

Aberdeenshire Adult Carer Strategy

2025 to 2030 (Summary)

The Aberdeenshire Adult Carer Strategy 2025–2030 sets out the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership’s (AHSCP) commitment to recognising, valuing and supporting unpaid adult carers. It builds on the first strategy (2018–2022) and reflects extensive engagement with carers, staff and partners.

The Strategy aligns with national policy including the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, Scotland’s National Carers Strategy (2022), and the AHSCP Strategic Plan. It focuses specifically on adult carers, recognising that young carers have distinct needs requiring a separate strategy.

Unpaid carers play a vital role in sustaining health and wellbeing across Aberdeenshire. This Strategy aims to enable carers to live well alongside caring through earlier recognition, clearer pathways and more proactive, personalised support.

WHO IS AN ADULT CARER?

Anyone aged 18 and over who provides unpaid care for someone due to illness, disability, mental ill-health or substance dependency. Caring roles include parent carers, older carers, carers of people with dementia, or mental ill health or substance dependency, carers supporting end-of-life situations, carers who care for more than one person.

KEY LEGISLATION AND POLICES INFORMING THE STRATEGY

Our strategy is guided by key national and local frameworks that set out the rights of carers and expectations for support. The [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) underpins our approach, establishing duties to identify, involve and support unpaid carers through Adult Carer Support Plans (ACSP), information and advice, eligibility criteria, and involvement in hospital discharge. The [National Carers Strategy \(2022\)](#) reinforces a national commitment to valuing and supporting carers.

Further reform comes through the [Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#), which strengthens carers’ rights, including entitlements to breaks from caring. The [Self-Directed Support Plan 2023–2027](#) guides our commitment to personalised, flexible support that promotes choice and control.

Locally, the Strategy aligns with the [AHSCP Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035](#) and the [Aberdeenshire Carers' Charter](#), which reflects rights set out in national Carers' Charter.

LEARNING FROM THE FIRST ADULT CARER STRATEGY (2018–2022)

The first strategy built core services, expanded support, improved identification, increased access to breaks, strengthened transitions and enhanced information and hospital discharge processes—creating a solid base for the next five years.

HOW CARERS SHAPED THIS STRATEGY - CARER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

We use a range of ways to hear from carers and the organisations that support them in Aberdeenshire. Carers are involved through representatives on the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and the Adult Carer Strategy Delivery Group (ACSDG) and through third-sector networks. Continued engagement, supported by a new Carers Forum and Advisory Group will strengthen engagement and help carers' voices shape local decisions.

Engagement and consultation in 2024 and 2025 provided feedback from unpaid carers, former carers and people who support them, including online surveys hosted on [Engage - Aberdeenshire Adult Carers](#). Carers highlighted needs around recognition, support, breaks, being valued and involved. This feedback helped identify four Adult Carer Strategy Priorities for 2025–2030:

- **Carer Identification** Improving early and proactive identification of carers across all services and communities so support is offered before crisis.
- **Carer Support** Providing timely, personalised and proportionate support through clear pathways, Adult Carer Support Plans and coordinated multi-agency working.
- **Recognising, Valuing and Involving Carers** Ensuring carers feel heard, respected and actively involved in decisions about the care they provide and in wider service planning.
- **Breaks from Caring** Improving access to regular, meaningful and flexible breaks that help carers maintain their wellbeing and sustain their caring role.

Impacts, Needs and Current Support

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CARING

Caring can be rewarding but can be physically and emotionally demanding. Carers can experience stress, financial pressures, and reduced wellbeing, as recently reported by [Carers Scotland](#). Early identification and timely support for carers are vital.

ABERDEENSHIRE STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR SUPPORT

The [2022 Scotland Census](#) recorded 24,751 unpaid carers age 16 and over in Aberdeenshire, which is 11.5% of the population in this age group.

The number of carers registered with the commissioned Aberdeenshire Carer Support Service ([VSA](#)) continues to rise each quarter. As of December 2025, 1,534 adult carers were registered, with 318 receiving active support. In addition, 306 eligible adult carers are currently supported by AHSCP Carer Practitioners through Self-directed Support (SDS).

SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

Aberdeenshire Carer Support Service ([VSA](#)) provides:

- Information and advice
- Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP)
- Personalised plans to identify carer's needs and outcomes
- Carer Advisor support
- Emergency and Future Care Planning
- Counselling and Peer support
- Short breaks funding, creative breaks options
- Post-caring support

SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT (SDS)

Carers with substantial or critical impact from their caring role, identified through their ACSP, may be eligible for an [SDS](#) budget. The eligibility criteria is available on Aberdeenshire Council's [website](#). Carers who do not meet eligibility criteria can access support from VSA.

Other services include [Advocacy North-East](#), [Alzheimer Scotland](#) and [Cornerstone SDS](#).

Short breaks help carers rest and can be arranged through an ACSP, the [Short Breaks Bureau](#), VSA, or SDS for eligible carers. Information on short breaks is available in the [Short Breaks Services Statement](#).

Further support includes the [Aberdeenshire Unpaid Carers' Information Pack](#), [Live Life Aberdeenshire](#) concessions, and training such as Aberdeenshire Council online courses (ALDO) and [SVQ](#) qualification.

Adult Carer Strategy Priorities for 2025 - 2030

1. Carer Identification

Aim: Raise carer awareness and identify carers earlier.

Actions: Provide carer awareness training, improve access to information via public promotions, clearer carer referral pathways and support for young carer transitions.

By 2030: Carers will say:

I am recognised early as a carer through routine conversations across GPs, hospitals, social work and community settings.

I am recognised and supported before I reach crisis.

I have clear, simple pathways into advice and support, without needing to self-advocate repeatedly.

As a young carer moving into adult services, I am recognised and supported throughout my transition

2. Carer Support

Aim: Empower carers to manage their caring role and maintain their health and wellbeing

Actions: Improve ACSP templates, support future and emergency planning, provide carer access to training, support complex caring roles and flexible use of SDS.

By 2030: Carers will say:

I receive support that is personalised and timely, not reliant on reaching breaking point.

I have improved confidence in navigating health and social care, with clearer information and consistent guidance from professionals.

I am able to access practical, emotional, and financial support that matches my personal goals.

3. Recognising, Valuing and Involving Carers

Aim: Carers are treated as equal partners and feel involved, respected and heard.

Actions: Develop carer feedback opportunities, establish Carers Forum and Advisory Group, improve carer pathways in hospital settings, improve access to information.

By 2030: Carers will say:

I am recognised as an equal partner in care planning and decision making.

I have Carer involvement which is meaningful, not tokenistic, and I am feeling heard and influential in shaping services.

I feel my contribution is valued, which improves my wellbeing and reduces feelings of isolation.

4. Breaks from Caring

Aim: Carers can access regular, meaningful and flexible breaks.

Actions: Map available breaks, increase variety of breaks, develop a resource pack, improve access to replacement care, update the Short Breaks Services Statement

By 2030: Carers will say:

I know where to find information and guidance on breaks available locally and nationally.

I have access to flexible, meaningful breaks that are more consistent and easier to arrange.

I get breaks that help me recharge so I can keep caring, but also still have time for myself and my own life.

Delivering the Strategy and Measuring Progress

A two-year Delivery Plan will guide early implementation, led by AHSCP Carer Support Team and overseen by the Adult Carer Strategy Delivery Group. Progress will be reported to the Strategic Planning Group and Integration Joint Board (IJB). The Strategy will adapt to national policy changes, including the Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025.

BY 2030, PROGRESS WILL BE EVIDENCED BY:

- More carers knowing where to get help
- Fewer carers reaching crisis before receiving support
- Improved confidence navigating health and social care
- Increased involvement in decision making
- Clear compliance with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

CONSTRAINTS AND CHOICES

With complex systems and limited resources, the Strategy prioritises:

- Prevention and early support
- Targeted support when universal services isn't enough
- Stronger partnership working across services and communities

HOW CARERS WILL INFLUENCE AND SHAPE CHANGE

Carers will shape ongoing work, moving from ad hoc consultation to ongoing influence through:

- Annual feedback loops to refresh Delivery Plans
- Clear involvement routes through the ACSDG, Carer Forum, Advisory Group, locality events, Engage Aberdeenshire and the Lived Experience Group
- “You said / We did” sharing to show impact
- Shared accountability across AHSCP for responding to carers' voices

Our Commitment Moving Forward

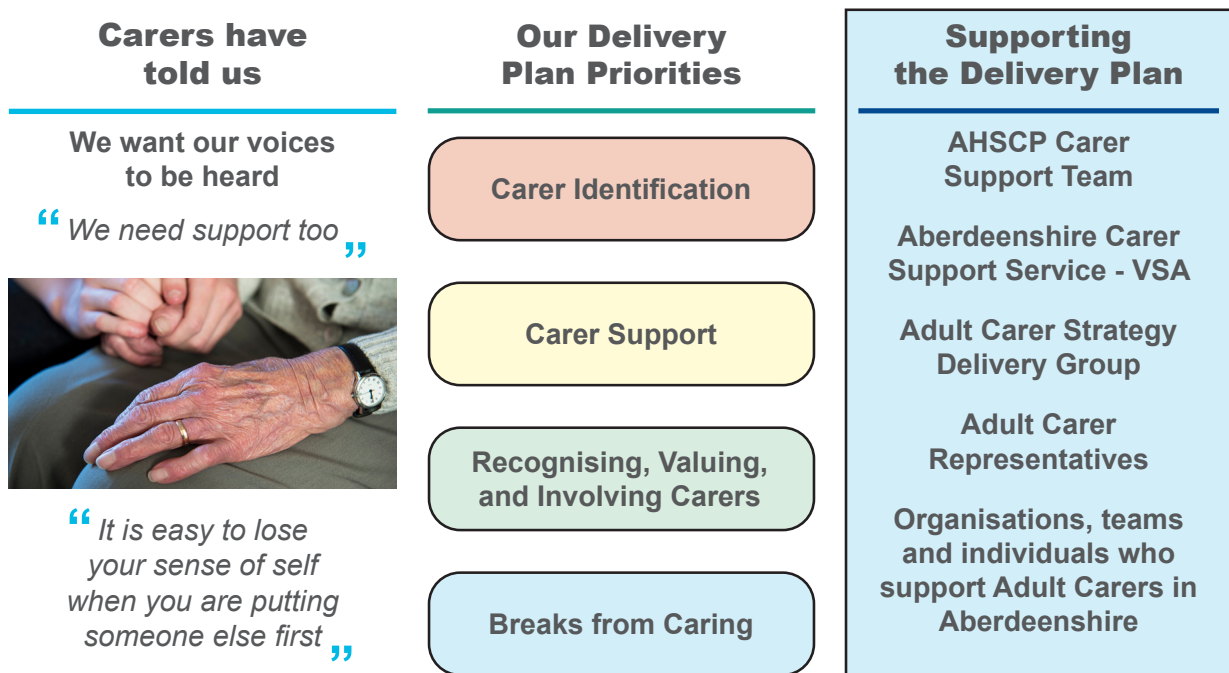
This strategy reinforces our commitment to recognising, valuing and supporting unpaid carers across Aberdeenshire. It sets a shared direction for partners, services and communities, grounded in collaboration, fairness and respect.

Looking ahead to 2030, we aim to create a way of working that evolves with carers' changing needs, responds earlier, and recognises carers as equal partners.

By continuing to listen, learn and work alongside carers, we will deliver meaningful, lasting improvements that support wellbeing, independence and quality of life. This strategy is the foundation for ongoing progress, ensuring support remains accessible, meaningful and sustainable for the future.

Strategy on a Page

Aberdeenshire Adult Carers Strategy 2025 - 2030



ABERDEENSHIRE IJB STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES LINKED TO CARERS STRATEGY

- Priority 1: Prevention and Early Intervention
- Priority 2: Health and Social Care Services supporting those with greatest need in our community

NATIONAL CARERS STRATEGY 2022: STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

