

SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS IN POWYS

Introduction

Llais Powys has been working to better understand and support unpaid carers across Powys. Through engagement events, surveys, and direct discussions with carers, we have gathered valuable insights into the daily experiences and challenges faced by those providing care. This report summarises the key findings from our outreach efforts, including insights from the Age Cymru Wellness Days in Newtown and Brecon, as well as the results from the Unpaid Carers Survey conducted in early 2025. Based on these findings, this report outlines recommendations for improving support services and enhancing the well-being of carers in Powys

What We Did

1. Engagement Events & Conversations with Carers

- o Attendance at Age Cymru Wellness Days in Newtown (15th January 2025) and Brecon (22nd January 2025).
- o Conversations with carers from diverse backgrounds, including those caring for individuals with dementia, mental health conditions, disabilities, and terminal illnesses.
- o Face-to-face discussions at community meetings and carers' support groups.

2. Unpaid Carers Survey 2025

- o Conducted to gain quantitative and qualitative insights into the needs and challenges of carers.
- o A total of 27 respondents participated, providing valuable feedback on their access to services, financial struggles, emotional well-being, and respite needs.

3. Review of Existing Reports & Policies

- o Analysis of documents such as the 2023 Carers Trust Adult Carer Survey Report, the Powys Population Needs Assessment, and the Health and Care Strategy for Powys.
- o Examination of Welsh Government policy statements and rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

4. Collaboration with Carer Support Organisations

- o Engagement with Credu, Carers Wales, and the Powys Health and Care Academy.
- o Identification of services currently available and potential gaps in provision.

Key Findings from Carers

1. Access to Health & Social Care Services

- o Many carers struggle to navigate health and social care services, often needing to chase providers for updates and support.
- o Some carers reported difficulty securing timely assessments for their loved ones and themselves.
- o The survey revealed that while some carers were aware of available services, a significant number either had not accessed them or were unaware of their existence.

2. Financial Struggles & Allowances

- o Carers face challenges in accessing financial support such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Carer's Allowance.
- o Many carers feel the financial assistance available is insufficient given the demands of their role.
- o A recurring concern was the complexity of applying for benefits and the need for more proactive outreach to inform carers of available financial aid.

3. Emotional Well-being & Mental Health

- o A significant number of carers experience stress, isolation, and burnout.
- o The majority of survey respondents reported that their role had negatively impacted their emotional well-being, with many feeling unsupported.
- o Carers expressed a need for more social engagement opportunities, mental health support, and peer networks.

Key Findings from Carers

4. Transport & Accessibility Issues

- o Long wait times for ambulance transport and difficulties accessing hospitals were common concerns.
- o Rural carers in particular reported struggles with transport for medical appointments and social engagement.
- o The survey emphasised the need for improved transport services to enable carers and their loved ones to access essential services more easily.

5. Respite & Breaks for Carers

- o Many carers have limited or no access to respite services.
- o Carers expressed a need for flexible respite solutions, including short breaks and local community support.
- o The survey highlighted that respite care is one of the most sought-after forms of support, but availability and affordability remain barriers.

6. Awareness & Information Sharing

- o Many carers were unaware of the full range of services and entitlements available to them.
- o More proactive outreach is needed to ensure carers receive relevant information.
- o Survey participants suggested that GPs and healthcare providers could play a more active role in signposting carers to available resources.

Recommendations

1. Enhance Communication & Information Sharing

- o Develop a comprehensive online and printed resource guide for carers.
- o Strengthen collaboration with GP practices to ensure carers receive information about available support.

2. Improve Transport Solutions

- o Advocate for expanded community transport services and hospital transport support.
- o Work with local authorities to improve access to transport options in rural areas.

3. Increase Respite & Mental Health Support

- o Expand availability of respite care and flexible break options.
- o Develop peer support groups and well-being programs tailored to carers.

4. Financial & Practical Assistance

- o Advocate for better financial support for carers.
- o Work with local authority and third sector organisations to help them provide guidance on applying for benefits and financial aid programs.
- o Implement outreach initiatives to proactively inform carers about available financial support.

Recommendations

5. Strengthen Community Support & Volunteer Networks

- o Support initiatives such as befriending services and volunteer respite programs.
- o To better support unpaid carers, businesses and organisations can implement a range of carer-friendly initiatives, such as:
 - 1. Flexible Working Policies** – Allowing carers to adjust their working hours, work remotely, or take unpaid leave when necessary to manage their caring responsibilities.
 - 2. Carer's Leave & Paid Time Off** – Introducing specific leave entitlements for carers, including emergency leave or paid carer's leave, like parental leave.
 - 3. Carer Awareness Training** – Providing training for managers and staff to better understand the challenges faced by unpaid carers and how to support them in the workplace.
 - 4. Financial Support & Assistance** – Offering subsidised childcare or respite care services, salary sacrifice schemes, or access to financial advice.
 - 5. Signposting to Support Services** – Ensuring employees have easy access to information about local carer support organisations, benefits, and mental health resources.

Next Steps

Engagement & Advocacy:

Present findings to Powys Health Board, Powys County Council, and key stakeholders.

Resource Development:

Create accessible materials to inform carers about their rights and available services.

Continued Outreach:

Work with CREDU and other organisations to expand engagement and collect additional feedback.

Follow-up Surveys & Consultations:

Continue monitoring carer needs and measuring the impact of implemented initiatives.

By implementing these recommendations, we aim to improve the quality of life for unpaid carers across Powys and ensure that they receive the recognition and support they deserve.

If you would like to share your experience as a carer, please contact us at 01686 627632 or powysenquiries@llaescymru.org

Together, we can build a more supportive and responsive care community in Powys.