

# National Carers Strategy / Covid Recovery

The Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care has committed to the publication of a stand-alone Carers Strategy, with an immediate focus on COVID-19 recovery and a longer-term purpose of improving carer support in a meaningful and sustainable way.

The strategy will focus on carers and their needs, setting out how policies across the Scottish Government can work together with other public bodies to support carers as we recover from the pandemic and beyond.

We will engage with unpaid carers about the strategy's scope and purpose in the coming months, and this will inform its development

- To be developed by late Spring, using Carers Strategic Policy Statement and including Covid Recovery for Carers
- Carers Rights and Support Steering Group to take the lead
- Carers and other stakeholders involved in development
- National Carer Organisations working on short and medium term measures to support carers

## National Carer Organisations – Briefing Papers

### Short term and longer term measures to Support Carers

- Carers manifesto commitments
- Responses to the National Carer Organisation consultation
- Evidence and research over the pandemic
- Carers on the pandemic response group – Quick Wins
- Spoke to several carer and other stakeholder groups

# National Carers Strategy / Covid Recovery

## Breaks from Caring & Social Care Phase 1 – Covid Recovery

- Re-open services.
- Contingency plans for future variants to ensure carers aren't left without support
- Ringfence Carers Act funding for direct carer support.
- Make the Covid-19 SDS Guidance permanent and ensure it is applied consistently across Scotland
- Enable top-up budgets to existing SDS packages for people with an increased caring role, without the requirement of additional assessments

## Breaks from Caring & Social Care Phase 2 - Carers Strategy

- Significant investment in short breaks services to address and increase capacity - to prepare for a right to breaks from caring
- Improve pay and conditions of the social care workforce and ensure equity between sectors
- Local areas should undertake a needs assessment and update short break statements

## Mental Health & Wellbeing - Phase 1 – Covid Recovery

- Provide carers with access to tailored, mental health support, in the same way the registered care workforce has access to this support. For example, access to counselling services through carers centres
- As part of mental health recovery, commission additional bereavement support for carers
- Ensure carers have an emergency plan in place and that there is an established system to ensure the right people have access to this in the event of an emergency

## Mental Health & Wellbeing - Phase 2 - Carers Strategy

- As part of the upcoming Mental Health Strategy, ensure carers can access mental health support to support them at key stages in their caring journey.
- Promote emergency planning more widely and develop flexible support in the event of an unplanned or emergency break in caring

## Hospital and Healthcare - Phase 1 – Covid Recovery

- Prioritise carers for future COVID boosters and flu vaccination.  
Ensure appointments are accessible
- Provide updated guidance on hospital visiting and ensure carers are recognised as essential visitors and partners in care
- Provide better information to people who are higher risk
- Continue to prioritise carers for PPE and testing
- Ensure carers have access to replacement care to enable them to attend their own health appointments



## Hospital and Healthcare - Phase 2 - Carers Strategy

- Introduce Social prescribing – such as a discount card and free leisure
- Provide health checks for carers and flexible G.P appointment, including longer appointment times at times which are suitable for carers and provide home visits where necessary

## Financial Support and Employment - Phase 1 – Covid Recovery

- Ringfence part of the Scottish Welfare Fund for carers
- Extend home working and introduce short term assistance through SDS or grants to allow for unpaid leave from work
- Continue to provide the Carers Allowance Supplement at a higher rate to compensate for the additional costs relating to Covid
- Explore ways of providing a similar payment to carers with an underlying entitlement to Carers Allowance
- Develop or extend relief funds for carers

## Financial Support and Employment - Phase 2 - Carers Strategy

- Develop a Carers Poverty Strategy
- Reform Carers Allowance
- End care charges as soon as possible
- Further support for carers in employment, or seeking employment

## Sustainable Local Carer Services - Phase 1 – Covid Recovery

- Provide direct funding to carers centres and young carer services to address organisational capacity issues and recognise the additional support they have provided since March 2020.
- Ensure that carer services help to co-produce national policy and programme implementation
- Ensure that any further additional national funding is long term and fully resourced.

## Sustainable Local Carer Services - Phase 2 - Carers Strategy

- Address carer service staff shortages, recruitment and retention through improved terms and conditions in social care
- Invest in the digital capacity of local carer services
- Recognise the number of unpaid carers who also work in the care sector and may need support to sustain employment.

## Carers as equal partners in care - Phase 1 – Covid Recovery

- Fully Involve carers in plans for COVID recovery and service remobilisation

## Phase 2 - Carers Strategy

- Ensure carer representatives on strategic planning groups, including IJBs, are fully recompensed and consider providing them with remuneration for what is essentially a full-time job
- Fund training to identify and support carers to become involved in local strategic planning, so this is not left to one or two carers in each area

## Equalities – Ensuring the Strategy meets all carers needs

- Require local authorities to set out in their local carer strategy how they are meeting their equality duties
- Have priorities and actions in the Carers Strategy which meet equality requirements
- Require local authorities to report on these actions to Scottish Government annually

\* The Strategy will also cover Young Carers