

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Gwella mynediad at gymorth i ofalwyr di-dâl](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Improving access to support for unpaid carers](#).**

**UC24: Ymateb gan: Bwrdd Partneriaeth Rhanbarthol Caerdydd a'r Fro | Response from: Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board**

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**Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan regional response**

Senedd Inquiry into “Improving access to support for unpaid carers”

Submitted by Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board.

The evidence is submitted on behalf of multiple-organisations who form the regional partnership for unpaid carers within Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. These include, the Health Board, Local Authorities, Third Sector and people with Lived Experience.

Consent has been given by all participants to include their evidence in a regional response.

Below is the response to the key lines of inquiry:

1. The main barriers faced by unpaid carers in accessing the support they need; including any specific challenges for carers based on factors such as age, ethnicity or where they live;
  - We have a strong network of leads in Cardiff and Vale through the Unpaid Carers Board and commitment to the Unpaid Carers Charter, this includes commissioning of information and advice services for unpaid carers. In 2024/25, our Carers Information Service supported 1,989 unpaid carers across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Support was provided to unpaid carers of all ages, accessing information and advice through education and Young Carers Services.
  - Locally the challenge lies in effectively recognising and responding to a diverse population in Cardiff in particular, where we think there is under reporting/self-identification within specific communities. According to the 2021 Census, 88.53% of unpaid carers in Cardiff and Vale identified as White, while 11.47% identified as being from ethnic minority backgrounds. This compares with 16.7% of the overall population in the region identifying as ethnic minority, suggesting potential underrepresentation of these groups in carer data.

- A continuing barrier is unpaid carers not identifying themselves and not being encouraged to recognise themselves as a carer when accessing other services.
  - For those who provide 24/7 care, it can also be challenging to leave their cared for to access support for themselves.
2. The current availability of respite care across Wales, including levels of variation across regions;
- Short breaks have allowed flexibility in the respite offer and strengthened the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in this area and has allowed 1,236 short breaks for unpaid carers in 2024-25.
  - Local authorities also provide respite to unpaid carers
3. The extent to which the demand for carers support services is being assessed and addressed, and current levels of unmet needs;
- Regular review through the Unpaid Carers Board, as well as at individual service level by local authorities.
  - Key to target unmet need has been to increase promotion through the Charter, as well as training and awareness through Carer Friendly campaign, and Young Carers in School projects commissioned for Cardiff and Vale.
  - The Unpaid Carers Board also reviewed the national reports including Carers Wales Track the Act and the Ombudsman Unpaid Carers Report to reflect on local provision and consider areas for improvement.
4. The role of Regional Partnership Boards in the provision of support for unpaid carers, and the effectiveness of current commissioning practices for services;
- The Unpaid Carers Board is supported by the RPB and is a part of the RPB governance. Unpaid carers are a priority population group for the RPB and a member with lived experience sits on both the RPB and Unpaid Carers Board to provide a representative voice.
  - RPB through RIF funding commissions:
    - **Information and advice services:** In 2024/25, our Carers Information Service supported 1,989 unpaid carers, including 690 newly identified carers. The service also facilitated 126 unpaid carer drop-in sessions and convened 11 unpaid carer engagement panel meetings.

- **Carer Friendly and Young Carers in School projects:** In 2024/25, 282 staff participated in training sessions through the Young Carers in School project, with 80% of responses (n=130) reporting increased confidence in identifying young carers. Additionally, 55 participants accessed training through the Carer Friendly initiative, and there were 131 initial contacts with organisations to promote carer awareness and support.
- **Short Breaks:** In 2024/25, 13 third sector organisations were supported through the Short Breaks programme, enabling respite and wellbeing opportunities for 1,236 unpaid carers across the region.

All these services are integral to the continued support available for unpaid carers.

5. The actions required to improve the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provisions for unpaid carers (including Carers Assessments and support plans).
  - Further promotion and capacity – in particular highlighting exactly what the region does to support unpaid carers and for this to be better recognised by practitioners, unpaid carers, and Welsh Government.
  - More work to be done to emphasise the importance of a carers assessment and encouraging carers to come forward.
  - Review the messaging to ensure unpaid carers are aware of the range of help that is available and the impact receiving support can make.

We also have a strong network supporting development of services for people living with dementia. Our citizen engagement through our EmpowerMind and Opening Doors initiatives has shown:

- Work is ongoing to promote our information and advice services as a first point of contact for unpaid carers. However, our engagement highlights that people find it difficult to know how to access services and what is available to them as an unpaid carer such as respite and carers assessments, but those who do access it have found this beneficial to their wellbeing.
- In Cardiff and Vale, we are working on improving access to respite provision for unpaid carers through access to short breaks and other opportunities for flexible respite; however, this is reliant on available funding & organisational constraints.
- We continue to actively review available data on needs and engage with communities which has proved positive in supporting over 30 events and 2000 people affected by dementia. However, data and engagement often rely on self-

identification as an unpaid carer which is particularly challenging among seldom heard groups.

- Increasing the availability of training for carer awareness and carer rights to enable health and social care staff to actively support unpaid carers. This work is being developed further through our Carer Friendly accreditation and dedicated Dementia Learning and Development Team in Cardiff and Vale.
- John's campaign is being rolled out within hospital wards and is proving beneficial to the unpaid carers to understand the care to continue at home when discharged.