



**Open Report on behalf of Martin Samuels,  
Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing**

Report to:	<b>Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>28 February 2024</b>
Subject:	<b>Introduction to the Lincolnshire Carers Service</b>

**Summary:**

There are 70,385 unpaid carers in Lincolnshire (Census 2021). The Council has duties under the Care Act 2014 to promote the wellbeing of unpaid carers and ensure pathways and services are in place to help them sustain their caring role. This is important in the prevention of carer breakdown which can lead to escalation to formal care provision.

While most unpaid carers are happy to self-help through available information and support, some require additional support to help them balance their caring role with their own wellbeing.

The Lincolnshire Carers Service was re-commissioned in October 2022, and provides a single point of access for unpaid carers to seek advice, support and guidance through a universal offer and receive further support where eligible. The extent and range of the service is explored further in the report.

Initial results for Lincolnshire from the annual Survey of Adult Carers in England provide useful information on the demographics, and health and wellbeing of carers. The survey helps local authorities learn more about whether services are helping them in their caring role and their life outside caring, along with their perception of the services provided to the person they care for.

**Actions Required:**

The Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the content of the report.

## **1. Background**

### Unpaid Care in Lincolnshire

An unpaid carer is anyone who provides unpaid help to a friend or family member needing support, perhaps due to illness, old age, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction. The range of care, hours and intensity can vary, and can be provided by someone within or outside of the carers household.

The Census (2021) estimates that there are 70,385 unpaid carers in Lincolnshire (around 10% of the population), with the highest proportion of Lincolnshire's unpaid carers residing in East Lindsey, the lowest in South Kesteven. Data shows that approximately two thirds of unpaid carers are female, similar to national and regional figures. Across Lincolnshire, the largest proportion of unpaid carers provide 19 hours or less care per week, with the proportion of people who provide 20-49 hours and 50 plus hours of care each week being greatest in East Lindsey. There is a correlation with higher levels of deprivation and an older age profile in the east of the county and given the ageing population the number of unpaid carers is expected to increase.

With the nominal value of labour for Lincolnshire's unpaid carers of all ages being estimated at £2,444 million per year, unpaid carers make a crucial contribution, however, being an unpaid carer places a significant strain on the individual and can impact their own health and wellbeing and quality of life. The NHS Long Term Plan recognises that carers are twice as likely to suffer poor health compared to the general population, primarily due to a lack of information and support, financial concerns, stress, and social isolation. There can also be an adverse effect on education and employment, with many carers giving up work or foregoing education.

The Council has a legal obligation under the Care Act 2014 to promote the wellbeing of unpaid carers and ensure pathways and services are in place to help them sustain their caring role. This is important in the prevention of carer breakdown which can lead to escalation to formal care provision, often in crisis situations.

The importance of the caring role is reflected in the Lincolnshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, of which Carers is one of five priority areas highlighted as the most important health and wellbeing issues in the county. The Carers Priority Delivery Group, chaired by Councillor Elizabeth Sneath, is responsible for ensuring the Health and Wellbeing Strategy objectives are delivered.

### The Lincolnshire Carers Service

The Lincolnshire Carers Service (provided by the Serco Customer Services team and Carers First) was re-commissioned in October 2022 and provides a single point of contact for all new referrals via the Care and Wellbeing Hub (based within the LCC Customer Service Centre). The service utilises a strength-based approach which places carers at the heart of the process, identifying their own skills and strengths and the support available to them in their community. These conversations inform a plan of how to meet the needs of both the carer and the cared for. The service is available to all unpaid carers over the age of 18

and young adults (age 16+) as they transition from the Young Carers Service, provided by Children's Services and supporting around 2739 known young carers.

The Lincolnshire Carers Service includes the following elements:

- Support to identify as a carer
- A strengths-based Carer Conversation to all Carers seeking support including next steps planning
- A Universal Offer to all Carers:
  - information, advice, and guidance
  - access to preventative community-based support
  - programme of Carer wellbeing
- Formal assessment of need
- Person-centred Support Planning, provision and arrangement of practical and emotional support and Support Plan Review
- Targeted support for Carers with eligible needs
- Support for Bereaved and Former Carers, and Young Adult Carers
- Hospital-In Reach (Lincoln and Boston), Employment Support and Benefits Advice
- Provision of a Carers Personal Budget to meet an assessed eligible need
- Carers emergency response; support to plan for what will happen if a carer is unable to carry out their role

The Lincolnshire Carers Service Universal Offer is available to all unpaid carers presenting with a support need and meets these for most carers quickly and effectively through a range of channels and in a variety of formats, including face to face, telephone, email and video calls. A dedicated service website is currently in development, and information is currently available via the Councils website and through the Connect to Support Lincolnshire online directory of services. A range of service user case studies are at Appendix A.

In 2023, the service received 4950 contacts (around 7% of estimated adult carers), with the majority accessing carer support groups, followed by information and advice and wellbeing activities via the 'universal offer'. Of these, 798 went on to have a formal carers assessment.

The service receives high satisfaction scores for feeling listened to (98%), feeling their wellbeing is prioritised (95%) and feeling more informed (95%). In terms of outcomes, 56% of carers showed an improvement following their carer conversations and next steps plans, with the biggest improvement areas being managing finances (59% increased their score), having choice and control over the caring role (53% increased their score), and seeing family and friends when they want to (44% increased their score).

Benchmarking with similar local authorities has shown that on average, 6.5% of unpaid carers receive information and advice/support through similar services in their local authority area. This is lower than the rate for Lincolnshire, however, it remains challenging to consistently identify unpaid carers. Many will self-serve using the available information and do not contact the service for direct support, however, there will be some

who do not readily identify themselves as carers or are unaware of the support available and may benefit.

A key element of the service is to raise awareness of the caring role, the rights of Carers and the support available. This takes many forms including printed materials, social media, websites, engagement with health professionals, voluntary services, employers and campaigns.

### System Working

Work with system partners through the Carers Priority Delivery Group aims to deliver the priority objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, both for the wellbeing of the carer and to support the person they care for. Unpaid carers are often integral in co-ordinating the care that is received by the cared for person, and with care needs often crossing both social care and NHS services it is important for them to be involved and listened to from the outset.

Lincolnshire NHS Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT) and United Lincolnshire hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT) have strengthened support and recognition of carers in the hospital environment. A badge scheme helps staff recognise a care partner and ensure they have access to some of the carer elements that we provide, such as more flexibility on visiting and authority to help support at meal times

A Carers Hub recently opened at Boston Pilgrim hospitals. Run by ULHT in conjunction with the Lincolnshire Carers Service and provides a dedicated area for carers to take a break when visiting and to access information about support and advice. Overtime it is anticipated that they will be replicated across other sites.

Within LCC there is an active staff carer network and personal passport, making it easier for employees to be recognised and seek the help they may need to balance their caring role and work responsibilities. Similar staff networks operative within the Lincolnshire ICS and several other large employers.

As one of the two Lincolnshire Carers Service providers, Carers First leads the Lincolnshire Employment Programme for Carers, engaging with key organisations to develop Carers Awareness programmes to support working carers and those that employ them and support employer-based working carer networks. LCC is an umbrella member of Employers for Carers, managed and supported by Carers UK. This provides free membership for small businesses to help them ensure they have policies, processes and support that assist them in retaining and managing employees with caring responsibilities.

To support ongoing development opportunities and ensure services meet the needs of unpaid carers, a range of co-production opportunities to better understand the experiences of unpaid carers have been undertaken. These have recently included the former carers pathway, for those whose caring role has come to end. This resulted in updates to the "After Caring" offer, including improved communication channels and

updated information. Opportunities for further engagement in the coming months include the Carers Emergency Response provision and Carers Personal Budgets.

### Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)

Carers are a key policy area within the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). All local authorities with social care responsibilities are expected to undertake an annual survey of Adult Carers using a predefined survey and selection formula from carers who have had contact with the service in the last 12 months. The survey aims to understand whether services are helping carers in their role, their life outside of caring, and their perception of the services provided to the person they care for.

The survey was sent to 1227 carers, with a response rate of 33%. Questions predominantly focus on topics that are indicative of a balanced life alongside their unpaid caring role.

The national results for 2023/24 are not expected to be available until later in 2024, however, initial results from the Lincolnshire survey show that:

- 72% of people being cared for are over 65 years old and 50% of people being cared for have a physical disability
- 79% of carers live with the person they care for, 62% are retired, over half (56%) have been a carer for 5 years or more and 41% spend 100 hours or more per week in their caring role
- 66% of carers or the person being cared for who accessed a social care service in the last 12 months were quite satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service received
- Nearly 60% of carers accessed information or advice from the Carers Service in the last 12 months
- Over half of carers (52.8%) reported their caring role had not caused any financial difficulties over the last 12 months.

## **2. Conclusion**

The Lincolnshire Carers Service supports the Council's legal obligations under the Care Act 2014 to promote the wellbeing of unpaid carers and to prevent, reduce and delay the onset of need.

By intervening early and providing access to information, advice, practical and emotional help and financial support, carers can have a life of their own while effectively maintaining their caring responsibilities. A wide range of information is available to support carers to access information at a time and in a way that suits them. For those that require additional support, the Carers Service universal offer provides an opportunity for an initial conversation. The needs of most carers who access the service are met in this way, with around 16% going onto receive a formal assessment of their needs.

In its first year, the service has demonstrated positive outcomes and received excellent customer feedback. Opportunities to work with carers with lived in experience have already been beneficial with further work ongoing and planned.

Although the response to the annual Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) represents a small proportion of carers in Lincolnshire, initial results show that of those that responded, most were retired, and many (41%) spend 100 hours or more a week in their caring role. This contrasts with the data from the Census 2021 which indicates that the majority of Lincolnshire’s unpaid carers spend less than 19 hours per week undertaking their caring role. This would suggest that those accessing the Lincolnshire Carers Service are carers who are spending a large proportion of their time caring and therefore may require the more support to balance their caring role with their own wellbeing.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

A risk and impact analysis for the Lincolnshire Carers Service was undertaken during re-commissioning and is available at [Carers Service Re-commissioning Equality Impact Assessment](#) No perceived adverse impacts on any of the protected characteristics were noted.

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Service User Case Studies

**5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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