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1. Introduction

Carers play a very significant role within our communities, with the number of residents in Cheshire West and Chester who are providing unpaid care to friends, family and loved ones on the rise. Our residents’ quality of life is at the heart of everything we do, so with this in mind, the council believes it is vital to provide as much help and guidance as possible for our carers to ensure they feel supported in every aspect of their caring role. This can range from the provision of services for the person they care for, to the types of information and advice available to carers themselves.

Along with the introduction of the Care Act and channels already formed such as the Joint Carers Strategy, Carers Interagency Group and Carers Forum, a lot of work is already being done by the council to address carers’ needs across the borough. Listening to public views is paramount to ensuring we become a more open and transparent council who puts our residents first. In this respect, the national Carers Survey provides us with an excellent means to gather the key information we need to allocate resources and shape services for both carers and the people they care for.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey. The information gathered through this consultation is invaluable in helping the Council to achieve the highest possible standard of service for our carers, and will enable us to build on the existing work streams and successful carer networks already established.
2. Background

Carers Survey - a national consultation

The national, statutory Carers Survey is commissioned by the Department of Health, and is undertaken every two years by all councils with Adult Social Care responsibilities. It aims to find out how well services are meeting carers’ needs and specifically whether or not the services received by carers are:

- helping them in their caring role
- helping them in their life outside caring
- improving their perception of services provided to the person they care for.

It is essential for councils to seek carers’ views, to ensure they are receiving the appropriate services for their needs, to identify where there are gaps and where improvements can be made to enhance the service.

The format and methodology were agreed by the Department of Health, but all local authorities were able to add questions to help inform local decision making. The information from the survey is intended to inform service delivery, monitor and develop quality standards and used to monitor performance through national outcome measures. It will become an important resource for accounting for what has been achieved for local carers, supporting local services for carers and enabling them to make better choices about their support.

Carers in Cheshire West and Chester

There are approximately 5.8 million carers in England and Wales who spend a significant part of their lives providing unpaid support to a partner, family or friend suffering from illness, disability, mental ill-health or substance misuse problems. The 2011 Census results show in Cheshire West and Chester, 37,121 people provide unpaid care, which equates to 11% of Cheshire West and Chester’s population.

Of these carers......

- 23,941 (7.3%) provide 1-19 hours of unpaid care a week
- 4,723 (1.4%) provide 20-49 hours of unpaid care a week
- 8,457 (2.6%) provide 50 hours or more of unpaid care a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision of Unpaid Care</th>
<th>2011 All usual residents</th>
<th>% All usual residents</th>
<th>2001 All usual residents</th>
<th>% All usual residents</th>
<th>2001 to 2011 change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who provide unpaid care: Providing 1 to 19 hours a week</td>
<td>37,121</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>34,971</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>2,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing 20 to 49 hours a week</td>
<td>23,941</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>24,167</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing 50 or more hours a week</td>
<td>4,723</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3,711</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All usual residents</td>
<td>8,457</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7,093</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All usual residents</td>
<td>329,608</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>321,971</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7,637</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows that between the 2001 and 2011 Census, the number of Cheshire West and Chester residents providing unpaid care increased by 6.1% (2,150). Carers tend to provide more hours of unpaid care in 2011 than 2001. The numbers of carers providing 1 to 19 hours of care has decreased slightly whilst those providing 20 to 49 and 50 or more hours of care have increased. The number of carers providing the most hours of care (50 or more hours a week) has increased by a fifth (1,364) between 2001 and 2011.

**Carers Survey – a local consultation**

The first Carers’ survey took place in Autumn 2012, with the second survey carried out during the same period in 2014. Questionnaires were sent to a sample of 1,029 people who had received a Carer Assessment (either as a separate assessment or as a joint assessment with the person they care for) in the last 12 months. This includes carers of people who have recently moved into residential or nursing care and self-funders if the carer has received an assessment or review.

399 questionnaires were completed and returned giving a response rate of 40%, compared to a 38% response rate obtained in 2012.

This report presents the findings of the survey, and provides valuable information about carers’ lives and the issues they face and deal with on a daily basis, including:

- carer satisfaction
- support and services used
- the impact of caring on people’s quality of life
- information and advice available
- the extent to which carers feel involved in the arrangement of the support provided for the person they care for.

Throughout the report, carers’ actual comments have been included to illustrate their views on certain aspects of caring. This report has been produced in addition to a data return, which councils are required to complete as a mandatory part of the survey process.
3. ‘Real life’ experiences of carers from Cheshire West and Chester

We have used the following three case studies to paint a picture of what it is like to be a carer in Cheshire West and Chester. Note that the names and some of the details have been changed to prevent anyone from being identified.

Case Study 1 (Happy with services)

- Wendy (62 years old) cares for her 40 year old son who has learning difficulties.
- Wendy is ‘extremely satisfied’ with the support and services she and her son receive.
- When asked about the level of encouragement and support she has in her role as a carer, Wendy stated this is ‘fantastic’.
- Wendy said she ‘would not be here without the help and support of the social worker’.

“Too personal to share but I receive a gold star service from Social Services. They guided us to the light in what appeared to be a very dark tunnel without hope”

Case Study 2 (Indifferent)

- Stuart (58 years old) cares for his 85 year old mother who suffers from Dementia, sight or hearing loss and problems connected to ageing.
- Stuart is ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ with the support and services he and his mother receive.
- In terms of accessing information and advice, Stuart said that telephoning is fine, as long as he actually speaks to a Social Worker and not just gets through to an answer phone.

“Generally the carers that come are good but if the main carers aren’t available the ‘stand-ins’ are not briefed enough before visiting”

Case Study 3 (Dissatisfied with services)

- Susan (59 years old) cares for her 85 year old mother who suffers from Dementia, sight or hearing loss and problems connected to ageing.
- Susan is ‘extremely dissatisfied’ with the support and services she and her mother receive.
- Susan said she hasn’t seen or heard from Social Services in 2-3 years.

“There is no help out there. I haven’t heard or seen a social worker, since mum was last seen over 3 years ago. It’s as though ‘you can cope get on with it’ ”
4. Summary

The national Carers survey took place between October and November 2014. Questionnaires were sent to 1,029 carers who had received a carer assessment, either separately or jointly with the person they care for. 399 forms were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 40%, compared to 38% for the last survey.

About the respondent
- Two thirds of respondents were female (67%)
- 61% of respondents are retired, and almost a third (30%) in either full or part-time employment
- 43% have a long-standing illness
- 52% of respondents have been caring for 5 years or more
- 43% spend 100 or more hours a week caring.

Satisfaction and services used
- Over three quarters (79%) of carers are ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied with the care they and the person they care for receive from Adult Social Care and Health.
- The top three support or services used by Carers in the last 12 months are information and advice, support from carer groups, and the WCESS (Emergency card).
- The top three support or services used in the last 12 months by the person they care for are equipment or an adaptation to their home, home care/home help, and Lifeline alarm (Telecare).

Impact of caring on quality of life
- Over two thirds (67%) of carers do some of the things they value or enjoy with their time, but not enough.
- Over a quarter of carers (29%) have as much control over their daily life as they want.
- Almost two thirds (62%) are able to look after themselves (this is in relation to getting enough sleep and eating well).
- The majority of people (90%) have no worries about their personal safety.
- Almost half (45%) of respondents have as much social contact as they want with people.
- Almost half (48%) feel they have encouragement and support in their caring role.

Information and advice
- A quarter (25%) of carers haven’t tried to find information or advice in the last 12 months.
- Of those who have tried to find information or advice, almost three quarters (73%) found it ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ easy to find.
- Of those who had received information and advice, the majority (93%) find it ‘very’ or ‘quite’ helpful.

Arrangement of support and services
- Of those carers who have been involved in discussions about the support or services provided to the person they care for, over half (82%) ‘always’ or ‘usually’ feel involved.
5. About the carer

The responses to a number of questions in the survey gave a general profile of the type of carers who participated in this year’s survey.

Gender and age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base for % 388

- Of the survey respondents, over two thirds (67%) were female, a slight increase since the last survey which saw 64% as female carers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-74</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base for % 382

- Over half (52%) of the carers who responded were aged between 55 and 74, and 81% were over 55 years old. In 2012, 48% were between 55 and 74 years old, with 82% aged over 55.

Health condition

Just under half of respondents (49%) said that they did not have a disability or long-term health condition. Of those that did, the table below shows the breakdown by type of disability of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disability</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A long-standing illness</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight or hearing loss</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical impairment or disability</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mental health problem or illness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A learning disability or difficulty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base for % 233

*Please note the percentages do not equal 100% as people were asked to choose more than one option.

- Of those who did have a health condition, almost half (43%) indicated they had a long-standing illness.
- A third of carers indicated they had a physical disability, and a similar proportion said they suffer from sight or hearing loss.
## Amount of time caring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time caring</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 6 months but less than a year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 year but less than 3 years</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 years but less than 5 years</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 years but less than 10 years</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 years but less than 15 years</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15 years but less than 20 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years or more</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base for % 387**

- Over half of respondents (52%) have been caring for five years or more, whilst 74% have been doing so for at least three years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours a week spent caring</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-99</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies under 20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies 20 and over</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base for % 371**

- Almost half of respondents (43%) spend 100 or more hours a week caring, which is an increase from the last survey (34%).
Employment and caring

In the UK approximately one employee in seven currently has caring responsibilities and over the next generation this is set to increase to three in five people becoming carers at some stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in paid work</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part time (working 30 hours or less)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing voluntary work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed part-time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed full-time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base for % 440

*Please note the percentages do not equal 100% as people were asked to choose more than one option.

- Over half of the carers who responded were retired (61%), and almost a third (30%) were in either full or part time employment.

Carers were also asked a question about combining paid work and caring responsibilities, and how supported they feel by their employer.

Figure 5.1 – Employment and support

![Chart showing employment and support data for 2014 and 2012]
Since the last survey there has been a reduction of 7% in the number of carers who are self-employed or retired.

All other answer options remained at a similar level.

Earlier this year Cheshire West and Chester were selected by the Department of Equalities as one of nine councils to pilot a scheme providing support to carers to help them sustain or return to employment. This was recently launched as the Cheshire West Carers in Employment project, and will be encouraging local employers across the borough to provide carer-friendly policies to support them in their roles.

Cheshire West and Chester Council already have policies in place which enable staff to work flexibly and balance caring responsibilities with the need of the business. A guidance document has been produced along with a series of future training sessions to provide more information on Carer support and help build a network for carers across the Council.
6. About the cared-for person

A number of questions in the survey gave a general profile of the people who are being cared for.

Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-74</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base for % 385</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of the service users that respondents care for were aged 75 or over, this is a very similar profile to the last carers survey.

Health condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disability</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents (2014)</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents (2012)</th>
<th>Percentage change since 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical disability</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems connected to ageing</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight or hearing loss</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-standing illness</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability or difficulty</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health problem</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal illness</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol or drug dependency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base for % 890</strong></td>
<td><strong>186</strong></td>
<td><strong>48%</strong></td>
<td><strong>58%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note the percentages do not equal 100% as people were asked to choose more than one option.

- Almost half (48%) of service users had a physical disability compared to 58% in 2012.
- ‘Problems connected to ageing’, ‘Dementia’, ‘Sight or hearing loss’ and ‘Long-standing illness’ were options also selected by over a third of respondents.
- The above table shows since 2012 there has been an increase in carers looking after people with Dementia, but a general decrease in a number of other health conditions.

Living Arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living arrangements of the cared-for person</th>
<th>No. of respondents in each group</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents in each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with carer</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living somewhere else</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base for % 386</strong></td>
<td><strong>264</strong></td>
<td><strong>68%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents indicated that the person they care for lives with them. This is the same proportion as the last survey.
Main Findings

7. Satisfaction with services

Carers were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the support or services they and the person they care for have received from Adult Social Care and Health in the last 12 months.

Figure 7.1 – Satisfaction with support or services received

- Over three quarters (79%) of carers indicated they were ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘quite’ satisfied with the support or services they have received in the last 12 months. This is an increase of 3% compared to the last Carers survey.
- Some of the reasons for this satisfaction included:
  - Quick responses to enquiries
  - Friendly, respectful and professional service
  - Making carers aware of the support and assistance available to them
- The number of people who said they were ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ or ‘dissatisfied’ have both decreased slightly.
- Reasons carers gave for being dissatisfied included:
  - General lack of support from the Adult Social Care and Health department.
  - Lack of understanding and co-ordination of the care package they and the person they care for receive.
  - More communication is required from the department – carers would like more regular contact.
  - The amount of financial support they receive for carrying out their caring role
  - People who are self-funding can feel unsupported.
  - Some carers felt that they had support initially from Social Services, however after that there was no contact and they were left to cope by themselves.
  - High staff turnover.
  - Length of time taken to action or receive a response to a request if it is not an emergency situation.
Figure 7.2 shows the distribution of responses to this question across the borough. The map shows there are slightly increased levels of dissatisfaction around the areas of Helsby, Frodsham and Northwich areas.
8. Support or services used

Carers were asked to select from a list of options which support or services they and the person they care for have used in the last 12 months. The support or services may be delivered by a variety of providers such as voluntary organisations, private agencies or the Council’s Adult Social Care department.

Figure 8.1 – Support or services used by the cared-for person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support or services used by service user</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment or adaptation to their home</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home care/home help</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifeline alarm or Telecare</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day centre or day activities</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a rest for between 1 and 24 hours</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a break at short notice/in emergency</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a break for more than 24 hours</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently resident in a care home</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal assistant</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals services</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch club</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage who selected ‘Yes’</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base for 2014 % 290 – 337</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base for 2012 % 226 - 256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The most popular support/service used is equipment or an adaptation to their home, with 59% of people ticking ‘Yes’ for this answer, even though this is a slight decrease from the last survey (63%).
- Just over half used home care/home help, a 2% increase since 2012.
- The proportion of carers who said they take a break from caring for more than 24 hours has reduced by 9% to 21% since the last survey.
- Those who use the Lifeline alarm or Telecare has also dropped by 5% to 35%, however it is important to note that the Telecare service has recently changed provider since the survey took place.
- The majority of people have not used a lunch club (93%) or Meals service (91%).
Carers were also asked to say which support or services they had used in the last 12 months to help them in their role as a carer. The support or services may be delivered by a variety of providers such as voluntary organisations, private agencies or the Council’s Adult Social Care department. This does not include any unpaid help from family and friends.

**Figure 8.2 – Support or services used by the carer**

- The most popular support/service used is information and advice, with 59% of people ticking ‘Yes’ for this answer, an increase of 7% since the last survey.
- A third of respondents indicated they have received support from carer groups, which has also increased by 7% since 2012.
- The proportion of carers who have used the WCESS (Emergency card) has doubled from 6% to 12%.
- The majority of people have not used the ‘Freedom to Care’ Telecare service or received any training service (both 95%).

![Support or services used by carers chart](chart.png)
9. Quality of life

Carers were asked a variety of questions in relation to the impact of caring on aspects of their quality of life, and also about parts of their life in general.

How you spend your time

Carers were asked to select from a list of options how they spend their time.

Figure 9.1 – How you spend your time

- Just over two thirds (67%) of carers said they do some of the things they value or enjoy, but not enough.
- Almost a quarter (23%) spend their time as they want.
- The responses to this question are at a very similar level to the last survey.

Control over daily life

Carers were asked to select from a list of options how much control they have over their daily life.

Figure 9.2 – Control over daily life
- 58% of carers said they had some control over their daily life, but not enough, a 3% decrease from the last survey.
- Over a quarter (29%) of respondents said they have as much as control as they want, the same proportion as 2012.
- Of those respondents who said they have no control over their daily life, over three quarters (78%) care for 100 or more hours a week.
- Whilst the data suggests that the proportion of carers who have no control over their daily life has increased by 3%, further investigation shows that this may be due to the nature of the samples in the two surveys, rather than demonstrating a genuine trend.

**Looking after myself**

Thinking in terms of getting enough sleep or eating well etc, carers were asked to select from a list of options how well they look after themselves.

**Figure 9.3 – Looking after myself**

- 62% of carers said they look after themselves, a 3% decrease from the last survey.
- Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents said that sometimes they can’t look after themselves well enough.
- Whilst the data suggests that the proportion of carers who are neglecting themselves has increased by 3%, further analysis shows that this may be due to the nature of the samples in the two surveys, rather than demonstrating a genuine trend.

**Personal Safety**

Carers were asked to choose from a list of statements which best describes how they feel about their personal safety (meaning feeling safe from fear of abuse, being attacked or other physical harm).
The majority of people (90%) had no worries about their personal safety. The reasons why carers indicated that they had some worries (9%) or were extremely worried (1%) were in relation to:
- Feeling threatened or experiencing aggressive behaviour from the person they care for.
- Feeling vulnerable due to their own health problems.
- Feeling alone and insecure at night time.

The people who had selected that they were extremely worried were contacted to see if they needed any help or support.

There has been no change in the percentage of responses for each option since 2012.

Social situation

Carers were asked to choose from a list of options which best describes how much social contact they have with other people.
• Similar levels (45% and 44% respectively) indicated that they have as much social contact as they want, and some social contact but not enough. These proportions are both a slight decrease from the last survey.
• Of the respondents who said they feel socially isolated, over half (55%) care for their loved one for over 100 hours per week, and 82% care for at least 35 hours per week.
• Whilst the data suggests that the proportion of carers who have little social contact and feel socially isolated has increased by 4% since 2012 to 12%, further analysis shows that this may be due to the nature of the samples in the two surveys, rather than demonstrating a genuine trend.

Encouragement and support

Respondents were asked to what extent they feel they have encouragement and support in their role as a carer.

Figure 9.6 – Encouragement and support

- The majority of respondents (84%) felt that they have at least some encouragement and support in their caring role. The remaining carers indicated they have no encouragement or support, a 2% increase from the last survey.
- The percentage results of this question are very similar to the 2012/13 Carers survey.
10. Information and advice

An important part of someone’s role as a carer is being able to access good quality information and advice. Respondents were asked a number of questions in relation to this subject including:
- How easy it is to find information and advice;
- How helpful the information and advice is once found;
- Methods used to find information and advice;
- Where people currently go to access information and advice;
- Information and advice topics of interest.

Accessibility of information and advice

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult it has been to find information and advice in the last 12 months.

Figure 10.1- Access to information and advice

- A quarter (25%) of carers had not tried to find information or advice in the last 12 months, compared to 35% in 2012.
- Of those who did try to find information and advice, almost three-quarters (73%) indicated it ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ easy to find, as opposed to 67% last time.
- The remaining 27% said it was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ difficult to find.

The reasons carers found it difficult to access information and advice included:
- They did not know who to contact, where to go or what to look for.
- It is not volunteered or readily available, therefore they have to trawl to find what they want.
- Carers don’t have time to look for what they want to know.
- Poor communications, for example, unreturned phone calls.
- Some methods are inaccessible to them, for example, internet.
Figure 10.2 - Access to information and advice

- Figure 10.2 shows the distribution of responses to this question across the borough. The map shows that in some areas of Ellesmere Port, Frodsham and Northwich areas, more carers found it difficult to access information and advice than in other areas of the borough.

Helpfulness of information and advice

Carers were asked how helpful they thought the information and advice they received had been in the last 12 months.

Figure 10.3 - Helpfulness of information and advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite helpful</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite unhelpful</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unhelpful</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base for 2014: % 287
Base for 2012: % 176
- 23% of carers said they had not tried to find information or advice in the last 12 months, compared to 37% in 2012.
- Of those who had received information and advice, the majority (93%) indicated it was ‘very’ or ‘quite’ helpful, an increase of 3% since the last survey.
- The remaining 7% found the information or advice ‘quite’ or ‘very’ unhelpful, the reasons for this being:
  - Being passed around too many people.
  - Their enquiries have not been followed up by the correct action.
  - Consensus that many people are too busy to help.

**Methods used to find information and advice**

This year a new question was included in the survey, asking what methods carers have used to find information and advice in the last 12 months.

**Figure 10.4 – Methods of finding information and advice used**

- Of those who did try to find any information or advice, the most popular method used in the last 12 months was by telephone, followed by face-to-face meeting by prior appointment, printed newsletters/leaflets and using the internet/websites.
- Only 5 carers have used a video kiosk.
- A third of 55-74 year olds have used the internet to find information or advice.
- Of those respondents who have emailed to find information or advice, over two-thirds (68%) were aged between 55 and 74.
Where people go to access information and advice

This year a new question was included in the survey, asking where carers go to access information and advice.

Figure 10.5 – Where people currently go to get their information and advice

- Community and voluntary organisations are the most popular type of organisation to go to for information and advice. This includes organisations such as Age UK, Cheshire Carers Centre and the Alzheimer’s society.
- This was followed by 215 people who went to the Council, and 126 going to their local GP surgery. Carers in higher age groups tended to go to their GP surgery rather than younger carers.
- Other places where carers go for information and advice included:
  - Community and District Nurses
  - Care/nursing home staff
  - Mental Health nurses
  - Family and friends
- General comments about how carers would like to access information and advice were in relation to:
  - More communication about information and advice is needed.
  - It would be helpful to have a dedicated individual that carers can contact for information and advice.
  - A central website and/or place to go for information/leaflets is needed, including a dedicated list of available services
  - Relevant referrals to agencies and guidance should be in place at the start of the care package process.
Information topics of interest

This year a new question was included in the survey, asking which information topics are of interest to the carer themselves and the person they care for.

Figure 10.6 – Information topics of interest

- The most popular topic carers would like information about with regards to themselves and the person they care for was financial support.
- Over two thirds (68%) of 35-54 year old carers are interested in financial information, and almost half of this age group would like information about support groups/networks (42%) and training/courses (45%).
- Of those carers who were interested in housing related issues, almost two-thirds (63%) were aged between 55 and 74 years old.
- Health and social care related issues and social activities were also topics of interest in relation to the cared-for person, as well as adaptations and equipment provision.
- Support groups/networks and social activities also were topics of interest.
- Other topics included employment opportunities and caring for multiple people.

General comments and suggestions with regards to information and advice included:
- More understanding of carers’ needs is required.
- Information is not readily available - sometimes there is too much to sort through to get to what is actually required.
- More communication is needed to reach carers, leaving some feeling left out of the loop, especially if contact is made with the cared-for person rather than the carer themselves.
- Carers don’t know how or where to ask for help.
- There is not enough help or information available.
11. Arrangement of support and services

This question asked how involved or consulted the carer felt in discussions related to the organising of support and services for the carer themselves and the person they care for.

Figure 11.1 – How involved/consulted did you feel?

- A quarter of carers said that there had been no discussions as far as they were aware in the last 12 months.
- Of those who felt there had been discussions, over half of respondents (53%) ‘always felt involved or consulted’, a 6% increase since 2012.
- There was a slight decrease of 4% in the proportion of carers who ‘usually felt involved or consulted’, whereas the remaining options remained fairly similar to the last survey.
12. Additional information

In addition to being asked specific questions about aspects of caring, respondents were also asked to share any experiences, positive or negative, and any other comments they would like to make:

- Some carers have had negative experiences with Social Services in terms of lack of support and communication with social workers.
- Carers have received a lot of support and help from their doctors, hospital, care staff, home help and day care centres.
- Some carers have had positive experiences with Social Services, and expressed a wide appreciation for the help and support received from the service.
- Some carers don't have enough time to enjoy any social activities outside of their caring role, or sometimes look after themselves adequately.
- Financial support and information is essential and carers would be lost without this.
- Information and advice needs to be more accessible and made more obvious to know where to find it.
- Some carers have worries about the future in terms of what will happen to the person they care for if anything happens to them. There are also concerns about the affect caring has on their own health and wellbeing.
- Some carers feel isolated and struggle to cope with their caring responsibilities.
- In some cases, the person being cared for doesn't want to accept any help from outside of the family.
- A few carers felt that people who are self-funding are left alone and have to fend for themselves.
- Organisations such as Age UK, Alzheimers Society, Wirral Autistic Society and the Stroke Association were highlighted as being helpful to carers.
- Some people don't consider themselves to be a carer, and would care for their loved one anyway.
13. Next steps

This report highlights some key issues from carers’ perspectives, including:

- **Carers’ quality of life** – there has been a slight increase in the proportion of carers who feel they have slightly less control over their daily life, are neglecting themselves, and feel more socially isolated.

- **Satisfaction with services** – even though satisfaction levels have improved since the last survey, reasons carers gave for feeling dissatisfied with the service included:
  - A lack of understanding and co-ordination of the care package they, and the person they care for, receive.
  - Insufficient communication as carers would like more regular contact.
  - Reduced financial support, including issues with self-funding.

- **Information and advice** - more people are finding it easier to access information and advice about services, however, those carers who found it difficult or thought what they received was unhelpful said:
  - They didn’t know who to contact, where to go or what to look for. It was suggested that a dedicated individual to contact, central website, and place to go for information leaflets etc. would be very helpful.
  - Information is not volunteered or readily available, therefore they have to trawl to find what they want to know, which they don’t have time to do.
  - They have experienced poor communications, for example, unreturned phone calls or being passed around too many people.
  - Their enquiries have not been followed up by the correct action.
  - There is a consensus that many people are too busy to help them.

- **Those who have some worries or are extremely worried about their safety** said they:
  - Feel threatened or experience aggressive behaviour from the person they care for.
  - Feel vulnerable due to their own health problems.
  - Feel alone and insecure at night time.

The Adult Social Care and Health Team, along with other key stakeholders, will be addressing the issues raised through the following ways:

- The Joint Carers Strategy and revised action plan
- The Carers Interagency Group
- Carers Forum

The Carers Forum has been established by the Cheshire Carers Centre to improve awareness of what is already being done to support carers in Cheshire West and Chester. The objective of the forum is to monitor the Carers’ Strategy and feed into the Interagency Group. At the end of the questionnaire, carers were asked if they would like to be involved in the Carers Forum. A third of respondents said ‘yes’, and filled in their contact details to receive future updates from the group.

**Key contact** – The Council has put in place a Carers Liaison worker, based in the Strategic Commissioning Team for Cheshire West and Chester Council. The role supports Strategic Commissioning, Health and Social Care and Third Sector staff, to ensure that carer issues are addressed as quickly as possible and that carers are supported by having access to the information, advice and support they need.
14. Appendix

The Adult Social Care and Health Outcomes Framework contains a series of measures, which have been agreed between the Department of Health and other key Adult Social Care and Health organisations. These measures are of value for both national and local comparisons of service performance.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*1D</td>
<td>Carer reported quality of life</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1I2</td>
<td>Proportion of carers who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like</td>
<td>New indicator – no comparison available</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>Overall satisfaction of carers with social services</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>The proportion of carers who report they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**3D2</td>
<td>The proportion of people who use services and carers who find it easy to find information about services</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Outcome 1D is a composite measure using responses from Questions 7,8,9,10,11 and 12.
**Outcome 3D2 – These indicators will be combined with results from an equivalent question in the Adult Social Care survey to produce an overall score. The results above only relate to findings from the Carers Survey.

The above table shows comparisons between the Outcomes Framework Measures from this survey’s results and the previous Carers Survey carried out in October 2012. These results show:

- Measure 1D (Carer reported quality of life) is very similar to the previous survey.
- Measure 1I2 (Proportion of carers who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like) is a new indicator, therefore is not comparable with the previous survey.
- Measure 3B (Overall satisfaction of carers with social services) has increased by 6% since the 2012/13 survey.
- Measure 3C (The proportion of carers who report they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for) has increased slightly by 1% since the previous survey.
- Measure 3D2 (The proportion of people who use services and carers who find it easy to find information about services) has increased by 6% since the last survey.
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If you would like further information about this report, please contact the Research, Intelligence and Consultation Team
Beverley Wilson, Research Manager, telephone: 01244 972176
Sarah Gerrard, Research Officer, telephone: 01244 977366
Email: research@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team, HQ, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NP