

# Carers' Strategy: Annual Progress Report Summary 2025



## Caring for our Carers - the next five years



In partnership with



# Introduction

[Caring for our Carers](#) is our all-age integrated carers' strategy which provides direction on how together, with our partners in health, care and the voluntary and community sector (VCS), we support carers over a five-year period from 2024 – 2029.

Our vision is for all carers living in Bracknell Forest to be recognised and valued in their community, supported in achieving their own aspirations and helped in their caring role.

Our strategy focuses on five key priority areas. These areas guide how we provide support to carers and ensure we meet their needs effectively:

1. Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community
2. Services and support that works for carers
3. Employment and financial wellbeing
4. Supporting young carers
5. Supporting young adult carers

We published this strategy in late 2024. Since then we have been working hard to ensure we deliver on the priorities of the strategy.

It is important to understand how well we are progressing against our five-year action plan. This report contains a review of what we have achieved so far, what we need to focus on next and considered new challenges and opportunities. It is important that we continue to understand our progress, to keep on listening to and feeding back to carers in the community. This helps us keep improving and plan the next steps together.



## How we found out what difference the strategy has made

### Listened to carers:

Two surveys, one for adult carers and one for young carers, were published over an 8-week period from July 2025 to September 2025.

The surveys were promoted by partners through newsletters, carers' groups and via social media to the public. In addition to surveys, carers had the opportunity to share their views face to face. Local carers' support groups were visited whereby carers could also complete a hard copy of the survey should they wish and have a conversation with officers.

Young carers and their families have shared their views and ideas throughout the year through consultations in schools, feedback on projects and activities they have taken part in and at young carers and family events. From September 2025 a new online feedback form was launched, which means young carers and their families can give feedback at any time.



### Gathered information and data:

We receive quarterly reports on progress against the priorities from people across the council, NHS and voluntary organisations who work to deliver support for carers. This work is regularly discussed to ensure we are always on track.

SIGNAL4Carers delivers our carers' support service and meets regularly with officers to update them on the work they are doing with carers.

The NHS database offers insights on carers' health in comparison to patients who are not carers. This means we can understand our carers' health as a smaller population of all patients. This information is important as it helps us to understand how we can better support carers' health needs.



All the information we gathered was reviewed to understand our progress after the first year of delivering the strategy. Below are some areas of our progress.

# How are we doing?

Carers told us that it is difficult to access GP appointments for themselves as they are busy with caring responsibilities. It is important for GPs to know which of their patients have caring responsibilities. All GP practices in Bracknell Forest introduced initiatives to help identify more of their patients as carers so they could be flagged and identified on the GP records. This led to a total of 5,301 carers flagged on GP records which is a 57 per cent increase.

- It is important for a carer to have their own health needs met. Led by Bracknell & District Primary Care Network, a minimum carers' offer is being rolled out in all GP surgeries across Bracknell Forest. This means that carers will be able to schedule routine appointments within two weeks, access appointments over evenings and weekends and where possible access GP appointments at a time and place that suits carers. Some carers have told us that they are now able to make appointments for both themselves and the person they care for at the same time. In our survey, 55 per cent of people who were registered as a carer at with their GP said they found it very easy, easy or OK to get a GP appointment. We also launched a new Carers' Health Forum which supports carers to access advice in looking after their own health and wellbeing.

Carers told us that they wanted their respite needs to be understood. It is also important for arrangements to be made should something happen to a carer in an emergency situation (known as contingency planning). In May 2025 Bracknell Forest Council launched the new carers' assessment which includes discussions about the carer's respite needs, contingency planning, ways in which assistive technology can better support the carer and also any training needs the carer may require. Since May 2025 we have completed over 95 carers assessments with the improved approach.

- Working-age carers often can't access the support that is on offer which is mostly during the daytime. Working-age carers told us that they would like support to be more flexible in the time that it is available. In addition, working-age carers sometimes have to leave employment to care for their loved-one. We now have a flexible support offer for working-age carers which includes evenings and weekend support. An average of 26 working-age carers access evening and weekend support/activity sessions each month. 80 per cent of working-age carers who attend the evening dementia carers' group have rated the support as excellent. Working-age carers are also able to book one to one or group support sessions to understand financial entitlements and benefits available to them.

- It is important for carers to be able to access up to date and relevant information. We reviewed and refreshed the council's Carers webpages to make sure it was more user friendly. These webpages now provide carers with information and advice, directs them to our carers' support service, SIGNAL4Carers, support for young carers and the Adult Social Care portal whereby carers can request support. Carers are also informed of the Public Health portal which provides details on nearby services, groups and activities. We have been measuring how people access these pages and since the refresh of the carer pages there has been a 40 per cent reduction in bounce rates. This means 40 per cent less people are leaving the site after viewing only one page.

It is important for us to ensure we reach out to all carers who may need support. SIGNAL4Carers have undertaken a range of proactive engagement activities across Bracknell Forest to identify carers not known to us. This includes World Café events for Romanian, Polish, Indian and Nepalese communities as well as a visit to a local mosque. Over the last year there has been a seven per cent increase in carers registered with SIGNAL4Carers.

- There are more carers in Bracknell Forest aged between 5 – 29 years old than there are carers aged 75+. The strategy identified that we needed to improve the support we offer young carers and young adult carers. We have worked closely with young carers to make these improvements and over the last year there has been:
  - a 40.9 per cent increase in the identification, assessment and registration of young carers
  - a 169 per cent increase in professional contacts received about a young carer
  - 200 per cent increase in the number of young carers attending the youth club
  - a new transition pathway developed to support young carers as they turn 18
  - 52 transition assessments offered to young carers transitioning to adulthood with 14 assessments completed.



## Some developments have taken longer than expected.

Where we have made every effort to achieve the actions listed out in the strategy action plan, some areas haven't developed as fast as we had hoped.

- Carers helped us develop the new on-line self-assessment. The self-assessment is an important part of our offer to carers as it supports carers to reflect on their current caring role and helps them to consider whether they may need additional support. The self-assessment also shares helpful information and enables carers to request a full carer's assessment with a social worker. Due to a technical issue we weren't able to upload the self-assessment onto our web pages as quickly as we were aiming to. However we kept the carers who helped us develop the self-assessment updated so they knew what was going on. The self-assessment has now been uploaded, and we have started to monitor how many are being completed.
- We have been working hard to ensure we reach all carers who need support. Despite an increase in the number of carers accessing support from SIGNAL4Carers, we haven't seen an increase in the Black and global majority and carers from other European backgrounds registering for support. We will continue to reach out to carers from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- There have been limited opportunities to engage with local employers and businesses to develop benefits and opportunities for carers. The current economic environment has been challenging for some businesses. We will continue to promote the Carers' Card UK and will engage with the Get Berkshire Working strategy which is in development.
- Young adult carers aged 18-24 continues to be a group with low interest in offers of support. We will continue to develop new approaches to ensure our services meet the needs of young adult carers.



# Thank you for your involvement

In order to understand whether we are getting it right and what further improvements need to be made, we regularly reach out to our community of carers by popping into your groups, support sessions, events and by sending out surveys. We always appreciate the responses we receive, and we rely on your feedback to continue to develop our services.

Some of the feedback we received for this progress report:

“There is so much support in Bracknell, you could go to a different group everyday.”

**Carer at the dementia carers coffee morning.**

“Being part of Bracknell Forest Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) has been a lifeline for me. The wealth of knowledge and help they provide is amazing. Also being a volunteer and attending co-production meetings is amazing.”

**Parent Carer BPCF survey response.**

“I have learned to overcome obstacles that I regularly fail and to have patience and calm when you find something difficult.”

**Young carer feedback after Wilde About Arts term.**

“I love going to young carers on a Thursday evening. It’s a cool place to hang out and the staff are really nice.”

**Young carer’s feedback from survey.**

**“Bracknell  
adult social  
care has been  
amazing.”**

*Carers’ comments survey.*

**“Adult social care was there when I got in touch.”**

*Carers' comments survey.*

“Thanks for a great online session last week. It was lovely to meet other carers and spend some time with you all...I got a lot out of the session and feel like I learn something new every time I have a care related conversation.”

**Carer feedback after SIGNAL4Carers online session.**

“Both my mum and I have had great support through the school which has enabled my education not to be impacted.”

**Young carer feedback in the annual survey.**

“It’s great that the children are given the chance to interact with adults without all the rules and strictness of school and other authoritative adults.”

**Parent feedback Young Carers Action Day - March 2025**



“The activities provided have been great for both my young carers and they have gained self-confidence.”

**Parent comments from young carers' service feedback form.**

# What happens next?

The carers' strategy is a five year plan, and we are one year into its implementation. As we enter the second year of working to achieve our vision and priority areas of the strategy, we will refresh the action plan with the findings of this report and new opportunities that have arisen.

Some of the areas we plan to focus on next include:



**Develop a guide to encourage more consistency across all GP surgeries to flag carers' health records to ensure their own health needs are also prioritised**



**Publish the new parent carer assessment as part of our parent carer offer**



**Develop a carers' handbook which will provide carers with information on all services and support available to them**



**Work with the local Connect to Work programme to highlight carers as a group that need support to find or remain in employment**



**Ongoing training webinars to support professionals in the identification of young carers**



**Provide an event for all young carers turning 18 to support them as they approach adulthood.**



**Implement our No Wrong Door policy to track our progress in supporting young carers across all services**

We will continue to track our progress by reviewing the data and talking to carers. A second annual progress report will be published in 2027

**If you need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with us, please call 01344 352000 or email: [customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk).**