

'Carers at the heart of Worcestershire's  
families and communities'

# **Draft Carers' Strategy 2009- 2014 (full version)**

The strategy documents can also be made available in other languages and alternative formats (large print and computer disk for full document & audio tape and Braille for easy read version) on request from Helen Garfield at [hgarfield@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hgarfield@worcestershire.gov.uk) or 01905 822638

## **Foreword**

The development of this new Carers Strategy for Worcestershire represents an exciting new era in the delivery of support for adult carers in the county.

For the first time Worcestershire County Council and NHS Worcestershire are pooling their resources to provide the best possible support for adult carers, and in partnership with the voluntary sector will be working more closely to deliver the vision and outcomes set for adult carers. Given future financial constraints this joint working will be vital if we are ensure that resources are effectively used and deliver value for money.

As a result of the recent local strategic review of carers support services carers have now been recognised as a distinct client group for joint commissioning of services between our health and social care agencies, and this will ensure a stronger focus on carers support needs in future decision making.

The commissioning of new and re-designed services will provide more equitable support for carers across the county, and all front line health and social staff involved in supporting patients and service users will be tasked with ensuring that the needs and aspirations of carers are considered at all times.

The strategic priorities identified for action will also enable Worcestershire to meet the key outcomes set by the new national carers strategy 'Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities'.

We are confident that the delivery of the new strategy will result in significant improvements in the quality of life and health and wellbeing of adult carers in Worcestershire, and we welcome the opportunity to work jointly with our partners, in particular those in the voluntary and community sector, to achieve this aim.

Eddie Clarke  
Director of Adult and Community Services  
Worcestershire County Council

Paul Bates  
Chief Executive  
NHS Worcestershire

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the support of the following individuals and agencies in the development of the strategy.

Their active contribution in a variety of ways to the recent local strategic review of carers support services ensured we were able to identify key strategic priorities for future action that we are confident will address the needs and aspirations of adult carers in the county.

Thank you all for your support.

Anne Duddington  
Ron Chambers  
Marie Hancock  
Emma Mitchell  
Maggie Brighton  
Rachel Officer  
Philip Bladon  
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Worcestershire County Council's  
Carers Unit

The above list is not exhaustive of all those individuals and agencies that have supported development of this strategy, so for those not mentioned that supported development of this strategy through engagement in focus groups or by hosting visits, a thank you.

## Consultation Arrangements

This new draft strategy is now open for formal consultation for a period of 3 months that ends at 5pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

You are asked to complete the on line questionnaire that can be found on the 'consultation portal' either direct at <http://www.bmgsystems.co.uk/whub/KMS/dmart.aspx> or via the County Council and NHS Worcestershire websites.

If you wish to send your response in by post please contact Helen Garfield at the Joint Commissioning Unit on 01905 822638.

If you have any other comments please send them to Helen Garfield by e-mail at [hgarfield@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hgarfield@worcestershire.gov.uk) or by post to the following address:

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## 1. Executive Summary

Carers are the main resource available to the health and social care sector in Great Britain. There are 6 million carers nationally with over a fifth providing 50 hours plus care per week, and the delivery of high quality support including consideration of safeguarding issues for carers is vital to ensure the provision of good quality care and support for the millions they care for.

The support of carers prevents admission and speeds up discharge from hospitals, and also prevents admission to care homes and reduces the demand for home care support. Therefore, given the future constraints on public sector finances, it is ever more pressing that we support carers to maintain their caring role, where they wish and are able to.

In Worcestershire there are estimated to be nearly 60,000 carers, representing over 10 per cent of the population. Many may provide limited care while others provide regular and substantial levels of care but all have a need for support of some kind to help them provide the best quality care possible while also ensuring their own needs and aspirations are met.

This Carers Strategy for the period 2009-14, which has a focus on the needs of adult carers, will ensure a higher profile for carers issues amongst key decision making bodies, will deliver more equitable services across the county, will support more carers to provide good quality care while enjoying a life of their own, and will ensure carers are more engaged in the delivery of care and support services provided for themselves or those they care for.

The strategy is focused on achievement of the outcomes specified in the new national strategy for carers and the findings of the recent local strategic review of carers support services, and it is well placed to respond to issues pertinent to Worcestershire while contributing to achievement of national objectives.

The strategy is strongly based on achievement of outcomes that local carers have identified as important, and evaluation of the strategy will be largely based on assessment against these.

The strategy also reflects a commitment to the principle of co-production between commissioners, providers and users (carers) of services with regard to the identification of strategic priorities, the design of services, and the evaluation of performance and impact.

Three strategic priorities for action have been set to enable us to meet these local and national outcomes, and these are to:

- develop stronger governance structures for decision making concerning issues facing carers – to raise the profile of carers issues, ensure the active engagement of key partners in decision making, and encourage the allocation of adequate resources to deliver required support services
- improve carer confidence in the quality of support available to them and the person they care – in particular the flexibility and responsiveness of services to meet personal needs and aspirations, and the extent to which carers are engaged in decision making regarding the support provided

- delivering more equitable access to and improved support services for adult carers – in particular between those eligible for statutory support and those with lower needs, for carers in different districts of the county, and between carers of different ages

A major aim of the strategy is to increase the number of adult carers in the county who access information advice and low level support that enables them to manage their caring responsibilities in a sustainable way for the continued health and wellbeing of themselves and the person they care for. A priority is to ensure that carers currently under-represented amongst current services are targeted for support, whether they be from Black and Minority Ethnic communities or have caring responsibilities not traditionally addressed by social care services.

Implementation and evaluation of the strategy will be overseen by new governance groups for carers that engage key decision makers for Worcestershire County Council and NHS Worcestershire, and also a wide range of individuals and voluntary sector agencies with an interest in improving the quality of life of carers in the county.

## **2. Background**

The development of this strategy is primarily informed by the following developments:

- National Carers Strategy 'Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities', 2008
- Personalisation Agenda, defined in 'Putting People First', 2007
- Worcestershire's Strategic Review of Carers Support Services 2008-09
- Review of Worcestershire's Carers Strategy 2005-09

The new national carers strategy is a framework for developing support for carers over the next 10 years. It has a strong focus on tailoring support for carers to their personal needs and aspirations, and acknowledges the need to support all carers through information and advice while recognising that the focus of resources will be on support for carers with the greatest needs.

This national strategy will be delivered alongside the national personalisation agenda for adult social care services, which requires a shift of resources towards universal early intervention services for all, choice and control over the services people receive, the support of non-social care mainstream services, and recognition of the vital role that carers and the wider community play in supporting people.

In response to the national carers strategy and personalisation agenda a strategic review of carers support services in the county was completed in 2008/09. The review entailed consultation with a range of carers through focus groups, an analysis of local and national data related to the needs of carers, good practice visits to other local authorities, mapping and review of existing services, and agreement of strategic priorities that underpin this strategy.

Key findings are that at current estimates there are nearly 60,000 carers in Worcestershire, representing over 10 per cent of the adult population, with the vast majority not known to current service providers. The 2001 also census highlighted a negative relationship between caring responsibilities and the health and employment/income status of local carers, and these needs are reflected in this strategy.

Also, the mapping and review of existing services identified that funding is largely focused on support for carers assessed as eligible using Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria, and also that services accessible to all carers are not equitably provided across the county.

Finally, in relation to the existing carers strategy for Worcestershire covering the period 2005-09 progress has been made to meet the specified outcomes.

This period has seen a significant increase in the number of carers assessments undertaken each year, with over 4000 in 2008/09 compared with less than 3000 in 2007/08. Development workers in local hospitals have been established to ensure planned discharge and a network of social care and mental health link workers set up, with both of these initiatives having a significant impact on the quality of support that carers receive.

Over this period voluntary sector organisations have contributed significantly to awareness raising of carer issues, both strategically and operationally. They have also provided information and advice, training, emotional and practical support, and undertaken dedicated work to engage GP practices in support of carers. Over this period the number of carers registered to receive support from the voluntary sector increased from under 2000 to over 4000.

Yet, the evidence of impact for carers is not very conclusive and the move towards an outcomes focused evaluation in this new strategy will help us to evidence this more robustly in the future. Also, while many services have developed in line with identified priorities from the previous strategy some have developed more ad hoc, resulting in some inequity in the coverage of services and a concern over the effectiveness of some.

This new strategy directly responds to these developments with the aim of achieving the vision and outcomes specified for carers below.

Full details on the background to this strategy are given in appendix A.

### **3. Vision**

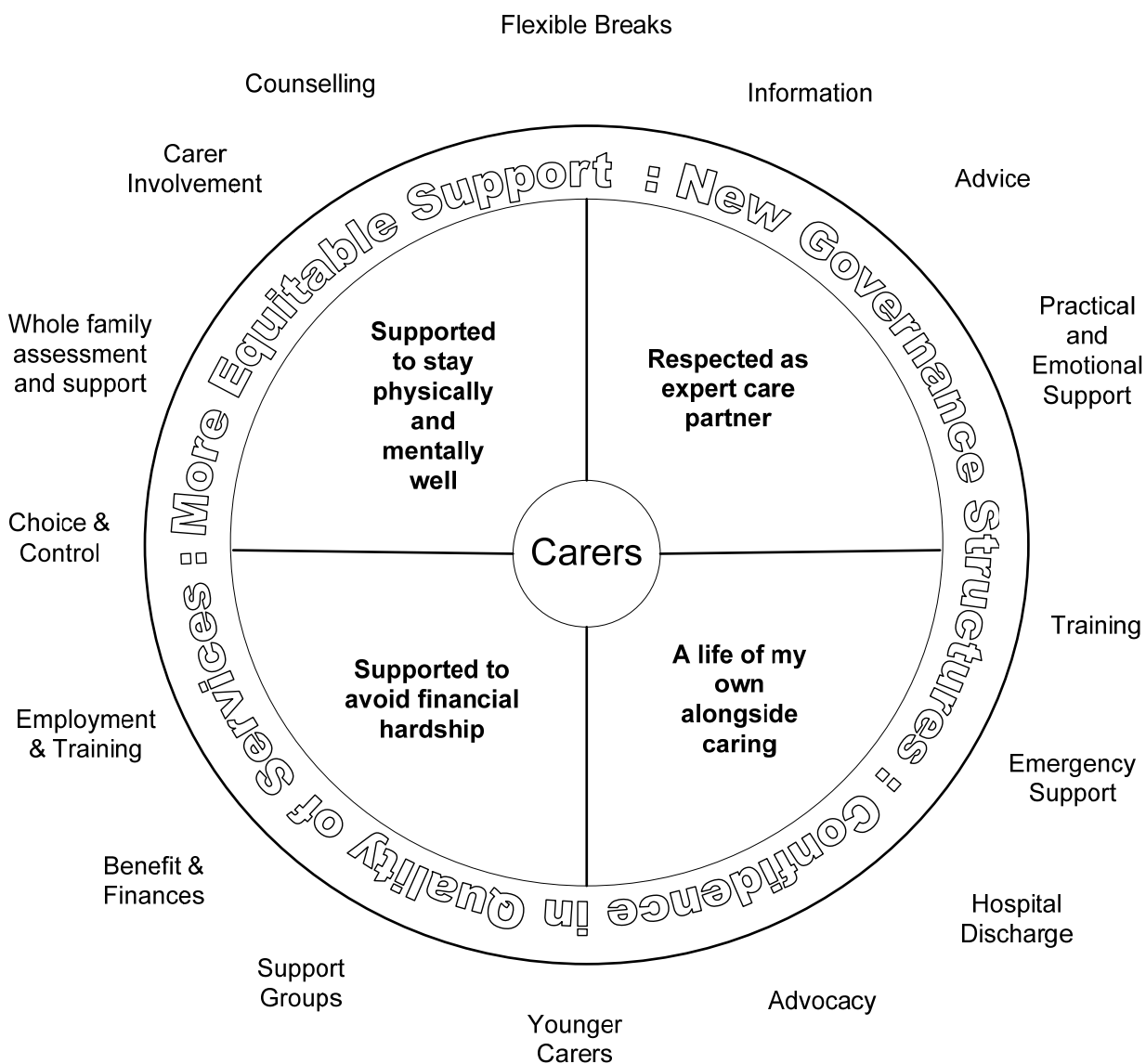
The vision for the support of adult carers in Worcestershire is derived from the key findings of the recent local strategic review of carers support services undertaken in Worcestershire, and also the new national carers strategy 'Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities'.

*Our vision is that all adult carers will be recognised and valued by key agencies in Worcestershire and by the wider community as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities. That all carers receive support tailored to meet their personal needs and aspirations and that helps them to provide good quality care and manage their caring responsibilities in a safe manner. That services enable carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, assist them in ensuring mental and physical health and wellbeing, and support them to be as independent as possible.*

In order to achieve this vision it will be necessary for a wide range of agencies to support delivery of this strategy. A cross-sector effort is required that goes beyond direct providers of health and social care services to engage other agencies such as district authorities and employment bodies that have a role in supporting carers to have a good quality of life.

The model we are developing to improve the quality and range of support for adult carers is summarised in the following diagram, based on the model developed by the Princes Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads.

**Worcestershire's Model of Carers Support**



**4. Outcomes**

The following high level outcomes are set for the national carers strategy and these will be the focus of Worcestershire's carers strategy for the future.

- Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role
- Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role
- Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role
- Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity

There is a fifth outcome set for the national strategy - children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods and to achieve against all the Every Child Matters – but this largely falls outside the remit of this strategy given its focus on adult carers.

In order to evaluate whether these national outcomes have been met we assess progress against the following set of carer outcomes. They are informed by the national health and social care outcomes framework defined by the Department of Health but have been personalised to represent the needs and aspirations of Worcestershire carers following consultation as part of the local strategic review.

	<b>National Service Level Outcomes</b>	<b>Local Carer Outcomes</b>
<b>1</b>	Improved physical health and emotional wellbeing	<p>My physical health and emotional wellbeing has improved</p> <p>I am better able to manage my stress</p> <p>I have increased understanding and confidence to fulfil my role as a carer</p> <p>My support needs are better met</p> <p>I am assured that the person I care for can receive good quality care and support when required</p>
<b>2</b>	Improved quality of life	<p>I have a good balance between my caring and personal life that relieves the pressures of caring</p> <p>I feel less isolated</p>
<b>3</b>	Increased choice and control	<p>I have improved understanding of how to access support services</p>

		I trust the support system more
4	Making a positive contribution	I am more involved & can influence the assessment of my needs and aspirations  I am able to provide enhanced quality of care
5	Economic wellbeing	I am supported to access the correct services to maximise my income to meet basic needs and achieve quality of life  I am supported to access the correct services to maintain my potential to enter or re-enter the employment market as and when desired in order to ensure independence
6	Freedom from discrimination and harassment	I receive recognition and respect for the importance of my caring role and contribution to society
7	Maintain personal dignity and respect	I receive recognition and respect for the importance of my caring role and contribution to society  I am able to maintain the dignity and personal nature of my relationship with the person I care for

These local and national carer outcomes will be used to evaluate the impact of all services specifically commissioned to support carers, and also to assess whether or not carers are "recognised and valued by key agencies and the wider community" and whether they receive support "tailored to meet their personal needs and aspirations" as defined in our vision.

It will be the views of carers themselves that primarily determines whether or not these outcomes have been achieved. Their views will be sought to assess the effectiveness of support services, and the extent to which key agencies and front line services consider their needs and aspirations.

## 5. Principles

The development and delivery of this strategy is based on the following principles that we would expect all those involved in the support of carers to adhere to.

- focus on carer outcomes – at all times the desired outcomes of carers should inform all decision making and support provided

- recognition and respect – the vital role of carers in complementing statutory health and social care services means that carers must receive recognition and respect for their contribution
- caring in a safe manner – support for carers to provide care safely and ensure that the people they care for are safeguarded
- involvement in decision making – carers should be recognised as 'expert care partners' and actively engaged by health and social care professionals in the statutory and voluntary sectors wherever feasible in discussions regarding the provision of services for patients and service users
- a life of their own – equally carers should be recognised as having a right to their own life and their personal needs and aspirations should be considered at all times
- personalised support – to support this any services carers receive should be tailored to meet their individual needs and aspirations
- equitable support for all – the needs and aspirations of all adult carers, whatever the reason for their caring responsibility or whatever their personal needs may be, should be equally addressed
- co-ordinated services – agencies actively engaged in the delivery of support for carers and patients or service users should work in partnership and seek to co-ordinate any support provided to ensure that outcomes for carers are met
- co-production – lead commissioning agencies the County Council and NHS Worcestershire should work in partnership with carers and service providers in the private, statutory and voluntary sector to design, procure and evaluate support services
- carers funding for carers – finally, a key principle of this strategy is that funding allocated specifically for support of carers shall be used where the primary beneficiary is the carer

Again, these principles reflect those underpinning the new national strategy and the key findings of the recent local strategic review.

## **6. Focus**

This strategy focuses on the needs and aspirations of adult carers aged 18 years or above who provide unpaid care for other adults.

While the strategy is not focused on young carers aged 17 years or under, or on parental carers of children aged 17 years or under, both of which are the focus of work by Children's Services, the needs of younger carers in transition from childhood to adulthood are recognised and addressed.

The definition of a carer for the purpose of this strategy is as follows:

"a person who, free of charge\*, looks after over a period of time a relative, friend or neighbour who because of disability, illness, the effects of old age or other needs cannot manage at home without help"

\* some carers receive Carers Allowance but this is not payment for their caring work but rather recognition of the extra costs associated with being a carer

The carer does not have to be living in the same property as the person they care for and the reason for their care and support needs are not relevant. For example the care and

support could be required as a result of substance misuse or domestic violence as much as for physical or learning disabilities.

## 7. Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities will drive forward delivery of this carers strategy. They are focused on achievement of the outcomes set for the national strategy and are derived from the findings of the recent local strategic review.

- develop stronger governance structures for decision making concerning issues facing carers – to raise the profile of carers issues, ensure the active engagement of key partners in decision making, and encourage the allocation of adequate resources to deliver required support services
- improve carer confidence in the quality of support available to them and the person they care – in particular the flexibility and responsiveness of services to meet personal needs and aspirations, and the extent to which carers are engaged in decision making regarding the support provided
- delivering more equitable access to and improved support services for adult carers – in particular between those eligible for statutory support and those with lower needs, for carers in different districts of the county, and between carers of different ages

While the above will be priorities for action over the coming 4 years the achievement of national outcomes for carers will also be largely achieved via ongoing delivery of existing support services for carers primarily delivered by voluntary sector organisations and the County Council's Carers Unit.

### Strategic Priority 1 - Developing New Governance Structures

Key decisions in Worcestershire regarding delivery of a wide range of support, social care and health services are made by the Joint Commissioning Group that represents Worcestershire County Council's Adult and Community Services Directorate and NHS Worcestershire. Carers have not been identified till now as a distinct client group for joint decision making and the profile of carers issues has subsequently not been as high as it could be. As a result **we will**:

- establish a pooled health and social care budget for carers as part of the formal joint commissioning agreement between Worcestershire County Council and NHS Worcestershire
- establish a Carers Consultative Group with all key stakeholders, including carers and voluntary sector partners, to shape future strategy development
- establish a Carers Commissioning and Finance Sub Group of key health and social care officers to lead on implementation of the strategy

The review identified a need for the health sector to engage more in supporting carers, and in support via NHS Worcestershire **we will** allocate £120,000 extra per annum, recurrent from 2010/11, to the above pooled budget to enhance support for carers.

To ensure carers involvement in the Carers Consultative Group and other relevant governance structures so that that their needs and aspirations inform key decision making

**we will** include a requirement within the contract for a new countywide carers information advice and support service that the provider supports carers to engage in a meaningful way.

Finally, to ensure a higher profile for carers issues within the health and social care sector we will ensure that the key governance bodies of NHS Worcestershire and the County Council receive regular progress reports on the implementation of the strategy, and that they are all challenged to maintain a clear commitment to delivering the agreed aims and desired outcomes.

In essence these bodies will be asked to 'think carer' in relation to the decisions they make and the actions they take. These decisions and actions will then be reported back to the Carers Consultative Group to ensure they have the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on them.

The key governance bodies that we will specifically report to and seek to engage with in this manner include:

- ❖ Worcestershire Partnership
- ❖ Worcestershire's Health and Social Care Partnership Board
- ❖ Worcestershire's Joint Commissioning Group
- ❖ Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet
- ❖ Worcestershire Adult and Community Services Directorate Management Team
- ❖ NHS Worcestershire's Commissioning Executive
- ❖ NHS Worcestershire's Clinical Senate
- ❖ Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust

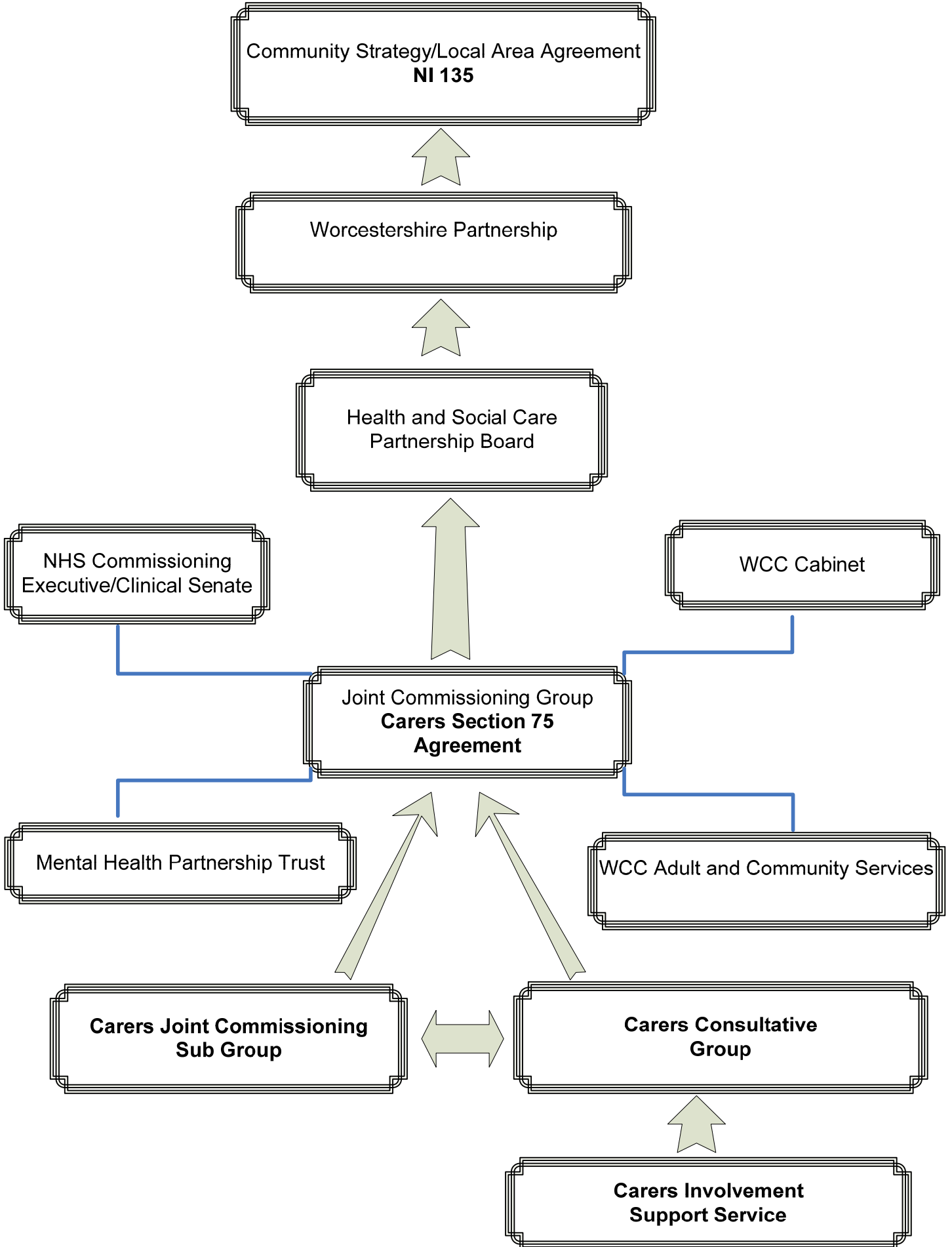
Further **we will** explore with these groups the development of a Carers Charter that enshrines how key health and social care organisations in both the statutory and voluntary sector, and also those organisations not traditionally concerned with the support of carers, are to shape their services to meet their needs and aspirations.

Another aspiration for the strategy is that via the Worcestershire Partnership **we will** see National Indicator 135 (which measures the number of carers whose needs are assessed or reviewed by a council in any given year who also receive a specific carers service or advice and information in the same year, as a percentage of people receiving a community based service in the year) included during the life of this strategy as one of the local indicators for measuring quality of life in Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement.

The above actions will raise the voice of carers and the profile of carers issues amongst key decision making groups, ensure that these issues are considered when making decisions that affect carers, will encourage more co-ordinated delivery of support services, and will maximise the potential allocation of resources to meet the needs and aspirations of carers.

The new governance structures described above are illustrated on the next page, with the proposed new developments highlighted in bold.

# Carers Governance Structures



## Strategic Priority 2 - Improving Carer Confidence in Support Services

The aim of developing new governance structures is to raise the voice of carers and understand carers issues from a 'top down' perspective by engaging with key decision making groups. But it is equally necessary to raise this voice and understand these issues from a 'bottom up' perspective by ensuring that front line officers who support carers, whether in the statutory or voluntary sector, engage with carers as having distinct needs and aspirations alongside those they care for.

In order to ensure that the personal needs and aspirations of carers are considered in the delivery of all dedicated support services **we will** undertake the following:

- review how carers are involved in delivery of the Choice and Control programme to ensure that carers are actively engaged in decision making so that their needs and aspirations are considered when developing care packages for the people they care for eg via membership of the User and Carer Forum
- complete a person centred care check of how carers support services are delivered at the point of review or re-procurement of existing services, the procurement of new services, and the evaluation of their performance
- re-procure the existing Sitter Service that provides short term breaks for carers as the Flexible Breaks for Carers service that will offer the option of longer breaks, a firmer commitment to evening and weekend breaks, and more choice in the provider of breaks
- consider the option of direct cash payments for eligible carers who wish to purchase their own support to provide them with breaks rather than receive support from the Flexible Breaks service
- require the new countywide information advice and support service that will focus on delivery of lower level support for carers to develop a carers wellcheck assessment tool that enables them to tailor their services to personal needs and aspirations
- maintain the focus of the County Council's Carers Unit on providing professional support for front line social care and health care teams to ensure that carers needs and aspirations are understood, and ensure continued growth in the number of carers assessments
- commission a dedicated service to engage with health professionals based at all GP practices across the county to ensure that carers issues are understood and addressed alongside those of patients
- embed carers issues into the development of care pathways for priority health service areas such as stroke and end of life support

Although a great deal of progress has been made over recent years to ensure that carers issues are addressed in the delivery of health and social care services the above actions will ensure that more carers are offered personalised support that addresses their particular needs and aspirations, and also that they are treated more as 'expert care partners' in the delivery of services for the people they care for.

## Strategic Priority 3 - Delivering More Equitable Access To and Improved Support Services for Carers

The local strategic review identified that carer support services have developed over time resulting in a degree of overlap and geographical inequity of provision. In particular the

support available to the majority of carers in the county who are not eligible for statutory support is currently limited and not equally available across the county, and the vast majority of carers are 'hidden' from even these services.

Through the new commissioning plan for carer support services from 2010/11 **we will** ensure more equitable access to delivery of support while also responding to new priorities identified in the local strategic review and the national strategy.

Also, as a result of additional funding provided by NHS Worcestershire **we will** improve the level support for carers both above and below the threshold\* for statutory support.

\* Carers who are assessed as providing regular and substantial care or support for people that are eligible for social care services from the County Council are entitled themselves to a range of support services, including direct payments, flexible breaks, counselling, and emergency back up. Carers that do not meet these criteria but still have support needs are entitled to information, advice, emotional and practical support, and training. This is reflected in the 'Pathway for Carer Support' diagram on page 18.

From 2010/11 the following funding will be available to pay for adult carers support services, although the amount of Carers Grant that Worcestershire is to receive will not be known until early in the new year:

- National Carers Grant - £1,812,000 (2009/10 allocation)
- Worcestershire County Council's Adult and Community Services Base Budget - £285,104
- NHS Worcestershire - £150,000 (this includes an additional £30,000 from the Dementia Strategy budget for the Al's Way service)

To address the local issues identified and respond to the national strategy **we will** use this funding to support the following undertakings:

- commission a new countywide information advice and support service that focuses on addressing lower level support needs and reaching out to identify the high number of 'hidden' carers in the county; its services will be accessible to all adult carers and it will have a particular remit to identify and provide support for carers traditionally under-represented amongst support services, such as those from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and those that care for people with non-traditional social care needs eg substance misusers or victims of domestic violence
- focus the County Council's Carers Unit on delivery of support services specifically provided for carers assessed as having higher needs eligible for statutory support, and also on related professional support for front line social care and health care teams to ensure understanding of carers issues and to ensure continued growth in the number of carers assessments completed
- retain the focus of the Carer's Unit on developing and overseeing delivery of the carers training programme, with specific provision to address safeguarding issues for carers - we will review this role over the course of this strategy following evaluation of the performance of the new countywide information advice and support service
- develop partnership working arrangements between the Carers Unit and the new countywide information advice and support service to ensure co-ordinated support for carers and easy access to other support services required

- commission a new service to engage GP practices and their associated health professionals in providing improved support for carers
- commission a new support service for carers aged 16-25 years from Worcestershire Young Carers service to provide targeted information advice and support for this group
- re-procure from Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust delivery of an enhanced educational programme that helps carers of people with mental health issues, in particular dementia, to understand the illness and supports them to provide good quality support while maintaining their own health and wellbeing
- re-procure the Al's Way service that enables meaningful activities for people with early onset dementia and their carers to ensure that it is targeted at support for people who most need it
- provide bridge funding in 2009/10 and in 2010/11 for recruitment of two extra Admiral Nurses for the county to provide support for families where a member has dementia
- consolidate all current funding for short breaks into a single countywide Flexible Breaks service to enhance our capacity to offer breaks to carers with the greatest needs who are eligible for statutory funded support
- continue to part fund the countywide advocacy service but review the level of support that carers receive to ensure value for money

Of particular note with regard to the above is the procurement of dedicated support services for carers of those with dementia as this will complement delivery of the new Dementia Strategy currently being developed for the county.

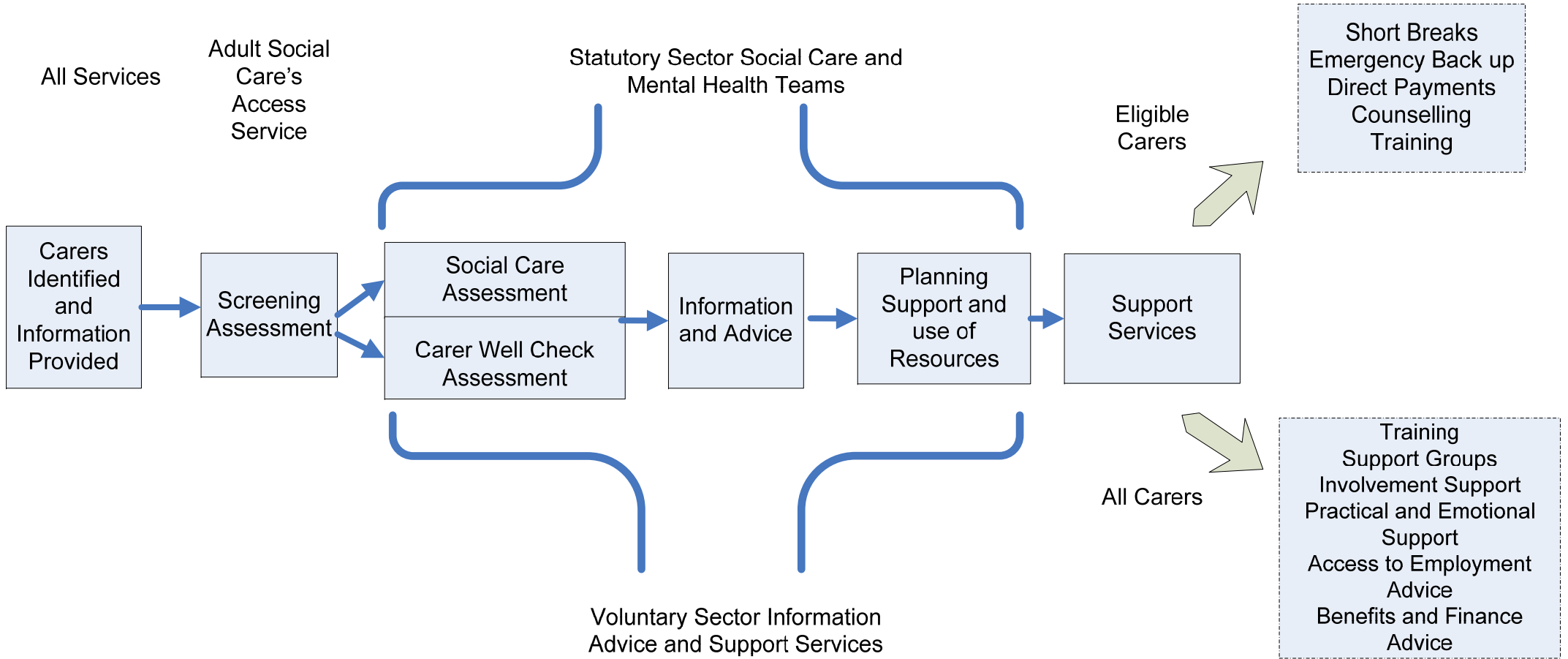
Another key issue identified from the review was the support provided to parental carers of children going through the transition from childhood to adulthood. While the support provided for this transition is not the focus of this strategy it is positive to report that there is work underway between Children and Adult social care services to develop an improved protocol and pathway for the effective support of these families.

Although the national carers strategy nominally allocated funding to Primary Care Trusts to improve the provision of breaks for carers, in Worcestershire we are already committing over £550,000 to flexible breaks next year, with an additional £330,000 allocated to direct payments that are primarily used for breaks. In order to address issues identified by the local strategic review **we will** therefore utilise the extra funding of £120,000 per annum allocated by NHS Worcestershire from 2010/11 on a wider range of services.

Finally, although the national strategy and the local strategic review identified the need for carers to receive training and employment support and advice with benefits and finances to maximise their income we have identified that the local Job Centre Plus service and the countywide Financial Inclusion Group that co-ordinates the delivery of services by CABs are best placed to meet these needs. Therefore **we will** require the new countywide information advice and support service and the County Council's Carers Unit to develop effective working relationships with these services to ensure carers receive the advice they need.

The offer of support that we will make to carers is illustrated in the 'pathway' diagram, while full details of how funding will be used from 2010/11 to deliver improved support for carers are provided in the table.

**PATHWAY FOR CARER SUPPORT**



### Investment Plan 2010/11

<b>Service</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
Countywide Information Advice and Support Service	£250,000	To be determined
Training Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All except moving and handling</li> <li>• Moving and Handling (till March 2011)</li> </ul>	£59,000  £20,000	Carers Unit  Worcestershire Association of Carers
Engaging GP Practices programme	£65,000	To Be Determined
Younger Carers Support Worker	£35,000	Worcestershire Young Carers
Mental Health Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational programme</li> <li>• Al's Way</li> <li>• Short breaks</li> <li>• Admiral Nurses</li> </ul>	£29,624  £72,500  £64,850  £25,000	Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust  To Be Determined  Carers Unit  Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust
Learning Disability Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respite and/or Support Workers</li> </ul>	£91,340	Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership Trust
Physical Disability Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respite</li> </ul>	£75,000	Carers Unit

Emotional Support Brief Solution Therapy Service	£10,000	Various - Approved Provider List
Short Breaks		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible Breaks Service</li> </ul>	£494,310	Carers Unit
Direct Payments	£330,200	Carers Unit
Emergency Support	£109,760	Carers Unit
Advocacy	£47,300	Onside Advocacy
County Council Professional Support	£396,051	Carers Unit
	£71,040	Contracts and Review Teams

## 8. Delivery of National Outcomes

Alongside ongoing delivery and development of existing carers support services the above strategic priorities will contribute greatly towards delivery of the outcomes set by the new national carers strategy. The national strategy breaks these outcomes down into subsets and the actions planned to address these in Worcestershire are specified below.

*Outcome 1. Carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role.*

(i) carers treated as expert care partners and establishment of carer champions

- ongoing awareness raising amongst key professionals by the County Council's Carers Unit via training courses and professional development work eg Carer Awareness programme
- ongoing awareness raising by voluntary sector agencies amongst key professionals within the voluntary sector through information and active networking
- ongoing delivery of training, co-ordinated by the Carers Unit and provided in partnership with a wide range of voluntary and independent sector agencies, to enable carers to fulfil their role as expert carers eg the Caring with Confidence programme delivered by the Worcestershire Association of Carers
- development of new governance structures that raise the profile of carers issues amongst key decision making agencies
- enhanced membership of Carers Consultative Group to give a stronger voice to adult carers
- regular reporting to and challenging of key agencies to ensure carers issues are given due importance in decision making
- review of the choice and control pathway to ensure carers needs and aspirations are considered when planning care and support for the people they care for
- delivery of engagement project with GP practices across the county that will improve support by associated primary health care teams
- new countywide information advice and support service to support carers to have a voice and influence key decisions that affect their quality of life

(ii) delivery of information services

- ongoing delivery of information by the Carers Unit on the services they manage
- ongoing delivery of information by voluntary sector agencies working with carers
- establishment of new countywide information advice and support service with a focus on lower level support
- development of carers pathway that ensures strong links between local services, and with the national Carers Direct information service
- new focus of resources on information and advice for all carers in the county irrespective of their level of need or financial situation

(iii) integrated and personalised services

- ongoing support by the Carers Unit of front line social work teams to enhance the quality of carers assessments and the delivery of support packages that benefit the carer and service user

- ongoing support by the Carers Unit of hospital teams to ensure that discharge is adequately planned in partnership with carers
- ongoing support of Worcester based GP practices by Worcestershire Association of Carers to improve the quality of support provided for carers
- review of the choice and control pathway to ensure carers needs and aspirations are considered when planning care and support for the people they care for
- delivery of engagement project with GP practices across the county that will also improve support by associated primary health care teams
- new information advice and support service will result in early identification of carers and support planning in partnership with other agencies to meet their needs

(iv) funding for breaks

- maintain priority given to funding of breaks for carers in the investment plan that supports this strategy - over £550,000 allocated to flexible breaks and £330,000 allocated to direct payments (high percentage used for breaks)
- re-procurement of flexible breaks service to offer more choice and control for carers who are eligible for statutory funded support over the provider, the duration of breaks and when taken

*Outcome 2. Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role.*

(i) personalisation

- review of the choice and control pathway to ensure carers needs and aspirations are considered when planning care and support for the people they care for
- ongoing delivery of training for carers, co-ordinated by the Carers Unit and provided in partnership with a wide range of voluntary and independent sector agencies, to build their capacity to provide good quality care
- new countywide information advice and support service to focus on specific needs of carers and ensure carers receive support in the early stages of caring to prevent crises and defer or reduce the need for statutory support

(ii) assessments

- ongoing support by the Carers Unit of front line social work teams to enhance the quality of carers assessments and the delivery of support packages that benefit the carer and service user
- ongoing support by Carers Unit of link workers network amongst social work teams to increase the number and improve the quality of carers assessments
- new information advice and support service to develop a carers wellcheck tool to assess carers needs and aspirations in aid of delivering personalised support

(iii) breaks

- maintain priority given to funding of breaks for carers in the investment plan that supports this strategy - over £550,000 allocated to flexible breaks and £330,000 allocated to direct payments (high percentage used for breaks)
- re-procurement of flexible breaks service to offer more choice and control for carers over the provider, the duration of breaks and when taken, with renewed focus on support for carers to make the most effective use of the time they have for a break

*Outcome 3. Carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role.*

(i) income and benefits

- develop partnership working between the Carers Unit, the new information advice and support service and local benefits and financial advice agencies, in particular CABs, to ensure seamless support for carers who need advice regarding benefits and financial matters
- awareness raising training for staff of local benefits and financial advice agencies, in particular CABs to ensure they are able to deliver information and advice that is sensitive to the needs of carers

(ii) employment

- develop partnership working between the Carers Unit, the new information advice and support service and the local Job Centre Plus service to ensure seamless support for carers who need advice regarding training and employment
- Job Centre Plus service recruiting Care Partnership Manager for the county to support staff with understanding of carers issues and deliver programme of dedicated training for carers

(iii) diversity

- ongoing focus of the Carers Unit and voluntary sector agencies including Worcestershire Association of Carers and Redditch Carers Support on engaging with BME communities to increase numbers identified, assessed and supported
- new information advice and support service to focus on identifying under-represented carers, including those from BME communities and those caring for people with substance misuse issues
- new younger carers support project will help carers in transition from childhood to adulthood and support them with their educational and employment needs
- consideration of carers issues when undertaking equality impact assessments for County Council and NHS Worcestershire services

*Outcome 4. Carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity.*

(i) GP awareness

- delivery of awareness training by the Carers Unit for key health and social care professionals ie Carers Awareness programme
- delivery of engagement project with GP practices across the county that will improve support by associated primary health care teams (building on guidance from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the Royal College of General Practitioners), building on work undertaken by Worcestershire Association of Carers and Redditch Carers Support
- delivery and review of support worker pilot project provided by Worcestershire Association of Carers with a Worcester GP cluster with a view to promoting across the county if successful

(ii) health and wellbeing

- development of end of life carer support services as part of a new countywide end of life strategy
- new information advice and support service to result in early identification of carers and support planning that engages all relevant health and social care agencies
- carers issues to be considered in development of care pathways for other key health service priorities such as stroke and Parkinsons disease

(iii) substance misuse and mental health

- partnership work with Worcestershire DAAT established and awareness raising of professionals in this field ongoing via Carers Unit
- new information advice and support service to focus on identifying under-represented carers, including those for people with substance misuse or mental health issues
- ongoing delivery by Worcestershire Association of Carers of the Caring with Confidence programme that will cover substance misuse and mental health issues for carers
- carer pathway to be developed to ensure links with the planned Improved Access to Psychological Therapies service
- expansion of psycho-educational, programme for carers of those with dementia and other mental health issues to enhance capacity of carers to provide good quality care

The actions listed above evidence how this new carers strategy, and the three strategic priorities identified for action, will achieve the outcomes set by the national strategy. As the strategy is implemented further actions will be identified and delivered where they contribute to these national outcomes or those identified by local carers.

## **9. Implementation and Evaluation**

The strategy is being implemented over the period October 2009 to March 2014.

Contracts for new, re-designed or re-commissioned services will operate for up to 3 years, and all new contracts should be in place by August 2010.

The development of new improved governance structures for carers will be completed by the end of March 2010 to ensure that carers needs and aspirations are formally addressed by key decision making groups from the financial year 2010/11 onwards.

Measures to ensure that key front line agencies and their staff across the statutory and voluntary sectors are fully engaging carers to tailor support to their personal needs and aspirations will be ongoing throughout the duration of the strategy, but by April 2010 we would expect to see evidence that carers are being recognised as 'expert care partners' in the County Council's Choice and Control programme and that they are actively engaged in decision making concerning service users.

The county's Joint Commissioning Group for health and social care, representing NHS Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Council, is the accountable body for ensuring delivery of the strategy, and for evaluating its effectiveness. Reporting to this group the

new Carers Consultative Group, representing a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in carers support issues, will oversee delivery of the strategy, guide its implementation over the next 4 years, and engage in monitoring and evaluation of the key strategic priorities set.

Evaluation of the strategy will be primarily based on the views of carers regarding their experiences. These views will be obtained by providers of support services through surveys and group discussions with carers in direct receipt of support from them, in order to assess whether services are effective or not in meeting their outcomes, and these findings will then be evaluated by the County Council and NHS Worcestershire as the accountable bodies.

Carer's views will also be sought by the County Council and NHS Worcestershire on whether the national outcomes and the vision set for the strategy are being met. These views could be obtained through annual surveys of existing Citizens Panels or through contact with carers known to support agencies in the county.

The Joint Commissioning Group will receive an annual report in March 2011, 2012 and 2013 on progress against achievement of the strategy's vision and outcomes. During the first 6 months of 2013/14 the strategy will be reviewed by the Carers Consultative Group in order to report to the Joint Commissioning Group at the end of 2013 with recommendations for either ongoing delivery of the strategy's priorities or the need to develop new strategic priorities for the future.

## **Appendix A            Background to Development of the Strategy**

The development of this carers strategy has been primarily informed by the following:

- The National Carers Strategy ' Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities' 2008
- The personalisation agenda as described in 'Putting People First' 2007
- A Review of Worcestershire's Carers Strategy 2005-09
- Worcestershire's Strategic Review of Carers Support Services 2008-09

### National Carers Strategy

The new national carers strategy, 'Carers at the Heart of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Families and Communities' is a framework for developing support for carers over the next 10 years.

It has a strong focus on tailoring support for carers to their personal needs and aspirations, and acknowledges the need to support all carers through information and advice while recognising that the focus of resources will be on support for carers with the greatest needs.

The vision for the strategy is of carers elevated to the centre of family policy and of carers in receipt of the recognition and status they deserve. Through support tailored to meet personal needs the vision is of carers enabled to balance caring with a life outside. Ultimately it is a vision of a fairer deal for carers.

The key strategic priorities that underpin achievement of this vision are:

- delivering integrated and personalised services
- supporting carers to achieve a life of their own
- supporting carers to achieve good health and wellbeing
- ensuring carers are able to secure adequate income and employment
- protect children and young people from inappropriate caring and provide support to learn and enjoy childhoods

### Personalisation Agenda

The national carers strategy itself has to be implemented in the light of the ongoing transformation of adult social care services, as described in the inter-departmental government concordat 'Putting People First' issues in late 2007. In effect all local authorities have to transform the way in which they deliver adult social care to bring about the following:

- a shift of resources towards universal early intervention services for all, as well as preventative or re-ablement services for those with higher needs that require statutory support
- choice and control for all over the services they access, whether provided by the statutory, private or voluntary and community sectors
- the support of mainstream services that have been traditionally seen as having a limited social care role in helping people meet their needs and aspirations
- recognition of the vital role that carers and the wider community play in supporting people and the need to ensure they are engaged in assessments and service delivery

In relation to the final bullet point the national strategy for carers emphasises that carers must be recognised as 'expert care partners' that those working in the field of social care and health should engage with in decision making regarding the services they and the people they care for receive.

### Review of Existing Carers Strategy 2005-09

The carers strategy for Worcestershire 2005-08 and the current interim carers strategy 2008-09 are based on a review of services undertaken in 2004-05. These strategies aimed to achieve outcomes via a series of actions based on different levels of support, and the progress made against these actions is summarised below.

#### Level 1 – Acknowledgement Understanding and Inclusion

- ongoing delivery of information and advice via voluntary and statutory agencies eg Carers Handbook
- joint information officer post established between statutory and voluntary sector
- joint working on annual carers rights day and carers week events
- joint working on countywide newsletter
- outreach work via voluntary sector to identify hidden carers, in particular those from BME communities
- targeting of GP practices via voluntary sector to raise awareness of carers issues eg development of Carers Registration Card
- training of mental health and social care teams to raise awareness and understanding
- carer link workers established in many social care and mental health teams
- two dedicated workers located in hospitals to support health staff
- adult care assessment has a focus on the needs of carers
- GP engagement work undertaken by voluntary sector agencies in Worcester, Evesham and Redditch
- carers pack developed for all identified carers that explains rights
- financial workshops delivered via voluntary sector
- voluntary sector support for carers to engage in the Learning Disability Partnership Board and its sub groups

#### Level 2 – Minimum Support

- carers support groups established and facilitated via voluntary sector
- psycho-educational programme delivered and support groups established for carers of those with mental health issues to aid understanding of conditions and improve quality of care
- access to preventative health and wellbeing services supported
- expert patient programme for carers, 'Looking after Me', now delivered
- carers emergency card delivered through the voluntary sector

#### Level 3 – Time Limited Support

- significant increase in number of carers assessments completed resulting in increased access to support services
- emergency back up support service established for times when caring cannot deliver caring function

- wide training programme delivered to meet carers needs and Caring with Confidence pilot now being run by the voluntary sector
- counselling service under development for carers of those with mental health issues
- counselling and bereavement support services established for carers in Redditch
- advocacy for carers funded as part of countywide service

#### Level 4 – Long Term Community Based Support

- sitter service has enabled short breaks for increasing number of carers
- annual direct payments support carers to meet their personal needs
- respite budgets established for carers of those with physical and learning disabilities

#### Level 5 – Institutional and hospital care

- two carer development officer posts established for work within Acute Trust supporting hospital staff with discharge arrangements that consider the needs of carers

#### Level 6 – End of caring

- joint working initiated and to be developed around lifelong learning and employment opportunities for carers in support of new strategy

For many of the services currently provided for carers there is some evidence that they are having a positive impact on the outcomes desired by carers, but the evidence is not conclusive and the move towards a more outcomes focused evaluation in the new strategy will help us to evidence this more robustly in the future.

#### Worcestershire's Strategic Review

While important to development of this strategy the new national carers strategy and the personalisation agenda have to be placed into local context for Worcestershire, and for this reason the key influence on the development of this strategy is the recent local strategic review of carers support services.

The review was led by a Project Group of representative groups and individuals with a Project Board of a similarly representative nature overseeing its delivery, and carers were well represented on both. The review adhered to strategic commissioning good practice and the active participation of all stakeholders ensures that there is a collective commitment to implement the actions proposed.

#### *Carer Consultation and Setting Outcomes*

The basis of all decision making and commissioning of carers' support services must be the outcomes identified by carers themselves, and these outcomes must inform the future specification and evaluation of services.

In order to identify carer outcomes we held nine focus groups, involving those caring for people with physical disabilities, mental health issues, and learning disabilities and older peoples, those living within designated areas of the county and Asian carers.

From these focus groups we were able to identify a number of key outcomes that are summarised in section 3. These outcomes closely mirror those defined nationally for health and social care and they also reflect the priorities within the national strategy.

### *Needs Analysis*

Nationally, from the 2001 Census and other research, the following key facts are of note:

- (i) 6 million people are carers in Great Britain
- (ii) 58% are women and 42% men
- (iii) 68% provide care for up to 19 hours a week, 11% for 20–49 hours and 21% for 50 or more hours
- (iv) nearly 21% of carers caring 50 plus hours per week report they are not in good health, compared with 11% of non carers
- (v) more carers without good social support suffer ill health compared to those with access to good social support
  - over-65s account for around a third of all those carers providing more than 50 hours of care a week
  - in the 45–59 age group 25% of men and 29% of women provide 20+ hours of care a week
  - many carers are transient in that turnover is 2 million per annum nationally, so a third of all carers in any year are either new to caring or have returned to caring
  - 417,800 carers in England are in receipt of Carer's Allowance
  - those who care for 20 or more hours per week are more likely to live in workless households than non-carers or those caring for less than 20 hours per week
  - some ethnic groups have higher rates of caring than others – Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents of working age are twice as likely to live with someone with a limiting long-term illness as white British residents
  - caring for 16-24 year old carers has a negative impact on likelihood of continuing in full-time education

Locally, from the 2001 census the following key facts for Worcestershire are of note:

- there were 57,000 carers recorded in 2001
- given projected 3% increase in the county's population by 2009 we estimate that the current number of carers is closer to 60,000 or 10% of the adult population
- 13,600 were aged 55-64 years
- per week 41,200 provided 1-19 hours of care, 5,400 20-49 hours, and 10,300 50 hours plus
- 20% providing 50 hours plus care reported they in ill health, and there were 2,500 carers with a limiting long term illness
- 27% providing 0-19 hours of care per week were out of work compared with 62% of those providing 50 hours plus care, and part time working amongst those providing low to medium levels of care were high

The negative relationship between all levels of caring and the health or employment status of carers is therefore obvious to see from the local census and from national research.

On top of this the majority of carers in Worcestershire are not known to service providers and do not access any form of support. The County Council's records show that approximately 4,500 carers receive statutory support, while carers known to voluntary

sector agencies total less than 5000, although many of these will be the same as those known to the County Council.

Alongside the focus of the national strategy and the requirements of the personalisation agenda this is strong evidence for a shift in some funding towards increased universally accessible services that can reach a greater number of carers.

Also, if more carers are to be identified in order to provide them with basic entitlement to assessment, information and advice there is a need to secure buy in by a wider range of agencies (and not just the health sector) than are currently engaged, including district councils, benefits and work agencies, the voluntary and business sectors.

One of the facts arising from the census data and the information held by the County Council is that a high proportion of carers are older persons and that a high percentage are not in good health. In order to address these facts it is vital that the health sector is actively involved in the future delivery of support for carers and invests adequate funding to achieve this.

Also given that 20,000 plus carers are identified in the census as not economically active and many of these are of working age there is scope to support many of them back into employment or support other carers to stay in work.

Key information on carers in Worcestershire from the 2001 census is given on the next page, which though eight years old still provides stark evidence of the scale of informal unpaid adult caring in the county.

## 2001 Census

	Total	Provide no care	Provide care:- 1-19 hours	Provide care:- 20-49 hours	Provide care:- 50-plus hours	Total providing care	Percentage providing care
<b>All People</b>	<b>532,826</b>	<b>475,943</b>	<b>41,177</b>	<b>5,441</b>	<b>10,265</b>	<b>56,883</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
All People : In Good Health	373,579	340,794	25,695	2,738	4,352	32,785	8.8%
All People : In Fairly Good Health	118,176	99,670	12,436	2,006	4,064	18,506	15.7%
All People : Not In Good Health	41,071	35,479	3,046	697	1,849	5,592	13.6%
All People - aged 0 to 4	30,310	30,310	0	0	0	0	0.0%
All People - aged 5 to 7	19,553	19,508	36	3	6	45	0.2%
All People - aged 8 to 9	13,630	13,567	55	0	8	63	0.5%
All People - aged 10 to 11	14,161	14,005	140	9	7	156	1.1%
All People - aged 12 to 14	20,405	19,990	375	16	24	415	2.0%
All People - aged 15	6,689	6,490	185	8	6	199	3.0%
All People - aged 16 to 17	12,929	12,478	369	45	37	451	3.5%
All People - aged 18 to 19	10,916	10,486	355	46	29	430	3.9%
All People - aged 20 to 24	26,574	25,372	933	121	148	1,202	4.5%
All People - aged 25 to 34	70,347	65,729	3,277	457	884	4,618	6.6%
All People - aged 35 to 44	78,994	69,675	6,828	899	1,592	9,319	11.8%
All People - aged 45 to 49	37,052	30,361	5,259	604	828	6,691	18.1%
All People - aged 50 to 54	42,251	32,926	7,377	828	1,120	9,325	22.1%
All People - aged 55 to 59	35,755	27,691	6,115	795	1,154	8,064	22.6%
All People - aged 60 to 64	28,426	22,826	3,989	534	1,077	5,600	19.7%
All People - aged 65 to 74	46,410	39,609	4,281	672	1,848	6,801	14.7%
All People - aged 75 to 84	29,992	26,941	1,434	345	1,272	3,051	10.2%
All People - aged 85 to 89	6,107	5,735	135	48	189	372	6.1%
All People - aged 90 and over	2,325	2,244	34	11	36	81	3.5%
<b>All People - 0-17</b>	<b>117,677</b>	<b>116,348</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
<b>All People - 18-64</b>	<b>330,315</b>	<b>285,066</b>	<b>34,133</b>	<b>4,284</b>	<b>6,832</b>	<b>45,249</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
<b>All People - 65-plus</b>	<b>84,834</b>	<b>74,529</b>	<b>5,884</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>3,345</b>	<b>10,305</b>	<b>12.1%</b>

## *Good Practice Visits*

In order to contrast and compare the way in which services are delivered in Worcestershire with other counties, two visits were paid to areas with a reputation for good practice with regard to carer's support: Hertfordshire and Gloucestershire.

With regard to Hertfordshire the County Council employs a small strategic commissioning team that supports delivery of their carer's strategy and oversees review of the impact, quality and cost effectiveness of services provided. Delivery of the carer's strategy is supported by a multi-agency partnership including the Primary Care Trust, District Councils, Hertfordshire Carers and GP Practices. There is high level management support or championing of carers' support services within the County Council, and across the county it would appear that the majority of agencies see carer's support as their responsibility.

The majority of funding for support services is allocated to the voluntary and community sector to deliver largely universal services for all identified carers. The majority of these services are delivered by one voluntary organisation which operates to a long term outcomes based joint contract with the County Council and Primary Care Trust.

In Gloucestershire a similar level of buy in by senior management at the County Council and the Primary Care Trust exists, and with this significant investment beyond the central government allocation of Carer's Grant - the PCT invests £500,000 per annum. As a result National Indicator 135 is part of the Local Area Agreement and this has apparently resulted in an increased profile and ownership of carers' issues across different agencies.

Again, the majority of Carer's Grant funding for adult social care is allocated to the voluntary and community sector, and a quarterly Carers Forum is held to consult with carers and identify their issues. Governance arrangements also evidence strong working relationships with the voluntary sector.

The good practice evidenced by Hertfordshire and Gloucestershire with regard to governance structures represents years of investment by the key agencies involved in delivering carers' support services. Yet, they provide examples of how the governance of carers' support services should be strengthened in Worcestershire and how service delivery could be re-structured to enable more carers to receive support. These lessons are directly reflected in the strategic priorities set for the new Worcestershire carers strategy.

## *Mapping and Review of Services*

In 2009/10 the County Council's Adult and Community Services Directorate allocated £1,812,200 from its Department of Health's Carer's Grant for adult carer support services, and also contributed a further £285,000 from its base budget to fund a variety of support services.

In the same year NHS Worcestershire allocated approximately £160,000 towards delivery of an expert carer programme, planned respite, and delivery of the Admiral Nurse service in partnership with the Mental Health Partnership Trust.

The majority of the above funding for carers is spent on support for those assessed as eligible using Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria. In 2009/10 less than 20 per

cent of funding is allocated to services, provided by the voluntary sector, that all carers can access, whatever their level of need, such as information and advice, support groups, and training.

Also, the provision of some support services is restricted to certain parts of the county. For example, only carers in the Redditch area can access the specific services provided by Redditch Carers Support, which are additional to those provided by the Worcestershire Association of Carers for all carers across the whole of the county.

A review of existing carer support services was completed with carers involved in the project, and this provided valuable evidence to base decisions on regarding the future commissioning of services.

This review was based on information supplied by various service providers in accordance with contract monitoring requirements. From this information we were able to identify whether services were offering value for money and delivering quality support that achieved real outcomes for carers. This assessment largely informed final decisions made regarding the new commissioning plan for carers from 2010/11.

### *Identifying Strategic Priorities*

Finally, in order to review all of the information collected by the review and analyse the key findings the Project Group held a workshop to identify strategic priorities for the future of carers support services in the county. The question we asked ourselves was “what do we want carers support services and governance structures to look like in 10 years?”

Taking into account both the national context and the key findings from the review the group appraised options for strategy development and identified the three strategic priority areas for action that inform this strategy.