

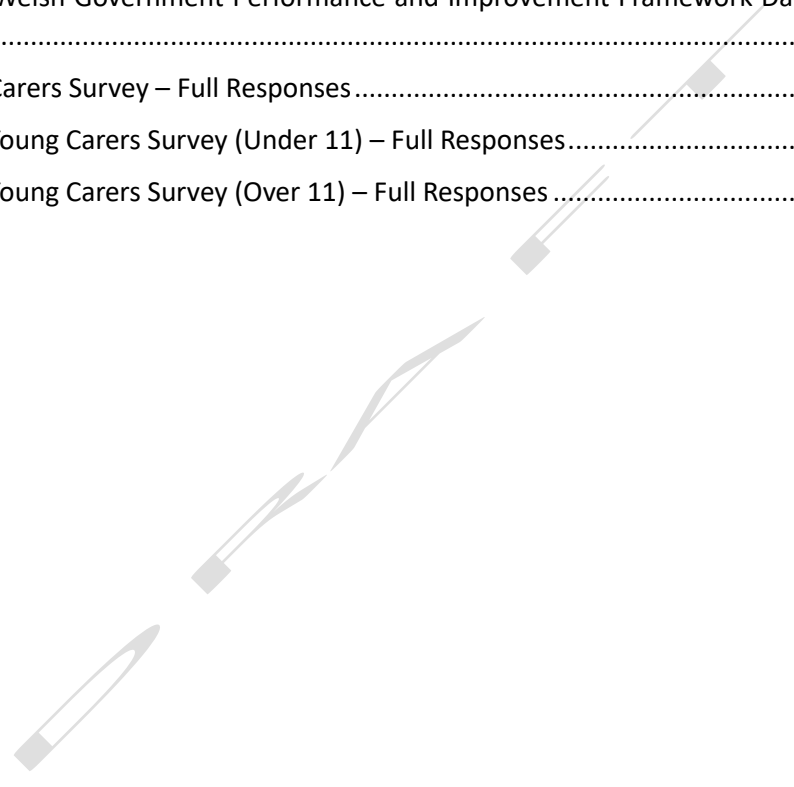
# Review of Carer’s Services in Flintshire 2024

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
Chapter 1 – Current Context .....	5
1.1 Background .....	5
1.2 Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers (2021) .....	6
1.3 Statutory requirements under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.....	7
1.4 Reporting Requirements .....	7
1.5 Number of carers in Flintshire.....	8
1.6 Carers Strategy Group .....	8
1.7 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Flintshire County Council Social Services.....	8
1.8 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) - Own Initiative Investigation .....	9
Chapter 2 - Currently commissioned services in Flintshire - in scope of this review.....	10
2.1 “Adult Carers Gateway” contract .....	10
2.2 “Carers Needs Assessments” contract.....	11
2.4 “Carers Well-being” contract .....	12
2.3 “Carers Training” contract.....	13
2.5 “Carers Opportunities, Participation & Employment (COPE)” contract.....	14
2.6 “Bridging the Gap” contract.....	14
2.7 “Respite Services” contract.....	16
2.8 “Carers of individuals with mental health/substance misuse issues” contract .....	17
2.9 “Carers of individuals with a Neurological Condition” contract .....	17
2.10 “Support for Parent Carers” contract.....	19
2.11 “Young Carers” contract.....	19
2.12 Support for carers of someone with a complex, long term or terminal illness / CHC (Continuing Healthcare).....	21
2.13 Marleyfield Dementia Saturday Respite .....	22
Chapter 3 – Out of scope services supported by Flintshire County Council .....	23
3.1 Carers Needs Assessments – Internal .....	23
3.1 Dementia Carers Support and Community Engagement Project.....	23
3.2 Direct Payments (Flintshire County Council).....	24
3.3 Arosfa .....	25
3.4 Action for Children (AFC) Creative Respite.....	25
3.5 Families First Disability Consortia .....	25
3.6 Families First Young People’s Consortia .....	26

3.7	Daffodils .....	26
3.8	Day services and Work Opportunities.....	26
3.8.1	Learning Disabilities .....	26
3.8.2	Mental Health Services .....	27
3.8.3	Physical Disabilities .....	27
3.8.4	Older People.....	27
3.9	Overnight Respite services within Care Homes (Older People) .....	28
3.10	Microcarers .....	28
3.11	Advocacy .....	28
3.12	Flintshire Local Voluntary Council's (FLVC) Social Prescription Service.....	29
3.13	NEWCIS Hospital Discharge Facilitation Service.....	29
3.14	Dementia Centre .....	30
Chapter 4 – Other services available .....		31
4.1	WG Respite Grant / “Amser” .....	31
4.1.1	NEWCIS.....	31
4.1.2	NEWCIS Young Carers.....	32
4.1.3	Daffodils .....	32
4.1.4	Crossroads Carers Trust.....	33
4.2	NEWCIS .....	34
4.2.1	Carers Breaks.....	34
4.2.2	Cost of Living / Food boxes / Shopping Vouchers / Winter supply boxes .....	34
4.2.3	Fundraising.....	34
4.3	NEWCIS Young Carers.....	34
4.4	Daffodils .....	34
4.5	Crossroads Carers Trust Respite Services.....	35
4.5.1	Health Service .....	35
4.5.2	Gwalia Care .....	35
4.5.3	Welsh Government Grants.....	35
4.5.4	Donations .....	36
4.5.5	Well-being Officer .....	36
4.6	Adferiad Recovery .....	36
4.7	Other services .....	37
Chapter 5 – What have carers said?.....		38
5.1	Carers Survey 2024 .....	38
5.2	What matters to our carers? .....	39
5.3	What matters to our young carers? .....	42

5.4 Carers Strategy Group Feedback.....	43
Chapter 6 – Gap Analysis .....	44
Chapter 7 – Funding Streams.....	46
7.1 Current Funding Streams .....	46
Chapter 8 – Conclusion and Recommendations .....	48
8.1 Conclusion.....	48
8.2 Findings .....	48
8.3 Recommendations .....	52
Appendices.....	53
Appendix 1 - Relevant Documents.....	53
Appendix 2 – Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework Data (Adults) .....	54
Appendix 3 – Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework Data (Young Carers) .....	56
Appendix 4 – Carers Survey – Full Responses.....	58
Appendix 5 – Young Carers Survey (Under 11) – Full Responses.....	63
Appendix 6 – Young Carers Survey (Over 11) – Full Responses .....	65



## Executive Summary

The local Authority has a number of statutory duties in terms of supporting carers.

- To **identify carers** that provide or intend to provide care for an adult or disabled child.
- A **duty to assess** a carer where there appears to be a need for support, regardless of the level of needs or resources. The assessment will focus on '*what matters*' to the carer and the carers needs in their own right.
- A carer is entitled to a joint assessment with the cared for if it is considered beneficial and there is consent from both.
- A duty to meet the needs of the carer following an assessment, depending on eligibility.
- The carer's assessment should be reviewed annually or when there is a significant change in circumstances.
- Provide **advocacy** support for carers.

Flintshire has the highest number of carers in North Wales, at 18,000, which is reflective of the overall population numbers. This is an increase of approximately 8% since the 2001 census (North Wales Population Needs Assessment).

The preventative value of carers services, both in promoting the well-being of carers, and in avoiding additional costs to local authorities and local health boards, is well-publicised.

The role undertaken by carers is of clear benefit to the local economy and contributes to easing pressure on the local authority and Health Board in a challenging market capacity and financial climate. The Welsh Government have calculated that Welsh carers contributed the equivalent of £8.1bn of care each year (Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers, 2021) which far exceeds the £2bn spent by local authorities across Wales on social care during 2019-20 (bbc.co.uk).

Flintshire Social Services delivers a wide range of services for carers, both in-house and commissioned through external third sector providers. Each service has a defined specification to deliver services to specific groups of carers within Flintshire. These contracts end on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. To inform the councils commissioning strategy for unpaid carers services post April 2025, we have undertaken a review of current carers services in collaboration with carers and stakeholder partners.

The review has found that overall, the pathways and services commissioned do generally appear to be effective and valued by carers. We have a good standard and a wide range of carers services and support available. Across the provision currently in place the combination successfully supports our commitment to the 4 priority areas of the WG Strategy for Unpaid Carers (as detailed in 1.04). With some small changes identified through this review improvements will hopefully further enhance the support provided to carers in Flintshire.

It is proposed that the carers services are recommissioned from April 2025 for a five year period to enable the council to meet its statutory duties with regards to services and support for unpaid carers.

## Chapter 1 – Current Context

### 1.1 Background

A carer is broadly someone who provides or intends to provide care and support to a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their age, physical or mental illness, or disability; this does not include someone who is paid or employed to carry out that role, or someone who is volunteering (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act).

Nationally we are seeing an ever growing, ageing population with increasingly complex needs and as a result we are also seeing an increasing number of individuals who consequently become carers for their loved ones. Carers Trust Wales now reports that 3 in 5 people in Wales will become a carer at some point in their lives.

According to the 2011 census there were 73,000 unpaid carers across North Wales, which is 11% of the population. Flintshire had the highest number of carers in North Wales, at 18,000, which is reflective of the overall population numbers. This is an increase of approximately 8% since the 2001 census (North Wales Population Needs Assessment).

The number of carers continues to grow and locally we are seeing a growing demand for carer support services.

The preventative value of carers services, both in promoting the well-being of carers, and in avoiding additional costs to local authorities and local health boards, is well-publicised.

The role undertaken by carers is of clear benefit to the local economy and contributes to easing pressure on the local authority and Health Board in a challenging financial climate. The Welsh Government have calculated that Welsh carers contributed the equivalent of £8.1bn of care each year (Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers, 2021) which far exceeds the £2bn spent by local authorities across Wales on social care during 2019-20 (bbc.co.uk).

In England, the Royal College of General Practitioners has worked with Baker Tilly (2015) to identify the social return on investment which can be made when Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) invest in services which support carers. The study shows that this could equate to a saving of almost £4 for every £1 invested.

Flintshire County Council recognise the key contribution that carers of all ages make to support the local social care sector and actively seek to support the development of carers services and raise key carers issues at a local and national level. Our well-established and well represented Carers Strategy Group which leads on developing carers services locally. We are members of the North Wales Carers Operational Group and were involved in the creation of the North Wales Regional Carers Strategy, which shares a clear regional vision for carers' services in North Wales by setting clear standards of service that partners are committed to achieving. On a national level, we are one of a small number of local authorities who sit on the Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers advising the Ministers for Health and Social Care on the important issues facing carers in Wales, influencing the development of government legislation.

Flintshire Social Services delivers a wide range of services for carers, both in-house and commissioned through external third sector providers. Each service has a defined specification with a set amount of funding to deliver services to specific groups of carers within Flintshire.

The contracts for all externally commissioned services end on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. In order to inform its commissioning strategy for unpaid carers services post April 2025, Flintshire County Council Social Services have undertaken a review of current carers services in collaboration with carers and stakeholder partners.

In order to ensure services are truly reflective of what is needed by our local population we are taking a multi-stakeholder approach to designing future services for carers.

To move forward it is vitally important that Flintshire Social Services and its partners, ensure that services are sustainable, accessible and suitable for carers in Flintshire. This includes younger carers, working carers and carers that are not currently involved with social services.

Over the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic compounded by the financial and workforce recruitment pressures on local authorities and traditional care providers, have seen unprecedented demands on unpaid carers.

By undertaking a review of carers services, Flintshire County Council Social Services aims to establish how the current provision is meeting the needs of carers now and whether it is fit for purpose in the future as well as explore opportunities and areas for development.

Following the identification of local carers needs, the Carers Strategy Group will be able to highlight what gaps there are in the existing provision and how we should develop our provision to meet carers needs in the future.

The outcome of the review will inform and support the development of the new carers' services from April 2025 and beyond.

## 1.2 Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers (2021)

Launched in 2021, the Welsh Government have stated that their Strategy for Unpaid Carers aims to renew their commitment to improving recognition of and support to unpaid carers. The full strategy document can be found in appendix 1 (a).

The strategy consists of 4 priority areas:

**Priority 1 - Identifying and valuing unpaid carers** - all unpaid carers must be valued and supported to make an informed choice about the care they provide and to access the support they need whilst caring and when the caring role comes to an end. This includes:

- Valuing unpaid carers.
- Raising awareness of unpaid carers.
- Working with local authorities to improve carers' assessments.
- Supporting unpaid carers' voices to be heard.

**Priority 2 - Providing information, advice and assistance (IAA)** - it is vital that all unpaid carers have access to the right information and advice at the right time and in an appropriate format. This includes:

- Raising awareness of ways to access information, advice and assistance.
- Addressing the digital divide.

**Priority 3 - Supporting life alongside caring** - all unpaid carers must have the opportunity to take breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their own health and well-being and have a life alongside caring. This includes:

- Improving access to short breaks and respite.
- Extending access to psychological support.

**Priority 4 - Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace** – employers and educational / training settings should be encouraged to adapt their policies and practices, enabling unpaid carers to work and learn alongside their caring role. This includes:

- Encouraging local authorities to support state funded schools to identify young carers.
- Working with employers and their representative bodies to promote unpaid carer friendly workplaces.
- Promoting financial resilience.

In recommissioning our own services in Flintshire, we need to ensure that we are set to be able to deliver services that meet the needs of our carers under these key priority areas.

### 1.3 Statutory requirements under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 significantly changed the definition of a carer. Under the Act, carers have an equal right to support as that of the person they care for. This is a very positive move for carers in recognition of the value they hold.

The local Authority has a number of duties under the Act, terms of supporting carers.

- To **identify carers** that provide or intend to provide care for an adult or disabled child.
- A **duty to assess** a carer where there appears to be a need for support, regardless of the level of needs or resources. The assessment will focus on *'what matters'* to the carer and the carers needs in their own right.
- A carer is entitled to a joint assessment with the cared for if it is considered beneficial and there is consent from both.
- A duty to meet the needs of the carer following an assessment, depending on eligibility.
- The carer's assessment should be reviewed annually or when there is a significant change in circumstances.
- Provide **advocacy** support for carers.

### 1.4 Reporting Requirements

The Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework includes metrics that the Local Authority and its delivery partners are required to report on. These indicators help the Authority to determine whether it is providing responsive services to carers.

The full Performance Improvement Framework for Social Services for 2023-24 can be found at appendix 1 (b). Data to demonstrate Flintshire's performance against these metrics can be found at appendix 2 (Adults) and appendix 3 (Young Carers).

## 1.5 Number of carers in Flintshire

The number of carers continues to grow and locally we are seeing a growing demand for carer support services. According to the 2021 census, Flintshire had the highest number of carers in North Wales, at 18,000, which is reflective of the overall population numbers. This is an increase of approximately 8% since the 2011 census.

NEWCIS currently operates a register of unpaid carers on behalf of Flintshire County Council. The register is maintained on a voluntary enrolment basis for carers who wish to register to receive information, advice and assistance and engage with support services available. The number of carers registered with NEWCIS since prior to the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to increase. The number of Adult Carers registered has increased by 82% since 2019 and the number of Young Carers has increased by 290% over the same period.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Adult Carers	5,996	6,231	6,573	7,209	9,611	10,954
Young Carers	121	204	263	332	404	472

According to Social Care Wales (Unpaid Carers Strategy, 2021), it is estimated that currently 12% of the population in Wales are unpaid carers and the same study predicts that this figure could increase to 16% by 2037. This is a trend that is clear in Flintshire.

Further to these overall numbers more detailed statistics for North Wales found in the Population Needs Assessment (2022) show that *“overall, more women provide unpaid care than men: 57% of carers in North Wales are women, and 42% are men, which is similar to the proportion across Wales and in each local council area. This difference has narrowed slightly since the 2001 census by one percentage point due to a greater increase in the numbers of men providing unpaid care.”*

In addition, *“in North Wales around 20% of people aged 50 to 64 provide unpaid care compared to 11% of the population in total. Generally speaking, the proportion of people providing unpaid care increases with age until the 65 and over age group. In the 65 and over age group 14% of people provide unpaid care, which is the same proportion as in the 35 to 49 age group. These proportions follow a similar pattern in each local authority.”*

## 1.6 Carers Strategy Group

The Flintshire Carers Strategy Group is a forum of carers’ organisations who represent carers, from both the statutory and third sector. The Group has a key role in helping to shape relevant local and regional and national strategies, and other key documents in relation to Carers, as well as the strategic development of services for Carers (including parent carers and young carers) in Flintshire.

## 1.7 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of Flintshire County Council Social Services

In November 2023, CIW announced that they would be undertaking a routine Performance Evaluation Inspection at Flintshire County Council Social Services to review how effectively the authority is exercising its duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.



The report produced was largely positive in relation to Social Services functions as a whole and specifically gave the following feedback in relation to Carers services:

*“Unpaid carers’ assessments are appropriately offered. Carers of adults told us they significantly benefitted from carers’ assessments and provision of support. There is a wide range of innovative practical support to promote carer well-being including counselling, grants, short-term direct payment provision, and short-term break arrangements.”*

*“There is a focus on promoting the well-being of young carers. Children were observed to benefit from the availability of support in a young carers support group. They clearly enjoyed the activities on offer and the company of both practitioners and peers alike.”*

## 1.8 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)- Own Initiative Investigation

In Spring 2023, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) has initiated an “Own Initiative” investigation across the whole of Wales into Carers Needs Assessments and subsequent support. Flintshire County Council have been selected as one of 4 local authorities to take part in the focused review into our processes and services. The Ombudsman states that they aim to consider where improvements can be made and also identify any best practices that can be applied across Wales.

At present the outcome of this investigation is yet to be published, however it is believed to be due in mid-2024. The findings from this will be included in this review should they be received within the appropriate timescales to allow.

## Chapter 2- Currently commissioned services in Flintshire- in scope of this review

As part of this review, it is important to understand the services available and the wider carers strategy for unpaid carers in Flintshire to enable a thorough analysis of what is working, what is not working and what gaps we may have that need to be addressed.

While it is important to note and recognise the full spectrum of support and services available to carers to inform this review, specifically the following contracts are due to end in March 2025 and are therefore able to be influenced initially by this review.

### 2.1 “Adult Carers Gateway” contract

#### **Currently held by North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)**

The service, provided by NEWCIS, provides a single and open access gateway for all adult carers, their families, professionals and partner organisations to access information and make a referral. The gateway is a one stop shop for a range of information, advice and access to assessments and further support (under the Carers Needs Assessment and support service contracts) which will be person-centred, outcome focused, proportionate and responsive to the needs of local adult carers.

The service includes the following elements:

- Information, advice and signposting
- Promotion of the service and awareness campaigns such as “think carer”
- Regular and targeted communication with carers
- Lead and champion for carer services in Flintshire

The service leads on exploring and jointly developing new and innovate ways to support carers, working with others such as health, social care, third sector organisations and carers and their families, to ensure that the carers strategy funding is used in accordance with the well-being outcomes of carers now and in the future.

It is an expectation of the adult carers gateway that the services provided are inclusive to all types of carers, accommodate their individual circumstances and explore new ways to engage and support the next generation of carers, including working carers, carers with multiple commitments, 21<sup>st</sup> century carers and carers who have care and support needs of their own.

Carers have expressed that they are finding the current time very challenging, the current struggles in the Health and Social Care sectors along with the cost of living crisis, more and more carers are contacting NEWCIS for support. The service has seen a significant increase in demand from the beginning of the contract in 2020 to the figures reported for the latest year (2023-24). The number of referrals has increased by 18% from 1,615 to 1,902 per year.

*“NEWCIS has helped me focus on my own well-being, I was never thinking of myself”*

For a case study relating to the Adult Carers Gateway, please see appendix 1 (c).

## 2.2 “Carers Needs Assessments” contract

### **Currently held by NEWCIS.**

The aim of this service is to provide adult carers in Flintshire with their statutory right to a holistic, strengths-based, proportionate carers needs assessment that focuses on well-being outcomes for carers and their annual review (or sooner if their circumstances significantly change). Carers will be given proportionate information, advice, signposting and support to access services over a short intervention period.

Referrals for an assessment come through the adult carers gateway. The service is inclusive to all types of carers and accommodates their individual circumstances, exploring new ways to engage and support the next generation of carers, including working carers, carers with multiple commitments, carers with their own mental health issues, modern day carers and carers who have care and support needs of their own.

NEWCIS offers carers assessment in Flintshire, lending their local knowledge, skills mix, facilities, qualifications and capacity to deliver the service at pace and ensure there is no impact on carers accessing their statutory right to an assessment.

The service has seen a significant increase in referrals for a Carers Needs Assessment since 2019. Data from 2019-20 shows that NEWCIS undertook approximately 282 assessments on behalf of Flintshire County Council Social Services, compared to the latest figures from 2023-24 that show the number had risen to 633 which is an 124% increase.

Despite the increase in the number of referrals for a Carers Needs Assessment, NEWCIS have worked to adapt and keep the wait time for carers from the referral to the point of assessment as low as possible. On average since the beginning of the contract the wait time for a carer from point of referral to the point of assessment has been 2 weeks, however at peak times this can increase to 3 weeks.

Moving to operate a hybrid approach to carrying out assessments has helped to process Carer’s Needs Assessments more quickly. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was standard practice for assessments to be carried out in person with the carer and usually in their own home. The team at NEWCIS now offer assessments in a wider range of ways, including in person, over the telephone and via video call and it is up to the carer to choose which suits them better. The pandemic has supported this shift in mentality generally and NEWCIS are finding that the majority of carers are happy to have their assessment over the telephone or via video call, which in turn drives efficiency for the team by reducing travel time between appointments.

In addition to this, as the NEWCIS team are multi-skilled and trained to carry out Carers Needs Assessments for consistency for the carer where they are referred directly to these support pathways the assessment is completed by this worker rather than the Carer’s Needs Assessment contract specifically.

Contract	Number of assessments completed in 2023/24
Carers Needs Assessments contract	223
COPE contract	70
CHC contract	120

In total, NEWCIS have stated that they allocated 6368 hours in 2023/24 to completing Carer's Needs Assessments, this equates to £163,985, meaning that on average each assessment costs £276. THIS INCLUDES BOTH PARTS OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS (WHAT MATTERS 1 AND WHAT MATTERS 2).

In addition to this, it has been calculated that on average, although this does vary significantly from case-to-case dependent on complexity, a Carer's Needs Assessment from start to finish will take 8.5 hours to complete. This has reportedly increased from about 7 hours per assessment when this was last completed, the reasons for this are statedly due to the general increase in complexity of cases since the pandemic which is a widely reported trend.

Despite the move towards a more efficient hybrid approach to carrying out assessments and the completion of assessment under a number of contracts, the demand is continuing to grow for Carers Needs Assessments year on year and resulting from this increase in assessments is the increase in required number of reviews that need to be undertaken. NEWCIS have stated that they are concerned that this is an area of the current service provision that is beginning to struggle to keep up with demand and looking to the future a decision will need to be made as to what is the expectation for the length of time for a carer to wait for an assessment vs. the need to allocate more resources to meet demand.

## 2.4 "Carers Well-being" contract

### Currently held by NEWCIS.

NEWCIS provide carers with support that will promote and enhance their well-being; services may include the following:

- Grants
- Activities and drop-ins
- Therapy services
- Counselling

The service is responsive to the changing needs of local carers and the delivery organisation, in partnership with the Carers Strategy Group and Commissioner, develops the service accordingly.

In 2023-24, 283 grants were given to carers to support a wide range of needs and ensure that they can continue in their caring role. Demand for grants continues to be strong in the current climate.

*"My washing machine broke down; I was washing everything by hand. This was causing lots of pain in my back and taking so much time. The grant from NEWCIS meant I could get a new one. I do my Mum and Dad's laundry as well because they are both unwell it was a huge task but so much easier now. Thank you so much."*

Carers report that the emotional impact of caring has a significant effect on them and their mental health, potentially causing anxiety, stress and depression. Counselling services are in high demand and are always booked up in advance. Carers have stated that they have little access to any talking therapy from NHS services and that this is often their only opportunity for professional support in this way.

*"I was very worried about my own health and my mind. Since finding out about my husband's diagnosis. I just have not been coping at all and nothing helped me. Having received counselling, I am in a much better place. Sandra has helped me understand what's going on for me and how I can take control and make my own ways to cope. It's nothing short of life saving. Thank you!"*

Carers drop-ins, coffee mornings and activities continue to be popular and are well attended. In 2023-24, 263 carers attended a mixture of weekly drop-in sessions, online forums, and information sharing events in Flintshire and a further 356 carers attended activities away from their caring role.

See appendix 1 (d) for a more in depth case study from relating to the Carers Well-being support contract.

*"The Christmas Party was fabulous! I met so many nice people and forgot about all my problems for an afternoon, I cannot thank you enough"*

See appendix 1 (e) for the NEWCIS newsletter with information on the wide range of support, activities and events this year.

### 2.3 "Carers Training" contract

#### **Currently held by NEWCIS.**

NEWCIS provide carers with a tailored training and specialist information that is carer-led and will support carers in maintaining their caring role. The training will focus on key areas such as practical help, well-being support, specialist / condition specific and preventative skill building, to provide carers with the right knowledge, techniques and skills. The service is delivered in partnership with other carer service providers, specialist and training providers.

Training continues to be an important consideration for carers. In 2023-24, 495 carers were able to access training through NEWCIS on a wide range of topics. Training is delivered in a wide range of ways to suit the carer, utilising both in person, online and written formats.

Training on Lasting Power of Attorney is one course that remains consistently popular with carers with the outcomes from this being positively felt going forward.

*"I have attended a number of courses with NEWCIS, I have learnt a lot from them and had the chance to ask questions in a friendly setting"*

*"You have helped me understand my wife and her condition in a way that no one else has been able to. I understand more about how to support her better and it means I am getting less frustrated. Thank you"*

## 2.5 “Carers Opportunities, Participation & Employment (COPE)” contract

### **Currently held by NEWCIS.**

NEWCIS provide carers with a bespoke and dedicated support to empower them to take forward their learning and development goals; this may include supporting carers to access further education / training, volunteering opportunities, work placements or employment.

In addition, the service builds strong working relationships with key partners such as Job Centre Plus, educational / training providers, local businesses, communities and public/ third sector organisations to develop a range of carers initiatives that all support the aim of identifying and supporting carers within the community and workplace.

This contract provides 26 hours a week in support and in 2023-24, NEWCIS worked with 100 carers to provide support in relation to their own learning, development and employment goals. Due to the increased intensity of caring roles in recent years the number of carers report that they have less ability and capacity to undertake paid employment and therefore the number of carers accessing this support to find employment has decreased. Despite this, 16 carers have been supported to find paid employment.

*“I want to thank you for the support. I didn't know where to start with my request for adapted working. The advice you gave helped me speak to my manager and plan for the future”*

The demands of this project have evolved and demand for support to remain in employment and improve relationships and understanding of the caring role have become a more significant.

For a more in-depth case study of in relation to the COPE contract please see appendix 1 (f).

## 2.6 “Bridging the Gap” contract

### **Currently held by NEWCIS.**

Bridging the Gap Respite Scheme was launched in April 2013 as a six-month pilot scheme on behalf of Flintshire County Council to work with partners as a co-produced model between the local authority, the voluntary sector and private entities.

It was created to give carers choice and options about who could provide them care and support, and at a time and place that they choose. The scheme also made provision for times of emergency/crisis and allowed for a quick and flexible approach to delivering a service when carers needed it most.

How carers access Bridging The Gap:

- Eligible carers, upon completion of a What Matters assessment, are provided with a voucher code for £300 valid for 6 months for flexible short term breaks.
- In the case of an emergency a code is allocated on the day and the needs assessment facilitated when the emergency care has been delivered and the situation is more settled.
- Carers are then given a booklet on the range of services available to them.
- Carers then contact the provider of their choice quoting their voucher code and arrange the respite they need.

Examples where Bridging the Gap has been a bespoke respite option for carers:

Mrs A requested respite for her husband who is living with dementia, but she wanted to ensure the respite was linked to his interests and hobbies. His interests included visiting the gym. NEWCIS approached a small local gym that had undergone Dementia training to see if they would offer sessions for the person living with dementia. The gym accepted these sessions enabling the carer to have respite that worked for both the carer and cared for.

T is only 18 years of age and has been supporting his mum as a young carer for a number of years. T was offered the chance to go to Holland for work experience. At first, he thought he would have to refuse this offer, due to his caring role, however due a Bridging the Gap respite grant was given and he was able to go, safe in the knowledge that his mum was being looked after in his absence for a couple of hours per day. In his own words, T described how he would have "worried himself sick" if he had gone away without this in place. His mum had a great time chatting away with the outside carers and looked forward to their visits. She had the chance to play games with them and enjoyed tea and biscuits with them and T said that the work experience was invaluable to him in his career opportunities.

Mr I has been poorly for some time with heart disease and other physical health conditions. His wife cares for him around the clock. After an assessment, his wife received support for both her and her husband to have respite from what she described as a pressured situation and to take a break from each other.

Mr I used a Bridging the Gap grant to go to NEWCIS's Prestatyn Holiday House with his sister who provided care over a long weekend, whilst his wife used a grant to fund an overnight break at a Spa with her sister in Yorkshire. Both had the chance of a change of scenery and an opportunity to have their own individual break that was meaningful to them. Mr I's wife reported feeling refreshed and calmer and was also thrilled at the opportunity to access this support in the future.

There has been a significant increase in demand for this service in recent years and has had to be bolstered by Welsh Government's Carers Respite Funds to meet the anticipated spike in demand for respite services caused by the impact of the pandemic on the mental and physical health of carers.

**Family Bridging the Gap** aims to provide flexibility to you as a carer and open up options that you could consider to be helpful to you and provide you with a break. The Family Bridging the Gap can be used to help with travel costs to enable a family member to offer you some support around the caring role. The support could be with practical tasks such as shopping, cleaning, cooking, or walking the dog or they could help out with your caring role on a day trip out or a breakaway. Expenses can be claimed against additional meals whilst your family member is with you, fuel costs, or entrance fees to a day out.

This part of Bridging the Gap was extremely valuable during the pandemic as carers were enabled to ask for help from family members and make sure that they were not out of pocket if the family member came to stay for the week.

285 carers used Bridging the Gap in 2023/24 of which 67 were family Bridging the Gap, this included 8 young carers using Family Bridging the Gap. This option has lowered the average cost being utilised to £213 per carer vs. previous years which was up to £290. The Family option has enabled the number of carers accessing the scheme to increase.

The trend has continued as we left the pandemic, and it has now become more commonplace to use the Family Bridging the Gap option. This option has helped us to enable carers to still gain some respite and support where agencies are struggling to provide the hours due to staff shortages. This option also supports carers with the isolation they have experienced and supported the carer in sharing what their role entails. As a result of the experience, carers have reported that families are offering more help more regularly.

As demand for Bridging the Gap increases, NEWCIS are having to work harder to ensure that available funds are distributed fairly and proportionately. It has become more challenging to ensure that there are funds available to meet demand throughout the year and it has not always been possible to meet demand, however as part of this review, it has been requested that consideration be given to the value of each Bridging the Gap code. Carers are reporting that the allocation of £300 is just not going far enough given the increase in the cost of care.

It has been reported that privately sourced care has increased in recent years from £12-15 per hour (25-30 hours care) to £28-£33 per hour (6-11 hours care). Clearly this increase is impacting on the number of hours the £300 allocation will achieve. The availability of Microcare providers and Family Bridging the Gap has helped with this, however for those in need to actual care agency support rather than purely supervision, there is an impact.

It has been requested that as part of this review, consideration be given to whether it is appropriate to increase the standard allocation for Bridging the Gap from £300 where it has been for many years. However, as budgets are unlikely to rise for this new contract period, if this was to go ahead it would likely have an impact on the number of carers that Bridging the Gap is able to support meaning that it would have to be more challenging of carers needs to make sure that this was being utilised in the cases where it is needed most.

- Option 1: Continue with the £300 allocation for Bridging the Gap – now with the facility for Carers Direct Payments to be used, this could follow on from Bridging the Gap for a longer-term solution, however Carers Direct Payments do have resource implications, requiring more resource in the set up and maintenance than Bridging the Gap.
- Option 2: Increase the standard allocation, while this would address the problem of the increase in care costs, it would mean that on a static budget, less carers would be able to be supported.
- Option 3: Allocation of amount based on intended usage i.e., a smaller budget for those who are not looking to use Bridging the Gap for agency care which could support a higher allocation for those who are looking to use traditional services.
- Option 4: Where the option for Bridging the Gap does not look likely to be able to be a sustainable solution due to the cost implications, it is by passed and an application is made for a Carers Direct Payment.

Whichever option is agreed, it does need to be acknowledged that under current circumstances, even in increasing the allocation to £750 would only get the carer approximately 22-26 hours per year to use in respite support.

Bridging the Gap as a whole last year gave respite options to 285 carers which included 8 young carers who used the family option 2023/24.

## 2.7 “Respite Services” contract

**Currently held by Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads Care Service.**



Flintshire Social Services commission a carer respite service for carers. This service provides a sitting and domiciliary care service within Flintshire. This service is accessed via Crossroads. The respite is currently available to those that have high demanding caring roles, this includes carers of adults with mental health problems, carers of children with disabilities, long term illnesses or a mental health condition and carers of those living with dementia. This service is offered for a 12-week period followed by signposting to SPOA to explore ongoing respite options.

While the feedback from individuals who have used this service is good, due to previous funding streams and separate commissioning processes, this service currently operates independently from the rest of the services. Therefore, consideration should be given to enhancing parity in allocation for this service through aligning the pathway to access this support as part of this review and recommissioning process.

*I would be devastated if this support stopped, and most importantly so would my son. He really looks forward to the time he spends with this amazing person and the precious time it allows me is so valuable a part of my caring role.*

## 2.8 “Carers of individuals with mental health/substance misuse issues” contract

Until recently (March 2024), Adferiad were commissioned locally to provide assessment and support for any carer of an individual with mental health and / or a substance misuse problem, including undiagnosed and those already known to services, living in Flintshire.

In contrast to current trends with Mental Health issues becoming more prominent and prevalent in the current climate, while the service was operational, it was significantly underutilised and on investigation a number of other services were providing better value for carers. The results of our survey of carers in Flintshire showed that 19% are carers of those with mental health issues. Therefore, careful consideration needs to be given through this review as to how best to support carers of those with mental health conditions and substance misuse issues.

Of the referrals received through the Carers Gateway, 109 carers identified as having mental health issues themselves and 126 carers were looking after a loved one with mental health issues. The total number support via NEWCIS last year was 235.

## 2.9 “Carers of individuals with a Neurological Condition” contract

### **Currently held by the Neuro Therapy Centre.**

This service, provided by the Neuro Therapy Centre (NTC) on behalf of the Council, provides respite and well-being support for carers of individuals with a neurological condition. The service has a range of well-being support that carers can utilise, such as:

### **Carers Stay Physically Healthy**

Encouraging carers to focus on their own physical health and to access our daily exercise sessions which include:

- Supervised personal-fitness sessions in fully kitted-out accessible Gym, focusing on individual needs.
- Complementary therapies including Sports Massage, Acupuncture, Reflexology sessions.

- On demand on-line 'Work-out-at-Home' sessions created in-house
- Live virtual exercise sessions delivered by our Therapies Team
- Outreach exercise opportunities in partnership with local leisure services

### **Support for mental health and Well-being**

Encouraging carers to make time to focus on the own mental health, and the following services are available for them to access when they need to:

- Counselling providing early intervention.
- Listening Programme – structured peer support provided by trained NTC volunteers.
- Range of weekly condition specific and special interest support groups.
- Library of on-demand, on-line self-care videos
- Sustaining Caring Role

### **Information, Advice, Assistance and Guidance from Support staff:**

- Listening Ear
- Connecting Carers
- Awareness raising of right to 'Carers' Needs Assessment'.
- Signposting
- 'Keep-in-Touch' calls for most vulnerable.
- Training for Carers - Coping with Caring, Mindfulness and relaxation, Manual Handling
- Programme of social events throughout the year – for both the carer and their loved one

### **'Me time'**

Feedback from our Carers shows the importance of having 'me time' whilst their loved-one is being supported by NTC. This gives carers the opportunity to:

- Go shopping or meet with friends.
- Have some quiet time for themselves in our Neuro Café.
- Chat with other people who empathise with their situation, enabling them to share experiences, learning from each other.
- Generally relax in a friendly environment.

34% of carers who responded to our survey stated that they were a carer for someone with a neurological condition. Responses to our survey and also that of the Neuro Therapy Centre have said that they find the service invaluable, even more so as the COVID-19 pandemic ended and access to NHS treatments and facilities has become harder and with longer waiting times.

Mr S is in his 70s and cares for his wife who has Parkinson's Disease.

*"It can be hard caring for someone with Parkinson's and sometimes it can be lonely. My friends don't really understand what my life is like now, and that it sometimes isn't easy to stick to plans. I really enjoy having the opportunity to relax and read my book while my wife is having her therapies at the Centre. That opportunity to know she is being supported and I can have a moment for me is wonderful. The support workers are on hand if I need advice and we have a good laugh and a chat. Having other people around who understand, and I can turn to for support and advice is great. People at the Centre really understand the situation you are in and can relate whether that is the staff or other carers."*

## 2.10 “Support for Parent Carers” contract

### **Currently held by DAFFODILS.**

DAFFODILS provide recreation activities and planned trips for children and young people with physical or mental disabilities, their carers and wider families to enjoy time together; these activities seek to integrate families into the local community, create friendships and peer support opportunities. In 2023-24, DAFFODILS held 165 activities and events. DAFFODILS have been a support network for parent carers of children and young people with disabilities within Flintshire for over 24 years.

Holding an average of 13/14 sessions per month enables parent carers to receive consistent support therefore reducing social isolation, improving confidence and self-esteem, improving physical and mental wellbeing and providing a fun, positive whole family interaction. Lots of the activities take place in local leisure centres, so parent carers can engage in physical activities like swimming, as the pools are exclusively hired 3 times per month. Monthly wellbeing sessions are held and are parent carer led. These can consist of coffee and cake mornings, lunchtime meals or wellbeing walks in Wepre, Loggerheads or similar venues. Short break excursions are organised and take place during all the school/college breaks to ensure support is available to parent carers during the most stressful and challenging times.

There are currently 1046 families registered with DAFFODILS and of these, 260 families actively engage with the services provided on a regular basis and 1002 individuals, which is made up of parent carers, young carers siblings and disabled young people were supported last year within DAFFODILS.

DAFFODILS received over 180 referrals from various agencies like Early Help Hub, social prescribers, Health visitors, TAF, schools and resource units during 2023/2024. An increase of 10% on the previous year.

There was a significant amount of positive feedback in our survey for the support that carers and their families receive from DAFFODILS.

*“Daffodils is a place for my child to be himself. He is able to express himself without fear of judgment or prejudice which he has to deal with a lot in the real world. Being around & supported by others that are in the same/similar situation as yourself is invaluable. Daffodils staff make you feel extremely welcome & part of the community.”*

## 2.11 “Young Carers” contract

### **Currently held by NEWCIS**

Young carers are children who help look after a member of the family (can include siblings) who is sick, disabled or has mental health problems, or is misusing drugs or alcohol.

Their day-to-day responsibilities often include cooking, cleaning, shopping, providing nursing and personal care and giving emotional support.

With so many adult responsibilities, young carers often miss out on opportunities that other children have to play and learn. Many struggle educationally and are often bullied for being ‘different’. They can become isolated, with no relief from the pressures at home, and no chance to enjoy a normal

childhood. They are often afraid to ask for help as they fear letting the family down or being taken into care. So, it's really important they know we can support them.

The Welsh Government defines young carers as being carers who are under the age of 18 and the Code of Practice for Part 3 defines young adult carers as being aged 16-25. According to the 2011 census there are 29,155 carers under the age of 25 in Wales. Wales has the highest proportion of carers under the age of 18 in the UK. It is likely that the actual number of young people in Wales caring is significantly higher, it is estimated that it could be as much as 4 times higher.

As stated previously, the number of Young Carers currently registered with NEWCIS Young Carers in Flintshire is 472, this has increased by 290% since 2019 and with the work currently being undertaken particularly in schools, this number looks to continue to rise. In 2020/21, 54 Children and Young People received a Carers Needs Assessment which throughout the period of the contract increased year on year to 94 in 2023/24.

Being a young or young adult carer can place a significant strain on children and young people. WG statistics show that the difference in attainment between carers and non-carers in exams is around nine lower grades (i.e., the difference between achieving nine Cs and nine Ds). Young adult carers are also more likely not to be in education, employment or training and are 4 times more likely to drop out of college or university. Young carers are more likely to have poor health than those without caring responsibilities. Young carers provide essential support to their families and loved ones and Flintshire County Council greatly values them for their commitment and selflessness.

The new Young Carers Support Service launched on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and is being delivered by NEWCIS Young Carers. The service aims to provide a single and open access point for all young carers up to the age of 25 years old, their families, professionals and partner organisations. The service is a one stop shop for a range of universal information, advice, signposting, access to assessments, one to one support (which is person-centred, outcome focused, proportionate) and well-being support.

Following a Carers Needs Assessment, there is a wide range of support and activities available to young carers through NEWCIS Young Carers. Weekly after school drop-in sessions and activities provide young carers with regular opportunities to take some time away from their caring role. At weekends and during school holidays a programme of activities and events including for example, forest schools, bowling, day trips to the zoo or the beach mean the young carers are able to spend some time with other young carers and do things that they wouldn't normally be able to do.

In 2023-24, NEWCIS Young Carers also raised funds to be able to take groups of young carers on camping trips and were able to use this to support a group to attend the WG Young Carers Festival in Builth Wells. Other residential trips have included the Chill Factor and Trafford Centre in Manchester.

The NEWCIS Young Carers Service offers support for young carers in their education by building links with schools through an accreditation scheme. Staff are involved in training sessions, increasing awareness of young carers, ensuring that they are able to be identified, recognising the additional challenges they may face and considering what further support needs they may have. Through this accreditation process, not only is awareness being raised amongst staff, but also throughout the school community with pupils learning about young carers, what some of their responsibilities could entail and what they can do to support each other. This awareness raising has been really very successful and the pupils at the Alun School in Mold has voted to support NEWCIS Young Carers as their charity of the year in 2023-24 The money raised by the school was then spent on additional tuition for young carers who felt they need it in the run up to their exams.

Further to supporting young carers with their traditional education at school, NEWCIS Young Carers offers young carers access to additional training and development opportunities such as first aid and food hygiene courses. Young carers have said that they appreciate these as something they can use both personally, but also to build a CV for their future.

In March 2021, the new North Wales Young Carers ID card was launched to give recognition to the amazing young carers in North Wales. The card provides photo-identification for any young carer aged 18 or under who would like one. This will enable them to easily identify themselves to professionals without having to share personal details about their caring role. In recognition of the role young carers play in providing support to their loved ones, NEWCIS Young Carers have been working to introduce additional benefits for our young carers, including discounts in local shops and restaurants, free and discounted access to leisure facilities. NEWCIS Young Carers have been instrumental in driving the success of this card through their work with schools and youth groups throughout Flintshire. To date there are now more than 400 young carers registered for a Young Carers ID Card.

NEWCIS Young Carers have developed a “shop” to support young carers with the cost of living. The “shop” (at no cost to the young carer) has provided school equipment, toiletries, fleece Oodles and blankets, hats and gloves in the Winter, suncream and sunglasses in the Summer, sanitary products, gardening tools and seeds to grow plants and vegetables for their gardens. Young carers have given feedback that this is something that they really value as they are often unable to afford to buy many of these items in their family budgets. Additionally, NEWCIS Young Carers has formed a partnership “Hey Girls” who are a charity providing sanitary products including tampons pads and period underwear.

*Comment from YC review “I attend NEWCIS young carers group every other week and love every minute of being there. It's a happy loving space where I can relax and have fun with friends who understand and staff that are the happiest and most loving ever.”*

*The parent added “Right now, the support S is receiving from NEWCIS is amazing. It's an all-rounder...”*

## 2.12 Support for carers of someone with a complex, long term or terminal illness / CHC (Continuing Healthcare)

**Funded by Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board (BCUHB), the contract is currently held by NEWCIS.**

NEWCIS support carers who are supporting individuals with a complex, chronic or terminal illness with a period of intense support. This service has been secured in Flintshire following the successful bid to Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board (BCUHB) in 2009 and is funded entirely under the CHC funding stream. The service was developed in partnership between Flintshire Social Services and NEWCIS. The funding for this service has continued ever since under this partnership, with BCUHB having recently regarded this service as ‘best practice’ and a service that each local authority areas should have.

While this contract is currently within the scope for recommissioning following this review, as it is fully funded by BCUHB, the decision to recommission is dependent on their ability to commit to the service for the full contract period.

Feedback has told us that this role is vital and has been instrumental in supporting carers to navigate the complex CHC process. The support provided helps with understanding the criteria for CHC via the Discharge Support Tool (DST) and support to attend these meetings, liaising with the CHC team, district nurses, care providers and care home managers. Carers have said that it has supported them significantly in ensuring that their voice is heard through the process.

*"I was scared and overwhelmed by CHC process, having support to guide me through was very much needed"*

*"With NEWCIS I felt I had someone on my side fighting for my voice to be heard. I would not have coped with this process alongside the emotional toll that my husband's accident had taken without support from NEWCIS"*

For a more in-depth case study on the support that this provides, please see appendix 1 (g).

Through this project, NEWCIS, in partnership with BCUHB, Flintshire County Council and the Welsh Government are also currently involved in developing an IUT (Independent User Trust) for a carer whose son meets the criteria for CHC funding to support his needs, however as a 46-year-old man didn't want to move to live in a nursing home and would prefer to remain at home with his mother and family.

The aim is to develop a system to allow CHC funded care to be delivered at home whilst following the legal framework required by health. This would support the carer (and future carers) in a person-centred and individual way, being able to have their loved ones at home and also accessing while being able to access the care and support needed under the CHC criteria.

### 2.13 Marleyfield Dementia Saturday Respite

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic NEWCIS were commissioned to administrate and promote carer respite for a cared for that is living with dementia within the council run Marleyfield Day Service on a Saturday for a period 12 weeks.

This service was referral based, where NEWCIS worked in partnership with Flintshire Social Services to provide respite for a cared for living with dementia within the council run Marleyfield Day Service on a Saturday. The carers details are provided to Marleyfield Day Service for an assessment of cared for living with dementia to access the service. The assessment is completed by a senior care worker that manages the respite service.

The service was halted due to the pandemic and the funds for this redistributed to provide other carers services that were able to operate during this time. Since the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions the service has not been in demand and funds have continued to support the provision of respite through our regular in-house day services at Croes Atti Care Home. The pathway to access this support is through a Social Care Assessment by the Social Worker.

Under the recommissioning process consideration needs to be given to the utilisation of these funds going forward.

## Chapter 3 – Out of scope services supported by Flintshire County Council

The following section of this report covers services that are supported through Flintshire County Council, however, are not funded through the Carers Strategy Fund and are not due for re-commissioning at present. Therefore, while it is important to understand the support provided, they are not able to be immediately influenced by the outcome of this review.

### 3.1 Carers Needs Assessments – Internal

While the majority of Carers Needs Assessments are carried out by NEWCIS, where a Social Worker is involved with an assessment for the cared for, the expectation is that they should, “in the first instance” be the one to carry out an assessment of the needs of the carer to be able to gain a holistic view of a situation and assess the need for support for both accordingly.

However, in reality increasingly carers have been referred by Social Workers to NEWCIS for a Carers Needs Assessment. In 2023/24 22 assessments were completed by Flintshire County Council Social Workers (Adults only).

Work is currently being undertaken to promote the use of holistic assessments that consider the needs of the cared for alongside the needs of the carer rather than independently. Therefore, the number of Carers Needs Assessments completed in-house is likely to grow.

### 3.1 Dementia Carers Support and Community Engagement Project

#### **Currently held by NEWCIS**

This project is led by third sector partner North-East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS). People living with dementia need to be supported by communities to maintain maximum independence and to live well. There is often a low level of awareness of how best to support individuals living with dementia. People living with dementia and their carers can lose confidence in participating in community-based activities, increasing risk of isolation.

This project provides support to unpaid carers of people living with dementia through Carers Needs Assessments and ongoing support. NEWCIS Well-being Officers support the implementation of creative conversations to identify ‘what matters’ to the person living with dementia. This facilitates the development of a person-centred plan.

The service provides signposting and information to enable people recently diagnosed to access a network of support and engagement activities. NEWCIS work closely with the local authority to develop dementia friendly communities and to implement the priorities of the North Wales and Flintshire Dementia Strategies. NEWCIS provide direct support to community groups and organisations to offer activities and events that are fully accessible to people living with dementia and their carers and families.

The project provides support to carers and family members to ensure they are informed and supported to make decisions for the care of their loved ones. This project supports the development of networks

of support. The third sector workforce receive training and development, to ensure that high standards of care and support are implemented, with the use of assistive technology where appropriate.

The funding for this project is currently allocated through RIF (Regional Integration Funds) and is split with 32.6% spent delivering Carers Needs Assessments and 67.4% focuses on delivering the strategic direction for dementia services, activities and raising awareness.

The initial intention for this project was not to deliver Carers Needs Assessments but to focus on delivering elements of the Dementia Strategy for Flintshire, however much of this work was put on hold during the pandemic due to restrictions imposed. As we exited the pandemic, popularity of these services was slow to pick up due to the vulnerability of the carers and their cared for. In contrast the demand on Carers Needs Assessments increased as more people had found themselves to be in a caring role through the pandemic period and were now requiring support. An interim measure was agreed to support the completion of Needs Assessments utilising some of the resource from this funding to ensure that carers were supported, and the funds were being used in the best way appropriate to the developing situation.

However as stated earlier, the demand for Carers Needs Assessments has remained high and this project has continued to support this which is now having an impact on delivery of elements of the Dementia Strategy, therefore again, allocation of resource for the completion of Carers Needs Assessments must be considered carefully.

### 3.2 Direct Payments (Flintshire County Council)

Recently, work has been undertaken to broaden the use of Direct Payments for Carers in their own right. Similarly to Bridging the Gap, a Direct Payment can be used to arrange support that is right for the person and their lifestyle.

Having a Direct Payment means that carers can have more choice over how the money is spent, have greater control over the support they choose and a far greater range of services and support to choose from, meaning they can think about what is important to them and make arrangements that fit in with their preferences, priorities and lifestyle.

The number of carers accessing support via a Direct Payment is growing and there has been a wide range of uses. It is important to note that no two Direct Payment arrangements will be the same. The scope of what can be achieved with a Direct Payment is unlimited. The options deliver more personalised support to individuals and in many cases cost less than the traditional offer of services but may take more time to set up.

A couple enjoyed traveling around in their campervan, but the individual's needs made this difficult. An Occupational Therapist assessed the campervan and the individual's needs. The couple purchased the equipment they needed to ensure the van was accessible and received a Direct Payment to employ a domiciliary care agency to support individual's needs whilst the partner went fishing.



A wife who had low level care needs had to go for an operation on her foot. Doctors explained that she would need to rest for a full week once the operation was done and not to load bear. She is caring for her husband with Dementia. Bridging the Gap was used to fund care calls for her husband over the week and her brother also helped at night and first thing. The carer could then rest at her sister's home where she had family to help with her recuperation and support.

### 3.3 Arosfa

Flintshire County Council works with Action for Children under a Collaboration Agreement. The services delivered include short breaks and respite to children and families with disabilities through their specialist facility 'Arosfa'. Foster Carers are also receiving training so they are able to provide short breaks for families of children with disabilities.

Arosfa is a well-established service providing short term breaks / respite for children with disabilities. The unused left wing at Arosfa has been refurbished to provide two additional places at the facility. These places bring capacity to accommodate up to five children using flexible care and shared care models.

This additional service, two new places, are in addition to the current short break respite provision for up to three children at any one time. Together the plans enable support for a maximum of five children at any one time.

The provision of an additional two places for shared care respite forms part of our Strategic intent to reduce reliance on expensive out of county placements and will enable Flintshire to support children and young people within the county. This increases the current capacity Flintshire has to also offer and more respite care provision within our vision for strategic ambition.

### 3.4 Action for Children (AFC) Creative Respite

Social Services have commissioned AFC to provide respite and breaks for families of children with disabilities. AFC staff will meet with parents and discuss the type of respite or break that would suit them. This might include having support for the family on a day out, a short family break, funding to pay admission fees to an activity, or anything the family feel would be beneficial, providing it is something AFC are able to facilitate.

### 3.5 Families First Disability Consortia

#### **Currently held by NEWCIS**

NEWCIS Young Carers support young carers under 25 in Flintshire as part of the main "Young Carers" contract discussed in section 2. However, through the Families First Disability Consortia, additional funding has been made available to NEWCIS to enable them to provide additional specialist support to Young Carers with a disability. Through this funding, NEWCIS have committed to working with 18 young carers with disabilities per year and a minimum of 5 young carers to assist in youth club, activities and events across the consortium and gain volunteering hours that can support Welsh Baccalaureate/Foundation skills challenge.

## 3.6 Families First Young People's Consortia

### Currently held by NEWCIS

As stated previously, NEWCIS Young Carers support young carers under 25 in Flintshire as part of the main "Young Carers" contract discussed in section 2. However, in addition to this, NEWCIS receives additional funding to deliver 1:1 advice, guidance assistance and bespoke issue-based training to a minimum of 30 Young Carers aged 5 to 18 each year.

## 3.7 Daffodils

In addition to the funding received for the services in section 2, the Flintshire County Council Youth Support Grant provides funding for a weekly Youth Club session (48 sessions per year) for disabled children young people and their unpaid carers. This weekly event enables unpaid parent carers the ability to meet weekly with fellow parent carers for a break whilst their disabled children and young people take part in activities within the session.

## 3.8 Day services and Work Opportunities

### 3.8.1 Learning Disabilities

**Hwb Cyfle** is a purpose-built day service centre based in Queensferry which opened in 2019 to replace the former Glanrafon day centre. The premises and service model are designed to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple disabilities. The premises has workshop spaces, multi-use rooms, a sensory room, a Changing Places facility, sensory garden, and a café.

The current service operates five small business models offering focused learning opportunities, skills development, and meaningful activities for people with a wide range of learning disabilities, mental health support needs and autism.

**Abbey Upcycling** – The service was previously known as Abbey Metals and the service was reconfigured in 2020, Abbey Upcycling is a workshop in Flint which supports up to 15 people per day. The site is split into three primary projects – upcycling, woodworking and recycling electrical components.

**Hwb Dyffryn** – The service opened in January 2021 and operates from Greenfield Business Centre. The site provides supports across five principal areas which comprise of a salon, an upcycling room, a craft room, art and crafts and an IT suite.

**Tri Ffordd** – This is a horticulture project based on Bretton, which supports individuals across three main areas: ground maintenance, growing produce such as hanging baskets and house plants and also logging from sustainably harvested trees. The Tri Ffordd service will relocate to the new Maes Gwern integrated service hub when it becomes operational in 2025.

**Growing Places** – The service offering is similar to that of Tri Ffordd and projects undertaken at the site include ground maintenance, growing produce such as hanging baskets and vegetables and also woodworking. The Growing Places service will relocate to the new Maes Gwern integrated service hub when it becomes operational in 2025.

**Caffi Dai** - The catering establishment is based at Rowley's Drive in Shotton and was formerly known as Rowley's Pantry. The cafe was reopened in June 2022 following a programme of refurbishment and has since been renamed Caffi Dai.

**Work Options** - provides support for adults to gain employment opportunities within their local communities and this is done via three primary support services Supported Employment Service – The service utilises employability coaches who work with the individuals supported to use vocational profiling to support people to build experience, apply for jobs, attend interviews, and gain sustainable employment. When an individual gain employment, the Employability Coaches provide support people with travel training, inductions, and worksite training, and assist the employer with reasonable adjustments. They will also provide long term support to the employer and the person supported to ensure long term employment is sustainable.

**Supported Volunteering** – The service offering is similar to the Supported Employment in that the team of Employability Coaches support individuals to find and maintain long term volunteering opportunities with third sector or public organisations.

**Clocktower CIC** are a Community Interest Company that provide a variety of services and therapies and deliver Learning Disability day and work services. The primary service is a day service based at a centre near Mostyn which is the service that the majority of attendees to the Clocktower services attend. The service also provides evening and weekend support and activities and some work opportunities services. Clocktower also provides transport as part of their service offering and this incorporated into the costs for their daily rates.

### 3.8.2 Mental Health Services

Double-Click Design and Print CIC are a Community Interest Company based in Shotton that operates as a professional design, marketing and print service that also provides support for individuals with mental health support needs.

The service supports adults with mental health support needs in a supported employment environment and specialise in graphic design, marketing and print services scheme service in order to give people an opportunity to experience a working environment. The service generates employment, work experience, training and volunteering opportunities within a supportive and inclusive environment for those who face significant barriers to employment.

### 3.8.3 Physical Disabilities

**Gorwellion Newydd** provide a support service for individual with Physical Disabilities (formerly Physical Disabilities and Sensory impairments (PDSI) according to details on the former contract / Service Level Agreement) based in Shotton. The service provides an opportunity for individuals to access a service that provides support to develop individualised programmes to support with rehabilitation programmes to develop daily living skills, access local leisure, educational and training resources and offer indirect respite services for carers.

### 3.8.4 Older People

At Croes Atti, one of our in-house care homes, specialist day care opportunities are jointly provided with health for Older People living with dementia. These provide an opportunity for carers to have respite and for the cared for, offers opportunities for social engagement and a meaningful and varied programme of activities that aim to promote and maintain independence and skills. The provision is also an opportunity to undertake further assessment, following which any identified support can be provided, maintaining the individual who is living with dementia in the community for a longer period of time.

### 3.9 Overnight Respite services within Care Homes (Older People)

All 3 of our in-house residential care homes support with planned overnight respite care for Older People, tailored to the individual's need. The service is flexible in the number of nights that can be booked ranging from a couple of nights to two weeks. All individuals who stay with us for respite care will have their own person-centred support plan and will be allocated a key worker.

Where respite has been agreed by panel, Social workers/care co-ordinators will arrange this respite locally. Limited Emergency respite is also available through this process.

### 3.10 Microcarers

Micro-Care has strong partnerships with local carers services to provide respite services to carers across the area. Through their "Bridging the Gap" scheme, carers are able to access grant support to purchase respite Micro-Care provision for their family members, which allows people to have a short period of rest from their caring role while knowing that the support provided will be from a trusted source. The project team and NEWCIS work closely together to maintain a list of trusted providers to ensure that those utilising the grant can do so from Micro-Carers who have already been assessed as having sufficient quality to provide services.

The majority of provision is 1-1 however there is also a Micro-Care provider who runs a day service that enables people with dementia to attend a group session for around 6 hours that gives respite as well as aiming to meet the outcomes of the individuals attending.

### 3.11 Advocacy

#### **Adults**

From January 2024, Advocacy Services North East Wales (ASNEW) has been commissioned to provide advocacy services across both Flintshire and Wrexham. The service aims to ensure vulnerable people in Flintshire and Wrexham have the opportunity to convey their opinions and make informed decisions on circumstances that will improve their lives.

Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) services are able to support with:

- Decisions made about a person's care
- The upholding of a person's legal rights
- The quality of care being provided

This includes (but not limited to):

- Working alongside the people to find the best possible solution.
- Supporting people to be in equal partner to their Care and Support Plan and service requirements.
- Attending meetings with people and speaking on their behalf if they want them to.
- Supporting people to have a voice in the process they are currently involved in.
- To enable people to make challenges to things that effect their life.

Community Advocacy supports individuals with situations that are outside of the involvement with statutory services and enables people to access non-statutory advocacy for specific single issues. The purpose of this service is preventative to ensure that people are able to participate and access support that they require and that is focused on their outcomes without the need for statutory social care support.

Advanced Brighter Futures also deliver a Self-Advocacy project in Flintshire and Wrexham. This has given the opportunity for a fresh new look at how to empower people to advocate for themselves and prevent the need to seek statutory advocacy support in the future. Advanced Brighter Futures have set out to re-evaluate the existing provision in Flintshire and codesign and relaunch a brand-new service in April 2024.

### **Young Carers**

Young Carers are often supported with informal advocacy by their parents, however there are occasions where this is inappropriate.

Formal advocacy is available for Young Carers through both their school staff and also the Young Carers Service, both of which will build up a relationship with the Young Carer as their involvement progresses.

Children's Independent Professional Advocacy is commissioned as part of a regional contract through Tros Gynnal. However, this only covers the active offer of advocacy for looked after children and those going through child protection proceedings. There is no provision for young people outside of this remit under this contract.

While it is reportedly unusual that there are cases where Young Carers require Independent Professional Advocacy Services. Under the current service provision this would have to be spot purchased as it does not come under any of the current contracts.

### **3.12 Flintshire Local Voluntary Council's (FLVC) Social Prescription Service**

Social Prescribing is about what can benefit and help improve people's Health and Well-being. It can enable people to gain more choice and control over what matters and what happens to them.

FLVC's service is phone-based support, and people can be referred into the service for lots of different reasons, e.g. they may be feeling socially isolated, struggling to find support in their caring role, experiencing mental health problems, the team will do all they can to help find the right activities and community services that can offer support, help and advice.

### **3.13 NEWCIS Hospital Discharge Facilitation Service**

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) funded the provision of a Hospital Discharge Facilitation Service for Carers across North Wales- carers Outreach do the West and NEWCIS the East.

NEWCIS works with carers, Community & Secondary Care professionals and other Third Sector organisations within the integrated health communities of North Wales (West, Central and East).

To ensure the needs of carers are considered across Community & Secondary Carer NEWCIS & Carers Outreach delivers an outreach service within hospital settings across North Wales through the provision of Hospital Carer Facilitators to support unpaid carers throughout the discharge process of the cared for person.

A wide range of carers of all ages will be supported, including young carers ensuring the differences in the needs of carers of people with different conditions and issues are met

The aims of the service is to support Unpaid Carers by all professions within Community & Secondary Care, pro-actively signpost to third sector support or local authority social services for further information, support, or to obtain a Carers Needs Assessment (as appropriate), as part of the patient's discharge process recognising the holistic needs of the unpaid carer.

The service will also support Community & Secondary Care settings (all professions) to become carer aware (understanding the needs of young and adult carers.) engaging with unpaid carers from ethnic minority communities, older carers, LGBTQ+ carers, those with disabilities and unpaid carers whose first language is not English).

The Facilitators will be proactively involved in the discharge plans for the patient ensuring that carers voices are heard and will encourage carers to be become more digitally aware.

### 3.14 Dementia Centre

Utilising RIF Funds, Crossroads (Carers Trust) have been commissioned to open a Dementia Centre in Flintshire that is aimed to be the initial point of call for those concerned about their memory in the community and the secondary point of call following a diagnosis for support within the memory support pathway. The aim is for the centre to be a place for people with dementia, their carers and families who may be struggling day to day to access the right care and support. It offers information, advice, activities, peer support groups, drop in service, and training to unpaid carers. The Dementia Centre provides a source of respite for carers of individuals living with dementia as well as services for those living with the condition.

## Chapter 4 – Other services available

The previous sections have highlighted the services available that have been commissioned and/or supported by Flintshire County Council, however we are aware that there are a number of other projects and services available for carers in Flintshire that operate / are funded independently.

### 4.1 WG Respite Grant / “Amser”

For a number of years (dating back to at least 2017), the WG has given Local Authorities a grant to support respite for unpaid carers, known as the “Welsh Government Respite Grant”.

Under this grant Flintshire have chosen to split the grant and support some of our own internal respite services as well as supporting our partner organisations and other schemes. Some examples include:

- Scaling up Bridging the Gap to meet demand – this has seen a significant investment over and above the value of the contract (2020-2023)
- Funding a Direct Payments for Carers Pilot.
- Programme of Activities for Young Carers
- School holidays programme for Children with disabilities
- Offsetting the costs of respite approved through panel.

Late in 2022/23 it was announced that the methods of allocating respite funds were to change for 2023/24 and 2024/25. From April 2023 £3.5m per year would be allocated across Wales split 60/40 between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector (60%) and LAs (40%).

Carers Trust Wales have been awarded the contract to administer the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector allocation through an application process. This is a scheme called “Amser” where grants of between £5k-£100k per year can be applied for (<https://carers.org/around-the-uk-our-work-in-wales/amser>). In Flintshire, we supported a number of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Partners to submit applications for funding through Amser, and the outcomes are detailed below.

Positively for Flintshire, under this new system, funding secured between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Amser applications and the LA's RIF allocation has seen the Flintshire area receive more funding with which to support carers than was seen under the previous system. Additionally, it has given a number of our other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners the opportunity to access funding in their own right which has improved the diversity of the allocation of funding.

Notably, despite the freedom for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations to apply for funding to provide short breaks for carers without the influence of the local authority, it does not appear to have resulted in new methods of support, but rather scaling capacity to further meet demand in the respite options that are currently on offer.

#### 4.1.1 NEWCIS

NEWCIS were successful in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 in their application for a grant covering both Adult and Young Carers.

Total award £40,241 - Adult Carers £26,541 / Young Carers £13,700

*“The ‘Time for Me’ project will support carers of all ages to take a break, however carers define a break to be for themselves and their family members. The ‘Time for Me’ project, gives choice, flexibility and opportunities for carers to take time out and will provide valued services to many carers which will enable them to look after their own mental and physical well-being and help them sustain their caring role.”*

The Breaks Coordinator and volunteers will deliver the below, open to all adult carers.

- 2 group hotel breaks for 48 hours - 18 carers supported by volunteers. Including meals and a planned activity.
- 20 x 3-day breaks at the NEWCIS holiday home, which will include accommodation and basic food supplies. Carers can currently use grants to support the break or self-fund, however since NEWCIS have owned the property they have had increasing numbers of carers who cannot afford to take this opportunity, even with some grant support to reduce the costs. Therefore, the 20 carers who will receive a break via this the Amser scheme funds will be those who are unable to afford the cost but are in desperate need of a break.
- 150 micro breaks providing a wide range of opportunities which could include: restaurant vouchers, entrance fees for days out, travel costs from days out.
- Bridging the Gap additional funding to support the demand for the scheme. Demand for Bridging the Gap has increased year on year since it was launched. In recent years this has been topped up with additional funds from FCC’s respite grant. An additional £6,600 has been awarded to enable another 20 / 30 carers to receive support in this way.
- Red letter days for 75 carers.
- Hobbies online - support group online sessions such as planting a hanging basket/herb boxes or baking skills - supplying carers with basic equipment such as cake tins and ingredients, plants, seeds, hanging baskets and plant pots.

#### 4.1.2 NEWCIS Young Carers

Young Carers £13,700

The Young Carer Team have 340 Young Carers registered in Flintshire and are planning to utilise these funds to deliver the following activities:

- 2 x 1 day/night residentials and 1 x 2 day/night residential trips include accommodation, meals, travel and activities for 36 Young Carers.
- 4 x 3-night campsite breaks for 48 Young Carers.
- 50 micro grants providing a range of opportunities which could include for example: cinema vouchers, days out, zoo passes, school trips.

#### 4.1.3 Daffodils

Award £28,361.61

Daffodils is a disabled and additional needs children and young people’s charity for Flintshire families. Daffodils supports parent carers who state that their biggest worries are what to do in the school/college holidays as their cared for needs constant entertaining, which can increase pressure on the parent carer. Taking a break together and spending quality time as a family can be a preventative



measure for continued well-being. They provide leisure and recreational activities supporting the whole family to access breaks and respite together as a family unit, spending quality time together.

*“The ‘enjoy a break’ project will support Flintshire unpaid parent carers to receive respite during the school/college holidays as this is a time when our carers tell us that they feel the most need of support as they do not have the respite of their child’s attendance at school for a long period.”*

- King Charles coronation party event
- Day trips, including transport and/or entrance to:
  - Greenwood Forest Park
  - Blackpool Pleasure Beach
  - Mancot Farm Park,
  - Apple Jacks Adventure Farm,
  - Rhyl Sea Aquarium/Beach,
  - Caernarfon/Beaumaris Castle
  - Welsh Mountain Zoo
  - Greenfield Valley heritage park
  - Liverpool museums/Albert Dock
  - Blackpool illuminations
  - Chester Zoo
  - Knowsley Safari Park
  - Rock and Roll Panto at Theatre Clwyd
- Christmas party celebration for parent carers and their cared for in a community venue

In total, Daffodils aims that 265 carers / families will benefit from this funding.

#### 4.1.4 Crossroads Carers Trust

Crossroads were successful in their application for around £85,000 (to be split across the 6 counties). On the assumption that the funding is to be split equally between the 6 authorities, Flintshire will benefit from around £14,500.

With the Flintshire portion of these funds, they are planning:

- A trip for carers and people with Dementia (around 50 people)
- A trip for parent carers and their families (around 50 people)
- A quarterly group for carers of those with Dementia
- A quarterly group for parent carers.
- Micro grants of between £50-£300 to provide some respite hours to allow the carer some time for themselves.

Using Amser funding they have been able to support unpaid carers across Flintshire with a mixture of grants, activities and social trips. The activities/trips can be attended by unpaid carers and the person they care for but if the cared for cannot (or do not) want to go on the trip, they offer to provide replacement care so the carer can still attend. Grants are also available for unpaid carers who prefer to arrange their own trips instead of joining an organised event. Last year Crossroads supported 64 carers in Flintshire via Amser with a direct grant and facilitated trips and activities for 80+ unpaid carers and the person they support.

## 4.2 NEWCIS

NEWCIS also have a number of other funding streams that enable them to provide support to carers in Flintshire.

### 4.2.1 Carers Breaks

NEWCIS have secured funds to support The Hotel breaks at Faenol Fawr or Wild Pheasant and offer up to 16 carers and cared for a 2-day break within the hotel. The break does not include any care packages, but 2 staff are present during the group stay and 2 volunteers attend to support during group evening meals.

NEWCIS have raised funds to purchase a house in Prestatyn which they have refurbished and use to provide carers and their cared for/loved ones to have a break away from their caring role.

### 4.2.2 Cost of Living / Food boxes / Shopping Vouchers / Winter supply boxes

NEWCIS have sought funding from by the Carers Support Fund – (Carers Trust) which supports by providing Flintshire carers with food boxes for 4 weeks following a hospital discharge or for a carer in crisis. These funds are also able to provide shopping vouchers for financial support, winter boxes containing warm goods such as hats, scarves and gloves, heated blankets and guidance on how to keep your fuel bills down. Additional carer grants can be accessed to provide items such as Air-fryers and Slow Cookers.

### 4.2.3 Fundraising

In addition to funds provided by Flintshire County Council and BCUHB, NEWCIS proactively seeks additional income streams and fundraises to support carers throughout Flintshire. Since 2020 and projected (only with confirmed income) to the end of the contract period on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, carers in Flintshire will have seen a further £1.5m invested in them. All of which has been added back into carer services, supporting carers in a variety of ways.

## 4.3 NEWCIS Young Carers

In January 2024, NEWCIS Young Carers have been successful in a bid for funding from the Waterloo Foundation for a 3-year project which will support them to expand and scale up their work to engage with Flintshire schools, continuing their work to raise awareness of young carers with both pupils and staff to ensure that more young carers are identified and offered support.

The project has already seen success in this first quarter having engaged with 7 schools with another 2 coming up shortly. Within these schools 11 training sessions have been held and a number of new referrals have been received for support for young carers.

## 4.4 Daffodils

With the support of funds from Children in Need, a monthly soft play session for Children and Young People and their unpaid parent carers along with 10 workshop sessions during the school/college

holidays. The parent carers have short breaks when their cared for are entertained within the sessions and have the opportunity to receive peer to peer support from other parent carers.

Social isolation funding has provided physical activity sessions each month for unpaid parent carers and their cared for, for example tenpin bowling, swimming and team sports like football and hockey. This improves well-being by reducing isolation and having a network of parental support at all the events ensures the unpaid parent carers are able to sustain their caring roles.

Postcode Community Trust funding compliments the whole programme of Daffodils activities and events, enabling more activities to be provided for families.

The Morrisons Foundation have provided funding for a monthly workshop event which has lots of activities taking place - these can be themed workshops for example healthy eating for the family and art and crafts.

A number of local companies have supported Daffodils with grants from their own fundraising activities. Since 2020, they have received over £31,000 in funding from various local companies for example Ardagh Beverages, Synthite and Polyroofing. These additional funds are used to expand services and activities provided to add additional capacity to meet demand.

Daffodils also support a monthly well-being session for parent carers to have some time away from the caring role. Some of the activities include meeting at a coffee shop or restaurant or going for a well-being walk” in the Summer months which gives parent carers a chance for some valuable peer to peer support and improve their overall well-being.

## 4.5 Crossroads Carers Trust Respite Services

### 4.5.1 Health Service

Crossroads (Carers Trust) are commissioned by BCUHB to provide Health Respite services for carers to enable them to attend health appointments relating to their own needs to ensure that they can look after their own health and well-being. Health appointments can include trips to the optician, dentist, GP, hospital appointments, treatments and physio etc. The health service is only accessible via referral from a health professional such as a GP.

### 4.5.2 Gwalia Care

Carers can choose to purchase care directly from us if they don't want to access support via Social Services.

### 4.5.3 Welsh Government Grants

Unpaid carers across Flintshire can apply for a grant from our Welsh Government funding to enable them to buy food shopping, white goods or equipment. 56 unpaid carers were supported in Flintshire last year.

#### 4.5.4 Donations

Crossroads Carers Trust utilise funds from donations to provide one-off special occasions for unpaid carers to attend weddings, celebratory events etc. This provides the respite that allows the carer to attend and know that their loved one is cared for.

#### 4.5.5 Well-being Officer

Carers Trust utilise WG Grant funding to provide a Well-being Officer (shared across Wrexham and Flintshire). Our Well-being Officer supports carers in any aspect of their life where they need it. This often includes support with benefit checks, completing DWP forms (Attendance Allowance and PIP etc) and applications to utility companies for support with bills. They are also registered to apply for Discretionary Assistance Grants to support with white goods and household essentials. The Well-being Officer will also facilitate groups and signpost to other services such as OT, dietician, incontinence nurses.

#### 4.6 Adferiad Recovery

**Counselling and Motivation for Addiction (CAMFA)** - provides therapy to those requiring specialist substance misuse psychological interventions including:

- Counselling,
- Motivational Interviewing,
- Brief Interventions,
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy,
- Access to recovery groups,
- Therapeutic Sessions.

Up to 12 sessions which can be face to face, on the telephone or online. All therapists are qualified counsellors with additional training in substance misuse and recovery.

Eligibility Criteria for Clients:

- Live in North Wales
- Over the age of 18
- Concerned that their alcohol and/or drug use is getting out of hand.
- Are substance free and would benefit from Relapse Prevention support.
- Have been affected by the substance misuse of a family member or close friend and would benefit from talking to a Counsellor.

**Counselling and Motivation for Addiction 14+ (CAMFA 14+)** – provides the support as above however is tailored specifically for those between the age of 14-18. CAMFA 14+ also offers Counselling to families and carers who are struggling with a young person's substance use.

**Flintshire Family and Carer Support** – the service has been devised to support the carers of those who suffer with mental ill health and substance misuse through providing one to one and group support, whilst promoting the empowerment and independence of the carer.

Each carer who accesses the service will receive a holistic and person-centred approach to help them with the individual and unique circumstances they face by providing support mechanisms and assisting the carer to develop their skills and knowledge to be more empowered and enabled to address the needs of the cared for whilst retaining their own independence and management of their own welfare. Throughout each individual case the team will support each individual within their own capabilities and level of comfort providing more or less support as required in relation to their caring role.

The service offers support with:

- Physical, Emotional and Mental Well-being
- Financial Well-being
- Accommodation concerns
- Access to Education and Training
- Spiritual, Cultural and Religious beliefs
- Sign posting to services within Flintshire to meet specific needs.

**Parabl** – provides short-term therapeutic support for those who are experiencing common mental health problems or facing challenging life events which may be impacting on their our emotional well-being. The Parabl service is for anyone aged over 18, who lives in North Wales and who are experiencing any of the following:

- Mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression
- Enduring mental health problems
- Bereavement issues
- Relationship issues
- Common psychosexual difficulties.

The service offers a range of interventions:

- Self-help guides
- Online workbooks and support (CBT)
- Therapeutic groups
- Counselling

#### 4.7 Other services

While there are a significant number of services detailed in this report, we are conscious that there is likely to be other services available in Flintshire that have not been included as we are unaware of them.

## Chapter 5 – What have carers said?

### 5.1 Carers Survey 2024

In January and February 2024, a survey was undertaken to gather the opinions of carers living in Flintshire about the current services and what they would like to see provided in the future to meet their needs.

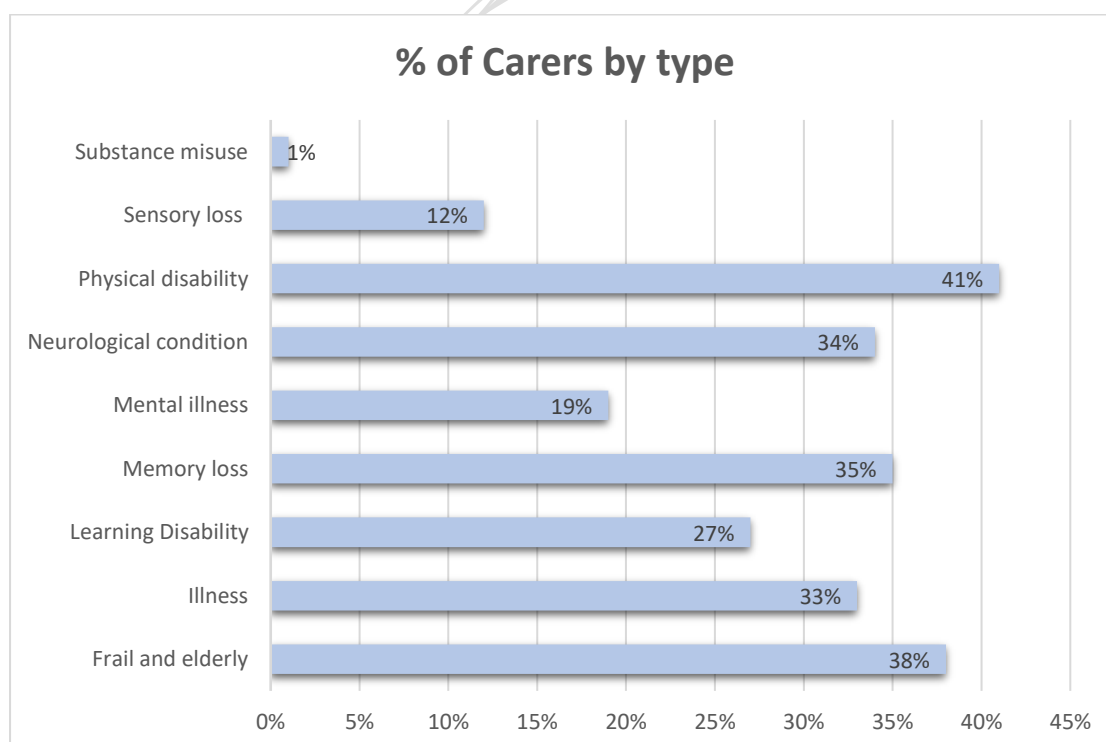
The survey was circulated widely amongst our partner organisations, who were able to target their own cohorts of carers who we know to have used or be using carers services. Social Workers and professional colleagues also supported to distribute the survey to those that they visited during the period. In addition, the survey was shared widely across all Flintshire County Council social media networks and featured on the corporate communications email distribution list (8000+ residents of Flintshire) to capture those who may not currently access or be aware of our carers services.

To the main, (over 18) carers survey, there were 207 responses (full detail on the survey responses is available in Appendix 4).

While the response rate for the survey is relatively low considering the number of carers registered and further the number of carers reported to exist in Flintshire according to the 2021 census, it does appear to give a good cross section of opinions from different cohorts of carers utilising the current services as well as those who are not. The information collected gives a good insight to support commissioning appropriate and effective services.

According to the results, 68% of those completing the survey had had a Carers Needs Assessment and/or received services from one of our commissioned carers services organisations within the last 2 years.

It was stated that there were a wide range of conditions of the cared for being supported by the carers who responded show in the graph below:



However overwhelmingly, of those who completed the survey the vast majority stated that they fulfil their caring role for more than 41 hours per week. Furthermore, when studying the answers provided, it was clear that many of these individuals are providing 24-hour care, 7 days per week.

## 5.2 What matters to our carers?

To understand the information that the carers have given through the survey, responses were grouped and counted by theme.

When asked **what things would make the caring role less challenging**, there was a wide variety of answers, however some stood out with a significant number of carers responding in a similar way.

- **Paid care and support** – Many carers responded to say that the support of paid carers would make their caring role less challenging. Analysing this further, there were a few main reasons why potentially they may not feel that this is as effective as they would like at present:
  - Assessed needs / meeting criteria – some carers felt that the cared for should be entitled to more care and support than they had been assessed as needing by Social Workers.
  - Availability and flexibility of care agencies – the current national shortages of care agency staff to provide support for the cared for, carers stated limited the flexibility and suitability of assessed care packages and in some cases prevented them being implemented at all.
- **Respite Availability** – The allocation, availability and suitability of regular planned respite opportunities both via placements and in the home environment were stated as challenging.
  - This was stated to be the case for both short breaks for perhaps an hour or an afternoon as well as longer breaks of a week or so to allow the carer to go on holiday for example.
  - Carers stated that it was also difficult to get one off respite support to take care of their own needs, for example to attend a hospital appointment.
  - Carers stated that with the shortages and inflexibility in current respite options, they were worried about what would happen to their cared for should there be an emergency and for example they were admitted to hospital unexpectedly.
  - Some carers stated that they did not feel that the allocation of respite through the cared for's assessment was sufficient.
- **Time to myself** – Many carers stated that they simply just wanted a little bit of "time to myself" or "time to be myself". Carers stated that support for the cared for while the carer is able to have some time to themselves was stated as the biggest barrier to this rather than the availability and options for what to do during any break from their caring role.
- **Financial Support / Stability** – Some carers stated that they found it challenging to be able to afford even basic living supplies at times, struggling with household bills and buying food.
  - It was expressed that Carer's Allowance was too low to be able to support them to live especially during this current cost of living crisis.
  - Some carers said that they would like to be able to work to generate more income, but their caring role prevented this, conversely, other carers stated that they would like to reduce their working hours to be able to provide more care, but the loss of income prevented it.

- **Professional support and communication** – Carers stated that they felt improved compassion towards carers and having good and effective communication with professionals would be helpful. A designated person / co-ordinator to speak to was suggested.
- **Understanding** - Community and Professional understanding of the role and pressures of being a carer. Many carers stated that they wanted acceptance and welcome for both the cared for and carer in the community.
- **Information and advice on what is available** - A hub or central place where information can be found on what is available to support carers themselves as well as the cared for. Carers stated that they felt it was challenging at times to obtain information 24/7 and online without visiting a range of websites to have to “research”, which they felt that they did not have time to do.
- **Household Chores and Maintenance** – Carers stated that they found it challenging to find time to complete household chores and maintenance around their caring role. Many carers even stated that they would consider “time for myself” to be time to be able to do their own cleaning / laundry / cooking / food shopping. Solutions identified varied between being able to have a cleaner while they provided support to someone to provide support to allow them time to complete household chores / shopping etc. *“Sometimes it would be nice just not to have to cook my own dinner when I get home from caring for mum on top of everything else”*

We asked carers **what matters most to them in relation to their family’s well-being**. The responses were varied and have been again grouped by theme. The highest number of responses were received in relation to:

- **Health** – physical and mental, included both the carer and the cared for.
- **Adequate support** – the right support, at the right time and for the right person.
- **Happiness** – for their family and for the cared for.
- **Time together** – activities and/or time spent not in caring role.
- **Social** – for the cared for and the carer, separately and together.
- **Stimulation and services** - for the cared for.
- **Safety** – of the cared for.
- **Financial stability**

We asked carers **what matters most to them in relation to their own well-being**. The responses were varied and have been again grouped by theme. The highest number of responses were received in relation to:

- **Respite / Time to myself** – knowledge that the cared for is safe to allow a break from caring.
- **Adequate support** – the right support, at the right time and for the right person, included professional support services for the cared for, counselling, peer to peer support, group support, regular and adhoc.
- **Health** – of the carer, physical and mental health.
- **Financial stability**
- **Social** – both with other carers and with current friendship groups.
- **I don’t think about my own well-being** – significantly to note, in response to this question a significant number of responses were outcomes that related to the well-being of the cared for and not that of the carer themselves, indeed there were carers who responded to state that they do not think about their own well-being.



We asked carers **what they value most about the services that are currently available**, with the most popular answers being:

- **Social Services / Direct payment Support Hours** – assessed care packages for the cared for through Social Workers.
- **Activities / Day Trips / Breaks** – this included the provision of activities, day trips and breaks themselves.
- **Someone to speak to** – this included duty officers, urgent contact, adhoc and proactive contact (“check-ins”) and counselling services.
- **Bridging the Gap / Grants / Financial Support**
- **Haven’t used / don’t use services / don’t value current services / don’t know about services available.**

When asked **what carers could suggest we do to improve support for them** that are not currently available, there were a wide range of responses.

While not all of the suggestions and requests were within the scope of what can realistically be achieved through the provision of local carers services for example there were many requests for an increase / change to Carers Allowance policies. These points will be taken onboard and we will advocate for change on behalf of our carers through our national networks.

On a local level, the following suggestions were made for carers support (not in order of popularity):

- Discounted/free **gym memberships** and fitness classes, swimming.
- **Discounts at shops**
- **Transport support**, including actual transport as well as support to make companion pass etc processes easier.
- **Information hubs** - booklets, online, accessible 24/7. This included information on services for the cared for as well as the carer, lists of trusted professionals etc.
- **Financial Support** - including grants, cost of living help
- Support with **Household chores / cooking / shopping / gardening / maintenance**
- Activities **spread across Flintshire**, not just in major towns
- More **companion services**
- Support with **grant applications, benefit applications** etc.
- Support with **employer understanding** and employment issues
- Proactive “**Check-Ins**”
- More sessions of previously ran “**Assertiveness training**”
- **Evening and Weekend sessions** for activities
- **Dementia Training**
- **Countess of Chester Hospital presence** – similar to Wrexham Maelor and Glan Clwyd.
- Support with **improved access to GP’s** and professionals
- **Respite / a break**
- **Improved advertising of services, activities, support available.**

Significantly, the high number of carers who responded to the survey who stated in the previous question that they don’t currently use services and/or don’t know about the services currently available, combined with the number of responses requesting support that is already available suggests that we are not doing enough to advertise and raise awareness of our carers services.

### 5.3 What matters to our young carers?

In order to understand the views of our young carers, we created 2 surveys aged at the different age groups (under 11s and over 11s). The surveys were distributed to the young carers who are currently supported by NEWCIS Young Carers and also through schools. Across both surveys there were 32 responses.

Overwhelmingly across both age groups, the young carers responded to say that they value the current young carers services.

#### **Under 11s**

In the under 11s survey, 100% of the young carers told us that they liked the activities available to them. 86% stated that it had helped them to make new friends and also learn new things.

Importantly, 86% also told us that the Young Carers service has helped them to feel good about themselves and their family.

83% of the young carers told us that the service helped them to feel listened to and involved in making decisions that affect them.

When asked what they thought was good about the young carers service currently, there was a significant list containing a wide variety of responses, but when collated, some of the most popular responses included:

- Connecting with people / making friends
- Peer support and understanding “knowing I’m not alone”
- Activities and trips
- Young Carers “Shop”
- Food
- The staff ... “kind” / “caring” / “helpful” / “happy”
- A break from caring “some time for me”
- “It’s fun”

When asked what they felt that the service could do better, the majority of responses simply said “nothing” and “it’s great”, however there was a request for more school assemblies and more emotional support.

#### **Over 11s**

In the over 11s survey, the young carers told us that the support that they had been receiving had meant that they had had emotional support and counselling, a break from their caring role, time to themselves and the ability to take part in activities that they wouldn’t normally be able to do.

82% told us that the young carers service has helped them with their caring role and helped them to learn new skills. 73% told us that they felt more confident as a result of the support that they were receiving and 91% told us that the service had made them feel good about their family.

It also appears that the young carers service is having a positive impact on young carers’ education. Amongst the responses, there were a number of young people who reported that due to the young carers service they were now attending school or college more often, that they were enjoying school

or college more and that they felt that they were now doing better at school or college than they were before they had support.

82% of young carers stated that the service had supported them to be involved and have a voice in making decisions that affect them.

When asked what they felt that the current service does well, there was a wide range of responses, when collated, the themes included:

- Emotional support
- The staff ... “kind” and “caring”
- “I feel safe”
- “I feel understood”
- Fun activities
- Inclusive

When asked what could be improved about the service, the majority responded to say “nothing”, however there was one response to say that they did not know about the service, therefore it is worth continuing to work to promote young carers and reach all young carers in Flintshire.

#### 5.4 Carers Strategy Group Feedback

The Flintshire Carers Strategy Group is a forum of carers’ organisations who represent carers, from both the statutory and third sector. The Group has a key role in helping to shape relevant local and regional strategies, and other key documents in relation to Carers, as well as the strategic development of services for Carers (including parent carers and young carers) in Flintshire.

Feedback from this group ....

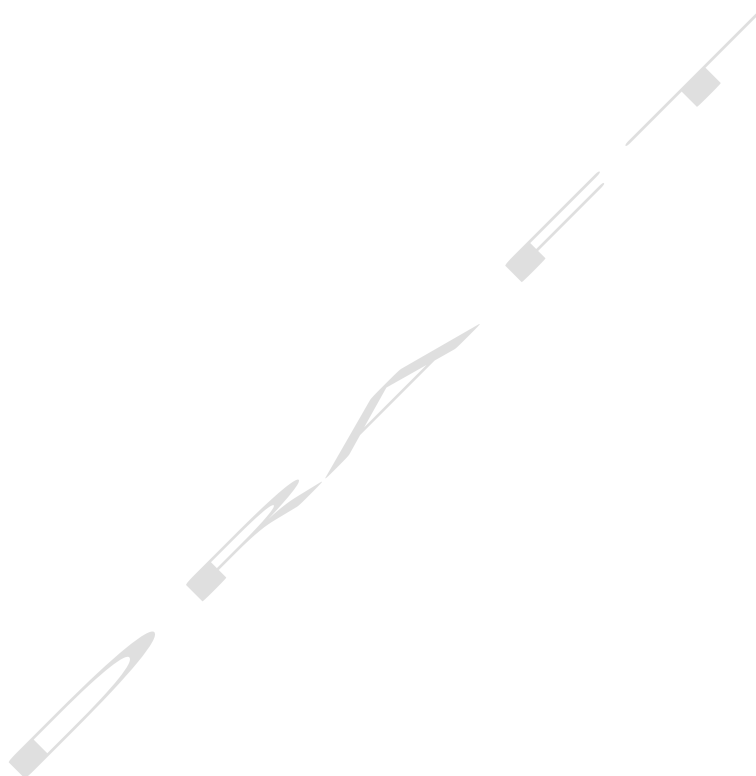
*“As an organisation that has been supporting parent carers for over 24 years in Flintshire and has been involved with the CSG since its conception, we believe by engaging with parent carers on a regular basis means we are able to provide support to so many that are not engaging with any statutory services. This therefore relieves the pressures on the Local Authority thanks to third sector, grass roots organisations like ours. The current commissioned services within the county all have proven track records and support so many in need. This review has supported to highlight this and identify the areas where there are gaps to improve services for our unpaid carers” – Anita James, DAFFODILS*

## Chapter 6 – Gap Analysis

A gap analysis exercise has been carried out comparing the services currently in place against feedback from carers about their wishes for support. This exercise will help to identify:

- Where the current service provision is **meeting carers needs**,
- Where there may be **overlaps in service provision** between current services, this may support us to divert funds to other new services or, to expand capacity in other current services.
- Where there may be **gaps in the current service provision** that we may be able to address in the recommissioning process.

Following our consultation with carers in January/February 2024, they identified the services and support that they value the most and are indicated in the table.



Current Service Provision																																			
	Services in scope of this review (Ch 2)											Supported services outside the scope of this review (Ch 3)							Other services (Ch 4)																
	Adult Carers Gateway	Carers Needs Assessments	Carers Training	Carers Well-being	COPE	Bridging the Gap	Respite Services	MH & SMS Carer Support	Neurological Carers	Parent Carers	CHC Carers	Marleyfield Dementia Respite	Young Carers	Dementia Carers Sup. & Engagement Proj.	Direct Payments	Arosfa	Action for Children Creative Respite	Families First Disability Consortia	Families First Young People's Consortia	Daffodils	Day Services and Work Opportunities	Overnight respite in care homes	Microcarers	Advocacy Services	FLVC Social Prescription Service	Hospital Discharge Service	Dementia Centre	NEWCIS - other services	Daffodils - other services	Crossroads (Carers Trust) - other services	Adferiad Recovery	Amser			
Access to an assessment		•	•	•	•							•						•	•																
Accessible information and advice	•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•						•	•					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Local information	•		•	•	•			•	•	•		•						•	•					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Duty contact when needed	•																																		
Peer to Peer Support				•				•	•	•		•	•					•	•	•							•	•	•		•	•			
Access to 1-1 direct support	•	•	•	•	•			•	•		•	•						•	•					•	•	•	•	•				•	•		
Access to formal Counselling				•				•	•		•	•						•	•																
Social Stimulation				•				•	•	•		•	•					•	•	•							•	•	•				•		
Time together				•		•			•	•		•	•					•	•	•						•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Access to leisure activities for the carer				•		•			•	•		•	•					•	•	•							•	•	•				•	•	
Access to planned respite						•	•		•	•		•	•			•	•										•								
Access to emergency respite,						•	•								•	•																			
Support with contingency planning			•	•			•	•	•		•	•						•	•							•	•								
Financial Support and grants				•		•		•	•		•	•						•	•						•			•				•	•		
Activities / Trips / Breaks - Carer			•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•					•	•								•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Activities / Trips / Breaks - Together						•			•	•		•	•		•			•	•	•							•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Advocacy for the carer				•	•			•	•	•		•	•					•	•					•		•									
Support to complete forms and applications			•	•	•				•	•		•	•					•	•					•											
Support with daily living tasks				•		•																													
Support with employment			•		•				•																•										
Opportunities for education and skills			•		•							•	•					•	•																
Transport support				•								•	•					•	•									•							
Promote recognition & value the carer	•			•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•					•	•	•				•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Services / activities across evenings / weekend	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•				•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Services / activities across Flintshire	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Support when caring role ends				•					•			•	•					•	•	•					•										
Raise awareness in primary and acute care	•			•	•			•	•	•		•	•					•	•					•	•	•	•								
Raise awareness in the community	•		•	•	•			•	•	•		•	•					•	•					•	•										
Raise awareness in employment situations			•	•	•													•	•																
Improve communication - professionals	•			•				•	•	•		•	•					•	•					•		•	•								

## Chapter 7 – Funding Streams

### 7.1 Current Funding Streams

While the majority of the funding the current carers services contracts comes from Flintshire County Council Social Services, there are a number of other contributors.

Service	Total contract value	FCC Social Services	FCC Education and Youth	BCUHB	WG Regional Integration Fund (RIF)*
Adult Carers Gateway	████████	████████			
Bridging the Gap	████████	████████			
Carers Well-being	████████	████████			
Carers Training	████████	████████			
Carers Opportunities, Participation and Employment (COPE)	████████	████████			
Young Carers Support	████████	████████	████████	████████	
Marleyfield Dementia Respite	████████	████████			
Support for Parent Carers	████████	████████			
Support for Carers of People with Neurological Conditions	████████	████████			
Support for Carers of People with Mental Health and Substance Misuse Conditions	████████	████████			
Support for carers of someone with a complex, long term or terminal illness (CHC)	████████			████████	
Carers Needs Assessments	████████	████████			
Respite Service (Crossroads Carers Trust)	████████				
Dementia Carers Support and Community Engagement	████████				████████
<b>Total Annual Spend</b>	████████	████████	████████	████████	████████

\*Regional Integration Fund (RIF) regional joint local authority and health partnership.

The current annual Flintshire County Council Social Services spend includes funds that were previously ringfenced under the carers strategy funding which is now part of the base budgets.

It is proposed that through this review that the current level of funding continues for carers although this commitment will need to be confirmed by the funding partners.

In addition to Flintshire County Council's investment in carers, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board also currently commission a range of services for carers. The services commissioned by Flintshire County Council are designed to link in and compliment those provided by BCUHB.

DRAFT

## Chapter 8 – Conclusion and Recommendations

### 8.1 Conclusion

It is easy to see the valuable contribution that unpaid carers give in providing care and support to their loved ones. Without the support of unpaid carers, many individuals would not be able to continue to live independently in their own homes for as long as they are, which is important to many in their feelings on their quality of life.

Nationally, the increased pressures on the health and social care sector do not appear to have an imminent resolution and therefore challenges in staffing and budget constraints look likely to continue. Further to these pressures within the sector, the official forecast predicts that the number of people who will become carers at some point in their lives will increase from the current 12% to 16% of the population.

Budgetary pressures on local authorities are well documented and the coming years are reported to likely to be the “most challenging that we have ever faced”. Due to this, while it would seem natural to increase the budget for unpaid carer’s services to support increasing demand, it looks to be unlikely that this will be a possibility. Furthermore, to compound this pressure on budgets the cost-of-living crisis and increase in inflation over the last few years has meant that goods and services are now costing more than they were at the beginning of the current service contracts. This means that it is likely to cost more to even simply recommission the same service that are currently in place without considering any uplift to account for the increase in carers.

The result of these pressures are likely to mean that possibly difficult decisions may have to be made in considering what is to be recommissioned from April 2025 to ensure that we are a) meeting out statutory obligations, b) effectively supporting and meeting the needs of as many carers as possible and c) achieving the best value for money for the services that we commission.

### 8.2 Findings

Feedback from professionals and unpaid carers alike has shown that our current carers services are generally of a good quality. CIW recently commented in relation to our adult’s services that:

*“Unpaid carers’ assessments are appropriately offered. Carers of adults told us they significantly benefitted from carers’ assessments and provision of support. There is a wide range of innovative practical support to promote carer well-being including counselling, grants, short-term direct payment provision, and short-term break arrangements.”*

Additionally, in relation to our services for our Young Carers:

*“There is a focus on promoting the well-being of young carers. Children were observed to benefit from the availability of support in a young carers support group. They clearly enjoyed the activities on offer and the company of both practitioners and peers alike.”*

Through our survey of unpaid carers, they told us FIND QUOTE

This review has shown that the current pathways and wide variety of services available in Flintshire are generally effective in supporting carers in their caring role. Particularly successful is the single point of access or “gateway”, mirroring the SPOA system in place for the cared for. This gateway and access



point for carers not only provides carers with a hub of information, advice and assistance, but has the knowledge and expertise to be able to signpost carers on to other services that will be able to support them with their individual needs, ensuring that for carers there is “no wrong door” and that their call for help is always answered. From a professional perspective this co-ordination of the front door to carers services supports the delivery of the carers strategy for Flintshire with the ability to collate a wide variety of information to inform continual development of services.

In terms of our statutory requirement to carry out Carer’s Needs Assessments, the current arrangements do appear to be working effectively. Again, the central point for carers to access an Assessment with onward referrals as a result of the identified outcomes ensures that there is consistency in the experience of carers no matter their circumstances. Alongside this, the ability for our own Social Workers to be able to work alongside NEWCIS and complete Carers Needs Assessments supports carers to be able to receive an assessment in their own right in the most appropriate way for them. Where previously, Adferiad were carrying out Carers Needs Assessments for carers of those with Mental Health and Substance Misuse issues, it was believed that this would provide a more specialist support approach, however the uptake for this service was limited and since the end of this provision there has been little by the way of feedback to suggest that a specialist service in this area is required.

However as pointed out earlier, with the number of unpaid carers in Flintshire growing year on year and the WG’s prediction that this is likely to grow this is an area that is likely to see an increase in demand in the future. As pointed out earlier in the report, demand is currently being met and waiting time reduced by utilising resources from a number of projects. This has up to now supported the effective completion of Carers Needs Assessments by far within the targeted timescale, however this is unsustainable in the long term. While it would be ideal to allocate significant additional resource to the process, the pressures already mentioned mean that this would highly likely mean diverting funds from other services. While it could be possible to divert some funds from other areas to this process ultimately, we will need to accept that timescales for the completion of assessments are likely to be closer to the current (28 day) target and additionally consider adjusting our expectation of the target timescale for completion if necessary to balance the demand with available resource.

Services available following an assessment have received positive feedback as well as noting some recommendations for improvement. While not all of the suggestions and requests were within the scope of what can realistically be achieved through the provision of local carers services for example there were many requests for an increase / change to Carers Allowance and associated policies. These points will be taken onboard, and we will continue to advocate with our partner organisations for change on behalf of our carers through our national networks.

Throughout the support currently available it is difficult to be able to identify areas and services that are not valued by carers in order to consider cost efficiencies and diverting funds. In analysing the feedback received, it appears that the wide range of support currently offered under the “Carer’s Well-being” contract is very highly valued and serves to support a significant number of carers. For example, this includes the provision of formal counselling services, which while of a higher individual cost remain very popular, however so do activities and drop ins that offer peer to peer support and that are individually cheaper. Despite the peer-to-peer support sessions being “cheaper” per individual as each carer and their needs will differ, it is important to continue to offer a spectrum of services that can be tailored to each and in this instance neither option is of less “value” than the other. Carers also stated that they greatly valued the activities, trips and breaks and grants available to them through this contract.

Training and development of carers is something that continues to be important for carers, not only to support their caring role but can also provide skills and knowledge that they can utilise in other areas of their lives, for example in employment or leisure opportunities. While the numbers of carers supported through this contract and its associated services are smaller than some of the other more wide-ranging contracts, the number is not insignificant and positive feedback from carers is regularly received.

Support for carers with employment opportunities and employment related support (COPE Contract) is something that carers told us that they value. As stated previously in the report, this contract has had to evolve since the initiation of the current contracts to meet the needs of carers with a different set of circumstances in the current climate. Again, the numbers of carers supported are smaller than with some other services, however they remain of significant value to those who do utilise the services. In addition to this, support for carers in education and the workplace is a key priority under the WG Strategy for Unpaid Carers (2021).

It does appear however that the current Carers Training and COPE contracts fit together and share some common objectives. It is reasonable to consider that in combining these contracts some efficiencies could be made.

The “Bridging the Gap” service remains very popular and has to be carefully managed to ensure allocated funds can support as many carers as possible. The points identified earlier in the report in relation to the feedback that £300 is rarely sufficient in the present day to be able to provide adequate support do need consideration for this scheme to continue to be effective. As budgets are unlikely to increase significantly to address the increase and continue to support the demand from carers, a balance needs to be found between a potential increase in the amount provided to each carer and the number of carers able to be supported.

The current “Respite Services” contract receives good feedback from those who are supported and in addition to this, carers strongly reported that respite services are something that they value greatly and is in short supply. As stated earlier in the report, these services do not currently form part of the main pathway for carers to access support following an assessment and can potentially leave a lack of parity in the services available to all carers. Therefore, as part of this recommissioning process as a minimum the pathway to access these respite services should be considered. As respite services were so strongly highlighted as an area that carers felt would greatly support them, further consideration should also be given to whether if funder were diverted to these services whether there is the supply of paid care from organisations that would be able to meet demand and fulfil the provision contracted.

The specialist support services for Parent Carers and Carers of those with a Neurological Condition were warmly welcomed in the carers that responded to our survey. All carers are welcome to access the generic carers services available across Flintshire and therefore it could possibly be questioned why there are specific contracts for support for these groups of carers specifically and not others. Carers feedback that while generic carers services are suitable for some and in some circumstances, it is also highly valuable to carers to be able to access peer to peer support for discussion with carers who are likely to more understand their circumstances. The importance of considering all services available in Flintshire as part of this review is that it can be seen through this analysis of other services outside the scope of this recommissioning process that there are in fact services available for specific groups of carers for example, Carers of those with Dementia or Mental Health. Carers of those with a Neurological Condition are not supported through any other means and while there is some support for Parent Carers it is limited in its capacity. Therefore, as there are limited budgets available to be able to support carers, we need to ensure there is not overlaps in funding and that gaps left are identified

and supported. It is considered that these two specialist services are such gaps that other services do not cover.

Dedicated and expert support for carers navigating the complex CHC process is something that carers have told us has been a “ray of light” in what they say is an otherwise overwhelming and complex situation. It is easy to see the benefit of this support from the point of view of the carer and the commissioner alike and there are easily many arguments for why this contract should continue to be funded and recommissioned as part of this process, however although this contract is currently sitting within the scope for recommissioning following this review, ultimately as it is fully funded by BCUHB, the decision to recommission is dependent on their ability to commit to the service for the full contract period. However, this review does advocate positively for this.

The review has found that our in-house respite day services are a valued service by many. The services provide excellent value for money and can carry a significant capacity in comparison to 1-1 respite options. The variety of needs that are able to be met through day services is wide and, in many instances, not only provides respite for the carer but will also benefit the cared for in providing therapies or social stimulation. The pressure on council budgets to provide these non-statutory services is considerable and therefore maintaining the funding from the carers services budget to contribute appears to be a wise decision.

Analysis of our Young Carers Service is straightforward in some ways without the complexities of a number of contracts providing interlinked support. Young Carers benefit from a “one stop shop” and pathway that follows through one service contract including Information, Advice and Assistance, Carers Needs Assessments and support services. They also benefit from the Young Carers support service being able to access “Bridging the Gap”. The specification for the contract was changed significantly under the last commissioning process in 2020, and this does appear to have had a positive impact on the delivery of young carers services in Flintshire. Processes appear to be working well and feedback has been good. There appears to be little reason to make significant changes to commissioned services moving forward.

Overall, the pathways and services commissioned do generally appear to be effective and valued by carers. It has been acknowledged by a number of sources that we do have a good standard and a wide range of carers services and support available. Across the provision currently in place it can be seen that the combination successfully supports our commitment to the 4 priority areas of the WG Strategy for Unpaid Carers (Priority 1 - Identifying and valuing unpaid carers; Priority 2 - Providing information, advice and assistance; Priority 3 - Supporting life alongside caring; and Priority 4 - Supporting unpaid carers in education and the workplace). With some small changes identified through this review improvements will hopefully further enhance the support provided to carers in Flintshire.

In considering the services to be commissioned, it has to be acknowledged that there are some services/requests for support that have been made by carers that we are going to be unable to fulfil. It is aimed through this process to align funds to services with the most impact however, as discussed earlier in the report aside from budgetary constraints, the current crisis in the social care sector can mean that the staffing resource is just not available in the workforce to be able to meet demand for respite services in terms of availability or flexibility as carers would wish.

Additionally, some requests received referred to the support that the cared for had been assessed as needing and the perception that this was not sufficient. The provision of carers support and services, although linked with the needs of the cared for, are independent. If it is felt that there are insufficiencies in the assessed support for the cared for, a reassessment should be requested. Carers

support and services cannot be used to plug a gap. Further, there were also some requests for support and services that although would be nice to be able to provide, are simply not eligible needs for support services.

Importantly, the number of carers who stated that they don't currently use services and/or don't know about the services currently available, combined with the number of requests for support that is already available suggests that on the whole there is room for improvement across the board in raising awareness of carers and advertising the services and support that are available. This is something that needs to be a prevalent in the specifications created for the new contracts.






### 8.3 Recommendations

As found through this review, existing unpaid carers services are generally well received and appear not to need significant changes to continue to deliver on our statutory services. However, there are some areas that have been identified that could result in some benefit in streamlining pathways for carers and providing more flexibility to be able to deliver the services required.

1. Carers Needs Assessments – include the requirement for carers to receive an assessment under all contracts if that is the most appropriate method with providers working together to achieve this.
2. Formalise the utilisation of RIF Dementia Funds to support with capacity for Carers Needs Assessments.
3. Combine the current contracts for the “Adult Carers Gateway” and “Carers Needs Assessments” to form one contract which would mean that carers are able to access support from initial contact through to assessment in a streamlined pathway.
4. Consolidation of the “Respite”, “Bridging the Gap” and Carer’s Well-being contracts to allow flexibility of budgets to meet carers needs in the most appropriate ways. This should include provision within the contract for (as a minimum):
  - a. A number of respite options including, but not limited to Bridging the Gap, traditional and other creative means of respite. This will improve the pathway for carers and reduce duplication. With funds being able to be used more flexibly by doing this, increase the “Bridging the Gap” allocation per carer to £400, where required.
  - b. Peer to peer support and formal counselling therapies.
  - c. Provision of grants.
5. Merge the services provided by the current “Carers Training” and “COPE” contracts into one single contract focusing on all Training and Employment Support.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1- Relevant Documents

a	Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers	 strategy-unpaid-carers.pdf
b	Performance and Improvement Framework for Social Services 2023-24	 Performance and Improvement Framework
c	Adult Carers Gateway Case Study	 Case Study 1 (Gateway).docx
d	Carers Well-being Case Study	
e	NEWCIS Newsletters	<a href="#">Spring 2023</a> <a href="#">Summer 2023</a> <a href="#">Autumn/ Winter 2023</a> <a href="#">Spring 2024</a>
f	Carers Opportunities, Participation and Employment Case Study	 Case Study 3 (COPE).docx
g	CHC Case Study	 Case Study 4 (CHC).docx

Appendix 2 – Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework Data (Adults)

Indicator	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>The total number of <u>contacts</u> to statutory social services by adult carers or professionals contacting the service on their behalf received during the year.</b>	1615	1719	1944	1913
<b>The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where <u>advice or assistance</u> was provided.</b>	1493	1719	1917	1913
<b>The number of contacts received for adult carers by statutory adult services during the year broken down by source</b>	1567	1719	1946	1913
a) self	998	951	1218	1132
b) Relative	0	0	30	0
c) Friend or neighbour	34	30	9	45
d) Early intervention prevention service (step up)	9	2	0	0
e) Health	160	224	218	313
f) Education	0	0	0	2
g) Housing	0	0	0	1
h) Police	0	0	0	0
i) Probation	0	0	0	0
j) 3rd Sector Organisation	81	145	177	92
k) Local Authority	0	0	58	48
l) Independent Hospital	0	0	0	0
m) Ambulance Service	0	0	0	0
n) Care Regulator	0	0	0	0
o) Provider	0	46	0	0
p) Advocate	0	0	1	1
q) Internal (Social worker, other team)	264	321	161	279
r) Other	31	0	72	0
<b>The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year.</b>	758	877	572	633
<b>The number of carers assessments completed for adults during the year where:</b>				
a) Needs could be met with a carer's support plan or care and support plan.	554	629	547	589
b) Needs were able to be met by any other means.	176	203	25	44
c) There were no eligible needs to meet.	75	45	0	0
<b>The number of carers needs assessments for adults refused during the year:</b>	0	40	36	22
<b>The number of carer's needs assessments for adults completed (CA/004) during the year where:</b>				
a) There was evidence of the active offer of Welsh	758	877	572	633

b) The Active Offer of Welsh was accepted	9	1	0	0
c) The assessment was undertaken using the language of choice	758	877	572	633
<b>The number of adult carers with:</b>				
a) A support plan on the last day of the quarter (31st March for year end)	317	520	600	553
b) A care and support plan, where the individual receiving care and support also has responsibilities as a carer that is supported in the plan.	48	20	35	27
<b>The number of support plans for adult carers that were due to be reviewed during the year.</b>				
	191	428	465	442
<b>The number of support plans for adult carers due to be reviewed during the year that were completed within statutory timescales.</b>				
	191	394	393	417

Appendix 3 – Welsh Government Performance and Improvement Framework Data (Young Carers)

Indicator	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>The total number of <u>contacts</u> to statutory social services by young carers or professionals contacting the service on their behalf received during the year.</b>	174	144	128	159
<b>The number of contacts by young carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where <u>advice or assistance</u> was provided.</b>	174	144	128	159
<b>The number of contacts received for young carers by statutory services during the year broken down by source:</b>				
a) self	0	41	36	61
b) Relative	28	0	3	0
c) Friend or neighbour	1	0	7	14
d) Early intervention prevention service (step up)	1	36	8	3
e) Health	5	1	5	6
f) Education	11	9	8	17
g) Housing	0	0	0	0
h) Police	0	0	0	0
i) Probation	0	0	0	0
j) 3rd Sector Organisation	61	16	13	16
k) Local Authority	0	0	4	0
l) Independent Hospital	0	0	0	0
m) Ambulance Service	0	0	0	0
n) Care Regulator	0	0	0	0
o) Provider	0	0	0	0
p) Advocate	0	0	0	0
q) Internal (Social worker, other team) – Children’s Services	41	37	40	42
r) Other	26	4	4	0
<b>The total number of carers needs assessments for young carers undertaken during the year.</b>	56	60	72	94
<b>The number of carers assessments completed for young carers during the year where:</b>				
a) Needs could be met with a carer’s support plan or care and support plan.	72	60	49	94
b) Needs were able to be met by any other means.	7	12	3	0
c) There were no eligible needs to meet.	0	0	1	0
<b>The number of carers needs assessments for young carers refused during the year</b>	N/A	N/A	13	3
<b>The number of carer’s needs assessments for young carers completed (CA/004) during the year where:</b>				
a) There was evidence of the active offer of Welsh	56	72	76	94



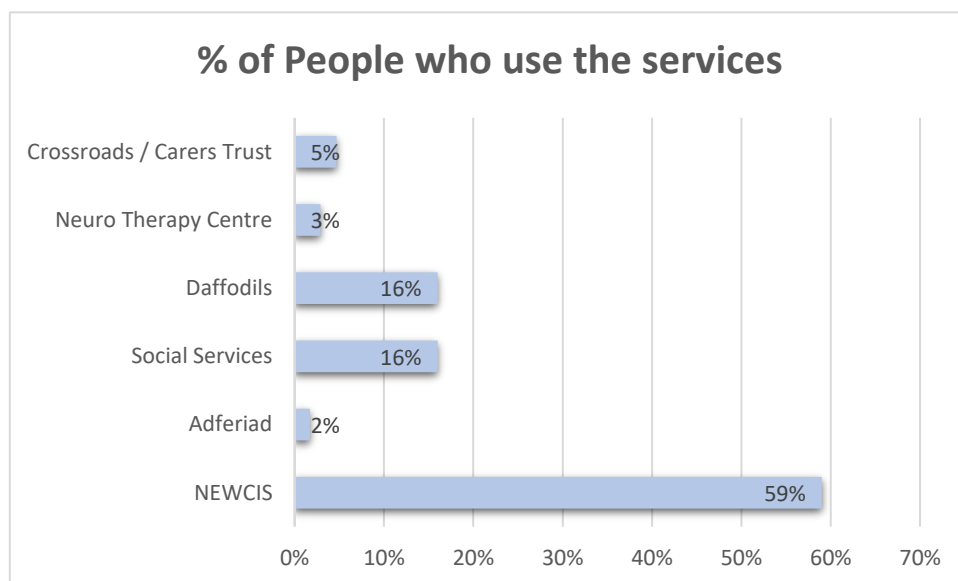
b) The Active Offer of Welsh was accepted	0	0	0	0
c) The assessment was undertaken using the language of choice	56	72	76	94
<b>The number of young carers with:</b>				
a) A support plan on the last day of the quarter (31st March for year end)	19	39	31	162
b) A care and support plan, where the individual receiving care and support also has responsibilities as a carer that is supported in the plan.	6	3	0	3
<b>The number of support plans for young carers that were due to be reviewed during the year.</b>				
	25	117	67	79
<b>The number of support plans for young carers due to be reviewed during the year that were completed within statutory timescales.</b>				
	25	104	62	79

## Appendix 4 – Carers Survey – Full Responses

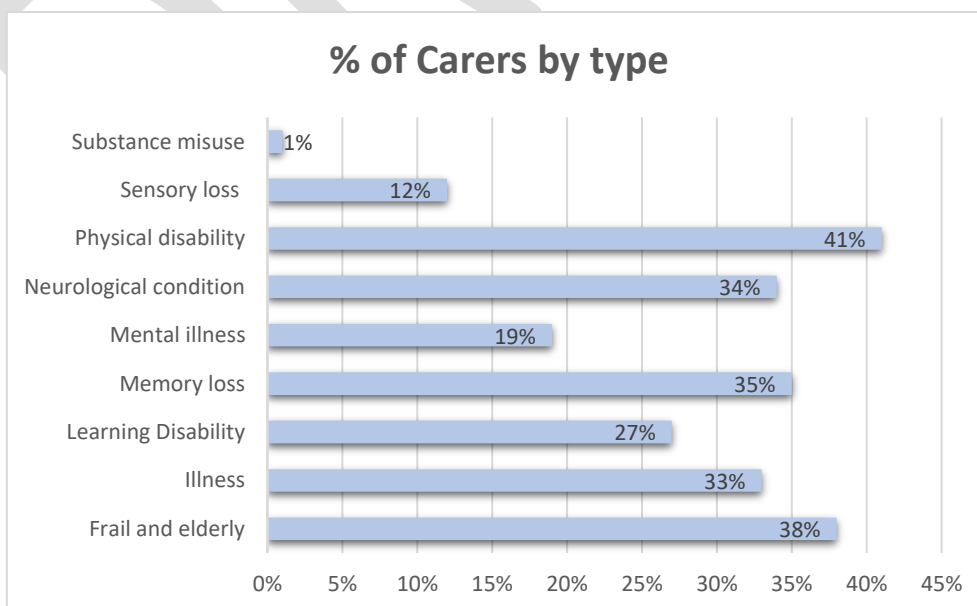
**Question 1: In the last 2 years, have you had a Carer’s Needs Assessment and / or received support from any of the following Social Services / NEWCIS / Adferiad / Daffodils / The Neuro Therapy Centre / Carers Trust?**

Yes	68%
No	32%

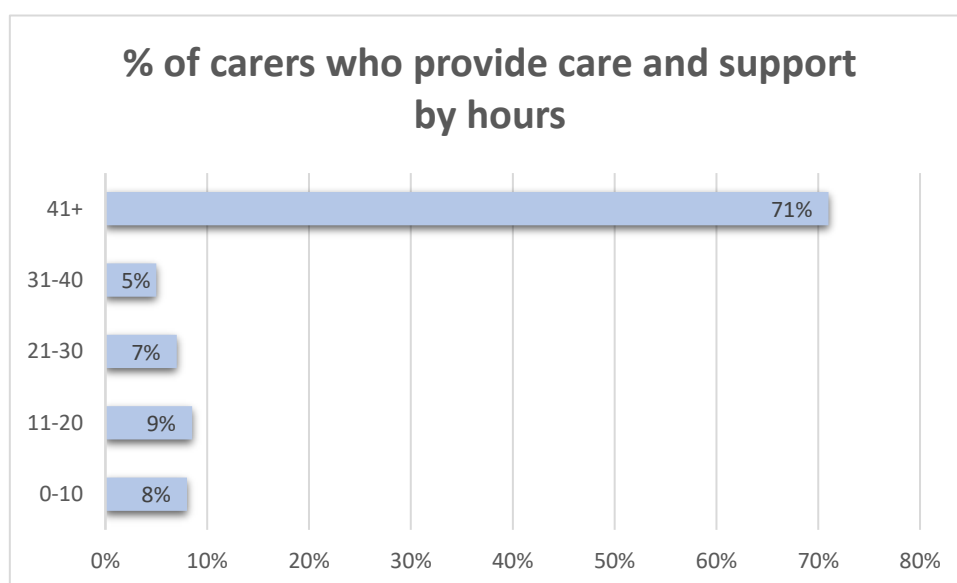
**If Yes, please specify:**



**Question 2: Do you support a relative, partner or friend with the following?**



**Question 3: On average how many hours a week caring support do you provide?**



**Question 4: What 3 things would make your caring role less challenging?**

Graph

1	<b>Paid care and support</b> - Meeting criteria for a care and support package as well as the availability and flexibility of services to deliver.	84
2	<b>Peer to peer support</b> - A mix of individual and group options were requested.	16
3	<b>Professional Waiting Lists</b> - Speed of access to support / Access to GP appointments etc	12
4	<b>Online Support</b>	1
5	<b>Support from Family &amp; Friends</b> - Greater support and understanding from Family and Friends, help with chores, errands, tasks, or to look after the cared for while they are able to take some time to themselves.	5
6	<b>Periodic Contact / Company</b> - Proactive contact to check in and be able to have a chat. Both from a professional and companionship perspective.	11
7	<b>Time to myself</b> - Support for the cared for while the carer is able to have some time to themselves was stated as the biggest barrier.	46
8	<b>Financial Support</b> - From support with bills and food to supplement Carers Allowance. Support to supplement wages to allow them to provide more support.	32
9	<b>Household Chores and Maintenance</b> - Varied from being able to have a cleaner while they provided support to someone to provide support to allow them time to complete household chores/ shopping etc.	20
10	<b>Respite Availability</b> - Availability and suitability of regular planned respite. Emergency provision. One off support i.e. hospital appointments.	47
11	<b>Understanding</b> - Community and Professional. Understanding of the role and pressures of being a carer, acceptance and welcome for both the cared for and carer.	24
12	<b>Transport / Wheelchair Transport</b> - Availability and cost of suitable public transport	5
13	<b>Breaks, trips, days out together</b> - Provision of breaks, trips and activities to enjoy together.	7

14	<b>Activities (Child/Young Person)</b> - Group activities and 1-1 requested. Before and after school, weekend and school holiday provision. Activities for the cared for allowing the carer a break, as well as activities they can do together.	13
15	<b>Activities for Cared for (Over 18)</b> - Activities for the cared for to take part in without the carer, allowing the carers to take a break. Include activities for individuals with capacity.	5
16	<b>Telecare</b>	1
17	<b>Adaptations / Facilities at home / Aids / Contenance supplies / Telecare</b> - Equipment and adaptations to support their caring role.	11
18	<b>Training and understanding for family</b> - Understanding of the role and pressures of being a carer, understanding of the cared for's condition "I wish my dad understood Mum's Dementia more"	5
19	<b>Information and advice on what is available</b> - A hub or central place where information can be found on what is available to support carers themselves as well as the cared for.	22
20	<b>Accommodation (cared for)</b> - Suitable accommodation to support the cared for	7
21	<b>Support from employer</b>	1
22	<b>Advocacy / Support with applications / benefits etc</b>	3
23	<b>Professional support and communication</b> - Understanding of the role and pressures of being a carer. Having good and effective communication with professionals, a designated person / co-ordinator to speak to was suggested.	25

**Question 5: What 3 things matter most to you in relation to your family's well-being? (well-being can be emotional, physical and social)**

**Graph**

1	<b>Respite</b> – knowledge that the cared for is safe to allow a break from caring	21
2	<b>Health</b> – physical and mental, included both the carer and the cared for.	66
3	Access to the <b>community</b>	4
4	<b>Happiness</b> – for the family, the cared for.	46
5	<b>Not being stressed</b>	1
6	Being <b>understood</b> / not being <b>judged</b>	20
7	<b>Adequate support</b> – the right support, at the right time and for the right person.	62
8	<b>Financial stability</b>	23
9	<b>Social</b> – for the cared for and the carer, separately and together	32
10	<b>Time together</b> – activities and/or time spent not in caring role	33
11	<b>Suitable accommodation</b> – for the cared for	10
12	<b>Safety</b> – of the cared for	28
13	<b>Independence</b> – for the cared for	11
14	<b>Emotional support</b> – for the carer	25
15	Ability to <b>plan ahead</b> and look to the future	5
16	<b>Being valued</b>	1
17	<b>Stimulation and services</b> - for the cared for	31

**Question 6: What 3 things matter most to you in relation to your own well-being?  
(well-being can be emotional, physical and social)**

Graph

1	<b>Respite / Time to myself</b> – knowledge that the cared for is safe to allow a break from caring	108
2	<b>Health</b> – of the carer, physical and mental health.	27
3	<b>Health</b> – of the cared for/other family members, physical and mental health.	10
4	Access to the <b>community</b>	2
5	<b>Happiness</b> – for the family, the cared for and the carer	5
6	<b>Not being stressed</b>	6
7	Being <b>understood</b> / not being <b>judged</b>	
8	<b>Adequate support</b> – the right support, at the right time and for the right person, included professional support services for the cared for, counselling, peer to peer support, group support, regular and adhoc.	65
9	<b>Financial stability</b>	17
10	<b>Social</b> – both with other carers and with current friendship groups	16
11	<b>Time together</b> - activities	12
12	<b>Independence and safety</b> – of the cared for	8
13	Being able to <b>plan ahead / contingency</b> planning – what happens to the cared for if I am not here, I want to make sure they will be cared for	5
14	Feeling <b>valued / acknowledged / recognised</b>	4
15	<b>Work</b> – would like to be able to work / would like more support from their employer	7
16	<b>I don't think about my own well-being</b>	15

**Question 7: What do you value the most from the services currently being provided to carers and what would the impact be if it was lost?**

Graph






1	<b>Bridging the Gap / Grants / Financial Support</b>	24
2	<b>Someone to speak to</b> – includes: duty officer, urgent contact, adhoc and counselling	26
3	<b>Activities / Day Trips / Breaks</b>	33
4	<b>Peer to peer support / Drop Ins etc</b>	14
5	<b>Social Services / Direct payment Support Hours</b>	34
6	<b>Respite</b>	17
7	<b>Current organisations, staff, care, compassion, understanding</b>	23
8	<b>Telecare</b>	1
9	<b>Treatments</b> – e.g. Physio	2
10	<b>Advice and Information</b>	18
11	<b>Courses</b>	1
12	<b>Advocacy type support</b>	11
13	<b>Haven't used / don't use services / don't value current services / don't know about services available</b>	47

**Question 8: Are there any new ways in which you could be supported that are not currently available?**






1	Discount at Aura / fitness services etc	
---	---	--






2	Discounts at shops	
3	Transport (like Chester Plus Bus?)	
4	Info on Care Homes pulled together	
5	Financial support	
6	Help with housework, gardening, decorating	
7	List of trusted professionals	
8	Activities spread across Flintshire not just major towns	
9	Plus one process for bus passes	
10	Companion Service	
11	Better advertising of services	
12	Help with grant applications etc	
13	Employer understanding	
14	'Check ins'	
15	Different speakers from different orgs to talk about services available	
16	"Assertiveness Training"	
17	Evening Sessions	
18	Weekend Sessions	
19	Dementia Training	
20	Hospital CoCH	
21	Access to professionals / GPs etc	
22	Respite / A break	


Appendix 5 – Young Carers Survey (Under 11) – Full Responses


<b>Question 1: I mostly enjoy or have enjoyed the activities</b>		
1		17
2		4
3		0
4		0
5		0

<b>Question 2: Young Carers has helped me to make new friends</b>		
1		16
2		2
3		2
4		1
5		0

<b>Question 3: Young Carers helps me learn new things</b>		
1		8
2		10
3		2
4		1
5		0






<b>Question 4: Young Carers has made me feel good about myself</b>		
1		13
2		5
3		3
4		0
5		0

<b>Question 5: Young Carers has made me feel good about my family</b>		
1		12
2		6
3		2
4		0
5		0






<b>Question 6: Young Carers has helped me help the person I care for</b>		
1		10

2		4
3		5
4		0
5		0






**Question 7: Young Carers has supported me to be involved in making decisions that affect me**

1		10
2		8
3		2
4		0
5		0

**Question 8: I think that the Young Carers Service listens to me**

1		13
2		4
3		3
4		0
5		0

**Question 9: If you had a problem, do you feel that you could talk to someone at Young Carers?**

1		2
2		1
3		1
4		0
5		0

**Question 10: I think these things are good about Young Carers...**

1	Connecting with people and making friends	3
2	Peer support and understanding, knowing I'm not alone	2
3	Activities and Trips	6
4	Young Carers Shop	1
5	Food	1
6	Staff ... Kind, Caring, Helpful, Happy	4
7	A break from caring / some time for me	4
8	It's fun	5

**Question 11: I think Young Carers could do these things better...**

1	Nothing, it's great	11
2	More school assemblies	2
3	More emotional support	1



## Appendix 6 – Young Carers Survey (Over 11) – Full Responses

<b>Question 1: I think these things are good about Young Carers...</b>		
1	Staff ... Kind, Caring, Helpful, Happy,	6
2	Someone to talk to, they listen to me	3
3	Activities / Trips	8
4	A break from caring / some me time	5
5	Making friends / peer support	4
6	Learning new things i.e., the First Aid Course	1
7	I don't know about the service	1

<b>Question 2: Here are some ways that the service may have helped you, please look at the list and tick the box to show whether this is true for you.</b>			Yes	No
1	I enjoy most of the activities	10	1	
2	The service has helped me make new friends	10	1	
3	The service is worth going to	9	2	
4	The service made me feel good about my family	10	1	
5	The service has helped the person I care for	9	2	

<b>Question 3: What kind of support have you been getting from the young carers service? Please tell us a bit about it.</b>		
1	Emotional Support / Counselling	8
2	Activities that I wouldn't normally be able to do	3
3	A break / Some time to be me	4
4	ID Card	1
5	Grants and help with money	2
6	None	1

<b>Question 4: Have any of these changed for you because of the service?</b>			Yes	No
1	I now attend school or college more often	4	7	
2	I now enjoy school or college more	4	7	
3	I now do better at school or college	5	6	
4	It has helped me with my caring role	9	2	
5	It has helped me learn skills in my everyday life	9	2	
6	I now do less caring jobs that I dislike	5	6	
7	People are more understanding of the caring jobs I do	9	2	
8	Do you feel that the Young Carers service has supported you to be involved in making decisions that affect you?	9	2	
9	Do you feel the Young Carers Service has helped you with your caring role?	9	2	
10	I feel more confident	8	3	
11	If you had a problem, do you feel that you could talk to someone at Young Carers?	10	1	

<b>Question 5: Tell us what you think we do well?</b>		
1	I feel safe	2
2	I don't feel judged / I feel understood	2
3	Kind and caring	5
4	Emotional support	7

5	Activities	5
6	Inclusive	4

**Question 6: Tell us what you think we can do better?**

1	Nothing	7
2	More activities	1
3	I'd like to be able to buy a jacket or coat with "young carer" on it	1
4	I don't know about the service	1

DRAFT