

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD (HWBB)

DATE: 7th September 2016

REPORT TITLE: Carers Health and Well Being

REPORT OF: Jonathon Eatough – Assistant Director: Legal , Procurement & Commissioning and Statutory Monitoring Officer

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – Cllr Arnold England

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

This report is an update on the progress being made with the HWBB commitment to improving the lives of all age carers relating to **health and well being**.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members of the Board:

2.1 Note the update and acknowledge development and achievements since receipt of the last Board Report September 2015

2.2 Support the strategic priorities and associated action plans while considering the changing landscape (economic and commissioning) facing health and social care.

2.3 Support and recognise the significant and financial contribution family carers bring to the social and health local economy.

2.4 Note the authorities continued progress in working towards raising carer awareness across the borough and local communities.

3. IMPACT OF ACTION - (How it is intended that action will make a difference)

The following principles are critical to the successful delivery of eight key outcomes set out in the Carers Strategy which is currently being revised. The Carers Partnership Board considers the outcomes continue to remain relevant in relation to the well being and prevention agenda. In addition

3.1 Continued engagement and working in co-production with family carers, who are best placed to inform and shape service provision and drive service improvement through

effective and efficient utilisation of resources both people and financial.

3.2 Raising awareness to prevent, reduce and delay the need for acute, complex or more intensive support for carers. This element compliments the Right Care, right place prevention illustration and builds on our focus to encourage community resilience..
Appendices 1

3.3 Constant reflection on how we extend our reach, hard to engage carers within our local community. In particular young people identified as contributing to a caring responsibility, those in transition 16-25 year olds and any adult in diverse and hard to reach population and communities.

3.4 Continued ownership of the all age carer agenda by the Council and its partners whilst reflecting the Co-operative Council principles, Clinical Commissioning Group priorities and Health and Well Being priorities.

4. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to a specific HWB Priority	
	Yes	Encouraging healthy lifestyles Improving Mental Well Being Strengthen communities
	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Put our children and young people first. Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults. Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The proposals impact on carers of all ages. A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to a family member or to a friend who could not manage without their help. This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled, has mental health or substance misuse problems.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Referenced with the Adults Carers Strategy 2013 – 2016 and associated plans Young Carers Strategy: 2012 – 2015 (to be combined with adult strategy as an all ages strategy Market Position Statement: 2015 which is currently	

	being revised	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The Adult carer's budget is contained within the Better Care Fund Section 75 Pooled budget arrangement, an agreement with Telford & Wrekin CCG. Funding for Young Carers sits outside of the Pool.</p> <p>The budget contained within the 2016/17 Pool is £521k, and the budget for Young Carers is £91k. The delivery of Carers services is delivered through various contracts and the current forecast in 2016/17 is for expenditure to be in line with current financial resources. In addition the LA holds a budget for short breaks.</p> <p>The present expectation is that there will be pressure arising to this budget based on better awareness and organisation of Carers in requesting assessments and promotion of individual budgets being the mechanism for delivering packages of care. The outcomes pyramid attached has been developed to apply a mechanism for the distribution of funding to meet needs to Carers ensuring resources are appropriately distributed to meet those needs.</p> <p>The expectation is that this additional pressure together with developments set out in the "Next Steps" section of this report will be handled where possible within existing resources, but this will be kept under review as part of the programmed monitoring process.</p> <p>RP-17.8.16</p>
LEGAL ISSUES This section needs further input awaiting report	<u>Yes</u>	<p><u>Legal Comment - Carers Health and Well Being</u></p> <p><u>The Care Act 2014 came into force on 1 April 2015.</u></p> <p><u>All carers: Young adults, those in transition and adults) have the right to assessment under Section 10 of the Care Act 2014. Originally introduced by the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995, until 1 April 2015 there was no duty upon local authorities to meet a carer's assessed needs, only to take them into consideration. Any carer who meets national eligibility criteria must have services provided to meet</u></p>

		<p><u>their needs for support now or in the future. The onus is on the authority to identify those in need of an assessment and to carry this out.</u></p> <p><u>Parent carers have the right to an assessment under Section 97 of the Children and Families Act 2014. As with young carers, the local authority must only consider whether to provide any services the parent carer is assessed to need. The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 require the local authority, as far as is reasonably practical, to provide a range of services to assist parent carers to provide care. Local authorities must also publish a “short breaks services statement” setting out these services and their eligibility criteria for accessing them.</u></p> <p><u>Since the introduction of the Work and Families Act 2006 carers for adults have had the right to request flexible working from their employers. This was extended to all employees under the Children and Families Act 2014. Employers can only refuse a request to work flexibly on limited grounds identified by statute.</u></p> <p><u>In addition, employees have the right to reasonable time off if a dependent is ill, injured or their care arrangements are disrupted. Carers of disabled and elderly people are also protected from discrimination at work under the Equality Act 2010. There are changes to the benefits that carers are entitled to, including changes to the eligibility of the person they are caring for, and the spare room subsidy or bedroom tax.</u></p>
<p>EQUALITY & DIVERSITY</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Family carers and former carers come from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, faiths and communities. The Care Act highlights the need to seek out those individuals that do not recognise themselves in this role, and the impact this has on their health and well being.</p> <p>Within the Carers Strategy meeting diverse needs raises the challenges in identifying and</p>

		raising awareness to this hidden and isolated group. A collaborative approach across health and social care economy ensuring that we utilise the principle of 'Every contact counts'.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact.
PATIENTS & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	Yes	<p>Carers and former carers contribute in a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Partnership Board: 6 carers provide active and critical contribution including undertaking Chair and Vice Chair roles. • Community Engagement Panel: Carer representatives. • Regular Consultative Sessions with all age carers including young carers. • Commissioning, evaluation and moderation working as active contributors. • Contract and Monitoring evaluations. Contribution to commissioning arrangements and evaluation of tender submissions. • Contribution to ADASS Council Peer Reviews and our local review during 2016 • Contribution to national developments such as Dementia Alliance/Action Alliance • CCG: Membership of Health Round Table • Health Watch • Co-production of Carer Self Assessment Tool. • Carer Lead in the development of Carers Strategy outcome: A Life outside caring which focuses on Employment, Education and Housing. T • Members of SATH: Ward visiting teams. • Carer Membership: Local Health Economy: Dementia • Contribution to Transforming Care Partnerships (ALD)

<p>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><u>Risks:</u> The Council will contribute to a bi annual national adult carer survey in 2016/17. Following the outcome of the 20/1415 survey analysis carers reported a 5% decrease compared with 2012/13 relating to impact of caring role, how they spend their time, control over their daily life and social contact. Reduction in 'cared for' budgets has been felt by carers and often reported on impacted on the carers well being and caring role.</p> <p><u>Carers Pooled Budget arrangement.</u> The budget finances a range of offers for carers including Individual payments which managed through the Carers Outcome Forum. Carers need to have one identified need to access financial resources. There has been a reduction in people requesting financial support since 2015. This is partially due to the needs being identified against Care Act eligibility outcomes. There is a reassurance that the allocation of financial resources is to those carers who would receive the greatest benefits are clearer and defined in line with the Right Time, Right Help prevention and well being agenda.</p> <p><u>Funding for Young Carers :</u> The identification of young people who contribute to the family home caring regime for a sibling or parent needs to be reflected in any adjustment of target operating model and access to support. Young Carer activities are funded through public donations. The request to extend accessibility for young carers to access Moving and Handling Family Adviser has not been progressed in part due to organisational structure and investment.</p>
--	------------	--

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. BACKGROUND

National Context

1.1 This report provides a progress overview in relation to the Health and Wellbeing objectives to enhance the

- .Encouraging healthy lifestyles
- .Improving mental health well being
- .Strengthening communities

1.2 The National Carers Strategy states that by 2018 every Carer should be:

- Recognised and supported as an expert carer.
- Enjoy a life outside caring.
- Not financially disadvantaged.
- Mentally and physically well; treated with dignity.
- Children will be thriving: protected from inappropriate caring roles.

In Telford and Wrekin the adult's carer's agenda is driven by the multi-agency Carers Strategy 2013-2016, the delivery of which is overseen by the Carers Partnership Board (CPB).

1.4 Other national initiatives compliment the Telford offers, including:

- Development of the Memorandum of Understanding (No Wrong Door: Working together to support Young Carers and their families contribute to promoting a person centred and whole family approach). This document has been created and requires submission to senior managers for approval and application.
- Carer and Employers: NHS England has produced a tool kit for all employers to consider their response to supporting family carers who are in the work place. Through ADASS West Midlands Carers Network leaflets are in production raising awareness of employers of carers employment rights. A public launch link to Cares Right Day will take place 25th November 2016.
- Care Act 2015: Regular stock takes enable the authority to ensure Care Act compliancy is fit for purpose and our local offer is robust and accessible.

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

2.1 The 2012 census told us **600 young people** and **18,000 adults** provide regular support to someone in Telford & Wrekin. We are currently aware of **332** young carers and **2556** adult carers where we offer a wide range of information, advice and support.

2.2 It is the identification and raising of awareness of carers of all ages across Telford community which requires particular focus with a continued emphasis on prevention, promoting self help and accessing community based solutions are employed an earlier stage in their caring lives in line with the Right Help, Time pathway which focuses on prevention and development of carer resilience.

Through the Prevention and Well Being Strategy, a collaborative approach requires everyone to be mindful of the impact of caring and to promote the range of community based solutions which enhances resilience and promotes well being among our carer population.

2.3 Our shared strategic ambitions for carers of all ages continue to be delivered through a pooled budget arrangement which includes the role of the Joint Carers Commissioner, central to driving forward the local carer agenda. From October 2015 the combining of young carer and adult commissioning responsibility allowed the transformation of all age carer services across the Borough to create a local offer which reflects a seamless pathway for all carers of any age, efficiency of resources while promoting a whole family approach. In June we learnt that the Young Carers Volunteer support was awarded the Queens Award for Volunteering.

2.4 This report allows Board members to gain an appreciation of how these arrangements are working on the ground to improve adult and children's carer's health, well being and development of resilience is based on the following eight key outcomes:

2. PROGRESS AGAINST CARER STRATEGY OUTCOMES

3.1: Outcome: Information Advice and Support

All age carer service went live 1st October 2015 The provision is provided by Telford Community Voluntary Service (CVS) and provides an accessible and generic service removing any transition barriers to accessing services. As part of the contract the following services are provided:

- Phone a Friend service where volunteers keep in contact with family carers
- Pamper Sessions held bi weekly attract up to 20 carers each session. New carers are encouraged to attend
- Manage the allocation of Iron Bridge Museum passes which are free for carers to access for family days.
- Carers Hub: a virtual hub enabling carers to access advice and support with regarding to portfolio development, employment and education
- Carers Link works with hospital and GP Surgeries: and element of this role promotes Carer Champions with the community. The aim is to identify a champion in places in employment to be the first point of contact for accessing information. A Carer Champion fact sheet is available is available on My Life portal
- Carer assessment. Take up of assessments is increasing. There is currently a waiting time of 8-10 weeks for assessments to be completed.

- Registration of Care Planning arrangements relating to the Emergency Carers Response Service:
- Lead role in two national carer initiatives; Carer Week in June and Carers Rights Day in November
- Young Carer Activities: A range activities including fortnightly youth club, healthy eating workshops
- In-betweeners: 18 years to 24 years: A social group which is self directed and promotes peer support. Over 40 young people access a range of activities.

Care Act: As from 1st April 2015 Carers are entitled to an assessment of need as well as the person they care for. Social Workers and support workers are able to access training sessions to improve their knowledge and awareness. Carers who are providing regular support can now request a Carers assessment which is set against eight national outcomes. Carers needs are measured against each outcome and where outcomes are unachieved; an individual payment may be awarded. A carers self assessment documentation has been developed and shortly to go live. A series of Care Act Training sessions is currently being delivered to Social Workers, Support Staff, Organisations and Providers who comes in contact with family carers.

Memorandum of Understanding - No Wrong Doors: A national agreement which is being localised between Adult and Children and Family directorates. Its main thrust focuses on young people in families who are undertaking caring responsibilities. It encourages whole family working and collaborative practice between all services so no young person is turned away in need.

Collation of Carer Data: Working with performance team to ensure carer data is collated from a range of sources to meet national requirement and returns.

3.2: Outcome: Planning for the Future

Emergency Response Service: Provides replacement support to carers when a crisis/illness occurs. The support will be available every day of the year, 24 hours a day for 48 hours Monday – Thursday and 72 hours Friday – Sunday and over Bank Holidays. During 2015/16, 214 new carers registered for this service. The service was re-commissioned in April 2016 with a local domiciliary provider (Direct Health) providing the emergency service. The agency received a national care award for the delivery of this local emergency service.

'Time for Me' Opportunities: A range of creative, well being and educational workshops have been purchased from the Preferred Providers Framework, relating to Dementia, Life Planning and Management of stress, promotion of wellness, Arts, Crafts, Drawing, Painting, Pottery and Singing. These sessions provide techniques for resilience and well being development as well as providing peer support. (Link to Outcome 3.4)

3.3: Outcome: Promoting well being

Pamper Sessions: Are held twice a month and facilitated by the Carers Centre. Fifteen minute sessions are available for up to 20 carers. Carers often stay and find the peer

support therapeutic too. Continued work with Public Health will provide information and support on weight, smoking and personal health management. In addition carers can access Tai Chi sessions to aid well being.

Cookery Sessions: Carers can access workshops are being delivered by the Council's Lets Cook Team where menu planning, cooking skills and budgeting are included. The current focus is on young adult and male carers with family cookery sessions planned for this year.

Admiral Nursing: is a service for carers and family members who support someone with Dementia. This service is funded through the CCG (Dementia budget) and delivered within primary care and allows carers to self refer. It is a very successful model with significant value placed on the use of carers as experts by experience allowing them to manage extremely challenging situations themselves with support of the Admiral Nursing Team. An additional part time nurse will be funded from the Carers Budget to address the growing demand for carer support and those living with dementia.

Moving and Handling Family Adviser: This service is available 40 hours per month to family carers, focussing on techniques and safe moving and handling procedures. Impact is measured by taking comfort scores from the carer and cared for prior and after intervention with carers stating that such intervention has reduced the incidences of back and wrist strain. There is evidence to increase staffing levels to meet demand and the need to review changing needs in keeping the cared for in the community..

Relationship Support: Delivered through RELATE this one to one and family counselling options are available for family carers who are experiencing loss or finding change or relationships difficult to manage. During 2015/2016: 161 sessions were booked with a steady rise in people/families accessing the service. During the first part of this financial year numbers have increased between 8 -10 referrals a week compared to 3-4 referrals a week for a similar period in 2015.

Friends and Family Service: Delivered by Aquarius. It is often the friends and family that bear the brunt of someone alcohol and drug taking. This service provides one to one and peer support and coping strategies. The service has developed a Blue Light Project which supports this client group of families, improving the pathway for this client group locally, develop and disseminate a toolkit of approaches that families can utilise in dealing with their loved one draw on the local discussions and promote joining up local services to meet the needs of this group of families. Aquarius is working with Willowdene who provide carer and cared for activities in a country farm environment.

Working with Parent Carers: to ensure the transition to adults services is supportive and is planned well. Conversations with PODS (Parents Opening Doors) and SEND Commissioner are in progress.

Personalised Carer Support: For some carers accepting they need help and support can be difficult. The Personalised Carer Support provides 25 free hours of support based on a carer's assessment. The service is delivered through We are the Care Company. The care provider has an introductory visit along with the carer assessor who works with the carer to develop a personal plan to achieve the best options to develop resilience and personal well being.

3.4: Outcome: Time for yourself

Preferred Providers Framework 'Time for me': This is a commissioning framework which invites providers of a range of community options/ local business's to present options for family carers within the following themes creative, educational and well being. Carers are asking for workshops to include the person they care for extending the opportunity to access support in the community in a safe and carer friendly setting. The framework is seeking new resources with the tender closing on the 8th August 2016. Carers are involved in all aspects of the commissioning process encouraging co-production. (Link to Outcome 3.2) Appendix 3 Carer narratives

Ironbridge Passes: Carers can access five family passes free of charge enabling them to visit the 10 museums at the World Heritage Site. The passes are issued by the Carers Centre and purchased through pooled budget arrangements.

3.5: Outcome: Meeting diverse needs

Inbetweeners Group: 18-24 years: This group facilitated by the Carers Centre has been running for the past two years, to response to a gap identified for this age group. Some young adult carers are taking the opportunity to volunteer in young carer activities and events.

3.6: Outcome: A life outside caring/ 3.7: Outcome: Feeling financially safe and secure

A sub group of the Carers Partnership Board focuses on Carers Employment, Educational and vocational opportunists. Recent work has focussed on Job Centre Plus staff receiving carer awareness sessions. In addition raising awareness with housing colleagues with regard to carer identification and support

3.8: Having your say

Carers Partnership Board: The Board continues to thrive and contribute to the prevention agenda. The Board continues to be carer led and this year Louise Langham stepped down from the role of chair and Barry Parnaby replaced her. The chair has been visited a range of community groups and formal meetings to listen to local needs and contribute to strategic decision making. The Board is currently focussing on its sustainability and has undertaken Board development with support from the Councils Community Engagement Team. Specific areas of needs are seeking members who can contribute to discussions around Adults with Learning Differences/ Mental Health and Chronic conditions. The Board is also participating in a pilot study facilitated by NHS England and Staffordshire University which is focussing on carer narratives in improving pathways and commissioning services. The Board also considers contributions from young people are lacking. The public seating area continues to be popular with carers and providers alike.

The Board has been asked to deliver a workshop at the regional ADASS conference in November 2016 around Experts by Experience which carers will lead on.

Telford Council and Clinical Commissioning Group were awarded second place/highly commended in the National Health Service Journal (HSJ) award for Commissioning for Carers. Our submission focussed on Co-production, development of resilience and Prevention.

Appendix 2: Our illustrative offer in Telford & Wrekin

Dementia and Carer Provider Forum: Professionals, agencies and business meet 2/3 times a year to share information and network to improve awareness and work collaboratively. The forum members contributed to the National Dementia Congress which was held in Telford 3-5th November 2015. In February and April this year two interactive sessions focussed on: Developing resilience and what family carers want from respite. Two carers shared the benefits of accessing Direct Payments and Shared Lives while Age UK shared the role they have in the local community in supporting local initiatives such as Pub Clubs and Group sessions. The forum is moving towards self management to encourage ownership and development

4 NEXT STEPS:

Looking forward we have identified the following areas of development over the forthcoming year:

- Working to expand our community carer offer in the Preventative and Well Being agenda to ensure those people with caring responsibilities receive the information and advice at the right time and have accessible community support when appropriate
- Securing a permanent third Admiral Nurse (Dementia) support for family carers. Other options for sustainable funding being considered such as 'Crowd Funding'.
- Securing additional hours to enable the Moving and Handling Family Carer Adviser to address the increase in referral rates.
- The continued development of allocating Carers Indicative payments which are aligned to unidentified carers outcomes. The launch of the Self Supported Assessment Tool will assist to evidence this along with the promotion of financial payments to carers as direct payments/individual budgets as a preferred purchasing option for care and support to assist in the self management of day to day care giving.
- Broadening the range of respite/community opportunities for family carers. We will engage with operational staff, providers, carers and those who use services with in consultation event planned for November 2016 to enable the individuals, local people, organisations and business to develop cost effective, solutions enabling people to remain in their local community.
- Revision of an all age Carers Strategy and associated plans by the end of 2016 in line with Carers National Strategy which will launched end of 2016.
- Continued working in co-production with carers to identify employment both vocational and paid opportunities. Carers are included in a 'Building Better Opportunities' bid being locally lead by Landau. The aim of the bid is to reach those furthest away from the employment marketplace.

- Work with local people and communities to seek contributions and action to energise and enable communities to have greater resilience and self efficiency.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Health and Well Being Report: September 2015

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Carers Strategy 2013 – 2016 Making connections for Carers in Telford and Wrekin and associated implementation Plan
Young Carers Strategy

Appendix 1 Carer Outcome Pyramid/

Appendix 2: Our illustrative offer in Telford & Wrekin

Appendix 3 Carer Narratives

Report prepared by:

Jill Tiernan: Carers Commissioning Officer

(01952) 388918

Jill.tiernan@telford.gov.uk

Appendix 1 Carer Outcome Pyramid

EQUITY AND CONSISTENCY

ACUTE

***STATUTORY
RESPONSE
TO CRISIS**

Level 4
Threshold £500 & above

***RECUPERATE AND
REHABILITATE COMPLEX
HEALTH AND SOCIAL
CARE NEEDS**

- ECRS
- EMERGENCY RESPITE

*** SUSTAINABILITY OF
CARER'S ROLE**

Level 3
Threshold £500

*** SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO
RECOVER**

- ECRS
- EMERGENCY RESPITE
- PLANNED RESPITE
- PERSONALISED CARE SUPPORT
- ADMIRAL NURSING

*** REDUCING RISK AND VULNERABILITY**

Level 2 Threshold
£250

*** BUILDING RESILIENCE**

***TARGETED PREVENTION INTERVENTION**

- FRIENDS AND FAMILY SERVICE
- MOVING AND HANDLING ADVISOR (CARERS)
- WORKSHOP – ENTERPRISE/EMPLOYMENT
- WORKSHOPS – EDUCATION
- RELATE

*** LOW LEVEL**

Level 1
Threshold
£250

*** PREVENTATIVE**

*** UNIVERSAL**

***COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS
NO CURRENT NEED FOR CARE AND SUPPORT**

- INFORMATION AND ADVICE
- PAMPER SESSION
- WORKSHOPS-CREATIVE/EDUCATIONAL/WELLBEING
- IRONBRIDGE
- THEATRE OFFER
- WALKS (WELLBEING)
- SINGING GROUP (FUN)
- REGISTRATION OF ECRS
- COOKING WORKSHOPS
- SELF SUPPORTED ASSESSMENTS



FORTNIGHTLY CRAFT GROUP THURSDAYS 10:30AM—12:30PM



We have 4 children with learning disabilities. All of our children are well into adult hood with me currently the registered carer for our daughter who is 28 and has Global Learning Delay Syndrome and is on the Autistic Spectrum.

My wife is the registered carer for our son who has a moderate learning disability.

Both children still live at home and we are their full time carers providing support with daily tasks, personal care, financial support and also transporting them to where they need to go.

We came to the open day you held before Xmas one year. My wife was really keen to come and I was just her transport. We met Fiona the artist from the craft class and had a go at the activity she was offering, I was about to walk away to grab a coffee when Fiona asked me to join in too. I really enjoyed it!

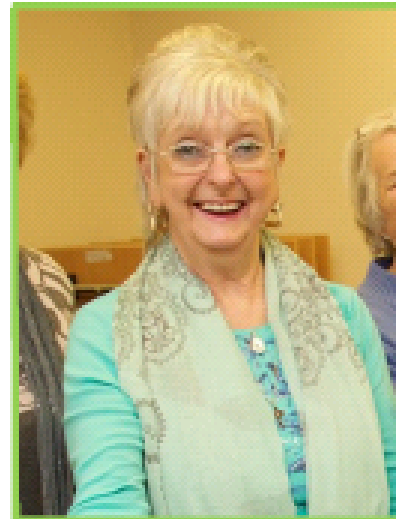
I've gone from someone that did no craft at all to someone that has now decorated the garden with all the things I have made and the spare bedroom is like an art gallery! We share some of the skills we have learnt with our daughter who is now volunteering at Club 17 and has taken some of the activities we have done and has shared them with a class of youths with learning disabilities. It's amazing to think how far reaching this has been for us as a family and for others when I think about it. We really have bonded as a group and we've met another couple who we now socialise with outside of the group, we are even going on holiday together soon.

For us it's a break from the mundane and the routine. It gives us something else to talk about and we often share ideas with one another at home. It has created stimulating conversations at home and has helped our daughter learn to be more independent, without the group we would just be at home all the time, without it we would be really low. We are learning all the time through the group. It has a lasting impact through the fortnight as we now find the time to finish our crafting at home—we have found a shared interest! "

A TIME TO SING
FORTNIGHTLY SINGING GROUP
TUESDAYS 2PM - 4PM

I care for my husband and have done so for 18 years due to him having brain surgery following a massive stroke in 1997.

I have been his carer for so long now that it has become second nature.



We live together and I care for him 24/7. I found out about "Me Time" through the carers forum and the newsletter. I'd sang a long time ago but it was more about getting out and socializing. With the group being just for carers it really made it easier to join as we all care for someone.

I've joined the Community Choir as well thanks to this group, I wouldn't have done that without coming here first. You lose your confidence being a carer and the group helped me with that, coming to the group makes me laugh and very happy – as a carer life can be very serious, when I'm here I forget about everything and laugh a lot! I have something to talk to my husband about it has really helped and improved our relationship.

I'm always concerned the service for carers will stop. I dread losing this chance to come and sing with the group and I worry about what it would mean for us and our cared for to lose this. The impact on our NHS would be really BIG!"