



“At breaking point” The urgent need to improve support for unpaid carers

Response to the HSC Committee report (April 2026)

28/09/2026

In April 2026, the Health and Social Care Committee submitted its report on its inquiry into improving support for unpaid carers. The report contains 35 recommendations. This is the Welsh Government’s response to those recommendations.

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1. Introduction

I thank the members of the Health and Social Services Committee for their report on improving support for unpaid carers. I have set out my response to the Report's individual recommendations below.

2. Response to the Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The incoming Welsh Government should work with unpaid carers and carers' support organisations to design and promote a national awareness campaign. This campaign should promote the concept of "unpaid carers," encourage self-identification, and publicise how to seek help. It should include outreach via GP surgeries, hospitals, pharmacies, schools, workplaces, and community settings (including places frequented by older people and ethnic minority communities).

Response: Accept

Our Carer Aware Programme for 2026/27 has developed public awareness raising approaches in community settings, with a particular aspect of the programme focusing on older carers.

We funded Carers Trust Wales to deliver a targeted two-week public awareness campaign in May/June 2026. The campaign exceeded key performance targets and generated insight into audience engagement to enable an evidence-based approach to a wider Carer Aware communications campaign planned for before the end of the financial year.

The Carer Aware Programme is delivered on behalf of the Welsh Government by Carers Trust Wales, Carers Wales and Age Cymru. A community-based awareness model is currently being piloted. The purpose is to improve awareness and identification of carers locally and to test a scalable model that could be adopted more widely. Staff and volunteers in libraries, community hubs and warm spaces will receive training and information to support effective identification and signposting conversations. There is potential to scale up across Wales from the current pilot, working with Regional Partnership Boards, local authorities and community partners.

We are also funding work to recognise young carers and to co-produce a resource with young carers to raise awareness and understanding within education and community settings. We intend to support further activity, co-designed with our Young Carers Advisory Board, to help young carers self-identify and raise awareness among relevant community members.

Our Carer Aware Programme also provides bilingual training resources for professionals in health and social care, to enable them to recognise and better provide initial support and signposting. Several targeted e-learning modules have been created for social work students, students and staff in primary and secondary health care, community workers and volunteers. New training

modules are being developed for Allied Health Professionals, which we expect to be launched before the end of the financial year. This will include optometrists, podiatrists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and dietitians. A specific module focuses on working with carers in ethnic minority communities.

Finally, the Carer Aware Programme is developing arrangements to place information on pharmacy bags. This will aid self-identification by unpaid carers and provide links to information and sources of support.

Recommendation 2

To promote identification of unpaid carers in primary care health settings, the incoming Welsh Government should consider re-introducing targeted incentives for primary care to identify carers and signpost them to appropriate information and support.

Response: Accept in Principle

A key development this year has been the creation of an Allied Health Professionals training module, as outlined in our response to Recommendation 1. This is designed to support professionals working across community and primary care settings. This has the potential to support improved identification and awareness amongst a broad range of practitioners.

We recognise that systematic identification and signposting activity across primary care settings would represent additional work for contractors and that targeted incentives may be required to support delivery and drive consistent implementation.

As part of ongoing work on the future development of primary care services, we will consider the feasibility of introducing such arrangements. Any proposals would need to ensure that appropriate support services are available for carers who are identified and would be subject to affordability, deliverability and, where required, agreement through contractual negotiations.

Recommendation 3

The incoming Welsh Government should encourage health boards to ensure that all hospitals have arrangements in place, such as carer support officers, to identify carers during outpatient appointments, inpatient admissions and in preparation for discharge, with clear procedures to involve and inform the carer at every stage.

Response: Accept

We continue to provide £1m to health boards to increase identification and initial support for carers at hospitals. The Welsh Government Hospital Discharge Guidance includes the importance of involving carers in discharge planning from the earliest stage and each hospital should have access to a Carer Support Service, with staff able to refer carers for support. Health boards have broader duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 regarding wellbeing, provision of information and promoting prevention that are applicable to their responsibilities toward unpaid carers. Further information on the Welsh Government Hospital Discharge Guidance is included in our response to Recommendation 9.

Recommendation 4

All health, social care, and education professionals should receive training in carer awareness, enabling them to recognise the signs of unpaid caring and respond appropriately. The incoming Welsh Government should work across portfolios to ensure that this recommendation is given full effect.

Response: Accept

Our funding of training for an expanding range of health, care and community professionals and volunteers is outlined in our response to Recommendation 1. This remains a priority area and our third sector partners are fully committed to making this training available through all relevant channels and promoting its use.

We have also funded the development of resources for staff in primary and secondary schools to support awareness of young carers and to better equip staff to respond and support young carers with their well-being and education. The resources are published on the relevant platform and are being shared through education routes and relevant stakeholder networks.

We have supported the development of a toolkit for professionals in further education to improve support for young adult carers, which was launched in June 2026.

Recommendation 5

The incoming Welsh Government should, in collaboration with local authorities and the third sector, explore innovative approaches to finding 'hidden' carers. This could include better use of data and technology (as per the suggestion of the Older People's Commissioner) to identify individuals who may be in caring roles (such as those frequently collecting prescriptions or making health appointments for others) and make a proactive early offer of information and advice, signposting and carers' needs assessments.

Response: Accept

As part of ongoing work on the future development of primary care services, outlined in our response to recommendation 2, we will consider the potential for the identification of carers while making healthcare appointments for others. This raises significant complexities and we will undertake further enquiries. Healthcare settings present opportunities to display information for unpaid carers and to aid self-identification and we will continue to promote this approach.

Community pharmacies are a regular point of contact for patients, families and carers. While carers frequently collect medicines, data on this is not collected and identification of carers is most likely to be through opportunities for pharmacy staff to engage with carers and signpost to sources of information, advice and assistance. We have sought to enhance awareness by providing access to e-learning on carer awareness for pharmacy staff, which has been available since 2025. Including messaging on pharmacy bags, as outlined in our response to Recommendation 1, will also help carers to self-identify. We will expand this aspect of the Carer Aware campaign next year. We will consider other venues where carers could receive information which may help them to self-identify, accompanied with details of sources of support.

Recommendation 6

The incoming Welsh Government should, as a matter of priority, review the action plan (led by ADSS) for upholding unpaid carers' rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to ensure that it:

- sets out clear actions, lines of responsibility and milestones;
- includes steps to improve the offer and take-up of needs assessments and ensure carers receive timely support services;
- addresses known barriers, including language and cultural barriers; and
- sets out how progress will be monitored and reported and should ensure that any gaps in the plan are addressed.

Response: Accept

I can confirm I have received a comprehensive report on the action plan led by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru), outlining progress to date and detailed plans for future action. A stakeholder group of unpaid carers, third sector and statutory agencies oversee the progress of the action plan, along with Welsh Government officials.

I am re-launching the Ministerial Group for Unpaid Carers which will provide additional governance and consider the future of the project from January 2027, when the current funding support ends.

It is vital we can measure the impact of the improvement work for unpaid carers and the means of doing this will be confirmed by the end of the year. Our new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers, which will be published in November, will ensure a focus remains on improved quality and consistency of early information for unpaid carers and carer's needs assessments.

Recommendation 7

The incoming Welsh Government should consider introducing national minimum standards for carers' support services. These standards could include:

- maximum waiting times for carers' assessments;
- expectations for the range of carers services that should be available as a minimum in each region (such as a dedicated young carers' service);
- a proactive offer of information and advice, and advocacy for those who need it; and
- expectations for carers' involvement in care planning and hospital discharge processes.

Introduction of these standards should be accompanied by publication of an annual progress report, which should provide details of the actions to be taken by the Welsh Government where minimum standards have not been met.

Response: Accept in Principle

Guidance to local authorities under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is typically delivered as Codes of Practice. Codes of Practice and Regulations impose statutory requirements on local authorities. We are undertaking a thorough review of current legislation and Codes of Practice to identify aspects of recommendations that may already be present in existing Codes and implications for other parts of social care, if amendments to statutory requirements are made. We will then consider the most appropriate action. The review will be completed by December.

Annual reporting will be produced following publication of the new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers. The first of these reports will be published by June 2027.

Recommendation 8

The incoming Welsh Government should consider updating statutory guidance under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to strengthen the standards for Carers' Needs Assessments. This should, as a minimum:

- require proactive offers of information, advice and assistance and needs assessments to be made to people who may be carers, and require assessments and support plans to be completed in a timely manner within a specific period of time, with a written copy provided to the carer;
- explore the use of alternative terminology (such as “what matters conversation”) to replace the word “assessment,” which some carers find off-putting;
- emphasise the need for the assessment process to be carried out with the carer in a collaborative, respectful way.

Response: Accept in Principle

The review of current legislation and Codes of Practice, outlined in our response to Recommendation 7, will include the existing guidance on Carer's Needs Assessments. On completion of that review, we will decide on appropriate action.

The improvement action plan led by ADSS Cymru, referred to in our response to Recommendation 6, includes work on terminology. This has included consultation with unpaid carers, and it is vital that consistent and clear terminology is used across Wales.

Recommendation 9

The incoming Welsh Government should ensure that updated hospital discharge guidance to be published later this year:

- reaffirms the importance of early discussions with families to ensure a safe and effective discharge;
- requires every health board to have a mechanism in every hospital (such as a designated carers' champion) to consult with the carer prior to discharge and, if that carer indicates they are unable to provide care, to work with the local authority to provide support to make alternative care arrangements;
- requires confirmation that the carer is willing and able to provide the necessary care and provides information to the potential carer about their legal rights.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government provides health boards with recurring funding of £1 million to promote identification and provide support for carers within hospitals.

The Welsh Government Hospital Discharge Guidance includes the importance of involving carers in discharge planning from the earliest stage. Community health services are required to provide a named contact to respond to queries from unpaid carers, and each hospital should have access to a Carers Support Service, either through hospital staff or a local carers' organisation. Discharge staff are expected to know how and when to refer carers for support.

We will strengthen the guidance to place greater emphasis on proactive consultation with unpaid carers as part of routine discharge planning. We will write to all health boards asking for details of their mechanism for ensuring carers are consulted prior to discharge and consider further strengthening of the guidance based on responses. Consultation with unpaid carers must ensure they are willing and able to provide the necessary care, and staff must liaise with partner services to put adequate discharge support in place as required. This consultation should be conducted with sufficient time prior to discharge and as part of the routine discharge planning arrangements set out in the hospital discharge guidance.

Recommendation 10

The incoming Welsh Government should ensure that the new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers is accompanied by a strong governance and accountability framework, and a clear implementation plan that links strategic aims to measurable outcomes.

Response: Accept

The new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers will be published in November and will be accompanied by a delivery plan and annual reporting structure. This will ensure we can review progress on actions, using the outcome measures included within the strategy. The Ministerial Advisory Group will oversee the implementation and progress of the strategy. We will use all available means of holding our partners to account for their implementation of the strategy and evidencing our performance against actions for the Welsh Government.

Recommendation 11

The incoming Welsh Government should consider a requirement for each relevant Minister to report on how their portfolio is contributing to supporting

unpaid carers in order to ensure that responsibility for unpaid carers is shared across government.

Response: Accept

We will form an interministerial task and finish group ensuring the involvement of all relevant Ministers. This will facilitate an enhanced cross-government approach to unpaid carers and will help identify and seek to resolve some of the barriers encountered by unpaid carers. Its work will also be aligned with the national strategy.

Recommendation 12

Given the well-documented and long-standing lack of progress with services for unpaid carers, we believe that external oversight is crucial. The incoming Welsh Government should commit to providing an annual statement to the Senedd on progress with delivery of key outcomes for unpaid carers, including the implementation of recommendations in this report and the Carers Strategy Delivery Plan. These statements should:

- detail improvements in areas including Carers Assessment rates, respite provision, and support for young carers; and
- outline any further actions the Welsh Government will take if progress is unsatisfactory.

Response: Accept

We will make an annual statement to the Senedd. This will align with the publication of the annual report on the carers strategy and will detail progress against the delivery plan and the national strategy, provide updates on our response to these recommendations and will make use of all available data to consider outcomes for unpaid carers and young carers. The first annual statement will be in June 2027. Where further action by the Welsh Government is required, we will outline our intentions.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the Welsh Government directs Care Inspectorate Wales to integrate ongoing compliance checks on carer support and statutory duties relating to unpaid carers into their regular inspection and monitoring of local authorities.

Response: Accept

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) already considers how local authorities fulfil their statutory duties towards unpaid carers through its inspection, assurance and oversight activity. This includes examining how effectively local authorities identify, assess and support unpaid carers, and how carers' experiences and outcomes are reflected in practice. Intelligence gathered through inspection activity, engagement with local authority leaders and wider assurance work is shared with the Welsh Government to support oversight and improvement. The Welsh Government and CIW will continue working together to ensure unpaid carers remain a key area of focus within ongoing assurance and inspection activity.

Recommendation 14

Following the Minister's agreement with Care Inspectorate Wales that their next bi-annual assurance meetings with Directors of Social Services (due in April 2026) will include support for unpaid carers as a key line of enquiry, the incoming Welsh Government should write to our successor committee within six months to provide an update on any developments arising from those meetings and details of the next steps that have been agreed.

Response: Accept

Support for unpaid carers is considered through CIW's inspection, assurance and engagement activity, as outlined in our response to Recommendation 13. CIW included support for unpaid carers as a more specific line of enquiry within their assurance meetings held April-June 2026. Information gathered through these discussions, alongside inspection findings and wider intelligence, contributes to CIW's ongoing assessment of local authority performance and provides valuable evidence to support the Welsh Government's oversight of unpaid carers policy and implementation. The next meetings will be held in September-November 2026. We will write to the committee in January 2027. This will enable comprehensive information to be reflected in our response. CIW will continue to work constructively with the Welsh Government to share relevant intelligence and ensure unpaid carers remain visible within local authority assurance and improvement activity.

Recommendation 15

As part of cross-government working, the incoming Welsh Government should consider creating a rapid home aids and adaptations scheme for unpaid carers for essential home aids and adaptations that have been identified as part of a needs assessment.

Response: Accept in Principle

Section 34 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 identifies aids and adaptations as a way of meeting a person's needs. The Welsh Government Independent Living Programme delivers smaller adaptations rapidly through various providers across Wales. Adaptations are typically provided through assessment and care and support planning arrangements for the cared-for person, rather than as a separate entitlement for the carer. However, carers' assessments should consider the impact of caring responsibilities and may identify a need for equipment or adaptations that support the caring role, reduce risk and help prevent carer breakdown.

Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), legislated under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Section 23 indicates support is available for the disabled occupant only, and not for another person.

Existing adaptations programmes are primarily focused on meeting the assessed needs of disabled/older people to enable safe independent living, rather than the unpaid carer.

We will undertake exploratory work to consider the nature of any unmet need, the extent to which existing adaptations services are already able to address these circumstances, and whether there is evidence of a specific gap in provision that cannot be met through current arrangements. This will inform any consideration of a separate dedicated scheme for unpaid carers.

Recommendation 16

The incoming Welsh Government should work with health boards and local authorities to establish a formal system to ensure carers receive timely health and mental well-being support. This should include offering all identified unpaid carers (particularly those providing high-intensity care) flexible appointments and regular health check-ups, as well as signposting to peer support groups or other mental health support.

Response: Accept in Principle

We will work with health boards, local authorities and primary care clusters to consider opportunities to strengthen support for unpaid carers and improve access to timely care and treatment within their local communities. This will include consideration of how services can better identify, support and signpost carers, and what further action may be required to improve consistency of provision across Wales.

Recommendation 17

Carers must be recognised as a priority group in mental health and suicide prevention strategies and action plans. The incoming Welsh Government should report on how it is addressing the elevated suicide risk amongst carers, including in the forthcoming suicide prevention action plan.

Response: Accept in Principle

We have requested that the current national improvement work on information and advice for unpaid carers and carer's needs assessments highlight the need for practitioners to be aware of the risk of suicide and for this to be considered by practitioners undertaking carers' needs assessments in line with the Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Strategy for Wales.

We will include the risk of suicide for carers in the e-learning for health and social care workers and the third sector outlined in our response to Recommendation 1. We are working with our third sector partners to progress this.

The Welsh Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out the transformation of mental health services to provide same day access to support for all, including carers.

Targeted action to prevent suicide is informed by the latest available evidence, including our Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance and our National Centre for Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Research. This evidence helps identify key factors that increase the risk of suicide and self-harm to target preventative action, support, and intervention. We recognise caring responsibilities as a risk factor for suicide and self-harm.

We will continue to work across the Welsh Government to take further opportunities to maximise awareness of unpaid carers within mental health and suicide prevention and self-harm work. The establishment of an unpaid carers interministerial Task and Finish group, referenced in our response to Recommendation 11, will help maintain a focus on carers' mental health and suicide prevention.

Recommendation 18

The Welsh Government and local authorities must ensure, through their respite and home care services, that carers can attend to their own health needs. Each local authority should develop a relief or sitting service provision so that carers can attend medical appointments. The Welsh Government should monitor provision of these services and should consider publishing national guidance to make replacement care for carers' health a standard offer across Wales.

Response: Accept

As part of the development of a respite action plan, outlined in our response to Recommendation 23, we will expect local authorities to confirm their relief or 'sitting' service arrangements.

We will also consider options for monitoring of provision for these services and other measures that may provide greater assurance that carers are better supported to attend healthcare appointments as required.

Recommendation 19

The incoming Welsh Government should undertake a feasibility study on providing a Wales-specific Carer's Allowance Supplement or other direct financial support for carers and publish its findings. It should do this within the next 12 months.

Response: Accept

We have asked officials to consider and report on a supplement payment and options. This will consider eligibility criteria, estimated cost, delivery options and include an impact assessment. We must carefully consider affordability of a recurrent payment within the context of budget pressures and will publish our findings by May 2027.

Recommendation 20

In the shorter term, the incoming Welsh Government should consider implementing additional, one-off support payments for unpaid carers most at risk of fuel poverty and financial crisis (for example, by replicating and expanding the £500 carers payment initiative). Such payments should be well-publicised and automatically issued where possible to avoid low uptake due to lack of awareness or administrative barriers.

Response: Accept

In addition to the report produced in response to Recommendation 19, we will also consider the means, impact assessment, cost and affordability of providing a one-off payment to unpaid carers under the most financial pressures. We will also consider other options to ease financial pressures on carers and will be able to report back on this by December 2026.

Recommendation 21

The incoming Welsh Government should consider increasing the annual funding for the Carers Support Fund in response to the clear evidence of need amongst

carers, and commit to proactive promotion of the Fund so that more carers in need are aware of it.

Response: Accept

As part of work outlined in our response to Recommendation 19 and 20, we will consider this issue including the affordability of increasing our funding of the Carers Support Fund and other options we may have. We will report on this by December 2026. We will include an overview of how the Fund is targeted and promoted, and its increasing focus on informing and supporting carers to get all the financial support to which they are entitled, which can have a more sustained impact.

Recommendation 22

The incoming Welsh Government should ensure that carers are recognised as a priority group when developing anti-poverty interventions in Wales.

Response: Accept

We are developing a new Child Poverty Strategy using evidence gathered from a range of groups, including unpaid carers, whose ongoing needs have been considered and who we know can be disproportionately affected by poverty. The Welsh Benefits Charter, published in 2024, includes commitments to ensure that Welsh Benefits meet the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged groups who are particularly at risk of experiencing poverty and this includes unpaid carers. All local authorities have signed up to the charter commitments, and we are working with stakeholders to achieve implementation.

The Welsh Government benefit take-up campaign encourages disabled people and their carers to access Advicelink Cymru to find out about financial support to which they are entitled.

Recommendation 23

The incoming Welsh Government should develop a comprehensive action plan to expand and improve respite care provision for unpaid carers. This should:

- include minimum standards for respite and replacement care provision across local authorities in Wales, including ensuring adequate provision of night-time and emergency care;
- monitor delivery against those minimum standards; and

- publish the findings annually, along with details of the actions it will take if any local authority consistently fails to provide the minimum level of respite.

Response: Accept

We recognise access to sufficient and appropriate respite is a critical issue for many unpaid carers. We will undertake thorough exploratory work with stakeholders to develop an action plan. This will build on existing dialogue with local authorities and Regional Partnership Boards and will consider the potential benefits of additional statutory requirements. This will include consideration of quality and reliability of local authority data on respite. The action plan will be overseen by the Ministerial Advisory Group on Unpaid Carers and reflected in the new National Strategy.

The Adults Receiving Care and Support Census contains a data item on whether an individual in receipt of local authority care and support with a care and support plan on 31 March is currently receiving respite. The latest publication of this was on 17 June 2026 and contains data for 2024/25.

The Unpaid Carers' Census will capture those where a need for respite has been identified from the carer's assessment and is outlined in a support plan.

We will consider the potential to further develop such data, which could then be published. Care Inspectorate Wales will continue their focus in support for unpaid carers, including respite provision, in their inspection and assurance activities.

Recommendation 24

To ensure stability in carer support services, the incoming Welsh Government should consider moving towards multi-year funding arrangements for the third sector and local authorities, similar to the multi-year funding commitments for important programmes like the Short Breaks Scheme and Carers Support Fund. Where possible, it should encourage and enable Regional Partnership Boards, local authorities and health boards to offer three-to-five-year contracts for key carer services, and should itself look to announce funding for carer support services early in the financial year to help the third sector plan, and recruit and retain staff.

Response: Accept

We promote longer-term funding arrangements that support improved outcomes, service stability, effective planning and staff retention through the Welsh Government's Third Sector Scheme: Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector. The Code applies to the Welsh Government and other public bodies

that provide funding to third sector organisations through grants, contracts or other funding arrangements. Our Short Breaks Scheme and Carers Support Fund are already multi-year funds. Five per cent of the annual £147m investment in the multi-year Regional Integration Fund is intended to support unpaid carers. In considering options for the future direction of the Fund after March 2027, we recognise the importance of longer-term funding arrangements in supporting sustainable workforce solutions.

To supplement these sources of funding, the Welsh Government has also run a multi-year scheme for social care third sector grants. Our officials are considering options to consolidate the impact of this investment, support national priorities and build on the strengths of the third sector. Future arrangements must be robust, affordable, transparent and stable, enabling organisations to respond to future challenges while continuing to support policy and deliver positive outcomes for people across Wales. These arrangements will be announced as soon as practicable.

Recommendation 25

The incoming Welsh Government should consider ringfencing the funding provided for respite and carers support services.

Response: Accept

The Regional Integration Fund requires 5% of the £147 million annual fund to be spent on carers services. Regional Partnership Boards use this funding, in addition to the funding from the Revenue Support Grant, to provide services for carers, including respite. As outlined in our response to Recommendation 24, we are considering options for the future direction of the Regional Integration Fund and will consider the current funding requirement for carers' services as part of this review.

We have maintained the recurring £1 million funding to health boards, which is ringfenced to provide support for carers within hospitals. The funding of the Welsh Government Short Breaks Scheme (£3.5 million annually) and Carers Support Fund (£1.75 million annually) is dedicated funding.

Recommendation 26

The incoming Welsh Government should improve transparency and accountability by requiring each Regional Partnership Board to publish an annual carers' funding and performance report, detailing how much funding is being spent on carer services in the region, which source of funding it comes from, and the outcomes being delivered.

Response: Accept in Principle

Regional Partnership Boards are required to provide an update on support to carers provided via Regional Integration Funding as part of the established annual monitoring and performance reporting system.

We will engage with Regional Partnership Boards to explore enhanced reporting through current processes. It will be appropriate to consider this when successor funding to the Regional Integration Fund is introduced and when the current review of the status of Regional Partnership Boards is complete. Establishing greater, formalised reporting requirements is likely to involve amendments to current regulations and Codes of Practice and we will consider the merits of such action.

Recommendation 27

The incoming Welsh Government must work with local authorities to improve the way they engage with carers from ethnic minority backgrounds, with the aim of co-producing culturally sensitive respite services which address the needs of diverse carer communities. The Welsh Government should monitor progress with this.

Response: Accept

Health boards and local authorities have a duty under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to undertake Population Needs Assessments, to inform the Regional Area Plans and commissioning. Partner agencies are required to consider the diversity of local communities and ensure services are culturally informed and responsive to those communities. Co-production is a foundation principle of the 2014 Act, and an expected part of the methodology of Population Needs Assessments. The National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support (2024) expects commissioners to involve citizens and carers in commissioning decisions and design services collaboratively.

We will ask Care Inspectorate Wales to consider involvement of carers in their oversight work, outlined in our response to Recommendation 13. We will include co-production and the provision of culturally sensitive respite services as an area of focus in work with Regional Partnership Boards in the development of a respite action plan, outlined in our response to Recommendation 23.

Recommendation 28

Support and services for unpaid carers should be co-produced with unpaid carers at every level – locally, regionally and nationally. To this end, we believe that the incoming Welsh Government and Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs)

should strengthen the voice of unpaid carers in decision-making and enhance their representation on RPBs. To this end, multiple carer representatives should be encouraged on each RPB, and each RPB should provide enhanced support for their carer representatives, including training, remuneration and replacement care where appropriate, to enable carers to be meaningfully involved, and attend and participate fully, in meetings. The incoming Welsh Government should commit to continuing to fund the third sector to support carers representatives on RPBs.

Response: Accept

All Regional Partnership Boards have unpaid carer representation, and the Welsh Government funds Carers Wales to support the unpaid carer representatives. We will consider the current level of participation, representation and support of unpaid carers on Regional Partnership Boards as part of our broader review, outlined in our response to Recommendation 26. We will identify opportunities for a strengthened approach to unpaid carer representation where this is required. We will continue to fund the third sector to provide support for carer representatives in Regional Partnership Boards.

Duties regarding a co-productive approach to service planning and design are outlined in our response to Recommendation 27.

We are re-launching the Ministerial Advisory Group for Unpaid Carers and will strengthen unpaid carer representation, from its previous structure. We will ensure unpaid carer representation on the stakeholder working groups under the Ministerial Advisory Group framework continues.

Recommendation 29

The incoming Welsh Government should ensure the development and delivery of training and guidance for school staff about young carers, co-produced by young carers.

Response: Accept

As referenced in our response to Recommendation 4, we have funded the development of a suite of resources for teaching professionals in primary and secondary schools to support young carers in schools. Resources include lesson plans, worksheet activities, fact sheets and training for staff to support young carers with their well-being and education. The resources were co-produced by Carers Trust Wales and 11 local authorities.

Medr commissioned the Learning and Work Institute to develop a practical toolkit for professionals in further education. The resource was launched in June

2026 and enables further education colleges to improve their support for young adult carers.

We have commissioned Dysgu to develop a three-year (2026-29) professional learning package to support teachers and other school staff to implement trauma-informed practice. This will explicitly guide practitioners on supporting learners who experience adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and trauma that can be related to specific protected characteristics, including young carers.

As part of our Carer Aware programme, guidance for professionals in Higher Education is being revised by Carers Trust Wales in partnership with higher education institutions, with launch planned for March 2027.

Recommendation 30

The incoming Welsh Government should encourage all schools and colleges in Wales to have a young carers champion or lead staff member with responsibility for young carers. The incoming Welsh Government should explore incorporating education about young carers into wellbeing programmes or frameworks, so that all students and staff are aware of what a young carer is and how to seek help.

Response: Accept in Principle

We will consider available levers to encourage schools and colleges to have a lead for young carers, recognising that the Welsh Government does not have powers to instruct schools in this matter. We will work with stakeholders, including young carers, to identify and share best practice and consider and disseminate evidence of impact of this approach. As our work on understanding existing data in relation to young carers develops, and a long-term approach to data collection is established, we will share emerging evidence from our phased research to influence future policy development for young carers in education.

Recommendation 31

The incoming Welsh Government must ensure that the rights of young carers are fully upheld and that no child or young person is left carrying out inappropriate levels of care. The incoming Welsh Government should issue refreshed guidance emphasising that young carers have a right not to undertake excessive or inappropriate care, and outlining the responsibilities of local authorities, schools, and health and social services to support young carers accordingly.

Response: Accept

We are including consideration of guidance on young carers in the review of current legislation and Codes of Practice outlined in our response to Recommendation 7. We have placed actions for local authorities in the new strategy regarding their responsibilities to determine young carers are not providing inappropriate levels of care.

We have signed the Young Carers Covenant on behalf of Welsh Ministers. A major principle of this document is ensuring young carers do not have inappropriate levels of responsibility and caring duties. We regard this as the priority agenda for our young carers and, while waiting for the result of the review, we will directly engage with Council Leaders to highlight their responsibilities.

Recommendation 32

The incoming Welsh Government must expedite the work to implement fully the recommendations relating to young carer data made by Estyn in its 2019 report.

Response: Accept

In March 2026, the Welsh Government published [Health, wellbeing and school life of young carers in Wales: findings from the School Health Research Network \(SHRN\)](#), providing the first large-scale national analysis of young carers' experiences in education. The publication represents the first stage of a planned three-phase approach to improving understanding of young carers in education, which includes analysis of available datasets, data linkage, and consideration of how emerging evidence may inform future understanding and potential areas for improvement.

Phases 2 and 3 of this work are now underway. Phase 2 will use secure, anonymised data linkage within the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank to analyse educational outcomes for young carers compared with their peers. This will strengthen understanding of outcomes including attendance, attainment and exclusions, and will provide evidence on data quality, coverage and gaps. Phase 3 will explore longer-term approaches to improving data collection on young carers in education, including consideration of the feasibility of recording young carer status through existing education data collections and whether young carer questions should be included as standard within future survey cycles. Engagement with schools, practitioners, parents and learners will inform this work.

This staged approach is intended to make effective use of existing data sources while avoiding additional reporting burdens on schools at this stage.

Recommendation 33

The Welsh Government should, as a matter of urgency, identify additional funding within relevant Welsh Government budgets to provide direct support for the full delivery of the young carer ID card scheme across all local authorities. It should monitor the outcomes of this action.

Response: Accept

Carers Trust Wales was provided with £110,000 in March 2026 to lead a Young Carer ID card project. Funding will enable targeted grants to local authorities where this will refresh the operationalisation of their ID card scheme. Guidance is currently being co-produced with local authorities and a learning event arranged to promote the ID card scheme across local authorities.

Recommendation 34

The incoming Welsh Government should strongly encourage local authorities to increase uptake of the young carer ID card and should publish annual data on the number of young carer ID cards issued by each local authority to track progress with delivery of the scheme.

Response: Accept

We have provided dedicated funding and engaged Carers Trust Wales to lead an improvement project, as outlined in our response to Recommendation 33. As part of this, we will engage with local authorities about the potential for receiving data. It should be noted that these are independent local authority schemes and the Welsh Government does not have powers to require data reporting.

Recommendation 35

In advance of publication of the new national data set on unpaid carers in April 2027, the incoming Welsh Government should consider publishing an interim data report bringing together existing data on key indicators, including number of carers identified; number of assessments offered and completed; waiting times for carers' assessments and support plans; types of support provided; and the number of carers receiving breaks. It should aim to do this before the end of 2026.

Response: Accept

We will provide an interim data report on unpaid carers by April 2027. Several data items are collected within the Carers section of the annual [Performance Improvement Framework metrics](#). These cover adult and young carers: carers seeking help, carers' assessments completed and numbers of carers' support

plans. The [latest publication](#) of this was on 7 April 2026 and contains data for 2024/25.

The Adults Receiving Care and Support Census contains a data item on whether an individual in receipt of local authority care and support with a care and support plan on 31 March has a carer known to the local authority. The [latest publication](#) of this was on 17 June 2026 and contains data for 2024/25.

A data report could also reference [Health, wellbeing and school life of young carers in Wales: findings from the School Health Research Network \(SHRN\)](#), providing the first large-scale national analysis of young carers' experiences in education. We expect to publish data from the Phase 2 research, referenced in our response to Recommendation 32, in 2027.

The Unpaid Carers' Census will provide a dedicated source of information on unpaid carers in Wales who receive carers' assessments. The implementation timetable has been adjusted to reflect current capacity considerations, and the first publication is now expected in spring 2028.