

# *Carers Strategy 2023 -2026*



***“Milton Keynes Carers’ Strategy details how the council, the NHS and partners will work together in keeping with the MK Deal to improve the support for all unpaid carers who live or provide care for someone who lives in Milton Keynes.”***

## **Executive Summary**

We recognise that many people at some point in their lives will become unpaid carers, even though it’s often unanticipated and unplanned. It’s therefore important we clearly describe the different ways Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) can support unpaid carers, to help them have a life of their own, outside of their caring role.

***“A carer is anyone who provides unpaid support to a family member or friend, who needs help with everyday tasks because they are ill, frail, or disabled.”***

This strategy is for all unpaid carers who live in Milton Keynes and/or care for someone who lives in Milton Keynes. It demonstrates how the Milton Keynes health and care system, supports and assists Milton Keynes City Council to carry out their statutory duties, as detailed within the Care Act 2014.

Milton Keynes City Council currently invests over £360,000 annually in carers support services. Due to the growth of the city, we anticipate that the number of unpaid carers will increase over the next 3 years.

***“We will prioritise supporting those who have the highest need for our help to protect them from harm or neglect, while providing services that increase independence and improve the quality of life for people.” MKCC Council Plan 2022-26***

## **1. Introduction**

Milton Keynes Carers’ Strategy details how the council, the NHS and partners will work together (in keeping with the MK Deal), to improve the support for all unpaid carers, who live and provide care for someone who lives in Milton Keynes. The strategy identifies a set of key priorities (see pages 8-13), supported by an Action Plan (see pages 15-16) which will be monitored and reviewed by the Carers Operational Management Group and the Adult Social Care Commissioning Board (see page14).

### **Context**

**The Care Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities Milton Keynes City Council has for adult carers. These include the duty to offer an assessment to carers and provide support to maintain that caring role if the carers are eligible for support.**

**The Children and Families Act 2018 sets out the responsibilities Milton Keynes City Council has for parent carers and for any carer under the age of 18 caring for a sibling or a parent.**

## Definition of a carer

**Adult carer:** someone aged 18 or over who is providing care and/or support for another adult for free, on a voluntary basis and not under contract.

**Parent carer:** someone who provides or intends to provide care for their child (or adult child), who cannot manage without their help.

**Former carer:** a person who has ceased their caring role, usually because of a change in the condition of the cared for person. This includes the death of the cared for person, the cared for person recovering (and no longer needing care and support) or the carer wanting/having to stop providing care.

**Young carer:** a person under 18 who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person. The concept of 'care' includes practical or emotional support, and 'another person' means anyone within the same family, be they adult or child.



## 2. Background

The 2021 census conducted by the Office of National Statistics (ONS)\* shows that Milton Keynes has approximately 21,580 adults who care for someone voluntarily and not as a paid job.

### NUMBER OF CARERS ACCORDING TO STATISTICS

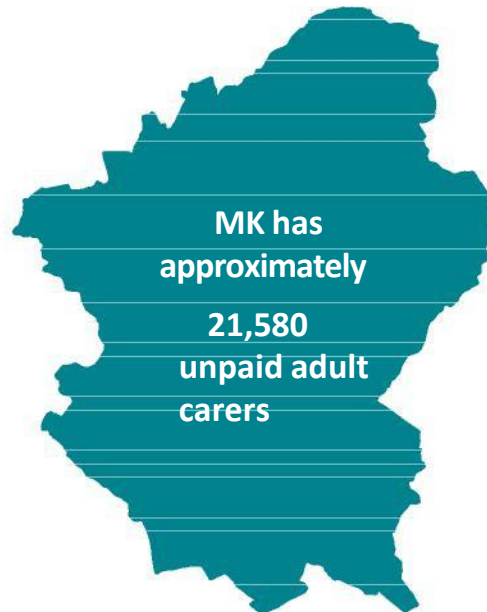
**670**   
Carers in MK  
are young  
carers under 18  
years

**8,620**  
are male  
carers

**985**  
are young  
adult carers  
aged 18-25

**11,975**  
are female  
carers

**1 in 10** adults in  
MK provide  
unpaid care



### NUMBER OF CARERS KNOWN TO SERVICES (some may be known to more than one service)

**4,619**  
Number of  
carers  
known to  
GPs

**5148**  
people are  
known to  
social care



**7,460**

Number of carers  
known to Carers  
MK (the MKCC  
commissioned  
carers support  
service)







# Milton Keynes City Council currently invests in a range of services for unpaid carers – from peer support groups and day services to free advice about your finances

## *What you've said!*

*"The Admiral Nurse Service made me feel less alone and struggling, helping me to put coping strategies in place"*

*"I found the drop-in sessions uplifting and humbling. They were a lovely group of people"*

*"There is a supportive and caring, carers community. You don't have to do this alone"*

<b>Carers Support Service</b> <b>Information, advice and support</b> A network of organisations commissioned to support carers - led by Citizens Advice Milton Keynes as Lead Provider <a href="#">Explore more</a> 	<b>Carers Support Specialist Providers</b> <b>Peer support, groups and information</b> Specialist information and support for carers of older people, and carers of people with mental health, learning disability or neurodivergence <a href="#">Explore more</a> 	<b>Digital Support - Mobilise</b> <b>Peer support</b> Mobilise provides information, advice and guidance, workshops and online support for carers <a href="#">Explore more</a> 
<b>CHUMS</b> <b>Young Carers</b> Chums are commissioned to support carers aged 5-25 years. This includes activities, meet ups, one to one support and a programme to support young carers in schools and colleges. <a href="#">Explore more</a> 	<b>Carer's conversation</b> <b>Direct Payments</b> The carer's conversation is a new style assessment that allows carers to access a direct payment of £240+ per annum if eligible <a href="#">Explore more</a> 	<b>Admiral Nurse Service</b> <b>Dementia Support</b> Our Admiral Nurse Service and Dementia Information and Support Service (DISS) can provide a lifeline for carers looking after someone with dementia <a href="#">Explore more</a> 

[Support for adult carers | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)

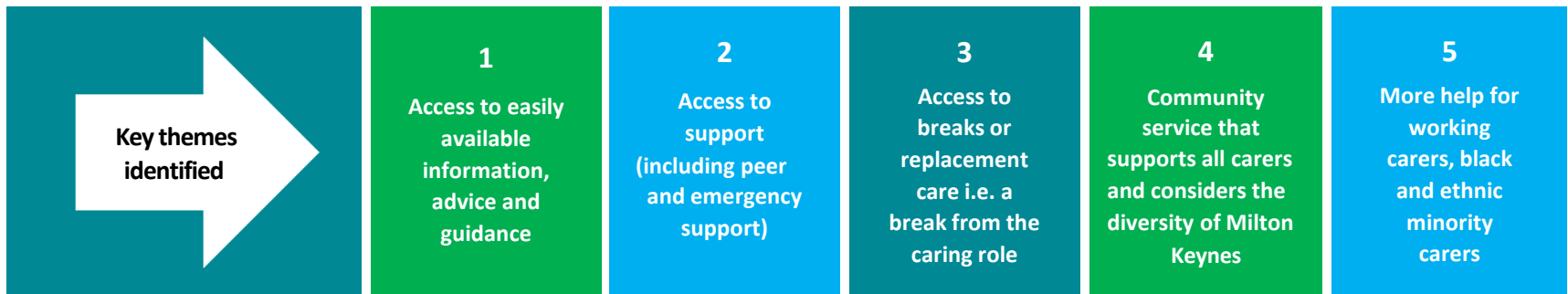
[Young Carers and Young Adult Carers | Milton Keynes City Council](#)

*“Working together with carers will improve the delivery of support to carers of all ages – and deliver a positive experience of their care and support needs.”*

### 3. Strategy aims and objectives

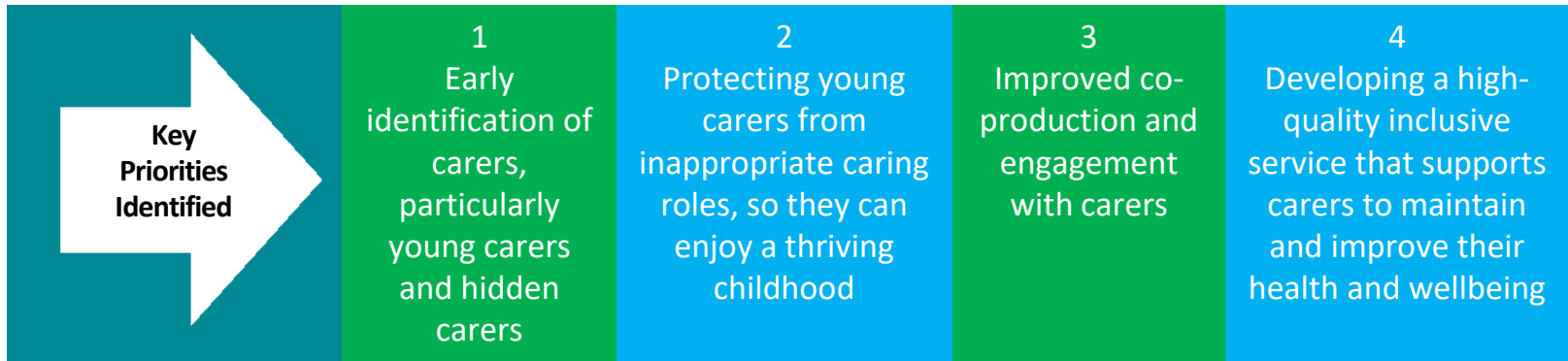
As mentioned, this strategy sets out how we’re currently supporting all adult carers in MK and what our key priorities are for the future. It also includes what we’re doing to protect young carers who are currently carrying out an inappropriate caring role or are at risk of carrying out an inappropriate caring role in the future.

The strategy was developed with the help of over 180 carers who were either resident or caring for someone who was resident in Milton Keynes in 2022/23. Feedback was gathered and key themes were identified via two online surveys and three workshops held in Milton Keynes throughout 2022/23. Feedback from the survey was conducted by Carers MK (the commissioned carers support service). Five key themes and four future priorities were identified:



## 4. Priorities

In addition to the key themes outlined, we worked with carers to identify four priority areas for future development. These priorities will be fulfilled by working together (in co-production) with carers, partners, and key stakeholders:



### Priority 1 – Early identification of carers particularly young and hidden carers

#### Why is early identification important?

Improving and focusing on the early identification and recognition of carers is a key priority because it helps carers access the support they need early on in their caring journey. Early identification assists carers to get the right emotional, financial, or physical support which can help them carry out their caring role. The NHS has a crucial role to play in the initial identification of carers and signposting them to services that can support them, especially to commissioned services. Recognising someone is a carer is beneficial both for the carer and the cared for person, as it supports them to maintain their caring role for as long as they want to, and to support the person they're caring for, for as long as they need.



## Priority 1 Outcomes

- ✓ Professionals will proactively identify and recognise carers
- ✓ Carers will have quick and easy access to helpful advice and information that is available in a range of formats

## What is currently in place and will continue?

- We will continue working with GP practices and commissioned services to ensure the identification of carers continues. This will include building on the recently introduced GP practices' online referral service, the community carers support service (subject to consent) and commissioned carers support service
- Maintaining a commissioned carers support service that leads on partnership, working with health and social care partners, to ensure carers are identified and referred to the commissioned service as soon as possible
- Continue with the provision of an online carers support service

## Priority 1: What else will we put in place?

1

Improve access to up-to-date information on services available to carers

2

Improve data collection and monitoring of carers using commissioned services - especially the commissioned carers support service

3

Promote the existing carers passport or a similar scheme in health and social care settings

4

Develop greater cultural awareness about the caring role and incorporate it into how we talk about carers/caring role

5

Establish a rolling carers awareness programme for professionals in regular contact with cared for individuals and unpaid carers

6

Monitor the numbers of individuals flagged as carers at GP practices and within the adult social care system, against the number of referrals to the carers support service

7

Embed the identification of carers in commissioned services where it is appropriate to do so

## Priority 2 • Young carers can enjoy a thriving childhood, protected from inappropriate caring

### Outcome

- ✓ Young carers are enabled and supported to achieve what they want, especially when they transition to adulthood

What is currently in place and will continue?

- We are currently working with young carers to review the young carers assessment process to ensure its as effective as possible.
- We are reviewing our commissioning model to ensure it better supports young carers and young adult carers.
- We are increasing the number of schools participating in the young carers transition programme, so young carers transitioning to secondary schools are better supported.
- We are increasing the number of schools involved in the young carers school drop-in programme.
- We are increasing the number of schools participating in the young carers' day.

### Priority 2: What else will we put in place?

1

Working with young carers to identify gaps to help ensure young carers have similar opportunities as other young people

2

Increase the number of schools participating in a young carer recognition programme

3

Support schools to develop their own support provision for young carers including a 'young carers champion' where possible

4

Develop and deliver support sessions in schools for the most disadvantaged young carers, e.g. those caring for a parent with mental health and/ or substance misuse

5

Ensure that young carers who are not in school have the same access to support as their peers in school including advice, guidance, training, and activities

### Priority 3

- Develop a high-quality inclusive service that supports carers to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing
- Develop a more innovative, personalised approach to short breaks
- Use more Assistive Technology to support carers in their caring role

### Outcomes

- ✓ Carers are supported and enabled to have a better quality of life
- ✓ Carers have access to a range of support that enables them to live the life they want and remain an active member of the community
- ✓ Carers have access to information both online and in person so that they can make more informed decisions and choices

### What is currently in place and will continue?

1. Continue to build on the person-centred carers conversation that focuses on the wellbeing of carers and helps to ensure strategies or support are in place to meet their needs.
2. Continue to promote a one-off direct payment to carers after a carer's conversation, which can be used by the carer as they wish.
3. As part of their agreed support plan, carers have access to regular agreed breaks from their caring role at times of crisis including overnight. This sometimes includes providing alternative care for the cared for person.
4. Continue to work with commissioned services and health partners to improve access to welfare services including counselling, befriending, group meeting and activities

### Priority 3 ..

**What is currently in place and will continue?**

5. Continue to work with partners to support carers to plan for when they are no longer able to provide care.
6. We are continuing to support the establishment of carers support groups.
7. We are continuing to support carers to have contingency plans in place, so the person they're caring for has provision in the event of an emergency.
8. Continue working with statutory and non-statutory services so carers can take part in community activities such as organised walks.
9. Provide training by voluntary community sector providers and other providers on a range of topics. Health and long-term management will continue and be expanded.

### Priority 3: What else will we put in place?

1

Enable young carers to access a range of age-appropriate activities, including the ability to attend after school activities

2

Build on current carers breaks to include varying types of breaks to suit diverse needs and situations, especially the need for emergency breaks. These may include building on the "shared lives" and short breaks offer

3

- Support carers to set up peer groups
- Introduce a phone line dedicated to carers
- Ensure carers have access to care technology that will support them

## Priority 4

Carers have a vast amount of knowledge and experience, both of the condition and management of the condition of the person they're caring for, whose needs should be considered in any new service design, including the commissioning process.

### Outcomes

✓ **Carers have a voice that impacts the decisions of the council and other public sector partners, especially health and education**

### What is currently in place and will continue?

- Carers currently contribute to the assessment, review, and relevant meetings of the person they're caring for. However, this isn't widespread and varies from team to team and from practitioner to practitioner. We intend to make this a more widespread practice by using training to raise awareness of the importance of carers' input.
- The Adult Social Care Engagement Officer will continue to build on their current work to support carers.

## Priority 4: What else will we put in place?

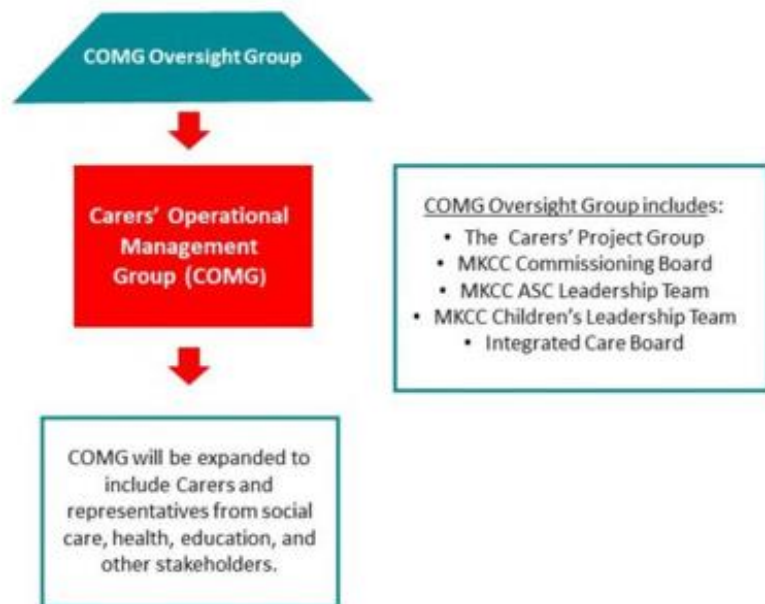
**We will put in place a systematic process that enables carers to shape our social work practice and support the commissioning process**

**We will support and encourage carers to be involved in the co-production of newly commissioned services**

**We will establish regular dialogue between carers and professionals - including carers' workshops and a carers' forum**



***“The Carers Operational Management Group (COMG) will oversee the implementation of the strategy as detailed in the Action Plan.”***



## **How will we deliver our strategy?**

We'll deliver the strategy by working collaboratively with partners, to ensure resources within the system are used more effectively.

## **How will we measure success?**

The Carers' Operational Management Group (COMG) will oversee the implementation of the strategy as detailed in the Action Plan (see pages 15-16). COMG is a multi-agency group that will be expanded to include carers and representatives from social care, health, education, and other stakeholders. Other responsible groups and partners will either help carry out and/or oversee COMG's actions. The COMG Oversight Group includes the Carers Project Group, MKCC Commissioning Board, MKCC Adult Social Care Leadership Team and MKCC Children's Leadership Team and the Integrated Care Board.

## Action Plan – Year One

### Early identification of carers

(improved carer  
engagement)

#### Priority One

- ✓ Improve the training and awareness programme
- ✓ Better identification of carers in key settings e.g. hospitals and schools
- ✓ Better identification of carers from ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ communities
- ✓ Easier access to information, advice and guidance
- ✓ Ensure information is widely accessible through multiple channels

### Protecting young carers

(so they can enjoy a  
thriving childhood)

#### Priority Two

- ✓ Ensure more young carers can easily access preventative services, including wellbeing services
- ✓ Ensure a whole family approach is fully embedded into social care practice
- ✓ Ensure young carers are identified and receive appropriate assessment
- ✓ Ensure young carers are supported through transition into adulthood

### Working together to shape services

(improved carer  
engagement)

#### Priority Three

- ✓ By making sure carers are involved in the commissioning process
- ✓ By making sure carers are engaged in the development of operational services, including the training of social care practitioners
- ✓ By making sure local and national survey feedback informs the development of services

## **Supporting carers to improve their wellbeing**

(developing a high-quality  
inclusive service)

### **Priority Four**

- ✓ Work with carers to re-commission a carers support service
- ✓ Maintain and build upon specialist carers services where possible
- ✓ Use assistive tech to assist carers in their role
- ✓ Continue to promote direct payments for carers
- ✓ Create peer support opportunities for carers (including former carers)
- ✓ Continue to work with providers and the voluntary sector to develop innovative solutions
- ✓ Improve and review crisis support for carers, e.g. a dedicated helpline
- ✓ Work with partners to improve the uptake of carers' contingency planning

## KEY DOCUMENTS

[Adult Services Commitment Statement](#)

[Adult Services Prevention Strategy 2023 – 2026](#)

[Care Act 2014](#)

[Children and Families Act 2018](#)

[Key Facts for Carers](#)

[Local Account Position Statement \(Autumn-Winter 2023\)](#)

[MKCC Council Plan 2022 – 2026](#)

[Market Position Statement 2022- 2027](#)

**Thank you for reading this document.**  
**If you have any comments or feedback please**  
**complete our short survey:**

**[Carers Services Survey](#)** 

**Alternatively contact the MKCC Commissioning Team at:**

**[CCTeam@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:CCTeam@milton-keynes.gov.uk)**