



Guidance on Supporting Adult Carers in North Ayrshire



Version Control

Document Version

- Version 3

Document Controllers

- Kimberley Mroz – Manager SDS/ Carers
- Kerryanne Owens – Carers Development Officer

Document Owner

- Caroline Cameron – Director North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership

Date Published

- November 2023

Related Documents

- [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016: statutory guidance - updated July 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- [Advocacy for Unpaid Carers, Guidance \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Table of Contents

Purpose

Who is an Adult Carer

The Act defines an Adult Carer as:

Identifying an Adult Carer

Duty to Offer and Prepare an Adult Carer Support Plan in North Ayrshire

Completing an Adult Carer Support Plan

Adult Carer Support Plan Content

Section 1 – About You

Section 2 – Your Caring Activities

Section 3 – Your Health & Wellbeing

Section 4 – Life Balance

Sections 5 – Home Environment

Section 6 - Employment or Education

Section 7 - Finances

Section 8 Emergency & Future Plans

Section 9 Carer Conversation

Section 10 Your Carer First Plan

Section 11 Agreeing Your Plan

Section 12 Reviewing Your Carer First Plan

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Purpose

This guidance has been developed in line with the [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) (the Act). It is intended to provide staff with an overall understanding of their duties (See Appendix 1 for full list) and the approach to be adopted in identifying, working with and supporting adult carers across North Ayrshire.

The overall intention of the Act aims to support carers on a more consistent basis so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, in good health and wellbeing, allowing them to have a life alongside caring.

Who is an Adult Carer

North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership (NAHSCP) recognise the significant contribution of carers who support family and friends who need their help due to illness, disability, mental health, addiction issues or simply as the person they care for grows older.

Many people do not recognise that they are carers and just see caring as doing what anyone else would do in their situation. Some carers do not live with the person they care for, some carers care for multiple people and are often balancing work, study, family responsibilities at home etc. Caring can have an impact on carers health and wellbeing both physically and emotionally and can affect them financially, at work and in other relationships.

The Act defines an Adult Carer as:

“An individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual (‘the cared-for person’). Adult carers must be at least 18 years old and cannot also be young carers. So, if a carer is aged 18 but still at school, they will remain a young carer until they leave school.”¹

Identifying an Adult Carer

All NAHSCP staff have a role to play in identifying and guiding carers to the right level of advice and support as early as possible in their caring journey. Some examples below are the ways we identify carers.

NAHSCP recommissioned the carer service early in 2023 and the incumbent supplier Unity continues to be the carer services partner to help people identify their caring role to gain access to information, advice and support. Unity and NAHSCP have commenced plans to expand the reach of the carer service by operating an outreach service instead of being centre based. Staff will be more present and visible in communities and will increase more than threefold, to better identify carers on their own doorstep and support them closer to home.

¹ Carer (Scotland) Act 2016

By identifying carers, we can;

- Help carers look after their own physical, emotional and mental wellbeing
- Provide access to financial support
- Help carers to maintain in education or employment
- Reduce isolation and loneliness
- Improve outcomes for the cared-for person
- Reduce the risk of carers reaching breaking point
- Support carers and their family relationships
- Provide appropriate breaks from caring

NAHSCP have facilitated a Carers Advisory Group since 2012. The group is populated by carers across the North Ayrshire localities caring for family or friends with a range of conditions who help NAHSCP guide and direct carer services development. This will be transformed to establish a Carers Collaborative or a network to reach more carers along with professionals, organisations and volunteers to come together to share information, ideas and to find opportunities to work better together to improve carer support.

NAHSCP implemented a Carer Appreciation Card in June 2016 with the focus of identifying young and adult carers across North Ayrshire. The card has a dual purpose of building a carer community in North Ayrshire and around 40 businesses have signed up to offer discounts and concessions. Around 1,043 North Ayrshire carers are registered and using their card.

In March 2023, North Ayrshire Council was recognised by Carers Scotland as a 'Carer Positive Exemplary Employer' through identifying and supporting unpaid carers in the workplace. NAHSCP Carers Team and the Council Human Resource department will continue to work together to create opportunities for carers in the workplace. There is a specific focus on raising awareness of our [Carers Leave Scheme](#) and [Supporting Carers Policy](#).

Duty to Offer and Prepare an Adult Carer Support Plan in North Ayrshire

Section 6 of the Act requires the responsible authority to offer and prepare an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) on identification of an adult carer. The ACSP is a framework for adult carers, who request or are offered, and accept the chance to complete their ACSP. It helps to identify and recognise individual caring needs and the things that are important to each individual adult carer. The Plan is a record, which they can receive a copy of, to own and share with any other person the carer wishes to.

Until October 2022 the function of preparing and completing ACSP's was undertaken only by Social Workers/ Social Work Assistants. This was enhanced with the introduction of a Carer Support Worker role within the carers team to support any carers who were not known to services or were aged 16 to 18 years and not in school. In terms of access to funding this was formerly only available through the

assessment and attached budget for the cared-for person, but the Carer Support Worker has access to an overarching fund for carer support requests as well as an Education Fund specifically for young carers and their families for short breaks from caring. Unity's new North Ayrshire Carers Gateway Service will also in their plans for expansion and improving reach to carers, be offering the opportunity to complete a lighter touch ACSP or YCS opening the options for carers to access the right support, in the right way at the right time.

For carers self-identifying who are not known to any Social Work Service, and are requesting their ACSP, local Service Access Teams are the point of referral (See Appendix 2) who will direct the referral to the Carer Support Worker to continue to support the carer to prepare their ACSP and provision of support.

NAHSCP encourage carers to talk through their ACSP with someone they feel comfortable with. This can also be the person they care for. However, circumstances may arise where there are strains or relationships that have the potential for conflict of opinion. This can be between the carer and the person they care for/ family, or indeed the worker who identified or is responsible for preparing the Statement with the carer. It is recommended that staff seek advice and consider [Scottish Government Guidance on Carer Advocacy](#) to help adult carers.

If concerns are such that tensions are having a detrimental impact on the carer's wellbeing, raising an adult protection concern in line with our local Adult Support & Protection guidelines may be necessary.

The role for the worker involved is to have a good and equal outcome-focused conversation (consider [Talking Points](#) approaches). Confirm and record, in detail, the things that matter to the carer including any identified needs and reasonable supports to meet the carer's outcomes. It is also important to establish and record any emergency or future plans with the carer which will help at the point there is a break down in caring or the carer is no longer able or willing to care. The worker also has a duty to apply [North Ayrshire carers eligibility criteria](#), help to arrange support and monitor the delivery and quality of support.

Completing an Adult Carer Support Plan

Section 9 of the Act outlines the information that must be contained in an ACSP. NAHSCP consulted with adult carers across North Ayrshire to consider the content and approach locally. The outcome is a local ACSP directed by carers for carers.

In terms of timescales for preparing and completing an ACSP, legislation does not state a timeframe, but it is best to inform carers and their families of indicative timescales. It is fully expected that some will take longer than others due to complexity, urgency or risk and the focus should be on achieving the right information and support for the carer. If there are delays always advise the carer and/ or family of the reason.

Timescales have been set under Section 13 where carers are caring for someone who is terminally ill. A cared-for person is terminally ill, if at that time, the person

suffers from a progressive disease or condition and death in consequence of that disease or condition can reasonably be expected within 6 months. This provision is for young and adult carers and the following link provides more detail on the process for prioritising carers caring for someone with a [terminal illness](#).

Adult Carer Support Plan Content

Refer to and apply North Ayrshire Guidance on Eligibility Criteria and Thresholds for Adult Carers when preparing an ACSP.

Section 1 – About You

Collects basic personal information about the adult carer and establishes who they care for and why. It checks if the cared for person's needs are being fully met or require to be reviewed. There may be interaction between the SSAQ or Child's Plan and the ACSP resulting in the caring responsibilities being lessened or made a bit easier. It will also confirm if the cared for person is accepting of formal support to meet their eligible needs.

Section 2 – Your Caring Activities

Considers the nature and extent of care provided or to be provided by the carer and information about the impact of caring on the adult carer's wellbeing and day-to-day life. It determines the types of care and the intensity of the care being provided by the carer. This might be emotional support, help with finances or welfare and often practical care with bathing and dressing or household tasks. The carer might reveal high levels of emotional distress, regular physical strain, social isolation or financial struggles trying to balance work and caring.

Alongside nature, impact and extent of the caring role, the ACSP must contain information about the carer's ability and willingness to provide care.

Assumptions cannot be made about the ability to sustain the caring role even if the carer is willing to care (i.e., the carer may not be well enough to continue providing the same level of care or their circumstances and commitments may have changed). The SSAQ or Child's Plan may need reviewed for the cared-for person if the carer is no longer able and/ or willing to care.

Section 3 – Your Health & Wellbeing

Section 32(d) requires the local authority and the relevant health board to have regard to the national health and wellbeing outcomes prescribed under section 5 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. These prescribed outcomes include the following - Outcome 6:

'People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including reducing any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and wellbeing'.

To prevent further pressure on local health and social care services it is important that the focus is not just on the cared-for person but also

acknowledges the carer's health and wellbeing. Improving the physical and emotional wellbeing of carers also benefits those being cared for and can help to sustain good caring relationships with the person being cared for, partners, extended family and friends.

Section 4 – Life Balance

The aim is to help carers to resolve any problems that are preventing them from having a more balanced life with access to opportunities and healthy relationships outside their caring role.

North Ayrshire Carers Gateway can offer a range of preventative support to carers including advice and information, emotional support, carer training, short breaks, therapies and welfare support, or indeed signpost to community groups, condition specific or other support routes.

Section 9(1)(k) requires the ACSP to include information about whether carer support should include a break from caring. A break is any form of support or assistance which enables the carer to have time away from their caring routines or responsibilities. Whichever form the break takes, choice and flexibility are key to the carer's health, well-being and continuing capacity to care. It may also include replacement care, where appropriate.

Sections 5 – Home Environment

Where the carer lives with the cared-for person, this could link back to the SSAQ/ Child's Plan. Living in a homely setting or location that is unsuitable can be difficult for carers and the people they care for. This might trigger a referral for housing support advice, assisted technology, equipment and adaptations to help make life a bit easier and relieve stresses enabling the carer, and the person they care for, to live a more safe and independent life.

Section 6 - Employment or Education

Caring, working and/ or going through education often puts competing demands on a person's time. Some young adult/ adult carers find themselves limiting their career aspirations and are limited by flexible, local employment or training due to it being the easier or practical option. Many carers have to leave their job, reduce hours or change career to manage their caring responsibilities.

Entering employment or education is not a form of break from caring.

Section 7 - Finances

Research shows that around one third of carers report financial difficulties. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (which includes income and employment factors) in the 2011 census, 47% of carers in the most deprived areas provide on average 35+ hours a week, compared to just 24% in the least deprived areas. This indicates a correlation between financial security and the amount of care that a carer provides.

Money Matters services can help reduce this inequality and financial stress by facilitating carers to maximise their available income and possibly sustain

employment. They will advise on [Carers Allowance](#) or any other entitlements or credits available within each individual carer's circumstances.

Section 8 Emergency & Future Plans

This section requires information about arrangements to be put in place for care of the cared-for person in an emergency. This may be due to the carer being unwell or in hospital or if there are adverse circumstances that they cannot attend to care. It is recommended that any arrangements or sharing of contacts is discussed thoroughly with the cared-for person to ensure all matters are agreed by everyone. It is also recommended the ACSP is linked to the SSAQ or Child's Plan of the person they care for through relationships on case recording systems.

North Ayrshire Carers Appreciation Card can help in these circumstances as carrying the card helps to identify someone as a carer and starts the conversation or process of putting support in place in times of crisis.

Future planning is about longer-term plans for the cared-for person, when the carer is no longer able or willing to care. Future plans are more in-depth than emergency plans. This may be if the carer secures employment or is going to university or moving a distance away from the person they care for. The carer, cared-for person and all other relevant family members or friends should be involved in this plan. The wishes and preferences of the carer and the cared-for person should be considered. Some things to include, but not limited to are, current care and future care, living arrangements, practical, legal and financial provision including Power of Attorney, guardianship, wills and trusts (if relevant).

Section 9 Carer Conversation

A joint summary is agreed between the carer, person helping to complete the plan and the cared-for person if required. It should include the overall level of care and impact/ risk to the carer and the person they care for. The range of options discussed and confirmed, the plan for support and any differences of opinion.

Section 10 Your Carer First Plan

Consider the outcomes identified through the carer conversation, agree actions based on the carer's support needs. Consider what would help the carer, who could provide that help to enable the carer to continue in their caring role if they are willing and able and how often support may be needed.

Section 11 Agreeing Your Plan

Ensure this section is signed by the carer and worker completing the ACSP.

Section 12 Reviewing Your Carer First Plan

NAHSCP recommends the timeframe of reviewing an ACSP should be at least annually, the same as the cared-for, to ensure the plan, identified needs and support are up to date and still required. It also allows the opportunity to identify any new or changing needs. The Act specifies circumstances in which ACSP's must be reviewed by the HSCP. These are:

a) When the adult carer moves to reside in a different local authority area.

b) When the cared-for person becomes resident in accommodation provided under:

1. Part 2 of the Social Work (Scotland) 1968 Act; or
2. Section 25 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003;

c) Any other change in the adult carer or cared-for person's circumstances which the HSCP views as having a material impact on the care provided by the adult carer.

The review should contain information about the extent to which the support in the current plan has helped the carer to continue in their caring role and have a quality of life alongside caring. As well as any new identified needs and appropriate information, signposting, referrals or support.

A copy of the review plan should be provided to the carer as soon as is practical and the HSCP should comply with the common law duty of confidentiality, data protection and human rights. Information can only be shared with people, agencies or organisations as directed by the carer unless, if necessary, raising a concern in line with Adult Support & Protection protocol.

Where can I ask for help, advice or support?

- [North Ayrshire Carers Gateway](#) on 01294 311333 or northayrshire.carers@unity-enterprise.com
- [North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership](#)
- [Carers UK](#)
- [North Ayrshire Carers Appreciation Card](#)
- [NHS Direct](#) or on 111 for medical help and advice
- **Only in the event of an emergency contact Police, Fire or Ambulance on 999**

Appendix 1

Duties Relating to Adult Carers

- Section 6 – Places a duty on all responsible authorities to offer an ACSP to all identified adult carers and prepare for those that take up on the offer, as well as for any adult carer who requests one in their own right, regardless of whether the cared-for is in receipt of HSCP services.
- Section 7 – regulates that the Scottish Government will provide prescribed timescales for the preparation of an ACSP in relation to adults caring for people with terminal illness i.e., suffering from a progressive illness with the potential of passing within 6-months. These are stated in [Terminal Illness Regulations](#).
- Section 8 – Duty to consider any impact that having one or more protected characteristics has on the carer under the Equality Act 2010.
- Section 9 – Sets out the minimum content that must be contained in an ACSP to gather the nature, extent and impact of caring, level of support required, if any, and indeed if said support should be in the form of a break from caring. Also, the requirement to discuss and record future and emergency plans for the carer/cared for.
- Section 10 – Sets out the circumstances under which an ACSP will be reviewed. These are:
 - a) when the adult carer moves to reside in a different local authority area
 - b) when the cared-for person becomes resident in accommodation provided under: i. Part 2 of the Social Work (Scotland) 1968 Act; or ii. Section 25 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003; or iii. Part 2 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 or
 - c) any other change in the adult carer or cared-for person's circumstances which the responsible local authority views as having a material impact on the care provided by the adult carer.
- Section 11 – addresses the duty for the local authority to provide the carer with a copy of their prepared or revised ACSP as soon as is practical.

Appendix 2

Social Work Team Contacts

Below is a link to the NAHSCP Contact Us page where enquiries can be submitted or people can telephone/ visit the following local offices. [Contact Us \(nahscp.org\)](https://www.nahscp.org/contact-us)