



NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
Management Office
197 Eyre Street
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31 May 2024

BY EMAIL

H.Robson@healthwatchsheffield.co.uk

Dear Holly,

Thank you for sharing your recent SpeakUp report with us, and for funding and supporting Parson Cross Community Development Forum to undertake this work.

Please pass on our thanks to Parson Cross Community Development Forum for their excellent work engaging with local people to produce this insightful report.

Supporting Carers – City-wide approach

Sheffield City Council (the council) has legal duties to support unpaid carers. To ensure that these duties are discharged, the council developed the [Young Carer, Parent and Adult Carer Strategy](#), the vision of which is that Sheffield is a 'City where Carers are valued and have the right support to continue to care for as long as they want to; to realise this vision and drive action that makes things better for carers, organisations worked together to create the Carers Delivery Plan.

NHS South Yorkshire (the ICB) is one of a number of city-wide partners along with Sheffield Teaching Hospital (STH), Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust (SHSC), Sheffield Carers Centre, Sheffield Young Carers, and Primary Care Sheffield (PCS), that have all signed up to work together to carry out the actions on the Carers Delivery Plan. The progress and detail are updated at the Carers Strategy Implementation Group and scrutinised at Sheffield City Council's Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee every six months to ensure progress is being made. It has been agreed that working in a city-wide integrated partnership model will ensure we are more joined up, can progress actions quicker, with an ambition that they are sustained and embedded within future services to ensure we are really making a difference and supporting our Carers in Sheffield.

For further detail please go to: [Carers' Strategy | Sheffield City Council](#)

We have read the report with interest and have shared the report with our city-wide partners. We would like to acknowledge that the report refers to both Social Care provided by outside agencies, and 'unpaid carers' however this response is tailored to the recommendations of the report that specifically support our 'unpaid' carers within the community. Carers UK define a carer as ***someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who has a, illness, mental health condition, addiction or disability and needs extra help as they grow older***

Establish more local support offers across the city, for example peer support groups

As part of discharging its legal obligations Sheffield City Council commission the [Sheffield Carers Centre](#) to provide support to Carers across the City which also includes carrying out carers assessments where it appears that a carer has needs, either now or in the future. The Sheffield Carers Centre is an independent charity affiliated to the Carers Trust who offer a range of support services once carers have been registered. Registration can be phone or online (self-referral) and once details have been processed a carer would receive a welcome pack with further detailed information about the services they can access as well as a Carer Card as confirmation of registration. We would encourage as many Carers in the community to register as a carer as a first step and we will explore ways in which we can mitigate against any barriers, this could include having local awareness days and colleagues from the Carers Centre coming into the local area to support registration and further conversations.

The Carers Centre offer a range of free services to help Carers focus on their own health and wellbeing and can connect to others in a similar situation and be on hand to help navigate the challenges of caring. They would encourage as many people as possible to join their own 'Community of Carers' who in return would have access to the Universal offer of services which includes:

1. Carer advice line

Personalised expert advice on anything related to a caring role. One of the team is an Urdu and Punjabi speaker, and we use an interpretation service for other languages.

2. Carer card

This offers discounts on a wide range of services, products and activities from local and national businesses; plus there is space to record two emergency contact numbers.

3. Carer activities & carers workshops

Regular activities for carers to have a break from their caring role and look after their own wellbeing and a programme of workshops to help carers share experiences and learn new skills.

4. Legal advice clinic

Free 30-minute individual legal advice sessions with a legal expert, offering advice around topics such as wills, estate planning and power of attorney. Clinics are held on a monthly basis.

5. Carer café & support groups

Café is held every Friday and is a great chance to meet other carers. The Support Groups take place at various locations around Sheffield on a regular basis.

6. Community connect

A telephone support service providing regular phone calls from volunteers to reduce social isolation and connect carers with their local community.

7. Emergency planning

Provide information to help carers make an emergency plan if something unexpectedly stopped them from looking after the person they care for.

8. Carer's assessment

A carer's assessment provides an opportunity to discuss the impact of a caring role with one of the trained Carer Advisors, who will discuss the support needed and help get this in place.

9. Time for a break grant

Small grants for short breaks or activities that support wellbeing and help a carer take a break from their caring role. Eligibility for this grant would be part of a Carers Assessment.

10. Information and resources

Easy access to a range of information and resources on the Carers Centre website from expert sources covering more than 20 topics to help with a caring role. This has recently been updated to accommodate translation into a number of languages to meet the needs of a local community.

11. Digital resources for carers

Carers can access the free online 'Digital Resources for Carers' which is provided by Carers UK and Sheffield City Council, that includes information, eLearning, resources, and the [Jointly app](#).

12. Carers news!

This free monthly e-newsletter provides up-to-date information about the Carers Centre services and activities, along with key news items that affect carers.

The Carers Centre has also appointed to a role of Head of Involvement, Diversity and Development within its organisation who is currently looking at ways to better involve local communities across Sheffield. There has already been initial positive feedback from the programme of work being undertaken but it is recognised that there is still a lot to be done to reach communities and that this needs to be a consistent city-wide offer and where possible, additional support will need to be delivered at a local community level as your report has highlighted.

Through the first Sheffield Carers Roadshow (led by the ICB on behalf of the multi-agency partners), that took place on 5 October 2023 in the Winter Gardens, we have had amazing feedback from carers' other support services. As a direct result of this we have been able to build stronger relationships with support agencies who are committed to working with city-wide partners with the aim of supporting Carers. One example of this is the production of a Carers Information Support sheet soon to be

circulated widely and to include GP Surgeries, Pharmacies and relevant local websites. This Information Sheet lists these support services and includes all relevant contact details. The information will continue to be added to and updated, and will also be included within the Carer welcome pack from June 2024 onwards and on the Carers Information Hospital Discharge Packs currently being developed within our Hospital Trusts. The ambition is that city-wide Carer support information should be made available and be accessed as easily as possible and we would welcome Healthwatch's support to continue to gain feedback to ensure this is achieved.

Carers Voice

Carers Voice meets regularly and enables carers to share their experiences of health or social care services, so that these can be improved. Sheffield Carer Voice focuses on getting things done to make Sheffield a better place for carers. We want the group to be led by carers, for carers so we know what matters.

The Sheffield Carers Centre Involvement Network links to this group, and regularly enables carers to shape the work of the Centre and other organisations who support carers. Different ways are being explored to engage with carers and support them to tell us their experiences, suggestions and ideas for how we can all improve our work.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) should support individual practices to develop good practice in identifying carers and connecting them with support. This work should be in line with the suggested actions set out in Supporting Carers in General Practice: A framework of Quality Markers

While this is not a primary function of PCNs, many do work together to improve identification and coding of key groups in their practice populations so that they can target support and assistance where it is needed.

The ICB has provided support and help to practices to identify and code carers and other groups and to offer them support, including a number of events organised by the ICB over the last 2 months to bring attention to the services available for carers in Sheffield.

The ICB at Sheffield Place has been working with colleagues from NHS England (Commitment for Carers) and across South Yorkshire to raise awareness for identifying new carers. Through an NHS England initiative a carers resource tool has been piloted that has been specifically tailored around the framework as part of best practice guidance. The toolkit is currently being revised to ensure this reflects Sheffield's services and is part of the Carers Delivery Plan. The toolkit has been developed for and with carers, and their views and feedback very much included in the version we have today.

The Sheffield Carers Centre have also recruited a Health Liaison Officer, whose role is to work with the ICB and link in with health professionals to raise awareness of the Carers Centre's services and offer of support. This has included presentations to Primary Care Network colleagues, individual GP practice teams such as Social Prescribers, hospital teams, and practice learning initiatives.

Through these established routes and building on developing relationships with PCNs and individual practices across all levels including practice nurses, receptionists etc the city-wide group will be looking to formally launch the Carers Support toolkit to support the reports recommendation.

Finally, South Yorkshire has received Accelerating Reform Fund grant money from the Department of Health and Social Care. This money seeks to drive innovation and reform within adult social care. One of the projects in South Yorkshire is the development of a 'carers app' to help foster peer support. We have been involving carers to understand exactly what they would want from this.

Enabling people to reach services; location of services and travel

Health care settings should be located close to public transport – where new services are established this should be a priority. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) should work pro-actively with transport providers to support the development of transport links to health services across the City

Ease of access is an important consideration when planning new primary care services and forms part of the ICB's planning and review process. We are often constrained however by circumstances including building capacity/space in existing buildings or availability of land where new premises are planned. We have been fortunate in Sheffield to received significant capital funding to develop new primary care centres in the north of the City and one of the primary aims of the planned new buildings is to provide space and facilities to co-locate more services with general practices that would have previously been provided elsewhere, thus ensuring patients can receive care, for example children's services or mental health support, closer to where they live.

Where we are able, we would seek to engage transport providers, however, contractual arrangements for services mean that we have very little opportunity currently to influence public transport links. In future this may become more straight forward as powers and functions in relation to public transport have been transferred to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, who we work with closely as part of the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).

Offer services in community-based settings where possible – for example, mental health services, bereavement support, places to access social care

It is a principle of the ICB in Sheffield to provide care as close to home as possible and we actively seek opportunities to provide services in community settings, examples of this include the new primary care mental health services, Improving Access to Physical Therapies (IAPT) provision within practices and children's and community services working within PCNs. We have commissioned additional urgent same day care to support access to primary care and, in the winter Acute Respiratory Hubs to see and treat patients with respiratory infection and these are deliberately located in the most deprived areas of Sheffield to support access for those in greatest need.

One of the limiting factors in providing services in the community is the availability of suitable accommodation, as general practices are often already at full capacity. The ICB leads a strategic estates group for the city which include representation from acute trusts and the local authority and one of our primary objectives is to ensure

that the use of capacity within the primary care estate is maximised to bring services closer to where people live. The new health centres in the north of the city have been designed to facilitate this shift and to wrap services around general practice in the community. They will include space for social care and council services and that can be used by all our partners in the city.

Claiming travel costs back - where applicable, appointment letters should give clear information about how to claim the cost of travel, and who might be eligible.

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme is administered by the NHS Business Services Authority and enables eligible people to recover travel cost when they receive specialist care or diagnostic services and refunds for costs are claimed from the relevant hospital or clinic. The scheme excludes primary care services.

We are sorry to hear that people find that the information provided by these providers is not clear and would be happy to raise this with our partners however, further examples or information would be helpful in order to do this.

Where new health settings are established, the ICB and individual providers should involve the public and / or relevant community organisations in considering accessibility of the location

We would always involve the public, patients, carers and other stakeholders when considering establishing new health care locations. We have recently undertaken significant involvement and consultation on plans to build new health centres in Sheffield and engaged as widely as possible with the public and community organisations to hear their views, suggestions and concerns. The work we did was commended by The Consultation Institute as an example of good practice.

Improving the accessibility of information and support

Health services should have different routes to accessing care – for example, GP Surgeries need appointment booking systems that are flexible to people's needs. This might include both telephone and online options.

All our surgeries offer a range of means of contact including telephone, online and in person contact. We understand that some people may not be able to, or be comfortable, using online methods of communication and therefore it is essential that this does not prevent people from seeking the care they need.

Several of our practices have recently received financial support to upgrade their telephone systems to include call queuing and call back functionality among other features.

Supported by the ICB and NHS England, practices are looking at ways to increase access to services for their patients and several practices in Sheffield have adopted processes to improve how they manage patient requests. This may mean that how you book an appointment changes, for example, you may be asked for more information by the receptionist or care navigator when you contact the practice and receive a call back from a clinician rather than being offered an appointment immediately or if you contact your practice online, you may be asked to complete a short form providing information. This is to help the practice ensure that patients see

the right member of staff first time and that the right patients are prioritised. Your practice will explain to you what is happening if they plan to make these changes.

We hope that by using these new systems patients will have a better experience when contacting their practice, the 8am rush for appointments will be ended and patients will see the right person at the right time. We note from a recent HealthWatch briefing that some people are already starting to benefit from these new systems, commending online systems and triage processes. Many of these patients praised the system's simplicity and were relieved they could bypass lengthy phone queues.

Further develop local roles (in statutory services and / or the voluntary and community sector) which are able to support people in knowing about and accessing services

As part of the Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service the 15 Primary Care Networks in Sheffield all receive funding for additional roles which must include Social Prescribing Link Workers whose role is to connect people to community-based support, including activities and services that meet practical, social, and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. This includes connecting people to statutory services for example housing, financial and welfare advice.

Social prescribing link workers work collaboratively across the health and care system, targeting populations with greatest need and risk of health inequalities. They collaborate with partners to identify gaps in provision and support community offers to be accessible and sustainable.

In addition, many networks also employ care-coordinators whose role includes working with individuals to help co-ordinate the care they need.

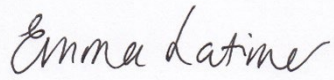
All practices and PCNs have also been offered support in 2023/24 to train staff in care navigation approaches to support and sign post people to services in the voluntary and statutory sector that may better provide the support they need.

In addition, the ICB is funding additional, bespoke, care navigation development and training for practices and PCNs in 2024/25 and has invested in an 18-month pilot to place Citizens Advice case workers in PCNs in the most deprived parts of the city to provide additional support for people.

There are many examples of PCNs and practices in Sheffield working collaboratively with community and voluntary organisations across the city to provide or support services for the local population.

We have very much welcomed this report and the views expressed and hope within our response to have expressed the ICB's commitment to be a city-wide partner supporting the Carers Strategy and ambitions to make support more accessible for Carers. We are committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our Carers and will continue to consider how we can continue to support these through the services we commission. We are also pleased to be able to share the extensive work we are doing with GP practices across Sheffield to help improve access to primary care and other community services for all.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emma Latimer". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Emma Latimer
Executive Place Director – Sheffield.