



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

Working in Partnership with Carers

A Strategy for Supporting Carers across the
Western Health and Social Care Trust

[2009 – 2014]

January 2009

Title	Working in Partnership with Carers
Reference Number	Corp 08/
Implementation Date	10 th June 2009
Review Date	10 th June 2014
Responsible Officer	Geraldine Hillick / John McGarvey

Table of Contents

Page 4 - 6	Setting the context – Regional Strategy
Page 7 - 8	Background
Page 9	They Key Principles of ‘Caring for Carers’
Page 10	Priorities for Action
Page 11 - 12	Recognition of Carers
Page 13 - 14	Information for Carers
Page 15 -16	Training
Page 17 - 18	Support
Page 19	Young Carers
Page 20	Employment
Page 21	Co-ordinating Support
Page 22	Performance Monitoring
Page 23	Strategy Implementation
Page 24 – 25	Equality Impact Screening

Setting the Context - A Strategy for Caring for Carers in Northern Ireland

In 2002, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety issued, 'Valuing Carers', a report containing 19 recommendations for the development of practical support for carers. The Report highlighted the need especially, for the identification of older and younger carers given that they may be less likely to come forward but may be more in need of specific support with regard to their caring responsibilities.

In 2003, the Northern Ireland Assembly brought into force the Carers and Direct Payments Act (NI) 2002. The Act requires Trusts to advise carers of their right to an assessment, and if requested, to undertake such assessment. Trusts are also empowered to provide a range of services within local priorities and available resources.

In January 2006, the DHSSPS issued, 'Caring for Carers', a strategy specifically designed to recognise, value and support the caring role. The strategy represents a long-term plan of action to deliver on the recommendations originally set out in 'Valuing Carers'.

The Minister then, Shaun Woodward, stated that:

"The contribution of carers to health and social care cannot be overstated. The strategy sets out to recognise, value and provide support for the important contribution carers make to our society. It also sets out a vision of what needs to be done to provide carers with the practical support they want and need to allow them to continue caring and, at the same time, to have as much access as possible to the same opportunities that the rest of us enjoy".

In March 2006, the Department issued the Quality Standards for Health and Social Care, recognising the importance of carers' views and experiences in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services, both for themselves and for those for whom they care. This was followed by the launch of the 'Standards for Adult Social Care Support Services for Carers' in June 2008, which are reflected in this strategy.

The Western Health and Social Care Trust wishes to recognise the very valuable role played by carers across its geographical locality, enabling vast numbers of people who need support to continue to live independent lives in the community. Our carers are deemed true partners in the provision of care and also recognised as individuals in their own right.

The strategy that follows reflects how the Western Health and Social Care Trust proposes to meet its obligations towards carers and their needs and wishes. It must be recognised from the outset that the strategy seeks to make the best possible use of limited resources to achieve maximum positive impact on the greatest number of carers, and to seek ways of ever-improving the supports that can be made available.

The Western Health and Social Care Trust Mission Statement -

“To enrich and enhance the quality of life for the whole community through the provision of relevant and efficient health and social care”

Demographic Profile

Population:

Northern Ireland - 1,685,267
 WHSCT Area - 281,215 (16.7%)

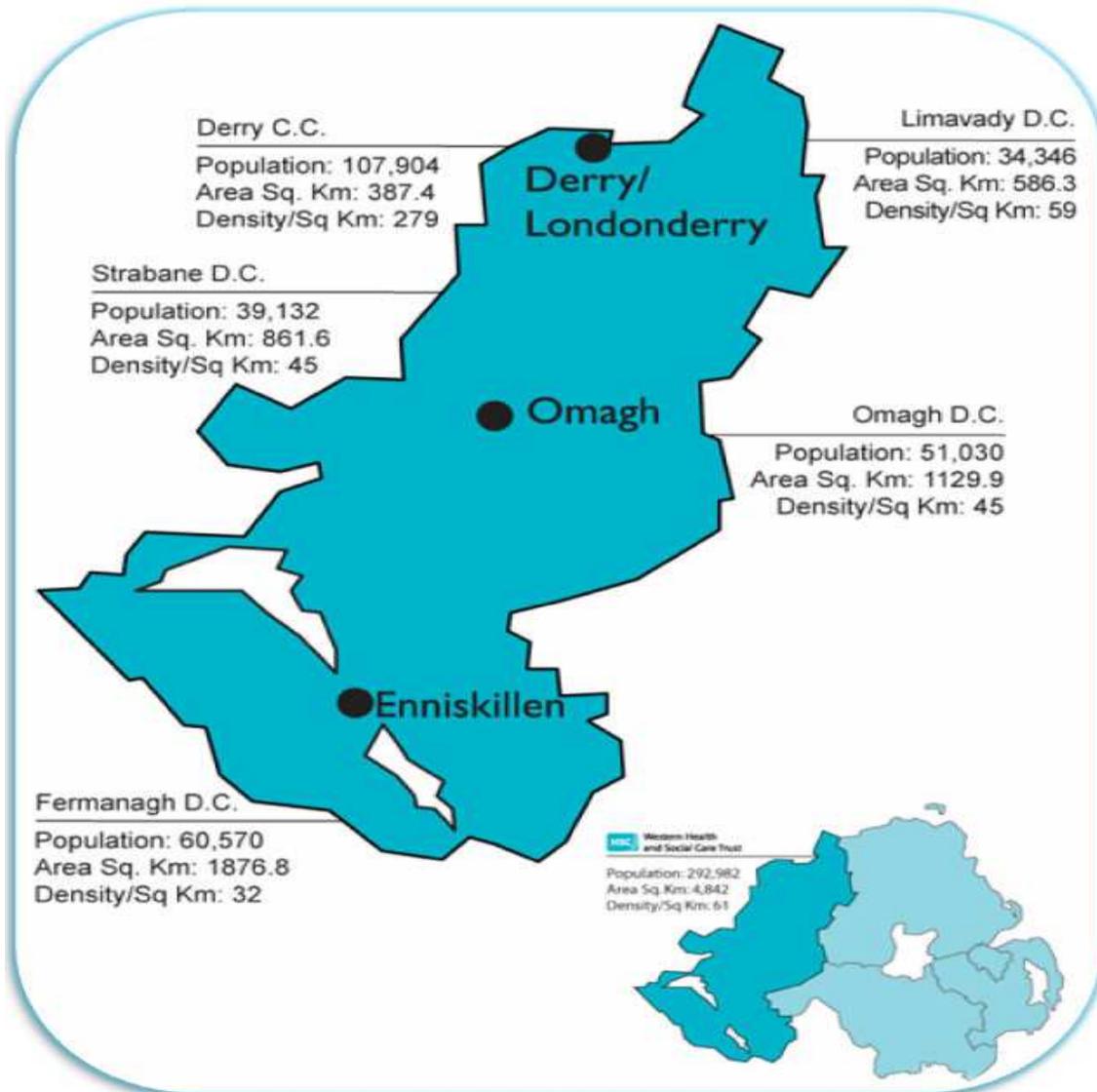
Identified Carers:

Northern Ireland - 185,066 (11% of the population)
 WHSCT Area - 28,390 (15.36% of N.I. population)
 (10.1% of WHSCT population)

The Northern Ireland Census 2001

Provision of Unpaid Care	Fermanagh	Omagh	Strabane	L/Derry	Limavady	Northern Ireland	WHSCT Total/ NI %
Provides 1-19 hours a week	3,417	2,879	1996	5872	1590	110,407	15,754 14.3%
Provides 20-49 hours a week	872	810	706	1920	519	28,000	4,827 17.24%
Provides 50+ hours a week	1,422	1,114	1177	3301	795	46,659	7,809 16.75%

Western Health and Social Care Trust Area.



The geographical area covered by Western Health and Social Care Trust is large and mainly rural. This leads to specific issues for carers and clients. Problems of a limited public transport network can make accessing services difficult. The lack of care workers in some areas makes it difficult for carers to access the help they need. This poses somewhat of a challenge to ensure that services are needs-led rather than service-led. Some carers can feel socially isolated and can easily lose their social networks in a full-time caring role.

In 2007 the University of Leeds published figures that suggest carers in Northern Ireland are saving the Health Service £3.12 billion per year. This is a rise of 44% from figures 5 years earlier. The new figures estimate that the average carer is saving the nation £15,260 per year.

Background

The Northern Ireland Census 2001 suggested that there are 185,066 Carers in Northern Ireland. This is 11% of the total population of the province 1,685,267. A previous survey, the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey 2002 estimated the total number of Carers is nearer 250,000. As the latter was a face-to-face survey it would lead us to believe there are a significant number of 'hidden carers' do not self-identify as carers.

Who are Carers?

Carers are family, friends and neighbours, who without payment, care and support someone for who is older, frail, ill or disabled.

Many carers do not recognise themselves as carers but rather they see themselves as a dutiful, son, daughter, parent, partner, brother, sister or friend.

The Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey 2002 found that:

- 16% of the adult population in Northern Ireland has caring responsibilities;
- 90% of carers care for someone related to them;
- 38% of carers care for someone in the same household;
- 55% of carers care for someone in another household;
- 7% do both;
- 64% of carers are female;
- 36% are male;
- Females are at the 'heavier' end of the caring role, caring for more hours in the week;
- Women tend to care for a wider spectrum of family members where men usually tend to care for a spouse.

Carer's health and well being gives cause for concern: -

- 30% of carers reporting one health problem;
- 31% reporting two or more health issues.

Carers highlighted issues of: -

- Social isolation
- Depression
- Having no one to talk to outside the household if they felt down having no one to turn to in a time of crisis.

Carers indicate they feel under stress financially. The most common age for people to take on the caring role is between 45 and 59 years of age. This holds implications for the carer financially if they give up employment to take on the caring role with regard to pension contributions. Carers Allowance, an income replacement benefit, broken down into a daily rate is £7.22 a day (*that is £1.44 per hour, for a 35 hour week, those caring for 50 hours are receiving £1.01 per hour- Apr 08 figures*).

The Southern Sector of the Western Health and Social Care Trust (the legacy Sperrin Lakeland Trust) were inspected in September 2005 by DHSSPS. The Departmental inspection of services provided to carers of older people ('Promoting Partnerships in Caring', Dec 2007) found that the legacy Trust was providing significant support to meet the needs of carers in the Fermanagh and Omagh areas. The Western Health and Social Care Trust is committed to developing these services across the new boundaries in the future.

Introduction of new legislation in the form of the Carers and Direct Payments Act (NI) 2002 has brought new rights for carers. The key provisions of the Act are as follows:-

- Carers legal right to an assessment of their support needs, if the person they care for qualifies for services (even when the person being cared for refuses services).
- The provision of services by Health and Social Care Trusts directly to carers.

Direct Payments are cash payments given in lieu of services that would otherwise have been arranged for them by Health and Social Care Trusts. The service-user or carer who manages the direct payment can then arrange for the provision of their own services. This gives a greater degree of flexibility and autonomy to the service-user or carer.

The Carers and Direct Payments Act (NI) 2002 makes direct payments available to:

- Carers (including 16/17 year olds)
- Parents with a disability
- Parents of children with a disability
- Children aged 16 or 17 yrs who have been assessed as requiring services under the Children (NI) Order 1995.
- People with a disability
- People affected by mental illness

The Carers and Direct Payments Act (NI) 2002, defines a carer as;

'An individual, aged 16 or over, who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis.'

The Key Principles of ‘Caring for Carers – Recognising, valuing and supporting the Caring Role’

The Department of Health for Northern Ireland produced a consultation document, called Valuing Carers in 2002. The ‘Caring for Carers’ regional strategy followed in 2006. The following key principles were identified as fundamental to a Northern Ireland strategy.

Western Health and Social Care Trust accepts and embraces these principles as being at the core of its own strategy.

Key principles of Caring for Carers

1. Carers are real and equal partners in the provision of care

Carers must be recognised and involved in every level of planning and service delivery. Carer’s views are taken into account in all aspects of the care planning process.

2. Carers need flexible and responsive support

Many carers find that they need routine and services need to fit around this, to support the Carer in their caring role. Carers need to be able to make choices based on accurate, relevant and timely information.

3. Carers have a right to a life outside caring

Carers need a break from caring, rest, relaxation and social activity. If a carer wishes to work outside the home, they should be supported to do so.

4. Caring should be freely chosen

Circumstances and a sense of duty often lead carers into a caring role. In some instances this can happen very suddenly. Carers should be allowed to decide the level of caring support, if any, they can offer at any particular time.

5. Government should invest in Carers

In order for H&SC Trusts to support Carers in their caring role, additional investment in resources is required in order to positively impact upon the lives of carers.

Western Health and Social Care Trust Priorities for action.

The Trust considered some of the key findings highlighted in the regional strategy relating to the identified needs of carers through structured consultation. The WHSCT strategy includes the following key areas as priorities for action:

- Recognition of carers
- Information for carers
- Training
- Support services
- Young carers
- Employment
- Co-ordinating support
- Service planning
- Performance monitoring

Prior to the Western Trust being established the Southern sector of the Trust (formally Sperrin Lakeland Trust) had developed a Draft Carers Strategy. The document was drafted following focus groups with staff and carers groups. The document was consulted upon over a period of three months.

The Carers Co-ordinators have taken that document and reviewed it, taking into consideration Department of Health circulars and guidance, and the recommendations of 'Promoting Partnerships in Caring'.

Carers Steering Group

The primary role of the Carers Steering Group will be to drive forward the Carers Strategy across all Directorates over the 5 year implementation period from 2009 to 2014.

The group is chaired by an Assistant Director within the Trust. Membership also includes a representative Commissioner of Services from WHSSB, representatives from each of the Trust Directorates and carer representatives from all programmes of care. Trust representation is at Assistant Director/Senior Manager level to ensure the Strategy and subsequent developments are supported at the appropriate level.

Recognition of Carers

What carers say they need

Carers say they want to be recognised and valued in their caring role. Carers should be real and equal partners in the provision of care. In order for this to happen Carers must be consulted and included in the planning for and delivery of services to the person they care for.

Aims:

- a) To continue to encourage people to identify themselves as carers;
- b) To continue the awareness raising among staff (in Acute and community settings), and the public about recognising and valuing the carers role;
- c) Where a care plan is implemented ensure both informal carers and formal care workers have a clear understanding of each others roles and responsibilities;
- d) To encourage carers to become involved in the planning and delivery of care.

Action Plan

- To ensure the presence of a carer (especially younger and older carers) is recorded and highlighted in all relevant patient/client and carer records.
- Where services are offered a clear care plan is documented which highlights the role of carers and Social Care Workers. Care plan to be shared as appropriate.
- Carers' Support Co-ordinators to be involved in the planning of new projects and the development of services to ensure that Carers views are represented.
- Continue to encourage good practice in relation to holistic care planning, which takes into account the carers views and needs, and to incorporate these areas of good practice into training and the development plans for the future.
- Offer all carers a Carers Support Needs Assessment and keep this under review.
- Monitor the uptake of Carers Support Needs Assessments and the reasons for decline of the assessment by carers.
- Continue with staff awareness training and team visits throughout all service areas in order to raise the profile of Carers.
- Develop a Trust wide Carers Forum.
- Continue with the development of Trust wide carers database where carers can be registered. This may help with the profiling of the local carer population and act as a mailing list to assist in communicating with carers.

- Development of cross-border initiatives to support carers with information, through peer education and awareness raising events for carers and professionals.

Information for Carers

What carers say they need: -

Carers say they need information verbally and in written form. Information should be given in a timely way and sensitively. Information should be easily accessible and should include, advocacy support, advice on financial issues, how to contact voluntary, community and Carer support groups.

Aim:

To continue to develop Carer Support Information in a wide range of formats, that is relevant and easily accessible (across acute and community settings).

Action Plan

- To continue to develop general carers support information in a variety of formats and languages in keeping with the Trust's policy, for distribution through GP surgeries and community pharmacies.
- To continue with the development of Carers Support information specific to programmes of care, for distribution through social work, social care, nursing and Allied Health Professionals (AHP).
- To develop a Carers page on the Trust's website - showing carers information on services, carers events and developments within the Trust and wider community.
- To ensure Carers support information is up-dated on an as and when required basis.
- To develop a Trust-wide Carer's Workers Network for paid workers who have a 'carers remit' in order to share information.
- Continue with the development of the quarterly newsletter for carers and professionals. The Carers Newsletter will provide relevant and up-to-date information on carer's issues and rights. The newsletter will be distributed to all carers registered with the Western Health and Social Care Trust as well as through voluntary and community groups.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to maintain links with Carers NI Carers Workers Network as a source of information and support.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to continue work in raising awareness among carers about their right to a carers support needs assessment.
- Development of cross-border Carers Information initiatives, in conjunction with Carers Co-ordinators in HSE.
- To give practical support where necessary to allow Carers the opportunity to participate in information and training events for Carers.

- Carer Support Co-ordinators to develop links with minority and ethnic groups with regards to carers' issues and developing information for these groups.

Training

What carers say they need: -

Carers say they need training in caring procedures as well as personal development type training, which will support them in their caring role. Carers say they need practical support to avail of this training.

Carers have indicated the following types of training are useful: -

- Stress management training
- Moving and handling training
- Training in personal Care
- Training in the use of aids and equipment.
- Training on managing challenging behaviour
- First Aid training
- Mental Health First Aid training
- Training on medication, management of catheters, PEG tubes and colostomies

Aims:

- a) To develop a Carers training programme, based on assessment of Carers training needs.
- b) To encourage and support community groups in the development and provision of carers training.

Action Plan

- To continue to support community initiatives in the development and provision of training for carers.
- Develop a carers training needs analysis tool.
- To develop personal development and stress management programmes for carers.
- Further develop the Information and Stress Relieving days.
- To ensure mechanisms are put in place via training and team visits by the Carer Support Co-ordinators to advise staff of training opportunities for carers.
- To ensure all training programmes are monitored and evaluated so to mould future training initiatives.
- To give practical support where necessary to allow Carers the opportunity to participate in training and information events for Carers.
- To maintain links with EGSA and refer Carers to the guidance counsellor for information on courses and funding opportunities.
- The Carers Support Co-ordinators to explore funding opportunities for training initiatives.

- Carers Support Co-ordinators to explore the training needs of carers from minority and ethnic groups.

Support

What carers say they need: -

Carers say they need a range of flexible support services, which are needs led rather than service led and take into account Carer choice. Carers need regular breaks from caring. The timing and type of respite care is important and must be flexible. Carers want to be able to plan ahead.

Aim:

- a) To establish clear systems for feeding back outcomes of carer support needs assessment.
- b) The collation of this information to be used in the planning and development of flexible respite services to meet the needs of carer and service user.
- c) To provide carers with the support and opportunity to plan together with the person being cared for, family, friends and professionals, for the future.

Action Plan

- Development of respite care information leaflet for each programme of care.
- To develop the current Direct Payments Training for staff to include carer/user participation and promote and monitor the use of Direct Payments for flexible respite.
- Review of present mechanisms used to collate outcomes of Carers Support Needs Assessments, including reason for decline and ability or otherwise to meet any identified needs.
- The Trust will document any unmet needs, in order to provide data for planning, service development, resources and funding.
- The Trust to consider the development of Carers Support Team in partnership with community and voluntary organisations.
- Carers Support Groups will be encouraged to identify their support needs. To liaise with the Trust Carers Support Co-ordinators in order for the Trust to consider and review the range of support it offers to carers groups and advocacy groups, in the Trust area.
- Explore the opportunities for developing training initiatives for Carers Workers through Western Health and Social Care Trust's Carers Network in conjunction with Carers NI.
- Explore the funding opportunities of cross-border initiatives to support and inform carers.
- Continue to run and develop Information Stress Relieving days through the local colleges. Such initiatives will be based on the training needs of carers, which will be identified through evaluation of current training and Carers Support Needs Assessments.

- Develop a Carers Befriending Scheme, which will involve linking new carers with more experienced carers who can provide support.
- To encourage and up-date staff in the use of a person centred planning approach, which will support carers of all ages in planning for the future.
- Develop information and support leaflet for Carers whose caring role has changed.

Young Carers

What carers say they need: -

Carers say that caring has a massive impact on the rest of the family. Young people under the age of 18 can experience problems e.g. non-attendance, lack of concentration, bullying and isolation at school brought on by the impact of caring for a parent, brother, sister or grandparent.

Young carers need to be recognised and supported to ensure that their caring role does not adversely affect their educational, social or personal development. Where there is a clear impact, these children will potentially be deemed 'children in need' as per the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

Aim:

- a) To ensure young carers are identified and develop support projects for them across the Trust to include partnership working with the voluntary and community sector.

Action Plan

- To develop a means of identifying young carers within the Trust area.
- To implement a survey of young carers in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area, in order to assess need and what kinds of support and activities young carers would be interested in.
- To develop a specific Young Carers Support Needs Assessment tool and to raise awareness of the needs of young carers through the Carers Support Needs Assessment and staff training.
- To review the leaflet designed for young carers that are currently being distributed through the School Counselling Service, and School/Youth Services and to consult with the Education sector about how best to raise awareness of young carer issues.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to research current young carers projects as models of good practice, and seek out funding opportunities and community partnerships to support a Young Carers Project.
- To support the development of the Regional Young Carers project currently being delivered by Barnardo's.

Employment

What carers say they need: -

Carers say they need support to remain in or take up employment if that is what they choose to do. Carers need flexibility from their employers. They need to be able to leave work on-time, have access to a telephone to check on the cared for person, opt for flexible working hours e.g. reduce hours, job share, time off when children are not at school, time off for emergencies and time out of the workplace for hospital appointments.

Aim: -

- a) To consider the needs of carers employed in Western Health and Social Care Trust.
- b) To raise awareness of the needs of carers regarding employment in the wider community.

Action Plan

- To support agencies promoting issues of carers in employment e.g. Carers NI, Labour Relations Agency and Beyond caring project.
- The Trust is committed to its current policy on flexible working hours, and access to Carers leave for those who are in a caring role.
- The Trust aims to develop models of good practice internally to support carers in the workplace.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to liaise with Human Resources to develop a summary sheet of information on flexible working hours and access to Carers leave.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to liaise with Human Resources to promote awareness of access to Carers leave and support available to carers through the Trust staff induction programme.
- To engage with the BITC 'Opportunities Now' initiative to promote carers issues and share examples of good practice with private employers, through discussion forums.

Co-ordinating Support

Aim: -

- a) To ensure all current and future work in the support of Carers within Western Health and Social Care Trust is co-ordinated by the Carers Support Co-ordinators.

Action Plan

- Individual members of the Trust Carers Steering Group will endorse, promote and oversee the implementation of the Carers Strategy. The Steering Group will continue to be chaired by a Senior Manager from the Trust with overall responsibility for implementation of the carers strategy.
- To develop the role of the Trust Carers Forum in the development and implementation of the Carers Strategy in line with the regional initiative or Public Involvement (PI).
- Consolidate the role of the Carers Support Co-ordinators in order to:
 - Drive the strategy forward in the next five years within the Trust.
 - Provide a central point of contact and support for carers within the Trust.
 - Raise awareness of Carers issues by continuing training in the areas of Carers Assessment and Direct Payments with staff and Carers.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to continue to liaise with Primary care, the acute sector (Trust Hospitals), and voluntary / community organisations in raising awareness of carer's issues.
- Meet with teams in all programmes of care to keep staff up-to-date and liaise with programme managers to ensure the provision of services for carers is adequate and equitable throughout the Trust.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to attend Carers NI, Carers Workers Network on a quarterly basis in order to network, share ongoing work initiatives and information.
- Carers Support Co-ordinators to meet regularly with Carers Workers/co-ordinator's within and across new organisational boundaries to further develop carer services and projects.
- To integrate the Carers strategy and Carer support function within the Trust's Clinical and Social Care Governance reporting framework.

Performance Monitoring

Aim: -

- b) To ensure all work initiatives supporting Carers are monitored and evaluated.
- c) To measure performance against the actions outlined in the Trust Carers Strategy.

Action Plan

- To ensure effective monitoring and evaluation systems are put in place to ensure carer's needs are being met.
- Review of definition of unmet need and clear guidelines for staff.
- To ensure robust mechanisms are in place to monitor Carers Support Needs Assessment re –
 - Uptake
 - Outcomes
 - Unmet need
 - Reasons for decline.
- To record soft outcomes such as confidence building, self esteem, feeling of value and well-being.
- To identify timescales for taking initiatives forward.
- To engage the Trust Carers Representatives Network in feeding back on the progress and impact of initiatives from a carer's perspective.
- To ensure mechanisms are in place to measure the impact of actions being delivered, e.g. individual stories, compliments and complaints.
- Ensure mechanisms are in place to collate data on the offer and up-take of Direct Payments in line with priority for action (PFA) targets.
- To report on and measure progress and achievements against recommendations highlighted in 'Promoting Partnerships in Caring' and the resulting action plan.

Strategy Implementation

The Carers Steering Group, on behalf of the Trust Board, will oversee the implementation of the Carers Support Strategy.

Priorities for Implementation

1. Each Directorate will complete a base-line audit of current carer support services. This will inform a performance management approach to be taken within each Directorate that will identify the key priorities for action on an annual basis.
2. A carers support communications plan will be developed to inform and support both carers and staff in relation to meeting the objectives of the carers support agenda.
3. The data collection systems used for reporting on delegated statutory functions with regard to assessing and supporting carers needs will be reviewed and strengthened.
4. A Trust-wide carers forum will be established to work in partnership with carers in the longer term planning and delivery of support services in conjunction with the new commissioning arrangements coming in to effect across Northern Ireland.

Equality Impact Screening.

The draft Carers Strategy document was Equality Impact Assessed prior to presentation at Trust Board. The document was ‘screened out’, as it was evident that the strategy would not have a negative impact on the section 75 groups. However there were a number of issues raised where the Trust recognised the need to take specific action to ensure equality and inclusion. The following briefly outlines these issues.

Section 75 Group	Needs Identified	Trust Response
Men and Women	<p>The Trust recognises the majority of carers are women.</p> <p>There is evidence to suggest male carers become socially isolated and loose their social networks more quickly. Male carers are less likely to engage in Carer Support activities, therefore the Trust recognises that the support needs of male carers may be slightly different.</p>	<p>During the consultation the Trust will discuss with both men and women what their specific needs are in relation to support in the caring role.</p> <p>Information identified will be included in the final strategy.</p>
Disability	<p>The Trust is aware that for Carers with disabilities there will be additional support needs e.g. information in accessible formats.</p>	<p>The Trust will ensure that during the consultation we discuss with carers with disabilities and will make sure to include their suggestions in the final strategy. We will ensure that if information is required in different formats e.g. Braille, DAISY, large font etc. that this is provided.</p>

Race	The Trust is aware that there is a very low uptake of support services for carers by members of local ethnic minority groups. There may be a need for information to be provided in translated formats	During the consultation the Trust will ensure that it contacts and discusses particular issues in relation to carers from different ethnic backgrounds and will do its best to include suggestions in the final action plan. It information in translated format is required the Trust will ensure that this is provided.
Age	The Trust is aware that carers in different age groups have specific requirements. Young carers, have needs around education and social activity. Carers of a working age, face challenges in balance work, family and a caring role. Carers who are older face difficulties when they becomes less able to cope with the physical impact of caring.	The Strategy has included actions that are sensitive to the support needs of carers of different ages, e.g. young carers, carers of a working age and carers who are older.