



Health and Social Care: Unpaid Carers Report 2025/26

1. Our Vision

Adult Carers: *To identify and recognise unpaid carers for the vital contribution they make to the community and the people they care for, and in doing so enable unpaid carers to have a life alongside caring.*



Young Carers: *Young carers are really important to us, to the communities where they live and to the people they care for. We want to make sure that they are recognised and supported if they care for someone, so that we can help them and the person they care for, and make sure they have time to do things for themselves.*



2. Introduction:

An Unpaid Carer is someone who provides unpaid care to an adult or disabled child. The cared for person may be a family member or a friend, who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem, or an addiction, cannot manage without their support.

An unpaid carer could be a husband caring for his wife, a parent caring for their child who has care and support needs, or a child caring for their parent. The care unpaid carers provide ranges from providing practical help, to personal care, and to supporting emotional and mental wellbeing.



Both the aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Cost of Living crisis continue to have significant consequences for unpaid carers. Efforts continue to be made at local, regional, and national levels to provide vital support to them.

Unpaid carers are a valued asset within our communities and without their continued support for those who are vulnerable and requiring assistance, our own health and social care services would be unable to cope.

How well are we supporting unpaid carers in the Vale ?

Here are some of the activities and actions taken that aim to support the continued improvement in our services locally. These activities and actions are also meeting many of the improvements advocated within national level investigations carried out by the Senedd, Carers Wales, the Public Services Ombudsman (Cymru) and Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (on behalf of Welsh Government).

3. Vale of Glamorgan Carers Services

The year 2025/26 and to date, has seen continued development of carers services and support in the Vale. The pathways and service delivery models for both adults and young people have become embedded to ensure timely and appropriate responses are made to unpaid carers, whether they are seeking assistance themselves or are identified by us as requiring support and offered help.



Provision of Information, Advice, Assistance and Carer Needs Assessments

Carers' Information

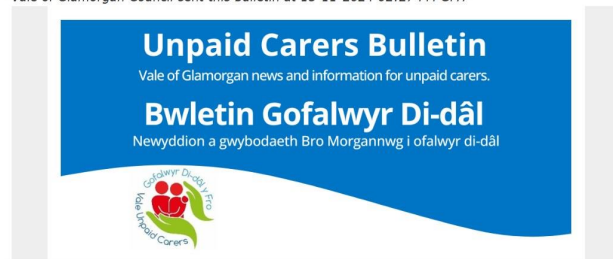
It is acknowledged that the provision of appropriate information delivered at the right time, is essential to support unpaid carers to maintain their care giving role, to enable them to manage their own wellbeing, and have a life alongside caring. These principles are enshrined in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014.

The ways in which we deliver information for unpaid carers is purposely varied, and takes many formats. Carers are not a homogeneous group. Their need for information and how they access it, as well as digital skills, will vary widely.



Carers' Rights Day 24 / Diwrnod Hawliau Gofalwyr 24

Vale of Glamorgan Council sent this bulletin at 15-11-2024 02:27 PM GMT



[Carers Bulletins](#) and mailings are being delivered frequently utilising the Gov Delivery email marketing platform for the public sector, as well as via traditional postal services for hard copies (twice a year). This year we have created and shared 45 e bulletins, that's almost one a week, and two extended hard copy editions. This enables us to respond to information that comes to our attention and will be of interest to unpaid carers and those who work with them, as well as acting as a marketing tool for our own initiatives and information. There are currently **440 unpaid carers on our mailing list** (up from 339) along with **200 professionals and service providers**. Mailings are also shared internally with staff, both for their own benefit and for those they may be supporting in their roles.

Information is shared through the corporate **social media channels**, reaching an audience far wider than known unpaid carers in the Vale. We have used this channel for promoting events such as Young Carers Action Day in March, Carers Week in June and Carers Rights Day in November each year.

Our Carers Week 2025 messaging attracted 6,614 views and 25 interactions (Likes, saves, comments), Young Carers Action Day resulted in 2311 views, with 6 interactions.

Working with colleagues in the Communications Team, we have an agreed programme of activity for the year ahead.



Our universal offer of information to support unpaid carers includes **training courses**.

Unpaid carers may attend a training course specifically designed for them, facilitated between Carers Services and the Social Care Workforce Development Team (**3 courses and 24 carers** attending Manual Handling or First Aid in 2025/26) or attend an Introduction to Complementary Therapy to assist them with managing their wellbeing (**107 referrals** made in 2025/26).

We have reviewed and developed the information freely available on the **Carers Services pages** on the [Council website](#) to signpost carers to appropriate information and support, from both internal and external services. 6218 hits were made to our carers pages in 2025/26.

Using this, people can choose to source support themselves, if this is their preference, or find out about how to access help and support.

Dewis Cymru is embraced as a means of directing and helping unpaid carers identify community based information..

A search for 'Carers' within the [Dewis Cymru resource](#) database will currently reveal 405 potential services or support. The Carers Services Team actively encourage organisations to publish their information on this community portal, as well as directly sharing information with Dewis Cymru staff on services and events they become aware of.



The [Vale Unpaid Carers Hub](#) (provided by TuVida) - is a one stop shop delivering information and advice to unpaid carers in the community, via telephone, email, and outreach (face to face). Carers are referred to them from statutory services or they can self-refer.

In the year April 2025 to March 2026, the Hub have received **364 referrals** and had **2939 contacts** with unpaid carers. It helps unpaid carers access information and advice about services which will support them in their caring role through a centralised helpline and email enquiry line and face to face support via drop-in sessions in community locations, so unpaid carers are able to receive information and advice closer to home.

The Hub is funded by Cardiff and Vale Partnership Board, and works closely with our Carers Services Team.



There are a range of ways in which unpaid carers receive information and advice from the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Not all can be recorded and/or quantified, as much of our contact involves unpaid carers, and unpaid carers will have interactions with a multitude of professionals.

Information provision is integral to the assessing, planning and delivery of services and support to those who need it.

Assessment and Statutory support

Unpaid Carers are often signposted to and/or identified at, the first points of contact for Adult Services and Children and Young Peoples Services.

A **‘What Matters’ conversation**, is provided through the Wellbeing Matters Service (for adults) or the Families First Advice Line (for young carers and parent carers). This will determine if there are any identified needs resulting from providing care for the unpaid carer, either alongside those of the person being cared for or for the Unpaid Carer specifically.

If the conclusion is that the unpaid carer’s needs can be met through the provision of information, advice, or assistance:

For adults - a referral is made to the Vale Unpaid Carers Hub.

For young carers and parent carers – a referral is made to the Families First Advice Line.

A Carers Needs Assessment will look at the individual situation of the unpaid carer and consider what may make their role more sustainable, and identify any obstacles getting in the way of them being able to maintain their wellbeing and/or have a life of their own. Working with the unpaid carer, the assessor will facilitate a discussion and reach agreement on how the desired improvements to their situation can be achieved. This may be in the form of signposting, assisting with accessing services or support, or by social services directly providing that help and support. An Assessment may result in all or some of these actions being taken. An assessment is always individual to the needs of the unpaid carer.

For adults, young carers, and parent carers- Where there are needs that cannot be supported with information, advice and assistance alone and a more comprehensive assessment required, the assessment will progress to a dedicated carers social care officer.

The officer allocated to undertake the assessment will be determined by the circumstances of the cared for person in relation to any statutory care already provided or the illness or disability of the person being cared for.

Adferiad is one of the third sector organisations we fund to provide support to unpaid carers, and their regular gatherings are part of the arrangement. Carers are referred to Adferiad as a result of a carers needs assessment.

Here is some feedback from an unpaid carer introduced to the organisation:

“I am a relatively newcomer to our monthly groups but would like to say how I find our meet ups invaluable. Knowing other people are going through the same difficulties helps to know you are

not alone on this journey. People in the group have become friends and it really helps to talk to them and just offload when necessary. Our organised events are a release from day-to-day life, a chance to enjoy myself and I come back with a more positive mindset which can only help with my caring duties."



Parent Carers and Young Carers



Parent carers and young carers are supported by a dedicated Social Care Officer (unpaid carers) post, based with the [Families First Advice Line](#). We now have a firmly established single referral pathway for information and support for the parents of children with a disability, and young people who carry out the role of an unpaid carer.

The new Vale Family Compass provides a range of information, advice, support and protection for children, young people, their parents, carers and families. This change to the front door access to services for children and families, encompasses the Vale Families First Advice Line which continues to help us respond to the growing number of requests for parent carer assessments in particular, facilitating improved cooperation and collaboration with partner agencies and stakeholders.



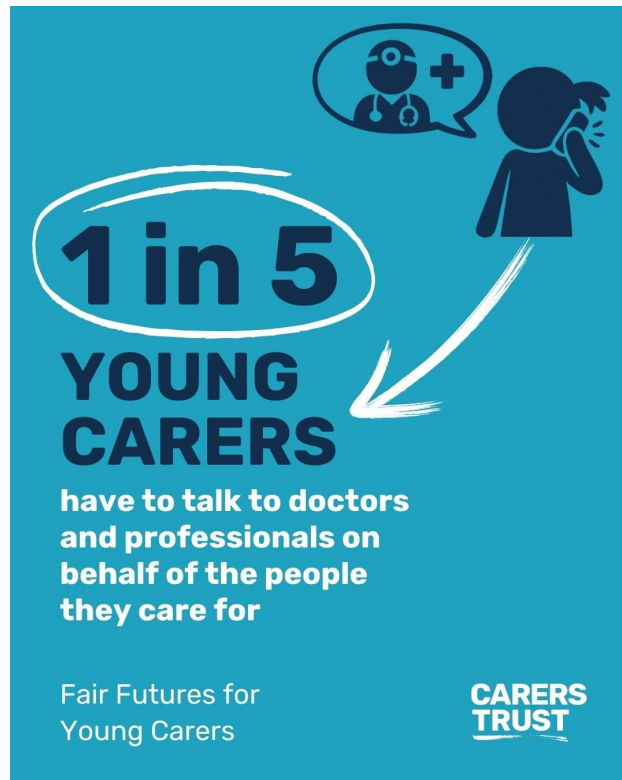
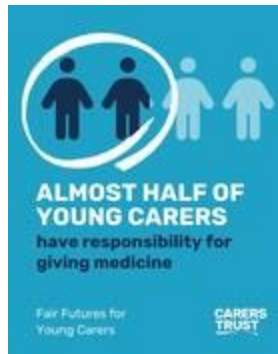
Not all referrals into the service result in a full comprehensive assessment, but all young carers and parent carers will receive information and advice that supports them in their caring roles. For some, this provision provides valuable sources of support and information.

During the last year, the Unpaid Carers electronic resource was made available to share with Parent Carers requesting an assessment. The aim of the resource is to meet the needs of Parent Carers through relevant information and advice and minimise the number of those needing to access a full Carers Needs assessment. The resource has been shared with 198 parents who were requesting a Parent Carer Assessment.

Sharing of the Unpaid Carers Padlet will continue to be monitored to ensure it is relevant to meet the needs of Parent Carers.

In Q1 2025-26, a Young Carer Unpaid Carers Padlet resource was made available to share with Young Carers where an assessment had been requested. In the year the Padlet was shared with 32 Young Carers.







Parent Carer Case Study.

Background

Contact received from Team Around the Family. The FFAL advisor completed initial wellbeing assessment to identify strengths and needs of the family and a Referral made for Parent Carer assessment.. TheParent is a carer for 3 young sons, who have a variety of ALN and physical health issues, including type 1 diabetes, ASD and ADHD. She also provides some care for her mother. There is no family support and no time for herself

Intervention

Outcome star evaluation tool completed, and action plan produced.. The Outcome star identified the following: Financial issues, wellbeing support, challenging behaviour, self care and time for herself. So, information was provided on mental wellbeing and self care, on managing challenging behavior, and available benefits. Support was given with filling out benefit forms due to dyslexia and an Application for funding for gym membership to allow time off from caring role and to improve both wellbeing and health. Carr was advised to speak to their GP about support for health and wellbeing. Information provided about local food bank.

Outcome

Knowledge and techniques gained to help deal with challenging behaviour. All eligible benefits applied for. Food bank access to reduce financial strain on family. Better involvement and support from family GP. Information on mental wellbeing and self care to promote improved quality of life. Funding for gym membership approved, which will allow time off from caring role, as well as improving mental and physical wellbeing.



Record Keeping and Data Collection



1 - Support for Unpaid Carers

Where Unpaid Carers are supported directly as a result of receiving information, advice , assistance , or a comprehensive statutory carers needs assessment, the record keeping is relatively straight forward and enables the outputs and performance of carers services to be managed and monitored.

Practice guidance and refresher training is available to help practitioners become confident and familiar with the recording processes, and emphasis is being put on recording all the support provided, not just where costed (internal or external) support is provided. Some unpaid carers also require ongoing support through maintaining regular contact with a carer's officer, to help them through a particular situation or to enable changes or opportunities to be implemented.

We also recognise that much of the support given to unpaid carers is actually delivered directly to the cared for person, especially when in the form of respite or domiciliary care. It is vitally

important to record and monitor the care and support delivered to our citizens, but we must also recognise the mutual (and sometimes primary) support this affords the unpaid carer(s). This matter is under discussion and identified as a high level need for a solution within the new record management system to be introduced in social services in the coming year. In the meantime we are looking in to any solutions that may capture this information in other ways.

While there is no requirement to keep a register of known unpaid carers, the ability to report on the number we recognise and/or support is often queried. Although keeping such information up to date is problematic, due to the 'informal' nature of caring role, the fact that they can be short term, intermittent or long lived, and unpaid care often goes unrecognised by both professionals and families themselves, we are making efforts to flag unpaid carer roles on our existing record management system and to keep this up to date. There are currently **965 unpaid carers** active on our system (30 young carers and 935 Adults). This is an increase from the 919 unpaid carers recorded in the previous year.

These improvements to record keeping will result in better data collection and management over time, as practice and process evolves.

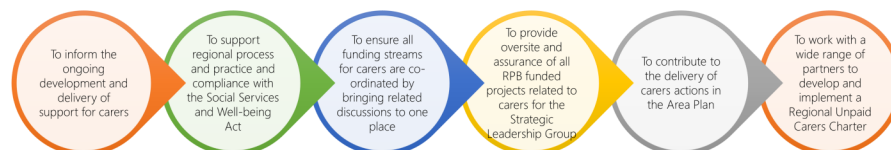
During 2025/26, **397 unpaid carers** have received a proportionate assessment (89 young carers, 62 Parent Carers, 246 Adult Carers). This is an overall increase from 249 in the year previous.

5. Collaboration and Scrutiny

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Board



The **Unpaid Carers Board**, established under the auspices of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board, has met regularly during 2025/6. Their purpose is:



Key Priorities and delivery aims for 2025-256 included:

Information and Advice - *Embed new models for a Carers information and advice*

- Develop resources to signpost carers for mental health and wellbeing support.

Carer Friendly *- Increase training and awareness of unpaid carers within health and social care.*

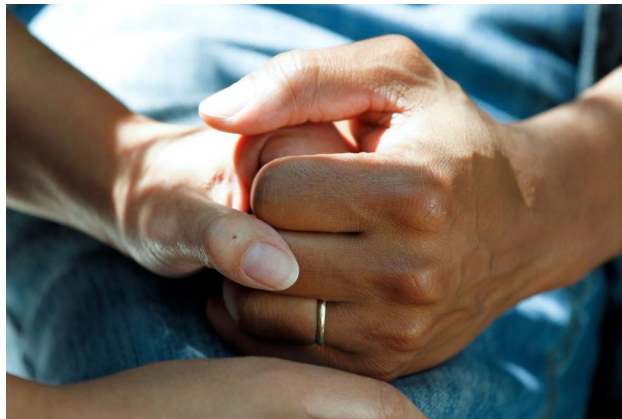
- Support the Unpaid Carers Assembly and wider engagement activities

Respite/Short Breaks *- Commission the 3rd sector to provide short breaks for unpaid carers*

Young Carers *- Evaluate and develop the existing model of young carers support (including support and training for schools)*

Partnership Collaboration - improve links across other RPB programmes

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Charter



The [Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Charter](#), contains the pledges of commitment of partners across the region, including NHS, local authorities, voluntary and 3rd sector organisations, to support unpaid carers. The Charter has been actively promoted in the Vale. It is published on the Corporate Website, shared via social media and unpaid carers bulletins produced by the Team for both staff and unpaid carers. its commitments are reflected in the Service and Team Plan actions.

Cardiff and Vale Carer Assembly



The third **Cardiff and Vale Carer Assembly**, took place in October 2025. The event was co-produced by the Cardiff and Vale Partnership Board, Carers Adfocad and unpaid carers.

Unpaid carers were invited to come along and meet the local organisations who provide services and support, and take up the opportunity to connect, share experiences, and build a support network with other carers.

Presentations were delivered by a range of organisations supporting carers, facilitating the unpaid carers voice to be heard. The event was live-streamed to improve accessibility.

The event was free to attend and included lunch and refreshments.

Carer Friendly



[Carer Friendly](#) (funded by Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership) aims to improve, share and recognise support for unpaid carers in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Carers Services Team are actively promoting the scheme to colleagues throughout social services and have undertaken the accreditation process themselves (awarded in April 2026). The Vale Family Information Services completed the Commitment stage successfully last year.

Carer Friendly has been designed in collaboration with carers, to improve and increase access to information and support for people who care for someone. They work with local services to provide them with the tools, training and support to establish good practice and to celebrate the great work they do to support carers.

TuVida provides Carer Friendly training and workshops to services, professionals and organisations working in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

In 2025/26 two Vale organisations achieved Carer Friendly status (one at Advanced) , while 12 are currently working towards it.

The [Young Carers in School Programme](#) is a version of Carer Friendly which is specifically designed for schools. The Young Carers in Schools Programme has 3 stages which supports schools to develop a whole school approach when supporting the needs of young carers.

Last year three Vale Schools achieved the Basics Award, while one achieved Best Practice. The Awards are required to be resubmitted periodically to ensure the standards within the programme are maintained.

Unpaid Carers Respite/Short Breaks



Amser, Welsh for 'time', is the grant fund for third sector organisations delivering personalised, flexible, and creative short breaks to unpaid carers in Wales.

Funded by Welsh Government, Amser is part of the Short Breaks Scheme for unpaid carers which enabled 50,000 short breaks up to 2025, exceeding its target of 30,000. It has subsequently been announced that funding will continue until 2029.

Information about organisations offering breaks and the types of breaks available are listed on the Carers Trust [website](#).

The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership received funding from this initiative directly, which enabled them to make available a grant scheme to 3rd sector providers locally to deliver services to unpaid carers. In partnership with C3SC **the Unpaid Carers Short Breaks Small Grants Programme** aimed to support voluntary sector groups who could meaningfully reach a wide number of unpaid carers. The primary aim of the small grants is to:

- increase the availability and access for short breaks for unpaid carers
- provide the option to personalise the type, time and content/focus the breaks take
- target unpaid carers who need this the most
- build resilience and sustain the carers caring relationships

Regional Young Carers Task Group



The Regional Young Carer Task Group continue to be actively involved in promoting the Regional Charter and engaged in a joint programme of promotion and publicity to mark Young Carers Action Day in March 2026.

The aim of the annual Action Day campaign is to improve the lives and outcomes for young carers and identify any hidden young carers in our schools.

This group enables information sharing and collaboration between the statutory and the 3rd sector organisations who support young carers.

On Saturday March 22nd, 130 young carers from across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan enjoyed a day of activities and entertainment provided for them by Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council and the YMCA Vale Young Carers.

Supported by staff and volunteers from all three organisations, this Celebration Day was intended to recognise the valuable contribution these special young people make to the lives of their family members, give them some time out from their responsibilities, and have some fun.

The Celebration for 2025/26 was delayed until April 2026, due to logistics, and 163 Young Carers were entertained at St Cyres School. We'll report in our next Annual Report on how well this went.



There have been a number of reviews and investigations conducted at an All Wales level to assess the implementation and impact of the improved rights of unpaid carers under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, which continue to influence or development and improvements in service delivery and impact for unpaid carers.

We have responded to these findings and recommendations by implementing an action plan to deliver changes and improvements. A number of resources have been developed to assist practitioners with carrying out carers needs assessments and to highlight good practice. Promotion of unpaid carers and schemes such as Carer Friendly form part of the Action plan which has been completed in the main, with some work continuing.

Public Services Ombudsman Wales



The evidence gathered during an [Own Initiative Investigation](#) of four local authorities has enabled the **Public Services Ombudsman** to draw conclusions and make recommendations aimed to drive improvements in public services that provide support to carers. The report invited the 18 authorities that were not investigated, which includes the Vale of Glamorgan, to consider the recommendations made to the Investigated Authorities and to take forward any learning points that would improve their own service provision. The report also invites these authorities to review the findings of the report at an all-Wales level to discuss and plan for the improvement of carers' needs assessments across Wales.

The Investigation sought to examine:

- a) Whether the local authorities being investigated are meeting their statutory duties under the SSWB Act and its Code of Practice and The Care and Support (Assessment)(Wales) Regulations 2015
- b) Whether those entitled to a carer's needs assessment are made aware and understand their right to request a carer's needs assessment
- c) Where carers' needs assessments are commissioned, whether those assessment services are being delivered appropriately and whether local authorities appropriately monitor the contracting arrangements.
- d) Whether carers' needs assessments, including those completed by commissioned service providers, are undertaken in accordance with the SSWB Act.

Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSSC)



ADSS Cymru

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru
Leading Social Services in Wales

Welsh Government commissioned the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSSC) to undertake a rapid review of the rights of unpaid carers. This [report](#), published in November 2023, identified significant areas for improvement with regards to the carers needs assessment process.

The Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan, asked the Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers (MAG) to develop and deliver an action plan to address the issues identified in the ADSSC report. A Task and Finish Group was established in January 2024 comprising of senior health board and local authority representatives, unpaid carers and unpaid carer organisations, academics and Welsh Government officials.

This workstream was designed to identify and promote national best practice in the provision of information, advice and assistance to unpaid carers and carers' needs assessments. A representative from the Vale Social services was put forward as a member of this task group.

The Task Group undertook a series of actions to obtain more detailed information from local authorities and unpaid carers on current approaches and good practice, along with proposals on how improvements in practice could be supported.

A set of recommendations presented to ADSSC for consideration were approved. This work has explored current practice in relation to unpaid carers needs assessments across Wales, identifying both strengths and areas where greater consistency, confidence and support for practitioners can be developed. The report brings together the findings from the project and sets out suggestions for improvement across seven prioritised topics, alongside overarching conclusions and wider recommendations. [You can read more about this work here :](#)

Carers UK



Carers UK, in their annual report : [State of Caring in Wales 2025 - The cost of caring and the impact of caring across carer' lives](#) state that :

The Financial costs

- More than half of carers (52%) are say they are cutting back on essentials like food and heat. This is a 53% increase from 2023 where 34% of carers were making these cuts.

- More than 1 in 3 (36%) carers have taken out a loan from the bank, used credit cards, or used a bank account overdraft because of caring - a 33% increase on our findings in 2024.
- 42% of carers are struggling to afford the costs directly relating to caring.
- 2 in 3 (66%) of carers say they haven't been able to focus on their career as much as a result of caring and nearly 3 in 10 (29%) of carers who are employed have reduced their working hours because of care
- More than half (51 %) of carers are worried about living costs and whether they can manage in the future.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of carers said they are regularly spending their own money on caring costs. Over a quarter (27%) are spending over £100 a month.

The Report also describes *The Human costs* of providing care, such as - 'Around 4 in 10 carers (39%) say their mental health is bad or very bad as a result of their caring role'.

No one service or action can alleviate the struggles of all unpaid carers. Each care- giving situation will be unique and present its own challenges.

However, by continuing to raise awareness, ensuring the promotion and understanding of unpaid carers issues, as well as delivering information, services, and support aimed at improving the lives and experiences of unpaid carers, we can all make a difference.

