

Suffolk All Age Carers' Strategy 2022-2027

Find out about Suffolk's Strategy to support carers and how you can make a difference.

Improving the lives of carers and those they care for

The Suffolk All Age Carers Strategy 2022-2027 was launched at the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board on Thursday 17 November 2022.

Background

It is likely many of us will be young carers or adult carers for loved ones at some point in our lives, and this can happen unexpectedly. It may be that you have been a carer and may be a carer again in the future.

Carers UK estimated 4.5 million people became carers in 2020 due to the pandemic, finding themselves in positions of financial hardship, reducing or stopping work, deterioration in their health, school pressure, breakdown in relationships or isolation.

The 2011 census reports that there were 77,745 people who identified themselves as carers in Suffolk. Suffolk Family Carers estimate that there are now 98,000 carers in Suffolk (2022), there are many more people who likely do not identify themselves as carers.

Carers tell us that caring can be challenging but also very rewarding, and that carers need to be celebrated. We agree, and we know that all carers are unique - there is no such person as a typical carer. You may be looking after a family member, friend, a child, parent, sibling, neighbour, or a combination of loved ones.

You are essential in supporting the health and social care system but more than that: you matter, and your needs also deserve to be met.

It was recognised that carers of all ages must have a voice in the development of the strategy and action plan.

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed and published in March 2022, designed to ensure that a policy or service does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people and that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or mitigated.

Co-producing the strategy

Between February 2022 and May 2022, 54 young carers and 28 adult carers were involved in the development of this strategy. More carers were contacted through groups, surveys and further co-production.

From the data gathered and working with the consultation team, carers voices were heard and the priorities developed. A consultation then ran for 8 weeks, from 20 June 2022 – 15 August 2022.

The outcomes and action pillars

We worked with young and adult carers to identify these five action pillars:

1. Early identification of carers
2. Improved information and advice

3. Young carers to have the same priority as adult carers
4. Systems and services that work for and support all carers
5. Improved health and wellbeing for carers

The action plan

The action plan setting out the tasks, resources, responsibilities and timelines requires to deliver the strategy is in operation. This is a living document that drives the actions which will make a difference for carers across Suffolk.

Action pillar leads are in place and quick wins have been identified for each pillar. We are continuing to deliver carers' awareness by organising events in the community to address early identification of carers. Work is underway to recognise 'Caring Companies' for improved information and advice. We are establishing better links with health to raise further awareness among young carers to help ensure that young carers have the same priority as adult carers. Community engagement events are helping to ensure that systems and services work and support all carers include communication engagement events. Finally, a carer focused working group has been formed to address improved health and wellbeing for carers. 6 monthly reports will be provided to the Family Carers Partnership Board and Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board.