrals between organisations rather than simply signposting	All partners coordinated by Darlington Carers Support	September 2023 onwards
Darlington Carers Support to deliver training to organisations to enable them to recognise carers	Darlington Carers Support	September 2023 onwards
Increase the identification of carers by Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care and ensure the provision of appropriate support, including by referring to Darlington Carers Support as appropriate	Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care Darlington Carers Support	April 2023 onwards
Support Darlington Connect to identify people as carers	Age UKNYD Darlington Carers Support	July 2023 onwards
Support Social Prescribing Link Workers to identify people as carers	Darlington Carers Support	May 2023 onwards
Review information currently provided for carers and identify any gaps/amendments required	All partners coordinated by Darlington Carers Support who will gather information from each organisation on their current information provision for carers	September 2023 onwards
Provide information for carers in a variety of formats, including leaflets, newsletters and via websites	All partners	
Develop a myth busting social media campaign to raise the profile of carers, including the creation of social media posts that enable all organisations to share the same message.	All partners coordinated by Darlington Carers Support – to be an agenda item at the August Carers' Strategy Steering Group	November 2023 (Carers Rights Day), then ongoing monthly
Develop a 'Commitment to Carers' logo to support the social media campaign	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People to approach Xentrall (DBC's Design and Print Service) in the first instance.	July 2023

Action	Lead	By when
Develop hard copy resources to reinforce the social media campaign	All partners - any resources published to include the new 'Commitment to Carers' logo once developed	November 2023 onwards
Link with NE ADASS regional carers Comms work as appropriate	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People	Ongoing as required
Support carers to become digitally included	Darlington Carers Support Digital Inclusion Connecting Carers Project	Ongoing
Develop a systematic approach to carer engagement/ involvement and set this out in a plan/as a checklist	All partners – to be an agenda item at the October Carers' Strategy Steering Group	December 2023
Develop a plan to identify and work with harder-to-reach groups of carers, including carers from ethnically diverse communities, LGBTQ+ carers, Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) carers, veterans, male carers and carers from socially excluded groups, including carers living in poverty and carers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	All partners – to be an agenda item at the October Carers' Strategy Steering Group	December 2023
Implement the actions identified in the harder-to-reach groups of carers plan	All partners	April 2024 onwards
Ensure the provision of social and community support for carers by continuing to commission Carers Support Services	Darlington Borough Council – new contracts to be put in place from 1.4.24	April 2024 onwards
Consider how carers can access other social and community support and publicise this	Darlington Carers Support Darlington Young Carers Service Alzheimer's Society St Teresa's Hospice	December 2023 onwards



Objective 2: Services and Systems that work for Carers

- Working with Health
- Assessing carers' needs and identifying ways to meet them
- Training to provide care and support
- Psychological and emotional support for carers
- Support during changes to the caring role
- Support for carers during end-of-life care and after the person dies
- Safeguarding carers and the people they care for

Action	Lead	By when
Share relevant findings from the Darlington Carers Survey with each organisation to which they apply	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People to collate information and share with CSSG	December 2023 and ongoing
Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer – Older People to share feedback re Adult Social Care with Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People	October 2023
Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care to determine actions to undertake to respond to the feedback and to the feedback provided and to other areas of this Action Plan	Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care	December 2023
Arrange a meeting with Health representatives (including Public Health) to identify actions to be undertaken by Health partners	Darlington Carers Support Healthwatch Darlington Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People	October 2023
Assessing carers' needs and identifying ways to meet them (either via a statutory carer's assessment completed by Social Care, or a non statutory assessment via other services/organisations)	All partners coordinated by Darlington Carers Support	October 2023
Publicise all available opportunities to enable carers to take a break from their caring role	All partners coordinated by Darlington Carers Support	November 2023 (Carers Rights Day)
Develop a survey to identify what carers would like to enable them to take a break (what are the barriers to taking a break/what would enable you to take a break?)	All partners – to be an agenda item at the January Carers' Strategy Steering Group and questions to be agreed; survey to be sent out in March 2024	March 2024
Further action(s) to be agreed based on the findings of the survey		May 2024
Training to provide care and support	Darlington Carers Support Alzheimer's Society St Teresa's Hospice Darlington Young Carers	October 2023

Action	Lead	By when
Psychological and emotional support for carers, including peer support	All partners	October 2023
Support during changes to the caring role, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the carer is temporarily unable to care (eg through illness) when the carer is finding it increasingly difficult to continue to care on an ongoing basis when a carer is diagnosed with a serious or life-limiting illness and wishes to plan ahead / make alternative plans when the cared for person dies or goes into long term care transitions in the caring role eg from young carer to young adult carer and from parent carer of a disabled child to carer of a young adult 	All partners	Ongoing
Publicise the Carers Emergency card, including to Young Carers.	Darlington Carers Support Darlington Young Carers Service Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care	December 2023
Include planning for an emergency in the Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care assessment process	Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care	December 2023
Growing Older, Planning Ahead for people aged 40+ with a learning disability, to improve the planning process for when families can no longer support their family member to stay at home.	Healthwatch Darlington	December 2023
Transitions Young Carer to Adult Carer Parent Carer to Adult Carer - To ensure that parent carers have easy access to information and advice about how the transition process from child to adults support and services will work for their child including, but not limited to, how support may change / be delivered differently to meet needs as an adult, timescales, new contact details as well as sources of support for adult carers.	See Objective 4 - Supporting Young Carers Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care and Childrens Social Care Health Education services and providers	March 2024
Support for carers during end-of-life care and after the person dies – identify the support available and publicise to carers. Promote the role of carers in Advance Care Planning for people with a life-limiting illness.	St Teresa’s Hospice Darlington Carers Support Age UK	February 2024
Consider the updated ADASS advice note ‘Carers and Safeguarding Adults’ and the multi-agency tool and guidance that was launched by Newcastle City Council in 2022 and decide whether this should be implemented in Darlington	Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care	December 2023

Objective 3: Employment and Financial Wellbeing

- Helping carers to stay in, enter or return to work, education, training and volunteering
- Working with Employers
- Benefits and Grant support, including information about local and national energy efficiency schemes

Action	Lead	By when
Ensure that carers are aware of the financial assistance they are entitled to and are supported to access it, including information about local and national energy efficiency schemes	All partners coordinated by Darlington Carers Support	February 2024
Ensure that carers are considered when decisions are made about which groups of people are able to access financial assistance/grants	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People Darlington Carers Support	October 2023 ongoing
Raise employers' awareness of carers and their needs and the support available	Darlington Carers Support	Ongoing



Objective 4: Supporting Young Carers

- Specific actions in respect of young carers are identified below and consideration of how to include young carers (where applicable and feasible) will take place in respect of all other areas of this Action Plan.

In particular, young carers and their needs should be considered in the actions relating to the identification of carers, provision of information to carers, engaging and involving carers, the planned social media campaign, work with harder-to-reach groups of carers, work with Health and work around financial wellbeing.

Action	Lead	By when
Continue to raise awareness of Young Carers within the community, schools and other agencies, including the provision of training. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of an awareness raising plan by the commissioned Young Carers Service, including the role that young carers play in caring for younger siblings when parents are unable to do so • continued roll out of the Young Carers Charter in schools • the inclusion of young carers in the planned social media campaign 	Darlington Young Carers Service	Ongoing
Participate in the national Young Carers Action Day which is organised by the Carers Trust to raise awareness of young carers and their needs	All partners coordinated by Darlington Young Carers Service	Annually in March
Revisit 'No wrong doors: working together to support young carers and their families A template for a local memorandum of understanding between statutory Directors of Children's and Adult Social Services – March 2015' following its relaunch in February 2024.	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer – Children/ Young People Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People	June 2024
Cross reference young carers data from the school census with data from the Darlington Young Carers Service in order to identify young carers who are only known to either their school or to the Young Carers Service	Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer – Children/ Young People Darlington Young Carers Service	Annually when the school census data is published
Support the transition from Young Carer to Adult Carer, including considering further ways of gaining referrals for Young Adult Carers that is meaningful to them. Ensure that Health is involved in this process.	Darlington Young Carers Service Darlington Carers Support	October 2023
Recommissioned Young Carers Service to look for opportunities for additional funding/grants to give added value to the core service as required by the contract.	Darlington Young Carers Service	April 2024 onwards

Action	Lead	By when
Ensure young carers have access to psychological and wellbeing support according to their needs.	Darlington Young Carers Service St Teresa's Hospice counselling Service Darlington Borough Council Therapeutic Support Service Kooth	Ongoing
Explore how young carers can be enabled to access practical support, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to the Dolphin Centre Card • guaranteed talks with a Careers Specialist • access to paid travel expenses to possible Higher Education providers • priority access to Breakfast Clubs • support with accessing medical services (for themselves or the person they care for) 	Darlington Young Carers Service Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer – Children/ Young People	
Ensure that the voice of young carers is heard in the development and delivery of the recommissioned Young Carers Service and more broadly	Darlington Young Carers Service All partners	April 2024 onwards Ongoing



Governance

- Darlington's Commitment to Carers will be taken to the Darlington Borough Council People Departmental Leadership Team and the Health and Wellbeing Board for approval and will then be published on the Darlington Borough Council website.
- The separate plans referred to in the Action Plan will be published on the Darlington Borough Council website as they are developed.
- CSSG members will review progress against the actions on an ongoing basis (one objective per CSSG meeting) and provide an annual update.
- When reviewing progress against the actions, CSSG members will look to develop SMART goals.
- All partners will take responsibility for their own identified actions



Appendix 1 -

CSSG members as at 30/09/23

It should be noted that not all members attend regularly - some members receive minutes only and some members contribute via email rather than by attendance at meetings.

Those organisations that actively participate are indicated by an asterisk.

Contact details for each organisation are also provided.

CSSG members	
Age UK NYD ageuk.org.uk/northyorkshiredarlington	Helen Hunter, Shaun Britton
Alzheimer's Society* alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/your-local-dementia-support-services	Kathryn Hardwick, Antoni Hall, James Riley
Arcus arcuslgbt.com	Lee, T Bell
Carers*	Lesley Brown, Kath Wall
CDDFT* cddft.nhs.uk/about-the-trust.aspx	Janet Mortimer, Samantha Sinclair
Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)* darlingtondisability.org	David Thomas, Lauren Robinson
Darlington Borough Council* Adult services darlington.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-services Caring for someone darlington.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-services/caring-for-someone Children's social care darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/childrens-social-care	Lisa Holdsworth, Josh Slack, Nerissa Cole, Councillor Chris McEwan
Darlington Carers Support* dcccarrers.org/about-us/	Alison Donoghue, Jenni Wood, Sophie Johnson
Darlington Mind darlingtonmind.com	Christine Thompson, Yvonne Hoare, Simon Davidson, Marcus Hawthorn
Healthwatch Darlington* healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/contact-us	Diane Lax, Andrea Goldie
Humankind Young Carers Service* humankindcharity.org.uk/service/darlington-young-carers-service/	Cheryl Hunter
Living Well, Primary Healthcare Darlington www.primaryhealthcaredarlington.co.uk/socialprescribing	Ethna Parker, Maxine Dunn, Rachel Leavis
Macmillan Cancer Care macmillan.org.uk/in-your-area/local-dashboard/detail/Information%20and%20support%20centres/7833/Macmillan-Information-and-Support-Centre---Darlington-Memorial-Hospital	Avril Charlton, Susan Remillard
Primary Health Care Darlington primaryhealthcaredarlington.co.uk	Rachel Gault
St Teresa's Hospice* darlingtonhospice.org.uk	Deborah Robinson, Claire Foggin
TEWV tevv.nhs.uk	Allison Cook
We are with you wearewithyou.org.uk/services/darlington-at-stride	Kayleigh Gamblin

Appendix 2 -

Demographic Information

Carers in the 2021 census

Comparisons between 2011 and 2021 data for the three categories of unpaid care in England show:

- decreases in the proportions who provided 19 hours or less of unpaid care a week in both England (from 7.2% in 2011 to 4.4% in 2021)
- increases in the proportions who provided between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care a week in England (from 1.5% in 2011 to 1.8% in 2021)
- the proportions of people who provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week remained similar in England (2.7% in 2011, 2.7% in 2021)

Potential explanations for changes in the provision of unpaid care could include:

- a) Coronavirus guidance on reducing travel and limiting visits to people from other households - unpaid carers who previously shared caring responsibilities may have taken on all aspects of unpaid care because of rules on household mixing during the coronavirus pandemic.
- b) There were a higher number of deaths than expected in the older population at the beginning of 2021 due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and other causes - this could have led to a reduction in the need for unpaid care.
- c) Changes in the question wording between 2011 and 2021 – these may have had an impact on the number of people who self-reported as unpaid carers.

In all English regions, there was a smaller proportion of unpaid carers in 2021 compared with 2011.

The North East was the region with the largest proportion of people who provided any amount of unpaid care in 2021 (10.1%, compared with 11.8% in 2011).

It was also the region with the largest proportion of people providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week, at 3.4% (compared with 3.3% in 2011).

In both England and in Wales, unpaid carers most commonly provided either the lowest amount of unpaid care possible (9 hours or less) or the highest amount of unpaid care possible (50 or more hours).

In England, the majority of unpaid carers provided 9 hours or less unpaid care a week (1.7 million), followed by 50 or more hours unpaid care a week (1.4 million).

Number of carers in Darlington

Approximately 9800 people in Darlington identified themselves as carers in the 2021 census (a decrease of approximately 1,200 from the 11,004 people who identified themselves as carers in 2011 census). 4707 (48%) of these were in employment.

However, the actual number of carers in Darlington is likely to be higher as people often don't identify themselves as carers, instead seeing themselves in their primary role of husband/wife, son/daughter, friend etc

This means there are many carers who are helping to sustain the overall health and care system in Darlington by keeping people safe, well and as independent as possible in their own homes. Failure to help these carers could increase the pressures in the wider health and care system.

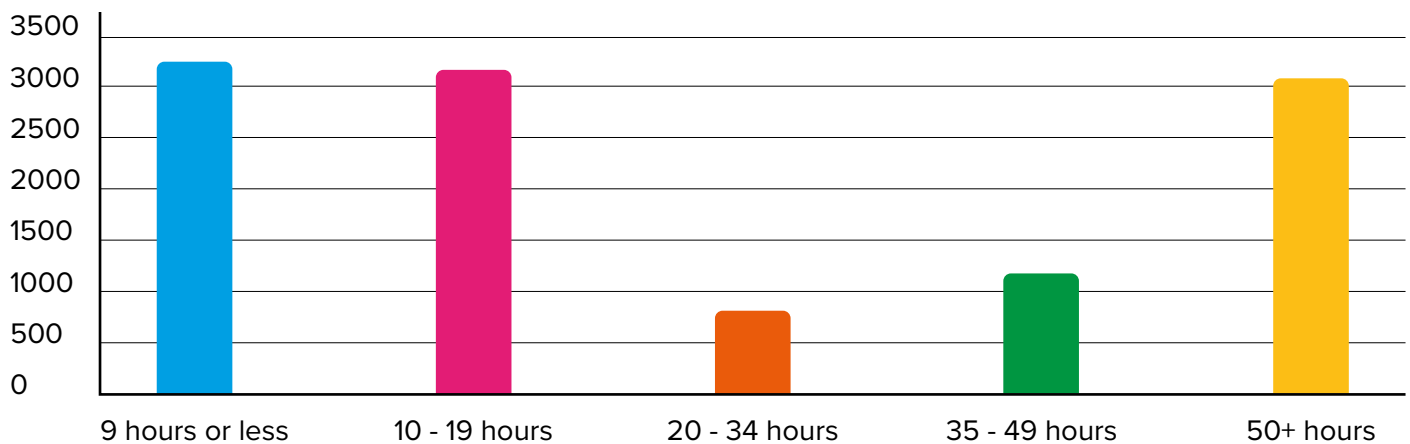
Carers' Ages



Carers' Ethnicity

White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British		Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh		Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African		Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups:		Other ethnic group	
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British - 9252		Bangladeshi - 36		African - 22		White and Asian - 21		Arab - 5	
White Irish - 41		Chinese - 28		Caribbean - 15		White and Black African - 9		Any other ethnic group - 45	
White gypsy or Irish traveller - 52		Indian - 51		Other Black - 4		White and Black Caribbean - 26			
White Roma - 4		Pakistani - 17				Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups - 21			
White Other - 114		Other Asian - 39							
Total	9463	Total	171	Total	41	Total	77	Total	50

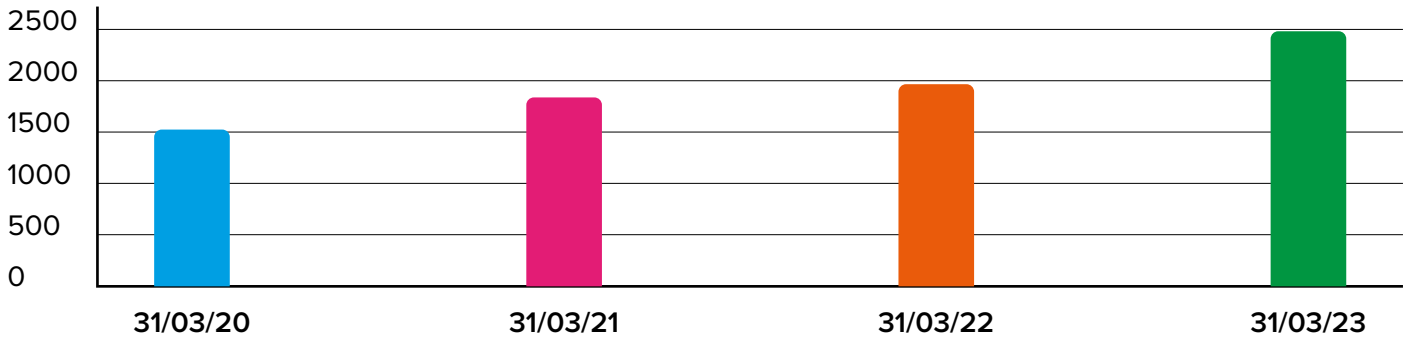
Number of hours unpaid care per week



Number of carers supported by Darlington Carers Support

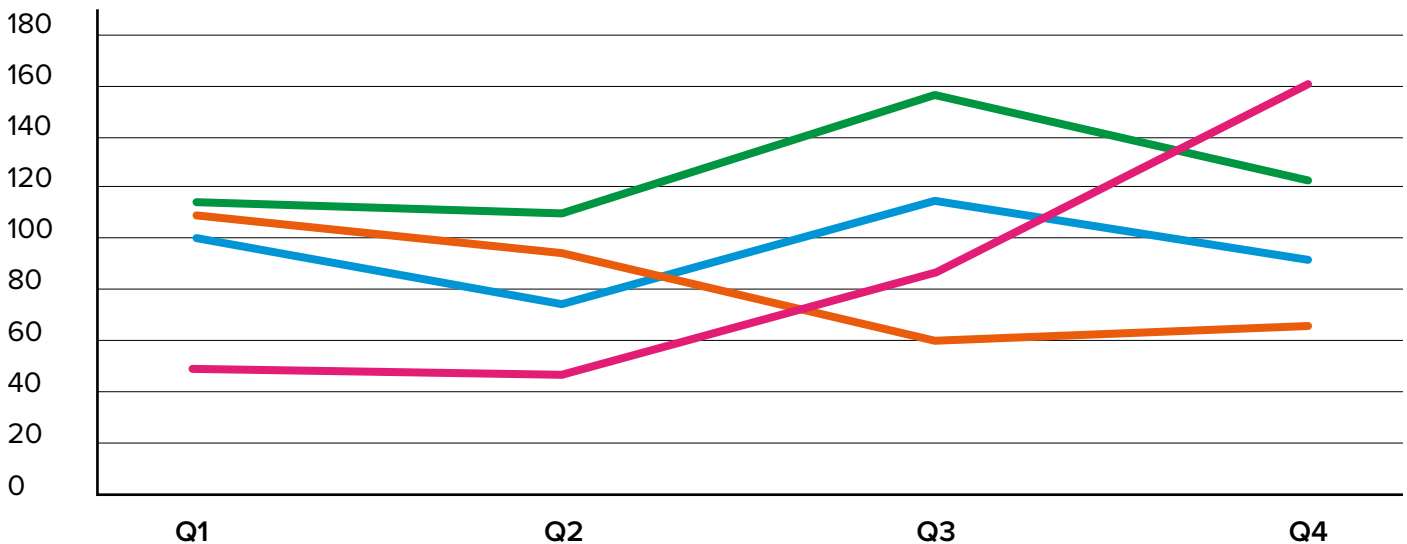
Number on the Carers Register from 31.3.20

31/03/20	1529
31/03/21	1766
31/03/22	1910
31/03/23	2442



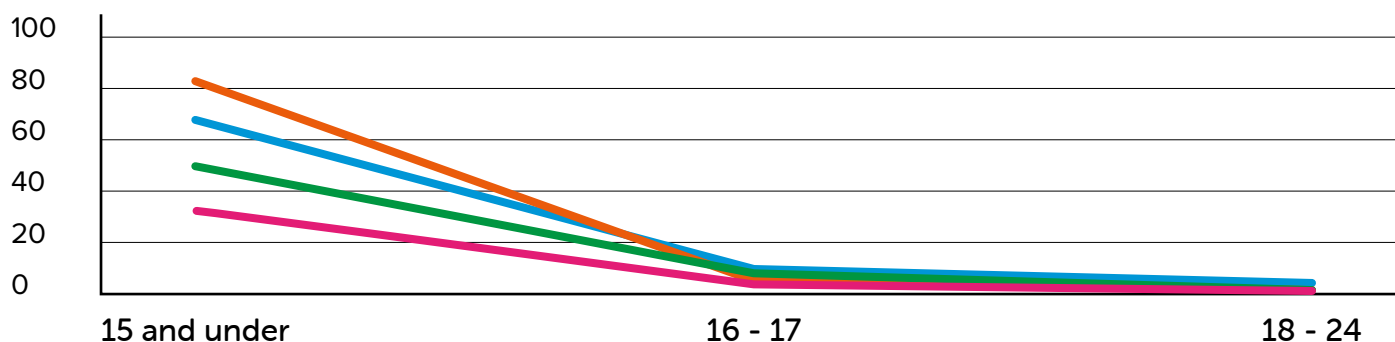
Number of referrals (per annum and per quarter 01/04/19 – 31/03/23)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
01/04/19 – 31/03/20	103	79	118	96	396
01/04/20 – 31/03/21	53	52	90	160	355
01/04/21 – 31/03/22	112	98	65	70	345
01/04/22 – 31/03/23	118	113	158	127	516



Number of young carers supported by Humankind Young Carers Service

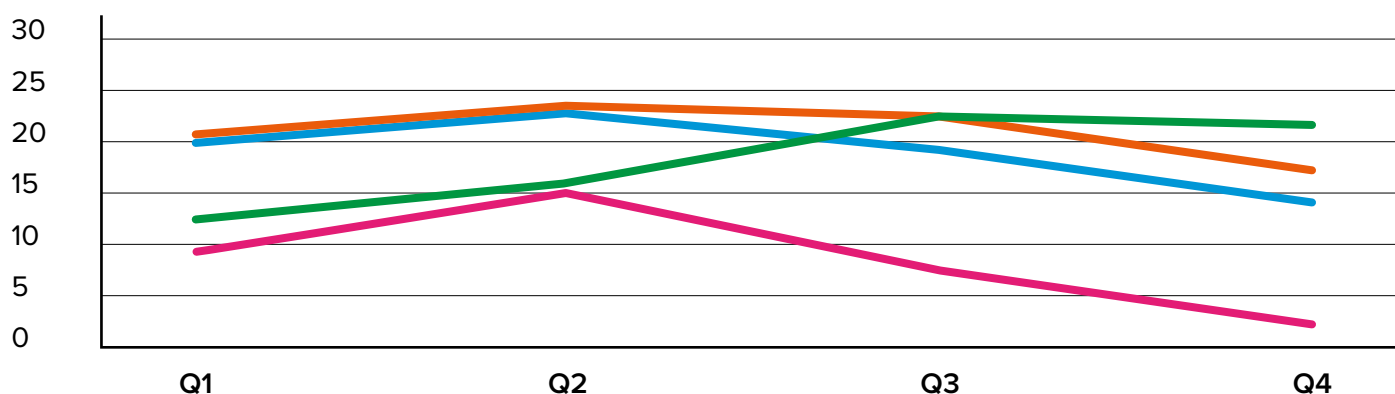
Age breakdown of young carers supported at the time of referral *	15 and under	16 - 17	18 - 24	TOTAL
01/04/19 – 31/03/20	66	7	3	76
01/04/20 – 31/03/21	31	3	1	35
01/04/21 – 31/03/22	79	5	1	85
01/04/22 – 31/03/23	67	6	1	74



* Please note:

- Not all individuals referred accessed the service.
- Some individuals will have been supported in more than one year, so in 2019-2020 there will have been a number of Young Carers already supported in previous year(s).
- Some may have moved up an age group within their time on service.
- There will have been a few re-referrals.






Number of referrals (per annum and per quarter 01/04/19 – 31/03/23)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
01/04/19 – 31/03/20	20	23	19	14	76
01/04/20 – 31/03/21	9	15	7	4	35
01/04/21 – 31/03/22	21	24	23	17	85
01/04/22 – 31/03/23	13	16	23	22	74

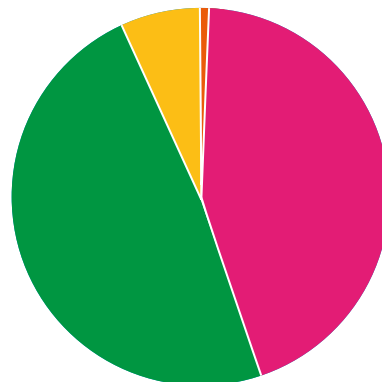


Number of Carers supported by Darlington Adult Social Care






This data was obtained from the 2022-23 SALT return.

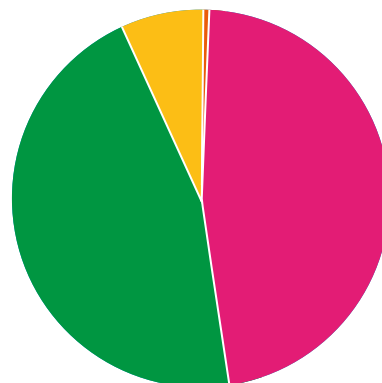
Total number of carers known to Adult Social Care

	Under 18	0
	18-25	2
	26-64	114
	65-84	126
	85+	17
TOTAL		259








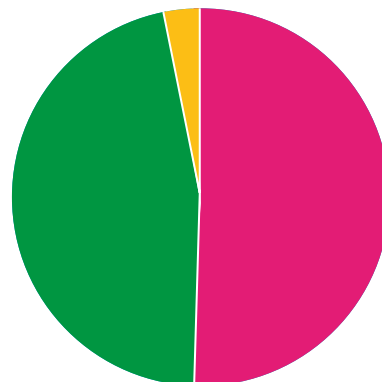
Number of carers assessed from 01/04/22 - 31/03/23

	Under 18	0
	18-25	1
	26-64	63
	65-84	61
	85+	9
TOTAL		134



Number of carers supported from 01/04/22 - 31/03/23

	Under 18	0
	18-25	0
	26-64	48
	65-84	44
	85+	3
TOTAL		95



Appendix 3 -

National Strategies/Guidance

Darlington's Commitment to Carers takes into account previous and current national strategies and guidance, including:

- the first national Carers Strategy launched in 1999.
- the 2008 Carers Strategy, which was reviewed and updated in 2010.
- the cross-government Carers Action Plan 2018 - 20, which was published with the intention of increasing identification, recognition and support for unpaid carers.
- the policy paper [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/people-at-the-heart-of-care) (December 2021, updated March 2022)

The most recent document 'People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform', illustrates the progress that has been made since the first national carers strategy was developed, with the importance of carers being acknowledged throughout the document, beginning with the Foreword which states -

'For the vast majority of people, care begins at home. Carers play a vital role in our communities and we all owe them a debt of gratitude. And so our vision for adult social care puts people and families at its heart. It is a vision that:

- offers people choice and control over the care they receive.
- promotes independence and enables people to live well as part of a community.
- properly values our exemplary and committed social care workforce, enabling them to deliver the outstanding quality care that they want to provide.
- recognises unpaid carers for their contribution and treats them fairly.'

A number of key commitments are made including:

- 1. Improving access to information and advice for both people who need to use care and support services and for unpaid carers**, as people 'struggle navigating a complex system and understanding what might be available to them... unpaid carers can also find it difficult to find support they may be entitled to, and in some cases, feel that the support on offer is insufficient to maintain their own health and wellbeing, support their employment, and achieve the outcomes that matter to them.'
- 2. Empowering unpaid carers by:**
 - working with the social care sector (including local authorities) to kick-start a change in the services provided to support unpaid carers, with a commitment to invest up to £25 million, with the expectation that 'this funding will identify and test a range of new and existing interventions that support unpaid carers, which could include:
 - respite and breaks;
 - peer group and wellbeing support;
 - new ways to combine these to maximise their impact'
 - identifying, recognising and involving unpaid carers by 'look(ing) to increase the voluntary use of unpaid carer markers in NHS electronic health records by simplifying current approaches to data collection and registration' and by 'introduc(ing) a new marker indicating the presence of a contingency plan, where one is available, that describes the actions to take if the carer is no longer able to provide care.'

There is also a new obligation for ICBs and NHS England to involve carers when commissioning care for the person they care for.

3. Supporting the economic and social participation of unpaid carers

There is a recognition that ‘unpaid carers, as a group, are disproportionately impacted by loneliness compared with non-carers’. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is therefore working with NHS England and the Carers Partnership, formed of the Carers Trust and Carers UK, to produce a social prescribing summary document to be disseminated to local carers organisations, which is intended to upskill staff at carers organisations on social prescribing as an intervention for loneliness, and to increase unpaid carer health and wellbeing. The DHSC is working with these same organisations to evaluate good practice in social prescribing to reduce unpaid carer loneliness, as well as testing loneliness interventions among unpaid carers.

There is also a commitment to introduce the right to request flexible working and for eligible employees to be entitled to 5 days of unpaid leave a year, which will be available to take flexibly in individual or half days.



Appendix 4 -

The Development of Darlington's Commitment to Carers

Work commenced in May 2022 when members of the Carers Strategy Steering Group (CSSG) considered the ADASS Carers Leads key principles for developing a Carers' Strategy drawn up by the North East ADASS Carers Leads Regional Group. (Appendix 7) and the findings from the North East ADASS Regional Carers Survey (Appendix 5).

The Strategy is based on a combination of the Supporting Adult Carers NICE guideline (NG150), published on 22nd January 2022 and the previous headings from the national Carers Action Plan 2018 – 20 which were used in Darlington's previous Carers Action Plan for 2020 - 2022 (Appendices 8 and 9 respectively).

Following consideration of the findings from the Regional Survey, members of the CSSG decided to develop a follow up survey to be completed by carers in Darlington. This survey was in a much simpler format and asked carers to answer 4 key questions -

- What has been working well for you? / What makes you glad?
- What have been the challenges? / What makes you sad or mad?
- What needs to happen going forwards?
- Are you worried about anything?

The survey was available online and as paper copies, originally from 21st December 2022 to 28th February 2023 and then extended to 19th March 2023 to enable time for further responses. A total of 84 responses were received.

As part of the process, members of the CSSG encouraged completion of the survey by carers known to their organisations, including by in person attendance at the 2 carer support groups run by Darlington Carers Support and the Alzheimer's Society Singing for the Brain group. Paper copies were provided as required. The survey was also shared on social media.

Following completion of the survey, the findings were analysed by the Darlington Borough Council Commissioning Officer - Older People (Appendix 6) and taken to the CSSG and discussed. It was then agreed that the analysis produced would be taken by CSSG members to carers' groups for sense checking/ to obtain further feedback. The top three issues in each section of the survey identified by carers who attended a regular carers' support group meeting facilitated by Darlington Carers are also highlighted in Appendix 6 and actions (where possible) have been identified to address them in the Action Plan we have developed.

Parent Carers' views were sought via the main survey and sense checked with Parent Carers who access support through DAD's Children and Young People's Service. Not a lot of additional comments were made, and many were in agreement with what had been highlighted through the survey. The additional comments are included as Appendix 10.

A separate survey (based on the original survey) was developed for Young Carers and due to the low number of responses initially, an amended survey was issued through 1:1s. 11 surveys were completed with an age range of 8-14. 7 were sibling carers and 4 cared for a parent. Not all Young Carers answered all questions. There was also a group discussion which was attended by 2 young people. All responses have been combined (Appendix 11).

Young carers who attended the face-to-face session were also asked their views regarding some of the initial findings in original Carers Survey. Points from the findings that were the most relevant to Young Carers were selected by the service. The comments made (Appendix 11) need to be considered in the implementation of the relevant sections of the Action Plan. Eg in relation to identification of young carers and awareness raising regarding the support available.

CSSG meetings have taken place both online and in person throughout the development of the Darlington Commitment to Carers







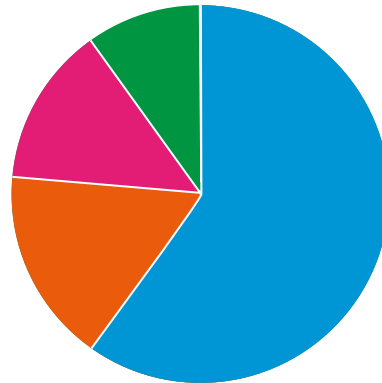
Appendix 5 -

ADASS NE Region Carers Survey Results Summary Information for Darlington

The survey was promoted by all 12 regional councils to carers and carer networks via email and a link provided to an on-line “survey monkey” for completion of survey. Hard copies were also available to carers who did not have access to digital modes. However, very few hard copies were completed.

A total of **1629** completed survey responses were received from across the region, with the highest returns as follows.

	Durham	822 (50.5%)
	Northumberland	228 (14%)
	Darlington	189 (11.6%)
	South Tyneside	136 (8.3%)



Key finding from this survey for Darlington

Include difficulties in accessing relevant information and advice, with **22.75%** of respondents not having received any information or advice.





44.4% of respondents had received information for a local carer support organization, **23.2%** from a social worker/OT at their local council and **22.75%** from their GP/surgery.

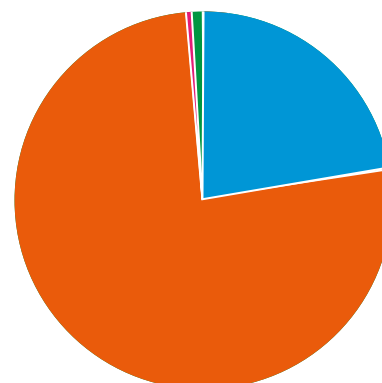
In answer to the question ‘**What needs to change in order to positively support you as a carer?**’, the 3 highest responses were -

- Being aware of what support could be available for the person I care for – **55%**
- Being aware of what support could be available for me – **54.5%**
- Time for me eg taking a break – **44%**

Detailed Darlington responses were as follows -

Gender

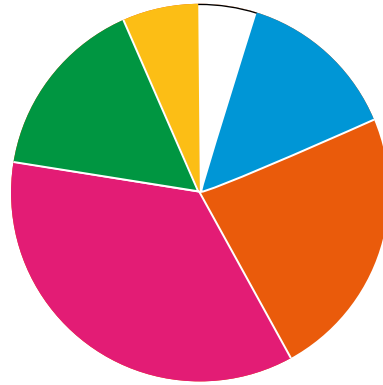
	Male	42 (22.2%)
	Female	144 (76.2%)
	Prefer not to say	1 (0.53%)
	Blanks	2 (1.06%)



Age Band of person completing the survey

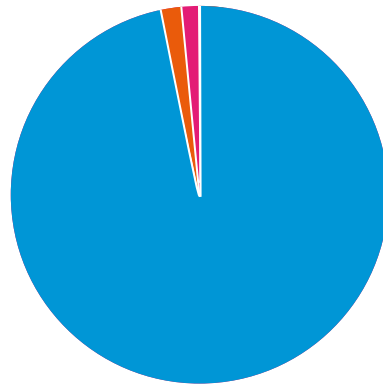
Age

Age	Number of carers
25 – 34	9 (4.8%)
35-44	26 (13.8%)
45 – 54	44 (23.3%)
55-64	68 (36%)
65 – 74	30 (15.9%)
75+	12 (6.3%)



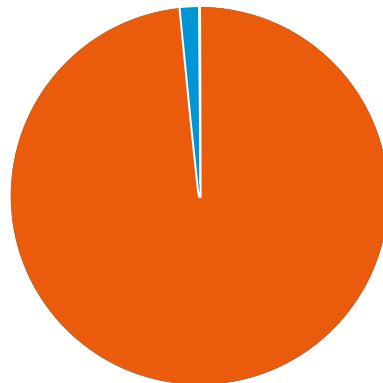
Ethnicity

White (includes any white background)	183 (96.8%)
Prefer not to say	3 (1.59%)
Asian or mixed	3 (1.59%)



Are you or have you previously been a member of the armed forces?

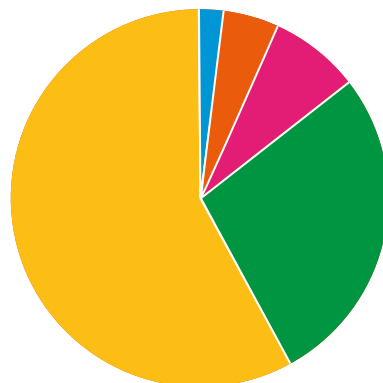
Yes	7 (3.7%)
No	182 (96.3%)



How long have you been a carer?

Number of years caring

Less than 6 months	4
6 months – 1 year	9
1-2 years	14
2-5 years	51
More than 5 years	111 (58.7%)



In general, since you became a carer where have you been able to access information about the support that is available to you as a carer?

Blue = the top 3 responses to each question

Answer Choice (highest number of responses first)	No. of Responses	% of Respondents
1. Local carers support organisation (e.g. charities, carers centres)	84	44.4%
2. From a social worker/ O.T. at your local council	44	23.2%
3. = I have not received any information or guidance regarding what support is available to me as a carer	43	22.75%
4. = My GP or surgery	43	22.75%
5. Friends	36	19%
6. National carer support organisation (e.g. Carers UK)	34	18%
7. Local authority website	28	14.8%
8. Family	27	14.28%
9. Other LA services	22	11.64%
10. Other local/national charity/support group	18	9.5%
11. Hospital/outpatients	16	8%
12. Community health services	14	7.4%
13. Online forums	14	7.4%
14. Community centres/libraries	5	2.64%
15. Neighbours	4	2.12%
16. Other	4	2.12%
17. Healthwatch	3	1.59%
18. College/university	0	

Carer satisfaction with the level of support received for themselves.

Highest levels of satisfaction

- local carer support organisation
- family
- friends

Lowest levels of satisfaction

- LA social worker/OT
- LA website
- GP or surgery (including receptionist)

Carer satisfaction with the level of support the person /people they care for have received.

Highest levels of satisfaction

- family
- friends
- GP or surgery (including receptionist)

Lowest levels of satisfaction

- LA social worker/OT
- GP or surgery (including receptionist)
- hospital or outpatients

Research tells us that timely information and support to carers is valuable in helping them maintain their caring role. To what extent do you agree or disagree that following types of support would benefit you?

Highest levels of agree

- knowing what my rights are as a carer
- easy access to information about the health needs of the person/people I care for
- the ability to talk to the same person/organisation about the needs of the person I care for

Lowest levels of disagree

- having a break from caring role longer than a few days
- having access to care agencies or people I could employ to help provide care in the home (e.g. personal care) or helping the person to maintain their interests or hobbies outside the home
- having a break from caring role overnight – a few days

Prior to Covid 19 I felt I was adequately supported to maintain my caring role?

Strongly agree	13 (6.9%)
Agree	53 (28%)
Neither agree nor disagree	49 (25.9%)
Disagree	38 (20%)
Strongly disagree	21 (11%)
Not applicable – wasn't a carer before	14 (7.4%)

Please provide any comments about how Covid 19 restrictions have affected your ability to access information?

Has not affected	120 (63.5%)
Has affected	58 (30.7%)
Blanks	11 (5.8%)

How have the following areas changed for you as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic?

Decreased

- level of support I receive from family supporting me as a carer;
- level of support from my GP
- the opportunities to have a break from my caring role

Increased

- worries about what would happen in an emergency and I could not care
- the number of hours of support I provide
- my need to obtain a break from caring role

Do you think the support received now by the person you care for helps you in your caring role?

No, I do not believe it gives me a good level of support/there is no support suitable for the person I care for	49 (25.9%)
N/A	47 (24.9%)
Yes, it gives me good level of support, but I'm unable to live the life I want to live	44 (23.3%)
No, it does not give me enough flexibility	22 (11.6%)
Yes, it gives me good level of support and allows me to live the life I want to live	21 (11.1%)
Blanks	6 (3.2%)

During the pandemic, many services have not been available face to face and only online or by phone, whether that's GPs, local authorities or carers organisations. Have you been able to adapt to this change?

No, I don't have the right equipment at home	(15) 7.98%
Yes, I can adapt to this change because I have the equipment (tablet, computer, mobile phone) and skills to do this	(115) 61.17%
Yes, I have the equipment (tablet, computer, mobile phone) but I'm not confident how to use it	(19) 10.11%
Yes, I have the equipment but I would prefer not to get support in this way (even if on occasion I have)	(38) 20.21%
Yes, I have the equipment, but no access to the internet at home	(1) 0.53%

In light of Covid 19 and the new ways of working that organisations have had to introduce, how comfortable do you feel with receiving support in the following way?

Respondents were comfortable to receive support via emails, text messages, telephone or face to face in a very small number. However, they were uncomfortable or would not access support via face to face in larger numbers or online forums/video.

What needs to change in order to positively support you as a carer?

Answer Choice (highest number of responses first)	No. of Responses	% of Respondents
1. Being aware of what support could be available for the person I care for	104	55%
2. Being aware of what support could be available for me	103	54.5%
3. Time for me eg taking a break (Survey – what would help carers to take a break?)	83	44%
4. Advice about how best to support the person I care for to live well	76	40%
5. Recognition of my role as a carer	75	39.7%
6. Increased access to info /advice person cared for	71	37.6%
7. Better support with emergency and contingency planning	71	37.6%
8. Opportunity to think about how the person I support could be supported	48	25.4%
9. Being able to talk to and gain support from other people	43	22.8%
10. Flexible support to enable me to be relatively spontaneous	30	15.9%
11. Opportunity to think about my caring role	27	14.3%
12. Support from employer	23	12.2%
13. No additional support needed/all is well	17	9%
14. Support into training or education	13	6.9%
15. Support into work	6	3.2%



Appendix 6 -

Darlington Carers Survey Analysis

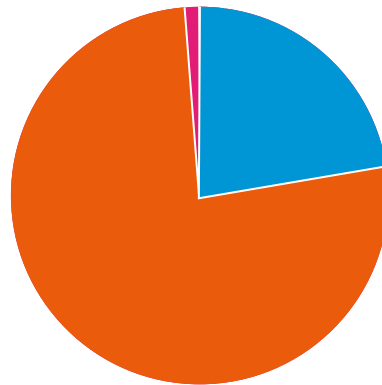
This was live from 21st December 2022 - 19th March 2023.

84 responses were received.

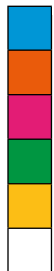
Gender



Male	19 (22.62%)
Female	64 (76.19%)
Other	1 (1.19%)

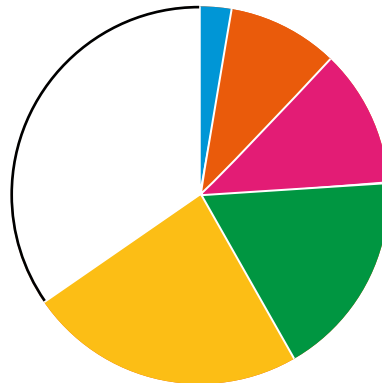


Age



Number of carers

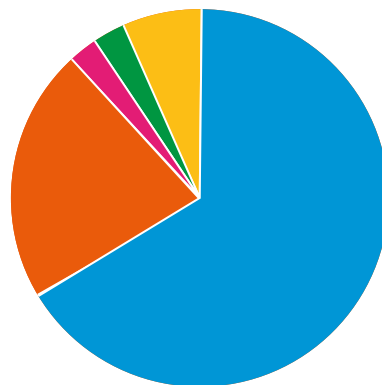
18 – 24	2
25 – 34	8
35 – 44	10
45 – 54	15
55 – 64	20
65 or over	29 (34.5%)



How many people cared for?



1	56 (66.66%)
2	18 (21.43%)
3	2 (2.38%)
More than 4	2 (2.38%)
Prefer not to say	6 (7.14%)



Person cared for

Virtually all (76) caring for a family member

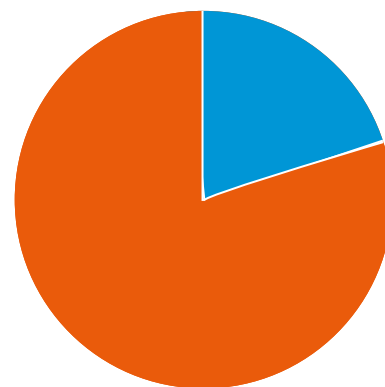
Support providers

- The majority of respondents received support from multiple providers
- The majority of those receiving support from a single provider were receiving support from Darlington Carers Support (15). In addition, 24 were receiving support from Darlington Carers Support + other provider(s) (39 in total – 46.42%)
- Not all respondents were receiving support from Darlington Carers Support

What has been working well for you? / What makes you glad?



Nothing/variations on a theme of this	20%
identified services that assisted – including Carers Support, health services (complex needs nurse, GP, dentist), Citizens Advice, Age UK, Parent Carer Forum, DASH, DAD, St Teresa's, Social Services, church, specialist organisations eg Parkinsons.	80%



What have been the challenges? / What makes you sad or mad?

- Left to own devices/feeling alone/trying to do everything on your own/unable to get anyone to listen in private.
- Not knowing what support is available/ chance if you find activities that help.
- Issues with hospital discharge
- Issues with housing
- **Issues with Adult Social Care/Social Services**
- Poor care workers
- **Financial issues/benefits**
- Balancing work and care
- Issues with person cared for – getting them to accept help for various reasons.
- Lack of continuity in care – mental health services
- **Issues with medical service eg GPs**
- Getting lost in the system – equipment not provided within a reasonable timeframe.
- Issues around disabled children/young people

What needs to happen going forwards?

- More understanding/recognition from professionals/the government. Lived experience. 'Unpaid carers need to be seen by government, local authority and community.'
- **More funding for social care and more provisions for carers to get some respite.**
- Support groups for those who work.
- 'Make sure they have a care package in place before they are sent home.'
- **Financial support/assistance**
- **'Darlington carers keep up the good work get out and about get known in the community.'**
- 'Carers allowance earnings limit needs to increase by at least double'.
- 'More services widely advertised and detail support offered.'
- More support and advice

Are you worried about anything?

- **What happens to the cared for if something happens to the carer/ the carer dies? 'If I am ill there is no one to look after him.'**
- Quality of care for the elderly – in the community and in care homes. Care workers not paid well enough. Lack of funding in MHSOP in Darlington
- **Financial worries – bills etc Cost of Adult Social Care**
- No sibling group.
- **How long can I continue to care?**
- 'Balancing looking after my mum while working full time and finding time for me'
'I'm burning myself out working and supporting my son.'
- What will my child have access to when he leaves Education?
- Life after being a carer.
- Not enough support
- My own health and mental wellbeing

It should be noted that comments in relation to Adult Social Care/ Social Services relate to both assessment/financial assessment by Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care and to broader social care support, including care providers



Appendix 7 -

Updating Carers' Strategies (NE ADASS Carers Leads Group, July 2021)

- 1. Leadership & Governance** – political and executive is key. Oversight of the strategy delivery should be built into key reporting structures eg Cabinet/Health & Well Being Boards (including Public Health involvement)
- 2. Health Commitment (engagement from all parts of health)**. If possible a single individual should be identified to represent the local system. (Health 'hooks'; GP Quality Marker, NICE Guidelines)
- 3. What's in a name** – Strategy/Action Plan/Commitment to Carers. A title can make it more accessible, but it needs to set out our commitments and what we will do
- 4. Co-production** – important to include carers and carer representative organisations and for them to be able to hold us to account for delivery
- 5. Strengths Based** – the strategy should mirror our overall position of pursuing strengths based approaches
- 6. Young People** – important that the strategy is all age, and involves young carers and parent carers
- 7. Recognition** – should be built in as a fundamental part of any strategy
- 8. Workforce** – needs to be considered and could reference broader workforce strategies and activity. Recognise carers in this respect especially in relation to accessing training.
- 9. Employment** – important to engage employers or employer representative organisations. The link to the Better Health at Work awards makes a useful connection to TUC and the NE Chamber of Commerce
- 10. Safeguarding** – recognising its importance and also how we support carers (who can be anxious about the topic)
- 11. Making it Real** – Crucial that there is a focus on practical activities that moves the strategy on to make a real difference to the lives of carers. (That will include the strategy document itself being easy to read).
- 12. Digital Options** – learning from how we worked through the Pandemic we should build on what worked well but not see digital as a replacement for personal connections rather how it complements approaches (a blended approach)

Appendix 8 -

Supporting Adult Carers NICE guideline (NG150) published on 22nd January 2022

- Information and support for carers – overarching principles
- Identifying carers
- Assessing carers' needs
- Helping carers to stay in, enter or return to work, education and training
- Social and community support for carers
- Training to provide care and support
- Psychological and emotional support for carers
- Support during changes to the caring role
- Support for carers during end of life care and after the person dies



Appendix 9 -

Previous national Carers Action Plan 2018 - 20 headings

1. Recognising and supporting Carers in the wider community and society
 - Identifying carers
 - Engaging and involving Carers (How will we meaningfully engage with carers?)
 - Working with Employers
 - Working with Health
 - BAME Groups, LGBT QI, GRT, Veterans
2. Services and systems that work for Carers
 - Carers Assessments
 - Carer Breaks
 - Peer Support
 - Training, advice and skills development
 - Psychological and emotional support
 - Safeguarding
 - Digital
 - End of Life Care
3. Employment and Financial Wellbeing
 - Work, education and training
 - The impact on finances following the pandemic
 - Benefits and Grant support
4. Supporting Young Carers
 - Darlington Young Carers Service to identify areas of development here
5. Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for Carers
 - NICE guidance (supporting adult Carers)
 - State of Caring survey
 - ADASS Carers Network- Local carers survey 2021
 - Darlington Healthwatch



Appendix 10 -

Additional comments from Parent Carers

- Changes in family dynamics
- Guilt - are we doing enough for him?
- Psychological stress from long term dependency
- Social stress when being out - isolation from close friends with 'normal' children
- Inability to participate in most social activities
- Lack of right community resources
- Feeling trapped no trained babysitter
- Difficulty in finding trained carers
- Sleep issues (not sure if this is the child or the carer, could equally be both)
- Food issues
- How long can grandparent continue to assist with care.
- Not being offered carer assessment alongside child assessment / difficulty getting carer assessment



Appendix 11 -

Feedback from Young Carers

What makes you glad about being a Young Carer in Darlington?

- I feel great and being a young carer helps me a lot
- Play with my sister and she smiles at me
- Helping with sister
- Trips
- That I can help my mam care
- Helping out
- See Young Carers worker 1:1
- Planet leisure, Trampolining and the bus journey there
- Outside getting to spend time together
- How I can get away from my brother and I can meet different people
- It is peaceful – away from sister
- It's fun and enjoyable
- It is fun

What makes you sad about being a Young Carer in Darlington?

- Sometimes when she doesn't act like others her age
- When she is poorly and I can't play with sister
- Nothing
- When sister goes in hospital
- Getting hurt by brother's words
- When he's crying
- I miss out on stuff because of him

What makes you mad about being a Young Carer in Darlington?

- Can be different to what it is like for others with brothers and sisters. They have a different relationship – it can be harder
- Don't know
- Nothing
- When I get shouted at
- When I stub my toe and have to put them (girls) to bed. Mam puts brother to bed
- Brother not always listening – gets frustrated
- When brother comes into my room without knocking
- Bigger range of activities

Does anything about being a Young Carer worry you?

- Don't Know
- In case I hurt my sister
- Nothing
- Nothing
- Not much
- No
- My brother's relationship with my mum
- Having to meet new people

What help do you think Young Carers and their family need in the future?

- More help to know how to handle it
- Don't know
- Nothing – what we have is enough
- Help because I can't care for my mum all my life
- To talk to the person (cared for) to see what support they need as this could then help carer
- They might need more help with money and the price rise

Young carers were also asked their views regarding some of the initial findings in the original Carers Survey. This was discussed during the face to face session and points from the findings that were the most relevant to Young Carers were selected by the service.

Getting services "known" in the community – how can we promote?

- Through word of mouth from other young carers
- Tell others you get to go on fun trips
- Make a leaflet – put in town centre and popular shops
- Parks
- TV
- Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Snapchat and TikTok
- Promote what helps Young Carers – trips etc
- Assemblies – primary and secondary and other awareness raising

Getting Help for cared for person

- Other carers
- Parents
- Tell a friend you trust

Knowing where to go/Who to ask for help

- Don't know where/how
- Not a lot of knowledge
- Awareness raising
- Tell Head of Year/School/Parents

What would happen to cared for person if main carer could not be there?

- The young people present did not express any worries about this

Sibling Support Groups

- Yes – go out and do stuff
- Education on certain subjects e.g. anger
- Coping with siblings behaviours

My own health/wellbeing – risk of “burn out”

- Yes – stress at school with work
- Something that really upsets them – behaviour from siblings
- At home – having to try and look out for siblings not listening e.g. being told to “shut up”
- Family life more difficult when someone has needs

Other considerations in relation to the survey undertaken

- When talking with the Young Carers, they seemed to consider their individual situation and not that of Young Carers as a whole group.
- Some vary in the amount of caring that they do, so may not think about caring all the time.
- Some seem to feel that coming to the service makes them a young carer, not that they come to service because they are already a young carer. Some answers therefore refer to the service being received and not the home situation.
- There can sometimes be some blurred lines with the understanding of who their caring role is for e.g. helping with brothers and sisters some can think that this is who they care for when in fact they are doing it to help a parent.
- It does not seem that they relate any issues around caring to living in Darlington specifically.





Darlington's
Commitment
to Carers