



Wrexham County Borough Council Social Care

Annual Unpaid Carers Survey Report 2021

Introduction

The purpose of the survey was to engage with unpaid carers and gain their views and opinions about their life as an unpaid carer. The survey was designed to gather information from adult unpaid carers about their caring experiences to help inform service improvements and development.

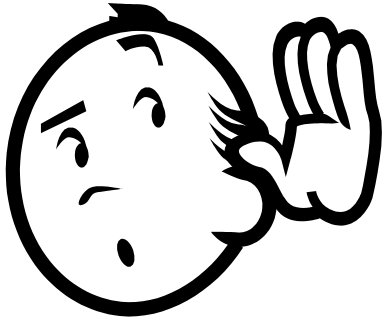
Many people do not identify themselves as an unpaid carer. An unpaid carer is anyone who cares unpaid, on a regular basis, for a relative, partner or friend who is elderly, ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. Unpaid carers may be supporting a relative or friend who are receiving a social care service or they may be supporting someone who is not in receipt of any services.

The survey was not completed during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and was last undertaken in 2019. The biggest change to the unpaid carer's service since 2019 is that Wrexham Council now fund NEWCIS (North East Wales Carers Information Service) to deliver unpaid carers services across the borough of Wrexham.

Methodology of the Survey

A questionnaire was sent to 1,200 unpaid carers registered with NEWCIS via post and was also publicised on-line, on the consultation hub 'Your Voice' and publicised on the Local Authority's social media channels (WCBC's website, Facebook and Twitter).

Response rates were very low, with 169 unpaid carers sharing their experience and views with us. This does not provide an accurate reflection of all unpaid carer views, which is estimated at 15,000 unpaid carers within Wrexham, recorded in the last population census 2011.



Learning from your comments, compliments and complaints

“YOU SAID, WE WILL DO”

By telling us what you think, and sharing your experiences with us, you can help us to improve services that are provided for unpaid carers within your local community.=

Following the survey completed in 2021, a number of challenges were identified by the unpaid carers who responded. This highlighted areas where improvement is needed, and what we, as a Local Authority need to do, to improve services for unpaid carers in Wrexham.

You said...	We will do the following...
<p>66 unpaid carers told us they had not been offered a Carers Needs Assessment;</p>	<p>We recognise the importance of unpaid carers having a Carers Needs Assessment to identify their support needs. We will work closely with NEWCIS, who we fund to deliver unpaid carer services across Wrexham, and our social work teams, to ensure a qualitative Carers Needs Assessment is offered to all unpaid carers across the County Borough of Wrexham who are identified as an unpaid carer. We will also work closely with NEWCIS, to improve self-identification as an unpaid carer, to register as an unpaid carer, and obtain valuable support and guidance.</p>
<p>A number of unpaid carers told us they did not accept the offer of a Carers Needs Assessment;</p>	<p>We will ensure that every unpaid carer understands the benefits of undertaking a Carers Needs Assessment, and the support that is available to them to enhance the quality of their caring experience.</p>
<p>A number of unpaid carers told us that their views have not really been listened to when discussing the needs of the person they care for;</p>	<p>We recognise the importance of feeling listened to, and will work closely with NEWCIS to engage better with unpaid carers via workshops and unpaid carer forums. We will also ensure that our social care workforce are highly trained so that unpaid carers feel their views are taken into account when discussing the needs of the person they care for.</p>
<p>We were informed by some unpaid carers that Wrexham Council has not helped to improve their quality of life, and that access to support from Adult Social Care is still not straight forward;</p>	<p>We recognise the importance of access to support from Adult Social Care and will ensure our highly skilled staff are able to direct unpaid carers to the correct service to ensure unpaid carers receive the right guidance and support at the right time, which can help to improve their wellbeing and enhance the quality of their life.</p>

A number of unpaid carers told us that they cannot access information from Wrexham Adult Social care that is helpful about being an unpaid carer, and they did not know where to go to get the information they needed	We recognise the need to improve in this area, and we will work with NEWCIS to ensure more unpaid carer information forums take place across Wrexham. We will ensure our social care teams, help people identify who and what an unpaid carer is, and how they can access information and support relevant to their individual needs.
Some unpaid carers informed us that they did not know enough about unpaid carers direct payments from Adult Social Care	We recognise the importance of better promotion of the direct payment scheme to ensure that unpaid carers have choice and control over the services they receive. We will ensure our social care workforce are highly trained to communicate the options available to you to enable you to make informed choices.
A number of unpaid carers told us that they did not feel supported by their social contacts, social support networks and other relationships	We understand the vital role unpaid carers play in supporting the cared for. We also understand the importance of unpaid carers feeling supported themselves. We will therefore work in collaboration with NEWCIS to ensure that all unpaid carers are invited to groups, activities and forums within their communities to socially interact with peers and support staff and learn about the different support networks available to them.

Recommendations:

The findings within this survey highlight the need for WCBC Social Care and NEWCIS to adopt better systems to raise awareness on the definition of what, and who, is an unpaid carer, and to understand their experiences in order to provide the right support, at the right time, across Wrexham.

In view of the above responses from the Annual Carer Survey, Wrexham Social Care recognises that the unpaid carer agenda is a high priority. In response, Wrexham Council has secured funding and is developing a newly appointed Carers Lead Officer post who will take the lead role of working closely with unpaid carers, organisations and community groups across the Wrexham County Borough, to ensure the needs of unpaid carers are considered in current services, and in the development of future service delivery.

WCBC consulted with a number of unpaid carers, and partner organisations across Wrexham, on what needs to be considered in developing the job description and Person Specification for the role.

If you would like to make further suggestions for change and/or improvements, you can e-mail us at commissioning@wrexham.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can write to us at Commissioning Team, Crown Buildings, 31 Chester Street, Wrexham LL13 8BG