



Building Caring Communities: Carers Questions & Answers



Background

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership launched 'Building Caring Communities, North Ayrshire Carers Strategy' in October 2023. Carers from across North Ayrshire were invited to Ardeer Community Centre, in Stevenston and given the opportunity to have their voices heard.

Questions & Answers

1. What support is available to carers to maintain positive relationships with the person they care for?

- Referral into Carers Gateway North Ayrshire service will help carers to talk to someone that understands and that they can trust.
- Peer Support Groups allow a break from caring, the sharing of information and help share experiences with likeminded carers. Creating and maintaining connections with others can help with issues such as stress, anxiety or loneliness.
- Preparing an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP)/ Young Carer Statement (YCS) gives the opportunity to have a conversation and better understand relationships, the impact of these, and how they change alongside each individual's caring role.
- Short Breaks from caring with or without the cared-for person can help to provide the space to rest, link in with other friends/ family, have quality time outwith the caring routine or experience/ enjoy new or old hobbies and interests which can help the relationship.
- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire is piloting a free counselling service for adult carers, contact the service for more details. Young carers can access a free counselling support service in school, speak to the young carer's guidance or head teaching staff for more information.
- Referral into North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership's (NAHSCP) [Service Access team](#) can help to access an assessment of need and ensure the cared-for person is receiving the right care and support, if eligible.



2. Are there support services for carers who become or find themselves disabled/ long term condition that may need a level of support?

- Referral into NAHSCP [Service Access team](#) can help to access an assessment of your own need and ensure that as a potential service user you are receiving the right care and support, if eligible.
- Refer to your GP or relevant health professional who may be able to assist.
- The Carer (Scotland) Act 2016 also has regulations for carers of family/ friends with a [Terminal Illness](#) and this directs local authorities to offer and prepare an ACSP or YCS in a particular timeframe.

3. What support would there be available for the cared-for to allow carers to attend events/groups etc?

- Referral into NAHSCP [Service Access team](#) can help to access an assessment of your own need and ensure that as a potential service user you are receiving the right care and support, if eligible.
- NAHSCP has Community Link Workers in each locality covering and often based from local GP surgeries and they can provide non-medical support with personal, social, emotional, and financial signposting.
- Short Breaks from caring with or without the cared-for person can help to provide the space to rest, link in with other friends/ family, have quality time outwith the caring routine or experience/ enjoy new or old hobbies and interests which can help the relationship.

4. Link Workers in GP's lack knowledge and understanding of the needs or roles of unpaid carers.

- NAHSCP Carers Team provide updates to Community Link Workers at their team meetings and the new Carers Gateway will connect with Link Workers to improve their knowledge and awareness.

5. Can carers access the National Trust Cards which are allocated to HSCP Staff?

- NAHSCP can consider each request on a case-to-case basis, dependent upon availability of the passes.
- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire could obtain National Trust cards if carers are routinely looking to visit attractions/ sites as a break from caring or for peer or group activities.

6. Carers need to be able to access breaks from caring easily, could a carers caravan/ accommodation be an option?

- Breaks from caring are individualised and accommodation (within a caravan) can be part of the ACSP to meet carer outcomes. Having this conversation helps determine what a break from caring could look like in line with the whole caring situation or circumstances. The purchase of a caravan would require

upfront and ongoing maintenance/ site costs, potentially taking resource away from those who wish to arrange a break in another way that best meets their needs and would limit choice.

- NAHSCP [Short Breaks Services Statement](#) is available and will be updated soon to reflect the variety of breaks and how to access.



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7. Day care services do not currently provide variety/ activities (Trindlemoss in particular) how can this be changed?

- The NAHSCP Carer Team have fed this back to Day Opportunities who would be happy to receive any ideas and share information about the different support/ activities available at Trindlemoss. Recent examples have seen people and their families enjoy:
 - Trip to Craig Tara
 - Trip to see Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in Glasgow
 - How we see ourselves – Art Project
 - TMFest (Festival)
 - Zoolab – Animal Therapy
- Older people day Service use activity planners to plan activities this involves service user/staff discussions and involvement in what they would like to participate in. Activities are also planned around specific events throughout the year for example easter, Christmas etc. A variety of activities are on offer each day which gives people the opportunity to choose what they would like to participate in. Services users/families also have the opportunity to discuss what activities they would like to access at service user meetings and during their reviews.

8. Can the cost of day care services be reduced if it is assessed as support for a break from caring for unpaid carers?

- NAHSCP [Charging Policy](#) is available and Services are aware of waiving of charges if to accommodate a break from caring.

9. What provisions are in place for me as a young carer when I leave school, as I am worried, I won't get the same support and may struggle?

- As a young carer the Young Carer Statement will continue to support until an Adult Carer Support Plan has been requested/ offered and prepared to consider future caring needs.
- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire can offer support during young carer transition stages in life from school to college or university or into employment.
- Pupil Support is available via Further Education.
- When applying for jobs, highlight that you are a carer and ask if the company is a [Carer Positive Employer](#). Ask them about their terms and conditions to support your caring role.
- NAHSCP [Money Matters Team](#) can assist with maximising benefits, welfare rights and advice.
- North Ayrshire Council [Housing Team](#) may be able to assist if your looking to set up home on your own.

10. Would prefer for young carers and adult carers to have separate strategies.

- Moving forward we will consider a separate strategy for young/ adult carers. Further engagement around this will take place before action is determined.

11. Can support or access to completing a YCS also be available for young carers out with school?

- Yes, NAHSCP Carers Team has a Carer Support Worker who can offer and assist to complete a YCS if you are not in school.
- Moving forward Carers Gateway North Ayrshire, will be offering and assisting to complete young carers statements also.
- If the person you care for is known to or in receipt of services from a specific cared-for person is open to HSCP team, the allocated team can carry out YCS.



12. What would happen to me as a young carer if the person I care for was taken into hospital?

- Depending on your caring circumstances perhaps a family member or family friend could help to support you in the short-term but this would be dependent on your age and abilities.
- Caring roles continue even if the person you care for is taken into hospital, as they may need continued emotional support.
- Referral into NAHSCP [Service Access team](#) can help to access an assessment of your own need and ensure you are receiving the right information and help. NAHSCP have a duty to care for all children under [GIRFEC](#) and [The Promise](#).

13. As a young carer the stress of caring is taking a strain and causing tension in my relationship with my family. What support can I be given to help?

- Preparing a Young Carer Statement (YCS) gives the opportunity to have a conversation with someone you trust and better understand your relationships, the impact of these, and how they change alongside each individual's caring role. The YCS will look at your health and wellbeing. This enables you to discuss your support needs and to look at how a break from caring could benefit you and the person you care for. After completing your YCS the Young Carers Education Fund can be accessed through school or through the HSCP Carers Team Carer Support Worker to fund a break from caring or other support needs within your statement.
- Referral into North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership's (NAHSCP) [Service Access team](#) can help to access an assessment of need and ensure the cared-for person is receiving the right care and support, if eligible.
- Young Scot '[Young Carers Benefits](#)' can offer discounts and concessions, which can be used as a break from caring. There is also really useful information, advice and support for young carers on the Young Scot website
- Young carers can access counselling at school which may help to talk through any worries or stresses.
- Referral into Carers Gateway North Ayrshire service will help young carers by talking to someone that understands and that they can trust. This could be in a group with likeminded young carers or 1 to 1 with a Young Carers Worker for additional support.

14. How do I go about as a young carer getting a short break with my family?

There are lots of routes, some have already been shared in the answers above, but young carers can also:

- Refer into the Carers Gateway North Ayrshire and apply for a break from Caring through the Time to Live, Creative Breaks, if caring for a sibling or young person you/ your family may be eligible to apply for the Family Fund.

- Your school, the HSCP Carer Support Worker or Carers Gateway North Ayrshire can assist you to look at other funds that may be available.



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15. Anam Cara Respite in Kilbirnie – how many beds are available to offer respite breaks for carers?

- Services provided at Anam Cara have been relocated to Taigh Mor in Beith and has 8 respite beds. When Anam Cara is fully operational there will be a possible of 9 beds.

16. The waiting times for blue badges are too long, what can be done to rectify this?

- A review of the Blue Badge application and renewal process has begun to reduce administrative and wait times. When the NAHSCP Carer Team have more information on progress we would be happy to shar

17. How often should my ACSP be updated?

- Your ACSP (or YCS) can be reviewed at any time if your caring circumstances or your health and wellbeing changes and the supports in place originally are no longer meeting your caring needs.
- It is good practice to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure carer outcomes are being met and any new needs can be identified.
- A review of your ACSP may also be undertaken if there are changes to the support for the cared-for person, this may also be appropriate if they have been in/ discharged from Hospital.
- Where the cared-for person has a terminal illness it is recommended that check in's or reviews are more regular and proportionate with each carers/ cared-for person's circumstances.
- Where a carer moves to reside in a different responsible local authority, the ACSP should be reviewed by that new authority. This would rely on the carer identifying themselves to the new local authority as a carer.
- The ACSP should also be reviewed 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.

18. How can carers be identified when cared for people are slipping through the social work gap?

- Referral into North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership's (NAHSCP) [Service Access team](#) can help to self-identify and refer for an ACSP/ YCS via the HSCP Carer Support Worker where the cared-for person is not known to, in receipt of or eligible for Social Work services.
- Referral to Carers Gateway North Ayrshire helps to self-identify and seek the right carer information and support at the right time.
- NAHSCP also have had a Carers Appreciation Card since 2016/ 17 which helps carers to identify themselves across local communities, in schools
- A review of HSCP front door service is taking place and will highlight any gaps in support.

19. Does your vision of support/ inclusion also include your staff? For example, what support if any is there for your staff that are also carers?

- Staff members who also have a caring role in NAC and Unity are entitled to the same benefits as all other carers. Both North Ayrshire Council and Unity are Carer Positive Employers which aims to encourage employers to have a supportive working environment for carers in the workplace. NAC AND Unity both have put in place a supporting carers policy with additional carers leave to support flexible working for staff with caring responsibilities. NAC have amended the recruitment paperwork to identify carers from the first point of employment, similar to informing an employer of a disability.

20. What strategies do you have in place to identify and support carers living in rural communities or may be isolated from their wider community?

- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire are working towards embedding locality-based model of outreach rather than working from the service base in Irvine. Locality workers across the communities and in schools will ensure services are brought to young and adult carers on their doorstep. There is a dedicated holistic role on Arran who will support adult and young carers from a family approach. The Carers Gateway is also inclusive of New Scot, ESOL (speakers of other languages), LGBTQ, Travelling Community.
- An initial Carers Gateway North Ayrshire service launch/ engagement event took place in West Kilbride on Carers Rights Day (23rd November 2023) and there are plans to hold similar future networking events across all North Ayrshire localities for carers to join, connect and have their voices heard whilst finding out more about the new service as it develops. There will be a variety of opportunities for carers to engage with the Gateway service, it's staff or groups via phone or in a communication method that suits the carer.
- Efforts are made to link in with all schools including Lockhart campus and identifying and supporting parent/ sibling carers. We are also working towards how we can support young people who are not in mainstream school.
- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire are at the beginning of a design project to deliver an accessible carers Digital Platform which will hold key national and

local carer information and links to support, opportunities to self-refer and register with the Gateway service, information on wellbeing, short breaks, groups and activities, newsletters among other things.

- In partnership, NAHSCP and the Carers Gateway service will work with services such as NA Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team, or Mental Health to begin to explore areas where carers are less likely to identify in their caring role.
- Further exploration of individual geographical areas and addressing what information and support is required for carers is key to the new Gateway staff role and there will be consideration of transport etc. based on localities.

21. Is there information or support for cared for individuals who would like to better support their carers to alleviate some of the stress or pressure?

- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire offer the cared-for person a listening ear and can signpost/ link to specific information, groups or support networks. The service have allowed the cared-for person/s to join in events and access opportunities along with their carer.

22. Do you intend to have access to counselling services for carers?

- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire currently have a pilot project for counselling opportunities for the next 6 months (commenced November) to determine demand and impact of this offer.
- Young carers can access free counselling via school.
- Carers are also able to explore the potential of counselling through the completion of an ACSP/ YCS.

23. Not everyone can access digital services, how else will support and information be delivered?

- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire still offers carers the opportunity to engage via telephone or face to face and the new carer staff group will be present across localities and be offering drop-in sessions in carers own local communities.
- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire will ensure that information leaflets and newsletters are available across each locality in communal places such as GP's, pharmacies, community centres, shops etc.

24. Councillors need to be more visible at carers monthly meetings and they need to be available to support carers. How will you work towards promoting this?

- Carers Champion Cllr Nairn McDonald along with other elected members can be invited along to independent carers groups.

25. Breaks from caring should not only be limited to applying once a year, but you may also require more than one break. How do you aim to support carers on an individual need's basis?

- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire are aware of the limit to one application, and we are aware of the limited funding to accommodate all requests. We do and would encourage carers to consider how a break could look and these will be different for different carers needs. An example: one funding application has looked to fund Golf Green fees for the year, another option might be a fishing fee with equipment funded for the year.
- ACSP/ YCS can be completed and if identified support a break from caring.
- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire promote other alternative funding that may be available like Family Fund, ILF Childrens Fund etc.

26. Can Carers Newsletter and information in general also be available in paper format as all carers do not have access to digital resources?

- Carers Gateway North Ayrshire can post out a copy of the newsletter if requested. Printed copies will also be available from constituted carer groups, community hubs, GP's etc.

27. More information on what is available for carers i.e., supports/ activities provided at Dumfries House etc. how will you provide this?

- The Digital Resource will be a platform to enable easier access to information, as well as the newsletter. Carers Gateway North Ayrshire have recently recruited a Marketing and Engagement Officer who is looking at numerous future ways to share information including social media such as X (Formerly known as Twitter) or Facebook.

