Rob Simkins
Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Wales
Carers Wales

[www.carersuk.org/wales](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.carersuk.org%2Fwales&data=05%7C02%7CAndrew.Fung%40swansea.gov.uk%7Cf162aa506fa842a65b6c08dc9d20a14e%7C4c2e0b76d4524d358392187fac002efe%7C1%7C0%7C638558010673694254%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bUFB6WMMiuzXMR4jK3tfpkP5TK9wTL32G2qq2JKMabw%3D&reserved=0)

rob.simkins@carerswales.org

Andrew Fung

Andrew.fung@swansea.gov.uk

9th September 2024

Dear Rob

**Carers Wales - Track the Act Information Request**

Thank you for the Carers Wales Track the Act Information request which you sent to Swansea Social Services.

Please find our response to the Survey on the following pages, and again please accept our apologies for the lateness of the return.

Do let me know if I be of any further assistance with this.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Fung**

Quality and Improvement Officer

Swansea Social Services

Andrew.Fung@swansea.gov.uk

**Track the Act Request**

**Section 1: Please can you tell Carers Wales:**

**a.  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.**

In Swansea adult unpaid carers become known to Social Services through a number of pathways:

* Self- referral.
* Family member or friend
* GPs, health care professionals, therapy staff.
* Swansea Council Local Area Coordinators
* Third sector organisations (Swansea Carers Centre, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service, Red Cross, housing associations).

An individual’s initial contact with our Comon Access Point (CAP) in Adult Services or the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in Child and Family is normally via phone where they can speak with staff offering advice and information. The conversation will focus on the carer, considering them in the same way as those they care for and providing the carer with the opportunity to discuss the impact of their caring role on their well-being. The focus will be on improving outcomes across the carers landscape through person centred approaches highlighting people’s strengths, networks and community. This will involve signposting on to independent and commissioned third sector organisations who provide community and preventative support services including short break and respite provision and other carer support.

CAP or SPOC can also be contacted via email or an online referral form after which staff will make contact to engage in conversation as above.

Once a person has been identified as an unpaid carer or potentially taking on the role we will actively make an offer of a carers assessment.

Information will be recorded onto the system for the carer and if required linked to the cared for person then forwarded to the appropriate Social Work team in respect of a Carers Assessment if their needs have not been met through alternative sources.

In Child and Family Services the carers assessment can be undertaken as a joint assessment with the child if this is the preference of the carer.

**b.  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?**

Unpaid carers receive information and advice through the Swansea council website, which is a regularly updated source of advice and information on both in-house services and services through the third sector and partner organisations.

In addition, staff within the CAP and SPOC can provide information and advice to unpaid carers over the phone or by email. Our Emergency Duty Team and Home First Social Work Team also do the same.

Local Area Co-ordinators and Early Help Hubs can also provide information and advice to unpaid carers in the community.

In 2023-2024, 239 unpaid carers contacted Swansea Council directly and all received information and advice. For 19 unpaid carers there was no further action, but the remainder progressed to a full Carer’s Assessment from our Social Work teams.

In addition, we commission Swansea Carers Centre to provide an information and advice service to all unpaid carers across Swansea. Swansea Carers Centre have recorded that in 2023-2024 they counted 24599 contacts with or on behalf of organisations and people (this includes the first referral contact and any subsequent contacts for the same referral). Swansea Carers Centre recorded 4590 contacts through their Advice and Information process, with 610 referrals from Social Services.

**c. 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.**

Swansea Social Work staff make use of the Carers Wales / Carers Trust Carers Awareness training which takes place on a monthly basis. The sessions are advertised weekly in Swansea’s Social Services training bulletin and staff are encouraged to attend.

Regarding our ongoing training for social workers, there have been 63 attendees from Swansea Council since the training commenced in 2021. This puts Swansea 2nd out of 22 local authorities in terms of attendance.

The YMCA Swansea Young Carers Service are commissioned to run the Understanding Young Carers Training. 47 professionals from across social services, education and the third sector have attended this during 23/24.

In addition, the commissioned YMCA Swansea Young Carers Service run awareness raising sessions in schools for pupils. 1506 pupils have attended these sessions during 23/24.

**d. 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?**

140.4 FTE posts in Adult Services. This includes Senior Practitioners, Social Workers and Care Management Officers.

Carers assessments and joint assessments with children are undertaken in our Social Work Academy in Child and Family Services. There are 11 FTE posts in the Children with Disabilities Pod including Practice Leads, Senior Social Workers, Social Workers and Family Support Workers.

1 FTE post is commissioned by Swansea Council in YMCA Young Carers Service. An additional 3 FTE posts in the Young Carers Service are commissioned by the Regional Investment Fund, via the West Glamorgan Partnership.

**e. 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.**

409 assessments were completed during 2023/24. Swansea Social Services carries out combined needs assessments where it is considered beneficial to do so and with appropriate agreement and consent as required by the Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. When staff undertake a combined needs assessment, they record the appropriate information on the cared for person’s needs assessment as well as on the carers’ assessment. Our client system, however, does not record these as part of a combined needs assessment and so we are unable to give a definitive figure as to how many carers needs assessments were part of a combined needs assessment.

A total of 27 Young Carers Assessment were carried out during 23/24.

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?**

In Adult Services in 2023/24 it took on average 36 days from referral to being allocated to a Social Worker, and on average 23 days from allocation to completion.

Please note that in Adult Services all cases that come in are appropriately triaged and managed accordingly. In situations where a carers assessment was urgently required this would be prioritised.

In Child and Family Services single assessments are required to be completed within 42 days from receipt of referral.

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)**

We do not have a specific budget as relates to undertaking Carers Needs Assessment. We are obliged to undertake as many Carers Needs Assessments as necessary every year in order to fulfil our legal obligations under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and associated codes of practice.

We are not able to give an estimated figure because demand varies. We will always actively make an offer of a Carers Assessment once a person has been identified as an unpaid carer or potentially taking on an unpaid carer role.

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.**

Our Social Services model promotes prevention, promoting independence and voice, choice and control and a variety of support that can be accessed in a timely manner.

Some unpaid carers will receive services directly from Swansea Carers Centre and YMCA who are commissioned to provide some services on behalf of Swansea Council.

Some unpaid carers will be referred to Social Services by the Swansea Carers Centre where they will be given advice and information before progressing to a Carers Needs Assessment and a Carers Support Plan. There were 178 Carers with an active Carers Support Plan as at 31/03/2024 (CA008). Others will be identified by Social Workers as they work with a cared for person.

There are other support packages that are provided to unpaid carers in their own right which not accessed via Social Services and are not recorded within a carers support plan. This may not include every unpaid carer who receives support through community services such as those provided by e.g. the Swansea Carers Centre.

The commissioned YMCA Swansea Young Carers Service provides support through a variety of different approaches depending on the needs of the particular young carer.

During 23/24 this included:

Number of young carers supported: 100

Number of group sessions provided: 42

Number of 1-2-1 sessions provided: 47

Number of residential respite provided: 6

Number of Young Carers I.D cards issued: 52

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

We are not able to give a definitive cost figure. Support for carers can be offered to them directly, but also within the context of a care and support package being offered to the cared for person.

Swansea offers a wide range of practical support to promote carer’s well-being including counselling, grants, direct payments provision, and short-term break arrangements. We proactively work in partnership with carers on coproduced outcomes.

We also provide direct services to the cared for person as a result of an assessment to enable the carer to have a break, where alternative care is needed for the cared for person. This can range from a couple of hours of alternative care at home, a full day at one of our day care facilities, one or more nights of residential / nursing care.

**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?**

The West Glamorgan Partnership Board is responsible for managing and commissioning projects which support unpaid carers through RIF funding across the region. Projects available in Swansea were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Connecting Carers - Carers and Young Carers (Swansea Music Art Digital) | Support for Carers at the end of the caring role; including workshops and one-to-one mentoring/coaching, supporting Carers to return to employment or education |
| Swansea Male Carers Project (Swansea Carers Centre) | Personalised, 1-1 male carer support/ information/advice on, Financial/ benefits, Carers rights/working rights, Hospital discharge/complex cases, Mental health, Breaks to take time away from caring – activities/ workshops and Peer group support.  |
| YMCA Young Carers | Weekend provision providing activities, respite and more to Young Carers. |
| Swansea Carers Hospital Outreach Service (Swansea Carers Centre) | Development of Swansea Carers Hospital Outreach Service. Aiming to reduce carers stress and improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing by joint working with primary and secondary care staff. |
| Swansea Carers Centre - Carers Project (Dementia) | Reduce carers (of people living with dementia) stress and improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing by joint working with primary and secondary care staff in local health settings.Supporting those diagnosed with dementia and their carers and families to receive early person centred care and support. Personalised, single point of access for support, specialising in carers of someone living with dementia, focusing on engaging carers of newly diagnosed – allay fears/concerns, inform & educate and reduce isolation.  |
| Swansea Carers Centre - Emergency Respite (Dementia) | Reduce carers (of people living with dementia) stress and improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing by accessing emergency respite in Swansea. Supporting those diagnosed with dementia and their carers and families to be able to receive person centred respite care and support. Early intervention enables carers to maintain their caring role, thus minimising escalation of needs and requirement for statutory support services.Emergency respite project offers 18 hours a week of emergency respite for 50 weeks, delivering dementia community based flexible respite services that provide care in the home. Builds on existing expert carers Sitting Service and increases the scale of provision for carers to access respite in an emergency situation such as family emergency/carer illness/called away for work urgently etc. Practical help for carers and the person they care for. This could include help with personal care, preparing a meal and light housework. |
| Swansea BAME Carers Pilot Project (Swansea Carers Centre) | Employing BAME Carers Worker for 21 hours a week to work with local community organisations to identify carers, bring them together, find out their needs and provide support.  |
| We Care Young Carers Project (YMCA Project) | A Programme of support services for identified young carers. Delivering the following:- ‘We Care’ Young Carers Project to Youth Clubs, Community Groups, Schools and Community Health Locations – Target 15 Locations. (Digital and Face to face)- PSE Awareness Raising sessions in youth clubs, schools, utilising existing resources (digital and face to face), Young Carers Groups, Family Groups - Target 1,500 young people- Training Programmes – online and face to face as required for ‘Understanding Young Carers ‘Training for Key Adults. – Target Train 20 Key Adults- Roll out the newly developed ‘Young Carers Digital Infographic Animation Resource’ with young carers and key adults. – Target 15 sessions.- Identify new Young Carers and signpost them to support programmes as appropriate. – Target Support 60 Young Carers. |
| Swansea Carers Extended Hours - Helpline & Counsel (Swansea Carer Centre) | New extended “out of hours” telephone/email helpline offering longer hours for carers (living in Swansea) to get telephone & online advice, information, and support. |
| Care & Repair Giving You Time Back | A project for Carers to access help at home, home improvement and handy person services. Handyperson, decluttering, gardening, cleaning support Grants for promoting social independence. |
| Carers Journeys Project (African Community Centre) | A Carers Community Transport scheme, One to One counselling (face to face or remotely and via phone) and Trips out for groups of Carers and possibly the person they care for. |
| Wellbeing breaks for parent carers. (Action for Children) | Residential short breaks offer referred parent/carers a two-night short break in a high quality, fully equipped static caravan on a quiet site, set in the coastal countryside of North Gower, West Wales. |
| Care Me (Chinese in Wales Association)  | Support and emotional wellbeing to service users from Chinese autism support group. Open to any ethnic Chinese parent carers who have autistic children with confirmed diagnosis.  |
| Parent Carer Forum | A group of volunteer parent carers whose children are involved with Children’s Services, Adult Services, Education and Health services.PCF work with, but are independent of Swansea Council, to make sure that services meet the needs of disabled children, young people, adults and their families.PCF believe passionately that working co-productively with Swansea Council and other service providers puts the voice of disabled children of all ages and their families at the centre of decisions and delivers services that work for our community.PCF vision is for Swansea to be a place where the voices of families are valued and effectively used to achieve an equitable and inclusive quality of life for our children of all ages. |

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?**

Swansea Council has received funding to develop a post within our Common Access Point and Single Point of Contact with respect to supporting unpaid carers and the uptake of short breaks. This post enhances the Information Advice and Assistance service which we already provide to Swansea unpaid carers both through our website and through our social work staff. Information Advice and Assistance is provided within the context of a preventative and early help offer in Swansea that focuses on preventing escalation of individuals' needs and integrating with partners and local sources of support to mitigate demands on statutory services.

In addition our social work staff conduct Carers Assessments and develop Carers support plans through strength based What Matters conversations. We continue to offer a wide range of innovative practical support to promote carer well-being including counselling, grants, direct payments provision, and short-term break arrangements. We proactively work in partnership with carers on coproduced outcomes. We provide direct services to the cared for person as a result of an assessment to enable the carer to have a break, where alternative care is needed for the cared for person. This can range from a couple of hours of alternative care at home, a full day at one of our day care facilities, one or more nights of residential / nursing care.

During this period a number of commissioned services have been delivered through Swansea Carers Centre – these include the provision of a one-stop shop for information, support and signposting for carers, welfare benefits advice, a counselling service as well as the Ty Conway Adult Day care centre, based in Swansea which provides flexible respite care to give unpaid carers a break from their caring role.

As part of their information Service, Swansea Carers Centre send out regular e-bulletins which outline new developments with the service or events or other activities of interest to unpaid carers in the Swansea area.

The YMCA Swansea has been commissioned since 2021 to provide a range of support services for young carers and their families. This includes:

Support is provided through face to face and/or online:

* Young Carers Service Assessment
* Wednesday Club
* Trips/Activities
* Residential Respite
* Advocacy
* Young Carers Forum
* Podcast & YouTube Channel
* Young Carers Awareness Sessions
* Young Carers National ID Card Scheme

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

There has been an excellent response from adult unpaid carers in regard to the Swansea Carers Service. Some of these comments are as follows:

*“The support and care that we have received from the Carers Centre, has made such a difference to us all, as a family. There is always a warm welcome from every member of staff, and the difference it’s made has been incredible. I can’t thank them enough for their kindness and patience.”*

*“I think everyone in the Service works so hard to support Carers and make them feel valued. Each time I have felt the need to contact the Service I have been supported and advised immediately. Thank you so much.”*

*"Ty Conway are outstanding! They have been so accommodating and nothing is ever too much trouble for them. They've really supported my Nan adjust to some housing repairs that have been going on for some time now. My Nan who can have increased anxieties with change has managed remarkably well with their support. Thank you to all."*

We have received similar feedback in response to our Information Advice and Support service and the services the Council directly offers:

*"I wanted to express my sincere thanks for the help and support that have been provided recently for my Mum and I. Everyone I have dealt with, starting with first contact via CAP has been kind, helpful and compassionate. I understand that you are working under pressure and must deal with some very distressing situations and difficult people, but you have all taken time to explain how the system works, provided all the information I've requested and more, and been honest in managing our expectations about the help we might receive. I would like to give a special mention to R. who has been very kind and patient in dealing with Mum, who has severe hearing loss and was, initially, quite resistant to the idea of receiving help. R. listened and understood the challenges we were both facing and was helpful in representing me as Mum's only carer, as well as Mum herself."*

From a client's husband looking for respite:

*"Thank you for the good news and for taking on my case with enthusiasm and commitment. Without you, I would still have been finding excuses for doing nothing, getting gradually more worn out!"*

From the wife of an individual who recently received respite care in one of our council care homes:

*"Many thanks to all who care for my dear husband. He is such a lovely man and I'm sure would be as grateful as I am for you all. Thank you."*

From the carer of a gentleman where respite was found at short notice:
*"I just wanted to give you a ring and thank you for all you have done for me and get everything done so quickly, I had a wonderful time and I was spoilt rotten, B. survived and he had a lovely time. We are all back home now, just to say thank you, thank you, thank you. All the best"*

We have worked coproductively with unpaid carers in changes to our processes or the services which we deliver.

In the run up to Carers Rights Day (23 November 2023) our service launched a new co-produced Carers Assessment and Carers Support Plan within our WCCIS client system to be used for young and adult carers. A group worked co-productively with unpaid carers to create a standalone Carers Assessment and Carers Support Plan which could be completed by assessors to identify the outcomes for an unpaid carer where they meet the carers eligibility criteria under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act.

The Carers Assessment and Carers Support Plan is used across Adult and Child and Family Services to achieve consistent practice to support unpaid carers no matter which area of Social Services they are engaging with.

In addition, a recent CIW inspection of Swansea Adult Services has found that the Local Authority demonstrates a robust commitment to coproduction. This commitment is strategic and operational, with a coproduction framework, charter, and governance groups in place. The focus on coproduction, and working in partnership with people and communities, evidences positive practice and aligns with the principles of the 2014 Act.

A multi-agency Young Carers Steering Group for professionals has worked closely with the young carer led Swansea Young Carers Forum to develop a 3 year plan to improve services for young carers. This plan outlines the some of the challenges facing young carers and the priority actions that we are undertaking to meet these needs. Their chosen format to share this plan was through a short video, the link for which is:

[Young Carers Forum Presentation - YouTube](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DFmZ87d-fWGk&data=05%7C01%7CGavin.Evans%40swansea.gov.uk%7Caa66e63fbd2547f36c8408db1e4b0d48%7C4c2e0b76d4524d358392187fac002efe%7C1%7C0%7C638137080194601575%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0qlxGtmnxeTw3xoo%2B83xk%2FzL7cXrNhxKjFYSeaqQbLM%3D&reserved=0)

or

<https://www.youtube.com?watch?v=FmZ87d-fWGk>

**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?**

In Adult Services we are aware that in 2023-2024, 45% of unpaid carers who were offered a Carers Assessment were recorded as wanting to take up the offer. Previously we did not record the reasons why unpaid carers declined the offer, but we have now issued guidance to our practitioners asking for these reasons to be recorded in future. It may be that in some instances the provision of timely Information Advice and Assistance and a What Matters conversation is sufficient for some unpaid carers at the point at which they contact us; at other times their focus may be solely around securing immediate help and support for the person they care for. It is only through analysis of the emerging data that we will be to understand if this is the case, or if there are other reasons why the offers of Carers Assessments are not taken up. By having a greater understanding of why this happens, we hope to support more unpaid carers to have a Carers Assessment where this is what they wish to do, and to further help them to focus on their needs and concerns as part of their caring role.

In addition to the above, we believe that our continued close and effective working relationships with the Swansea Carers Centre as well as other partner agencies in Swansea will help to mitigate and close the gap between the described aspirations of the Act and the reality of carers receiving this.

As of 1st August 2024 we have commissioned a new model of care and support services for unpaid carers across Swansea in the form of a Carers Hub to be provided by Swansea Carer Centre. Our aim is for the Carers Hub to provide a one stop shop for unpaid carers to access information, advice, advocacy, and support services that will improve the quality of their life and enhance their capacity for independent living.