

Torbay Carers' Strategy

2024 - 2027

**An Inter-agency Commitment to meet
the needs of Torbay's Carers,
including Young Carers.**

Content	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. National Context	3
3. Local Context	4
4. Review of 2018-21 Carers' Strategy	5
5. Formulation of Priorities	8
6. Priorities	8
7. Commitment to Carers Partners	9
8. High level priorities of Action Plan	10

1. Introduction

Who is a Carer?

A Carer is anyone, including a child, who provides care to another person. This excludes people who do it as paid work, voluntary work, or ordinary parenting. It includes caring for a partner, relative, friend or neighbour, if they have a physical, sensory, or learning disability, mental health or drug/alcohol issues, frailty, illness, long-term health condition and/or vulnerability which means that they cannot manage alone in the community.

Sometimes people are 'mutual carers' - they support each other. Often everything works well until one person's health deteriorates or their situation changes.

Two out of three of us (65%) will be a Carer at some time in our life. Many people do not realise that they are considered to be a Carer, or that there is a wide range of support available to them. Torbay Carers' Strategy helps us to address this issue.

Why have a Carers' Strategy?

Torbay has had an inter-agency strategy (plan) for Carers since 2000 and it is updated every three years. Torbay's Carers are consulted to find out what their priorities are, and these are worked into the Carers' Strategy alongside national and regional priorities. The main agencies who come into contact with Carers then work together to create an action plan to achieve these priorities.

Having an inter-agency Strategy and Action Plan helps partners work together in a joined-up way, to achieve what Carers really need. Representatives of Carers and of the various agencies meet quarterly to ensure that the Strategy Action Plan remains on track. The updates are published on-line.¹

2. National Context

In the 24 years since our first Strategy was published, awareness about Carers, especially Young Carers has increased significantly. In 2014, the Care Act and Children and Families Act made the health and wellbeing of Carers a priority by law.

In 2019, the NHS published a Long-Term Plan with the following priorities for Carers.

1. GP Quality Markers for Carers
2. Identify and Support for Carers from Vulnerable Communities
3. Adoption of Carers' Passports
4. Information sharing
5. Contingency Planning
6. Supporting Young Carers

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) published guidelines for support to Carers of Adults in 2020 and launched Quality Standards in March 2021². These will be built into the Strategy action plan.

¹ <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/carers-service/strategy-policy-and-quality/> .

² [Overview | Supporting adult carers | Quality standards | NICE](#)

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced an obligation for Carers to be involved in hospital discharge planning and for the NHS to consult with Carers. Carers UK undertakes annual surveys of Carers. Their 2023 survey shows that Carers' health and wellbeing is deteriorating, their employment is significantly affected by caring, and the cost of living is also having an adverse effect. *'It highlights how people caring round the clock for older, disabled or seriously ill relatives do not have adequate support from statutory services that are in place to help them – leaving many steeped in thoughts of hopelessness, fear, and dread, and urgently in need of support'*³.

3. Local Context

In the 2021 Census, approximately 15,000 people in Torbay identified themselves as Carers. However, we know that many people do not see themselves as Carers, or do not identify their children as having a caring role in the family. Actual numbers are likely to be much higher and this is backed up by the 2023 GP survey⁴. Torbay has a very high level of Carers providing more than 50 hrs care per week – 6th highest Local Authority out of 317 in England according to the 2021 census.

In 2018, Carers' Leads and Carers developed a Devon-wide Commitment to Carers. It was based on NHSE's 2014 Commitment to Carers and the Triangle of Care (treating Carers as expert partners in care). The seven principles are:

- 1: Identifying Carers and supporting them
- 2: Effective Support for Carers
- 3: Enabling Carers to make informed choices about their caring role
- 4: Staff awareness
- 5: Information-sharing
- 6: Respecting Carers as expert partners in care
- 7: Supporting Carers whose roles are changing or who are more vulnerable

Devon's main health and care organisations signed up to these principles in October 2019. Many have subsequently undertaken self-assessments and action plans to help them to achieve these priorities.⁵ Every year, their top three priority actions are added to the Action Plan for the Carers' Strategy and reported quarterly.

Carers is a cross-cutting Area in Torbay's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026.⁶

In 2023-24, other strategies were launched that impact upon Torbay's Carers:

- Torbay Adult Social Care Strategy,⁷

³ [State of Caring survey | Carers UK](#)

⁴ [National GP patient survey 2023](#)

⁵ [Carers - One Devon](#)

⁶ [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 - Torbay Council](#)

⁷ [Adult social care - Torbay Council](#)

- Torbay's Learning Disability Big Plan⁸
- Torbay SEND Strategy⁹
- Devon Partnership Trust's Carers' Strategy¹⁰.

The Carers' Strategy Action Plan will include actions relating to all the above.

4. Review of Torbay Carers' Strategy 2021-2024¹¹

Despite Covid impacting Carer Support in 2021-22, almost all the **169** targets within the 2021-24 strategy were achieved. That huge success is testament to the dedication and hard work of all parties but particularly Torbay Carers' Services in keeping actions on track. The main summary is below, and final progress will be published on-line in May 2024¹².

Identification of Carers – (29 targets, 28 met)

- All Torbay's main health and care organisations other than SW Ambulance Service signed a Commitment to Carers (C2C), and most report quarterly on their priorities. Citizens Advice Torbay also signed a C2C whilst Samaritans and Fire Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding.
- All Torbay's GP practices completed their Carers' Quality Markers, and achieved their Carer identification target, some reaching the stretch target of 7% of patient list. However, Carers still report that doctor's surgeries are the main place where they could have been identified sooner.
- Torbay Hospital is re-promoting the Triangle of Care, improving identification and involvement of Carers. This started in the Emergency Department and is being rolled out across the Hospital.
- Work has been undertaken to improve identification of Carers from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a community link worker is being piloted to further improve this.
- Awareness campaigns have been undertaken with a wide range of organisations.
- Torbay Carers' Services now runs an annual event for Carers' Rights Day with Paignton Library's Christmas Fayre in order to raise public awareness. It provides information, advice, and support for Carers with a huge range of partners.

Information, Advice and Support (59 targets, 51 met, Carers' Information Booklet delayed, 6 partially achieved, 1 not achieved – Performance in Top Quartile – Carers find information easily)

- We have maintained most existing Carers' Information and Support Services, and those that have been used have been generally well-rated by Carers. Signposts information Service and Signposts Newsletter were the most positively

⁸ Big Plan - Torbay Council

⁹ Torbay SEND strategy 2023 - Torbay Council

¹⁰ Introducing the Carers Strategy 2024 - 2027 | DPT

¹¹ <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/uploads/torbay-carers-strategy-2021-2024.pdf>

¹² <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/carers-service/strategy-policy-and-quality/>.

reviewed.¹³

- The Community Mental Health Team reduced their Carer Support Worker hours. Whilst their Assessments are on track, 81% of Mental Health Carers felt not at all or not very supported.¹⁴
- Torbay Carers' Service suffered significant IT issues. Changes in the Council IT server necessitated a 17-month Carers' Register rebuild, significantly delaying planned developments and the launch of the Carers' Passport. The 'Torbay Carers Together' website changed hosting platforms and is not live at present.
- Despite the Register issues, the 10% increase target was achieved year on year and at end March 2024 there are 5392 registered Carers. Processes are seen nationally as good practice in terms of asking consent to share with partner organisations, and of having Carer Contingency Plans and discounts as standard.
- Hospital support was fully reinstated after Covid. Funding was obtained to appoint a worker to improve Hospital communication with Carers and evaluation shows that this was very successful¹⁵. Developments also included supporting Carers with Virtual Wards and technology to support Carers with discharge.
- Torbay Young Carers' Service moved to the Youth Trust in 2021 and back to the Council in 2023. Young Carers were not adversely affected by the changes as the service worked hard to maintain direct support. There has been a significant increase in identification of primary school age Young Carers during this time.
- The interagency Young Carers' Under 25 Strategy 2022-25 was launched and its work demonstrates good partnership working to achieve early identification of and support to Young Carers under 25.
- On-line support to Parent Carers has improved with several on-line workshops, awareness, training sessions provided throughout the year, particularly at school transition times.
- With regard to staff Carers, Torbay and S Devon NHS Foundation Trust achieved Employers for Carers, Carer Confident Level 2 'Accomplished' Award – only the second NHS Trust to achieve this. It also launched an award for managers who support staff Carers which is now being adopted by Torbay Council.
- Partnership work including the voluntary sector continues. A network of Carers' allies meets regularly and there are close links with Paignton's Community Hub.
- Targeted work has been undertaken to support veterans and Carers of veterans, with much positive feedback from these Carers.
- Carers' Aid Torbay has group activities targeting men as they are not well-represented at many Carers' groups or activities. Their Bay Benefits Service for Carers now includes Carers' Choices cost-of-living support.
- Work has continued to improve support Carers from ethnic minority, refugee, and asylum seeker backgrounds, although Carers' Services has not yet achieved the target of parity between population and Register. A Community-link worker role is being piloted to continue this work and also target Carers in areas of deprivation or who are vulnerable.

¹³Torbay Carers Strategy Consultation 2024 – Engaging Communities South West

¹⁴Torbay Carers Strategy Consultation 2024 – Engaging Communities South West

¹⁵Evaluation of the impact of the Ward Family / Carer Liaison Worker on George Earle Ward (torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk)

Carers' assessment including whole family approach (39 targets, 34 achieved)

- GP Carer Support Workers exceeded their annual target of 500 Health and Wellbeing Checks (HWBCs) in two out of the three years. (602 in 2023-24)
- Carers' Aid Torbay continued to provide independent enabling and advocacy, and they met all annual targets.
- This contributed to Adult Social Care meeting their Assessment target of 36% each year and achieved 46% against their stretch target of 40%.
- Children's Services met their target for Parent Carers' Needs Assessments in 21-22, increased the target for 22-23 which was not achieved, but are on track to achieve it for 23-24*.
- Referrals to Young Carers' Service from Adult Social Care, Mental Health and Substance Misuse are consistently low and not achieving target.

Involvement of Carers in service delivery, evaluation and commissioning (23 targets, all achieved to some extent)

- Carers' Services used Healthwatch's 2021-24 Strategy Report and National Carers' feedback to shape the Strategy and action plan.
- Staff Carer support has been shaped with staff Carers, and this will continue.
- Carers are represented in all levels and functions of Torbay Carers' Service and the Young Adult Carers Operational Group demonstrates good levels of involvement with Young Adult Carers (16-25).
- SEND Family Voice Torbay has been set up during this time which enables engagement with Parent Carers of children.
- There has also been a much-improved level of engagement and co-production with Carers within the Strategies mentioned in Section 3.
- Peer support improved with some new groups, eg Carers of Adults with Autism and 'Your Time' Carers' group. The Carers' Volunteer Phoneline suffered a hiatus with the retirement of some key members but re-launched in January 2024.
- The Autism Partnership Board which was set up during this strategy period has two Carer Ambassadors representing Carers' Voice, in the same way as the Learning Disability Partnership.
- Many service evaluations have been undertaken by Carer Evaluators and the feedback built into developing services. Use of Carers' Direct Payments, Carers' Technology Enabled Care Pilot, Carers of Adults with Learning Disability Service, Hospital Carer Liaison Pilot, Volunteer phoneline and Carer's Assessments. Evaluations are published on-line.¹⁶

Enhancement of Support to the person being cared for (19 targets, 3 not fully achieved yet, 16 achieved)

- Replacement Care is still the biggest area of concern for Carers of Adults, and it is on the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan. Torbay's share of 2024-26

¹⁶ [Strategy, policy and quality - Torbay Carers Service \(torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk\)](https://torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk)

Accelerated Reform Funding will be targeting this enabling us to improve Shared Lives provision and accelerate achievement of two of the targets not yet fully achieved - the volunteer-run sitting service and increasing Carers' access to the Arranging Support Team.

- Although availability and provision of Short Breaks for adults needs to be improved, the processes within the Short Break Vouchers Scheme for adults with a learning disability are being significantly improved based on feedback from Carers who use it.
- Children's Services reviewed their Short Breaks offer and have an ongoing recruitment campaign to recruit additional foster Carers offering specialist support and breaks to Carers.
- Torbay Carers' Service has continued to work with local hospitality providers to provide discounted stays for Carers and signed up to Carefree Breaks which offers occasional free breaks to Carers. Both have a significant impact on Carers' health and wellbeing.
- Torbay Carers' Service Technology Enabled Care pilot was very successful and therefore ongoing funding has now been allocated within baseline budget.
- Planning ahead is of critical importance to prevent Carer breakdown. It has been built into the contract for Carers of Adults with Learning Disability to work with Adult Social Care to achieve this more rigorously. Carers' Services have improved their website information about planning ahead, and the recent Carers' Rights event had a room dedicated to planning ahead which included solicitors, Rowcroft, Age UK Torbay and other partners.

5. Formulation of Priorities for 2024-2027

The development of potential priorities for 2024-27 was based on Carer Consultation while taking account of national and local priorities, and evidence of what works well.

Engaging Communities South West carried out a Carers' engagement exercise in late 2023, with 377 Carers responding.¹⁷ Despite sending paper surveys to all, this was a lower return rate than previously, but still significantly higher than most Carers Surveys. We think this was due to 'consultation fatigue' as Carers had engaged in the three strategies mentioned in Section 3, plus Healthwatch's own Survey into Carer Breakdown¹⁸ and the biennial Personal Social Services National Carers' Survey.

The detailed feedback from Carers will be used to shape the action plans linked with this Strategy and the Young Carers under 25 Strategy 2025-28. The higher level actions for Young Carers under 25 will be outlined within this Strategy and monitored in both Strategy Steering Groups.

¹⁷ [Torbay Carers Strategy Consultation 2024 – Engaging Communities South West](#)

¹⁸ [The impact of providing unpaid care at home \(Phase 2\) - Healthwatch Devon](#)

6. Carers' Priorities for 2024-27

Carers have agreed that the priorities from the previous strategy will remain the same. They have developed 'I statements' showing what they want.

1. 'As soon as I start my caring role, I want to be identified, recognised and valued as a Carer.'
2. 'I want to be able to easily find information, advice and support to meet my needs as a Carer.'
3. 'I want to know that every Carer involved in a person's care can have a Carer's assessment when they need one.'
4. 'I want to be confident that Carers guide all things that affect them.'
5. 'I want the care and support to the person that I care for to also meet my needs as their Carer.'

Within these priorities, there are other issues to be addressed:

- a. Information to Carers to include support to the person they care for
- b. Carers and employment
- c. Carers' own mental health and support to people with Mental Health issues and their Carers
- d. Partnership working / information sharing across organisations
- e. Carers finance / cost-of living challenges
- f. Improving support at transitions
- g. Improving use of technology and digital support

7. Commitment to Carers – Partners in Torbay

Torbay Council (Council)
Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)
Devon Partnership Trust (DPT)
One Devon – Integrated Care Board (ICB)
Rowcroft Hospice
Citizens Advice Torbay
Compass House Medical Centres
Plus all Torbay GP practices (under GP Carers' Quality Markers)

Where 'partners' are referred to in the action plan, this will include all partners above, 'Health and Care partners' excludes Citizen's Advice Torbay.

Background Documents

[Carers UK. Valuing Carers 2021.](#)

[Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England - NHS Digital](#)

[Caring as a social determinant of health \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[National GP patient survey 2023](#)

[State of Caring survey | Carers UK](#)

[Torbay Carers Strategy Consultation 2024 – Engaging Communities South West
Devonwide survey re impact of providing care at home - phase 2](#)

[Strategy, policy and quality - Torbay Carers Service \(torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk\)](#)

Law and Guidance About Carers

2014 Care Act. [Your guide to the Care Act \(England\) | Carers UK](#)

2014 Children and Families Act. [The Children & Families Act 2014 | Carers Trust](#)

2019 NHS Long-Term Plan had the following priorities for Carers. [NHS Long Term Plan » Our long term commitment to carers](#)

2020 NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). Carers of Adults NG 150. [Overview | Supporting adult carers | Guidance | NICE](#)

2021 NICE. Quality Standard QS 200. [Overview | Supporting adult carers | Quality standards | NICE](#)

2022 Health and Care Act 2022. [health-and-care-act-2022-carers-rights-2.pdf \(carersuk.org\)](#)

Carers to be involved in hospital discharge planning. NHS to consult with Carers.

Other Plans that Include Carers in Torbay

- Torbay's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026. [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 - Torbay Council](#)
- Torbay Adult Social Care Strategy. [Adult social care - Torbay Council](#)
- Torbay's Learning Disability Big Plan. [Big Plan - Torbay Council](#)
- Torbay SEND Strategy. [Torbay SEND strategy 2023 - Torbay Council](#)
- Devon Partnership Trust's Carers' Strategy. [Introducing the Carers Strategy 2024 - 2027 | DPT](#)

Devon-wide Commitment to Carers. [Commitment to Carers \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)