Please can you provide the following information for the **2023/24** financial year:

Section 1: Please can you tell Carers Wales:

1. **Please describe the standard journey of an unpaid carer in your local authority area from identification through to a Carers Needs Assessment. If this is modelled in your local authority, then please feel free to share this with us.**

The question does not clarify whether this is in relation to Adult or Young Carers, we have slightly different pathways for each:

Carer wellbeing officers for both adult and young carers are present across our community to ensure wide promotion of our carer support services and to reduce barriers for access.

Adult Carers: Carers are referred or, can self-refer to our carers gateway. The gateway operates to create a single access point to receive referrals, offer initial information advice and assistance and signposting and offer a Carers Needs Assessment to every carer. If the offer of a Carers Needs Assessment is taken up, the gateway team will pass the referral for the assessment to be completed directly to the Carers Needs Assessment team for completion.

Young Carers: Young Carers are usually referred but can also self-refer to the Young Carers Service. The Young Carers Service operates a single service for Young Carers from receiving a referral, offering information, advice and assistance and signposting, to completing a Carers Needs Assessment and then providing support following that assessment.

1. **In what ways can unpaid carers receive information and advice from your local authority and how many unpaid carers received information and advice through these sources?**

This is a very difficult question to quantify accurately. We have worked extensively to ensure that carers have easy access to Information, Advice and Assistance from a wide range of sources, at the appropriate time and in a manner that suits them, however not all of these are quantifiably measured.

On a daily basis our Single Point of Access and Carers Gateway teams are contacted by carers and provide immediate access to the information, advice and assistance that they require. The figures for this are broken down for Adults and Young Carers in the table below.

On a weekly basis, we provide a carers drop-in session at our Carers Centre which allows carers the opportunity to access Information, Advice and Assistance as well as a break from their caring role and some peer-to-peer support. At the drop in sessions there are always professionals available for Carers to speak to and we regularly provide “themed” drop-ins with subject specialists from a wide variety of sources (not limited to health and social care, for example Citizens Advice, Utility Specialists, DWP) arranged to come and give talks or be available to answer carers questions. We do not hold registers for these events but they are regularly attended by 20-40 carers each week.

Throughout the year, we also arrange larger events where carers can drop-in and speak to a number of professionals and services etc. Again we do not keep registers for these events but they usually attract at least 100 carers throughout the day.

In 2023/24, we had 10,954 carers registered in Flintshire, all of these carers will have received a copy of our quarterly carers newsletter, which is full of a wide variety of up to date information.

We also have a wide range of information available on both the Flintshire County Council and NEWCIS websites which is regularly accessed by Carers. Figures on these are reported in the table below. In addition to this, carers are also directed to access information through the DEWIS system which we are unable to report the figures on.

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| --- | --- |
| The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided. (WG Performance and Improvement Framework Data – Adult Carers) | 1913 |
| The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided. (WG Performance and Improvement Framework Data – Young Carers) | 159 |
| Number of carers registered in Flintshire who received a quarterly copy of the carers newsletter | 10,954 |
| Number of individual views of specific carers information on the Flintshire County Council website (there are significant numbers of views on other pages that will supply information, advice and assistance to carers, however the number quoted is limited to pages specific to carers and carers services) | 1815 |
| Number of newsletters distributed in the year | 43,816 |
| Number of individual views of the NEWCIS website | 16,231 |
| Number of people who viewed NEWCIS social media pages | 59,000 |

There are also numerous other ways in which carers access Information, Advice and Assistance which we are not able to provide data on in a meaningful way, but will have a significant impact for carers. For example:

We provide printed literature to be readily available at a range of locations such as libraries, community centres, pharmacies, GP surgeries, schools etc. Although we are aware that carers are accessing this information as we have to re-stock supplies, we are unable to report specific data on how many carers access information through these means.

Carers will have conversations with professionals involved with the cared for on a regular, sometimes daily basis, however these are not recorded specifically as Information, Advice and Assistance provided. This will include not only Social Work and OT professionals, but also include and not limited to our carers specialists based at our acute and community hospitals and our CHC specialist carer support.

1. **What carer-related training and development do staff supporting unpaid carers receive and how many staff have accessed carer-related training and development? This could include customer service, social workers/OTs, carer teams, housing teams etc.**

NEWCIS:

NEWCIS staff who complete assessments have QCF level 4/5. All NEWCIS staff complete local authority mandatory training. Staff are regularly trained and updated on new developments, carers rights issues, carers services and specific carers training throughout the year at group supervision, team meetings and training sessions.

FCC staff:

All staff are invited to attend the Carer Awareness Sessions for both adults and children, that have been developed specifically between our in-house Workforce Development Team and NEWCIS. In 2023-24, 14 new members of staff undertook this training.

All social services staff are also kept up to date and trained on carers throughout the year with attendance by carers services representatives at group supervision and team meetings and in addition to this, in 2023-24, all Adult Social Services staff received specific training sessions on Carers Needs Assessments and Direct Payments for carers.

In addition to our own training sessions, 22 members of our workforce accessed e-learning training sessions available through Carers Wales.

Further to in person training, all members of staff had access to our training materials, practitioners information leaflets, our policies and procedures and regularly received training on carers through Practice Directives issued.

1. **How many fulltime equivalent posts were available and able to undertake Carers Needs Assessments in your local authority and/or funded by your local authority?**

NEWCIS have 3.5 FTE per week of staff dedicated to carrying out Carers Needs Assessments.

Internally, all of our assessors are also able to complete Carers Needs Assessments as part of their role. Our assessors include the following roles: Social Workers (all levels), Occupational Therapists (all levels), Community Care Officers, Reviewing Officers.

1. **How many Carers Needs Assessments have been undertaken in your local authority area? Please define the total number of Carers Needs Assessments and how many were stand alone and how many were part of a combined disability needs assessment.**

We have processes in place to offer all carers a Carers Needs Assessment. Where there has been a need for an assessment and the offer has been taken up, the figures for 2023/24 are:

Adult Carers: 695

Young Carers: 94

We are unable to breakdown how many were completed standalone and how many as part of an assessment for the cared for due to our system not reporting in this way.

We are aware that health have a responsibility to provide Carers Needs Assessments as well as the local authority, the number above are reflective of those undertaken by and on behalf of the local authority. There will be more that will have been undertaken by health within the local authority area that we are unaware of.

1. **On average, how long did a Carers Needs Assessment take in your local authority, from referral to when carers are informed of the outcome of their assessment?**

The question is unclear about whether “from referral” means the initial referral for carers services, or the referral specifically for a Carers Needs Assessment. We have interpreted this to mean referral specifically for a Carers Needs Assessment for two reasons 1) it can often be some time from being made aware of their rights and the initial contact with carers services to actually taking up the offer of an assessment, and 2) we do not collect data on the time from initial referral to carers services to the assessment.

Additionally, we do not collect data on how long it takes from the referral to the end of the assessment process, and this would be impossible to average/estimate due to the wide range of carer’s and their circumstances. While some assessments can be relatively quickly and undertaken in a few hours, some will take a number of weeks and a number of conversations to complete and ensure that the outcomes and solutions identified are appropriate for the carer. Furthermore, the data would also be skewed by those carers who do acknowledge that they would like to have an assessment but are unable to do so or it is inappropriate to do so at that point for their own reasons, one example of this would be where the cared for has been admitted to hospital.

The data that we do measure in Flintshire includes:

The time from the referral for a Carers Needs Assessment to the carers being contacted to book an appointment to begin the assessment (includes both Adult and Young Carer): This is always within 5 working days but the average is 2/3 working days.

The time from the referral for a Carers Needs Assessment to the initial appointment to begin the assessment (includes both Adult and Young Carer): Average for the 2023/24 period is 11 days.

1. **Within the relevant 2023-24 budgets, how many Carers Needs Assessments could be theoretically delivered each calendar year in your local authority area? (We understand this may be an estimate)**

Under the SSWBA, we have the duty to provide Carers Needs Assessments, therefore we do not have a specific budget allocated in order to do this. Assessments and Carer’s Support are built in as a core part of our service. We would never refuse to undertake an assessment due to the lack of budget to do so.

Furthermore, it would be very difficult to give a theoretical answer that is anywhere near accurate as it is difficult to ascertain an average time to complete an assessment due to the breadth of complexities of cases across the spectrum of carers.

In attempting to consider how many assessments could possibly have been delivered during a year in this way drives an attitude of quantity over quality which is something that we would not want to do, and which goes against the principles of the SSWBA.

1. **How many unpaid carers were in receipt of a support package or direct payments? If possible, please split between where a carer has been included as part of a disabled person’s support package and where a carer gets support in their own right.**

The question is unclear in relation to a “support package” – is this a Support Plan following a Carers Needs Assessment? We have interpreted “support package” to mean Support Plan following a Carers Needs Assessment for the purposes of this question, however it needs to be acknowledged that there are a range of support options that carers are able to access that do not require the completion of a Carers Needs Assessment and a subsequent Support Plan.

For the year 2023-24 there were 589 adult carers and 94 young carers with an active Support Plan in their own right.

For the year 2023-24 there were 25 carers with a Direct Payment in their own right.

We are unable to provide data on how many additional carers were receiving support as part of a disabled person’s support package as our system does not report data in this way.

It also needs to be acknowledged that there are many more carers accessing support through the provision of support for the cared for, for example the provision of day care services and overnight respite in a care home would be recorded on the record of the cared for, but ultimately the carer is benefiting from this as respite support.

1. **What is the cost of an average support package or direct payment over a financial year for an unpaid carer?**

As above, the question is unclear in relation to a “support package” – is this a Support Plan following a Carers Needs Assessment? We have interpreted “support package” to mean Support Plan following a Carers Needs Assessment for the purposes of this question, however it needs to be acknowledged that there are a range of support options that carers are able to access that do not require the completion of a Carers Needs Assessment and a subsequent Support Plan. In addition to this, there are a vast range of services that it is not possible to quantify the cost of the provision of those services accurately and our systems will not gather such data to report in this way. For example, a carer may be accessing a Direct Payment or respite services, however as well as this their support plan may include attending drop in sessions, social groups, therapies and other activities that our system will not report.

The information that we are able to provide relates to Direct Payments for Carers in their own right.

For the year 2023-24 the total cost of Direct Payments for Carers in their own right was £77,669.16, with an average cost of £3,106.77 per carer.

We are unable to provide data on how many additional carers were receiving support as part of a disabled person’s support package as our system does not report data in this way.

It also needs to be acknowledged that there are many more carers accessing support through the provision of support for the cared for, for example the provision of day care services and overnight respite in a care home would be recorded on the record of the cared for, but ultimately the carer is benefiting from this as respite support.

Section 2: Please can you tell Carers Wales:

1. **What new services for unpaid carers were commissioned and delivered by the local authority in the financial year April 2023 to March 2024?**

Although there were new services available and supported by the local authority in 2023/24, the local authority did not specifically commission new services during this period.

1. **What ongoing services for unpaid carers continued to be funded and delivered by the local authority in the financial year April 2023 to March 2024?**

Flintshire County Council delivers a wide range of services for carers, both in-house and commissioned through external third sector providers.

We recently completed a review of our Carers Services to inform the recommissioning process that is due to be undertaken for our externally commissioned services from April 2025. The review has found that overall, the pathways and services commissioned do generally appear to be effective and valued by carers. We have a good standard and a wide range of carers services and support available. Across the provision currently in place the combination successfully supports our commitment to the 4 priority areas of the WG Strategy for Unpaid Carers. An extract from this report detailing services available in Flintshire has been included and embedded below entitled “Services”.

We are proud of the services we deliver in the county, with a wide range of partners, and these have been nationally commended as demonstrated by the Bridging the Gap project winning a Social Care Accolade in 2020.

In November 2023, CIW announced that they would be undertaking a routine Performance Evaluation Inspection at Flintshire County Council Social Services to review how effectively the authority is exercising its duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The report produced was largely positive in relation to Social Services functions as a whole and specifically gave the following feedback in relation to Carers services:

*“Unpaid carers’ assessments are appropriately offered. Carers of adults told us they significantly benefitted from carers’ assessments and provision of support. There is a wide range of innovative practical support to promote carer well-being including counselling, grants, short-term direct payment provision, and short-term break arrangements.”*

*“There is a focus on promoting the well-being of young carers. Children were observed to benefit from the availability of support in a young carers support group. They clearly enjoyed the activities on offer and the company of both practitioners and peers alike.”*



<https://www.newcis.org.uk/autumn-winter-newsletter-2024/>

<https://www.newcis.org.uk/summer-newsletter-2024/>

<https://www.newcis.org.uk/newsletter-spring-2024/>

<https://www.newcis.org.uk/autumn-winter-newsletter-2023/>

<https://www.newcis.org.uk/summer-newsletter-2023/>

<https://www.newcis.org.uk/spring-newsletter-2023/>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N9xmIdGbwtlVtrD8stjQj5ku9Y714991/view>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16n5ehTY94FPiLZu6oRFzIJ_gEM6YwkxZ/view>

1. **Please provide examples and how these have supported unpaid carers so we can share good practice.**

There are a number of examples of how our services have supported unpaid carers throughout the embedded documents and links above.

Section 3:

**There is currently a gap between the aspirations of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act regarding unpaid carers receiving information, advice and support and the reality of carers receiving this. We understand that this is due to a variety of reasons. How do you think the gap could be closed and more specifically, what would help your local authority to do this?**

The identification of carers and understanding who a carer is appears to be a national issue. Increased awareness of carers and the value that they contribute would be welcomed. In promoting the positive value of carers more widely across communities and outside of the health and social care sector, the perception of carers and their role would be improved, reducing isolation and encouraging carers to come forward for support and guidance proactively rather than when they reach crisis point.

The responsibility to provide support for carers is jointly held between local authorities and health boards, however the emphasis appears to be placed on local authorities. A coherent and collaborative approach, with health contributing equally would see a significant improvement in experience for carers.

The reduction in funding for local authorities over consecutive years has had a significant impact on the ability to be able to provide support services for carers. The preventative value of carers services, both in promoting the well-being of carers, and in avoiding additional costs to local authorities and local health boards, is well-publicised. The role undertaken by carers is of clear benefit to the local economy and contributes to easing pressure on the local authority and Health Board in a challenging market capacity and financial climate. The Welsh Government have calculated that Welsh carers contributed the equivalent of £8.1bn of care each year (Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers, 2021) which far exceeds the £2bn spent by local authorities across Wales on social care during 2019-20 (bbc.co.uk). The Social Services and Well-being Act recognises this and the vital role that carers play in the preventative support provided to their loved ones, however the funding provided by WG to local authorities to provide these services is insufficient to meet these expectations.

**\*\*Please note: Due to the nature of the questions and information provided, it is not comparable with other authorities, and it would be inappropriate for it to be used for such purposes.**