

**Annual Unpaid Carers Experience Survey**

**Participation & Engagement**
**Feedback Report**

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1. **Introduction**

An unpaid carer is someone who, without payment, helps and supports a relative, friend or neighbour who cannot manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction, or disability.

Many people living in Fife will take on the role as an unpaid carer at some point in their life. Caring for another person can be a demanding role and sometimes difficult.  It can help to get professional support, share experiences and ideas with other people in the same situation.

Fife’s Health & Social Care Partnership has a duty to support unpaid carers. Since the introduction of the *Carers (Scotland) Act 2016*, there have been significant improvements in the scale and scope of support that can be offered to unpaid carers. The Act includes a duty to involve carers in carer services.

The refreshed *Carers Strategy for Fife* *2023 – 2026*, outlines the aims and outcomes to be focused on over the next three years, as we continue to deliver robust and high-quality support for unpaid carers. By engaging with unpaid carers in Fife, their feedback will help shape and inform how the priorities within the strategy are delivered and what further improvements can be made.

1. **The Engagement Timeline**

The timeline below provides an outline of engagement activity from planning through to reporting.

1. **Stakeholder Engagement**

**3.1 Designing the Consultation**

In previous years an annual unpaid carers experience survey was issued to unpaid carers, which adopted questions from the University of Nottingham – Manual for the Adult Carer Quality of Life Questionnaire 2010. When developing the 2024 consultation, the Participation and Engagement Team structured the questions to support the Fife Carers Strategy Delivery Plan Priority Outcomes, to understand from the unpaid carers’ perspectives areas the Partnership is doing well in and areas that may require further improvement. For us to effectively measure the impact of our investments and actions, we were keen to hear from carers about their experience of being a carer and being supported to carry out their caring role.

The survey aimed to target unpaid carers living across Fife’s seven localities and to listen to their experiences over the last 12 months.

The survey was developed to focus on three outcomes within the Carers Strategy 2023 – 2026:

**Outcome 1:  Information** – Access to information, in a range of formats, that helps unpaid carers manage their caring role in the community, where and when they need it.

**Outcome 2:  Co-ordinated Support** – To ensure unpaid carers have support to coordinate their caring role, including help to navigate the Health and Social Care systems as they start their caring role.

**Outcome 3:  Breaks from Caring** – To help unpaid carers take a break from caring when, where and how they want to, so that they are rested and able to continue in the caring role.

Feedback will offer the Carers Strategy Group and commissioned partner providers a chance to review the impacts of the investment and actions under Carers Strategy Outcomes 1, 2 & 3.

An overview of results will be produced for a Carers Panel meeting, to review what carers across Fife are telling us and how we can deliver further improvements and investments.

* 1. **Engagement Methods**
* Microsoft Forms online survey was live for 7 weeks, from 14th March to 26th of April 2024.
* Printed and Easy Read versions of the survey were created.
* Key findings were presented to Organisations and unpaid carers during Carers Week (10th June).
* An interactive workshop is being developed with the members of the Carers’ Providers Forum, to ensure that organisations supporting unpaid carers in Fife, can contribute to action planning and support change ideas, as detailed in the Carers Strategy (TBC - likely July).
	1. **Engagement Reach**

Within Fife, there is an estimated 34,828 unpaid carers *(taken from Fife HSCP Website May 2024* [Who is a Carer? | Fife HSCP (fifehealthandsocialcare.org)](https://www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/services/for-carers/who-is-a-carer/)<https://www.fva.org/news.asp?id=18131>*)*.

This survey received responses from **237 unpaid carers** and has provided data based on what they told us. This response rate is four times greater than the previous survey in 2020 (67 responses), providing readers with greater certainty of the findings.

* Responses were completed via the online link / QR code.
* **1** Paper copy completed.
* **0** Easy read copies were requested.

An A4 poster with QR Code and survey link was emailed to 75+ organisations, including Social Work Teams, Fife Carers Centre, and Fife Voluntary Action to share with unpaid carers they support. (appendix 2)

Over 60 unpaid carers, who were identified through various Participation & Engagement projects, were personally invited to complete the survey.

Posters were displayed in a wide range of locations including local supermarkets, Gyms, and on the Fife bus service.

Fife HSCP, NHS, Fife Carers Centre, and Fife Voluntary Action also shared the poster through their social media platforms.

**From respondents who completed the equalities, diversity, and inclusion questions**, we were able to understand more about their age, gender, and nationality:

**Age**: From the **143** responses to this specific question a detailed breakdown is shown within the table below. Data shows the majority of unpaid carers **(40)** were within the **65+** age bracket.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Under 18​** | **18-24​** | **25-34​** | **35-44​** | **45-54​** | **55-64​** | **65+​** | **Prefer Not to Say** |
| 3​ | 1​ | 3​ | 26​ | 32​ | 37​ | 40​ | 1​ |

**Gender: 237** responseswere received. **182** of respondentswere **female, 52 male, 1 non-binary, 1 preferred not to say** and **1** was **other.**

**Nationality: 143** respondentsanswered this question. **79** respondentswere **Scottish,** and **47 white. 9** were **English.** Low numbers of respondents told us they were **other British (3), Irish (1), Mixed or Multiple Ethnic (1), Asian/Scottish (2), Other (1).**

**Localities:** All **237** respondents told us where they live, and responses were received from every locality in Fife.

The highest locality response was **Kirkcaldy** (which also covers Kinghorn and Burntisland), with **48** respondents**.**

The second highest locality response was **Dunfermline** with **45** respondents.

The third highest locality response was **North East Fife** (which also covers Auchtermuchty, Cupar, St. Andrews, Crail and Anstruther) with **43** respondents.



1. **Themes from Feedback**

This significant increase in the number of respondents to the survey this year compared with the 2020 survey can have a dramatic and misleading impact on the way performance is viewed.  In many cases, the increase in the number of respondents who answered a question can be viewed positively (or negatively), whereas when viewed as a percentage of the total respondents the performance is less positive.  This is the case with most questions where a comparison is available.  For this reason, we have presented percentages for comparison with real numbers expressed in brackets after each quoted percentage, where appropriate.  The significant improvement in the overall number of respondents provides a greater sense of confidence of the views of unpaid carers as regard to each question – although further improvement is needed.

**4.1 Outcome 1 - Information**

To support this Fife Carers Strategy outcome, we asked unpaid carers a range of questions around access to information, being recognised and supported as a carer by a GP or doctor and communication with professionals about their caring role.

**We asked if unpaid carers have access to high quality information at a time and place that helps them to make informed choices about their personal support needs.**

**234** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**, compared with 56 responses in 2020.

In **2024**, **22%** of respondents (51) stated they **have access to information**.  While the number of respondents who said yes in 2024 is greater than the 2020 survey, when shown as a percentage against the total number of 2024 respondents (234), it appears less positive compared to the percentage of those who responded in 2020.

The feedback tells us that in 2024 more people are not or unsure of how to access information for unpaid carers and highlights an area for improvement around communicating the quality and availability of information and how this effectively reaches them.

**We asked unpaid carers if they currently access information and if so, where from.**

**158** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

**30%** of respondents (47) said they **‘do not access’** any information.

**70%** of respondents (111) of unpaid cares in Fife told us they **‘are accessing’** information, some of which includes:

The feedback highlights a diverse range of information is being access by unpaid carers, with the most prevalent being from Fife Carers Centre, STAND and Alzheimer’s Scotland. Online access is being used, which highlights carers are taking ownership of their own support and not relying on face-to-face help and guidance. It is noteworthy that only a small number of our commissioned delivery partners are referenced by unpaid carers in their responses to this question.

**We asked if unpaid carers felt they were recognised and supported as a carer by their GP or doctor.**

**236 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**,compared with 32 responses in 2020.

In **2024**, **55%** of respondents (129) said they are **not recognised** by their **GP** as an unpaid carer, which shows an increase from those who responded ‘no’ in 2020.

In **2024**, **27%** of respondents (65) said that they **are recognised** by their GP as an unpaid carer. While the number of respondents who said yes in 2024 is greater than the 2020 survey, when shown as a percentage against the total number of 2024 respondents (236), it appears slightly less positive compared with the percentage of those who responded in 2020.

The feedback tells us that many unpaid carers are accessing their GP surgeries but either not identifying as or being recognised as an unpaid carer and highlights an area of improvement in collaboration with GP practices on how to continue to improve identifying early intervention and support for unpaid carers.

**We wanted to understand if unpaid carers felt communication between professionals about their caring situation had improved over the last year.**

**234 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**,compared with 55 responses in 2020.

In **2024**, **13%** of respondents (31) felt that **communication had improved** over the previous year. While the number of respondents who said yes in 2024 is greater than the 2020 survey, when shown as a percentage against the total number of 2024 respondents (234), it appears less positive compared with the percentage of those who responded in 2020.

In **2024**, **59%** of respondents (138) told us that **no improvements** had been made, which is a significant increase from the percentage of those who responded in 2020.

This feedback suggests that communications is an area for development and improvement among those who support unpaid carers. This may come as a result of the Good Conversations training the partnership has recently commissioned for this group of staff.

**4.2 Outcome 2 - Co-ordinated Support**

To support this Fife Carers Strategy outcome, we asked unpaid carers a range of questions which focus on support, involvement with social work and voluntary organisations, Adult Carer Support Plans, and general quality of life.

**We wanted to understand from those who had been offered support recently, had it been meaningful.**

**167 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**.This question was not asked in 2020.

Although **24%** of respondents (40) felt that support they have received **was meaningful**, **49%** of respondents (82) **did not** and **27%** of respondents (45) were **unsure**.

The feedback highlights that further work with unpaid cares is required, to better understand how the support they have received could be improved, as well as what they could do to support these improvements.

**We asked if unpaid carers access support.**

**237** **responses** were received to this question fromthe **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

**69%** of respondents (164) said they **do not access support**.

**22%** of respondents (52) told us they **did use and access support**.

**9%** of respondents (21) were **Unsure**.

**We asked a further question to try and understand the reasons why unpaid carers do not access support.**

**164 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey.** This question was not asked in 2020.

**27%** of respondents (45) told us they **didn’t know** what support is available. **25%** of respondents (41) said they had **not been offered support** and **21%** of respondents (34) told us they **don’t think they** qualify for support.

The feedback highlights opportunities for caring organisations to promote what support is available to unpaid carers.

**12%** of respondents (20) selected **‘other’**, it would be worth exploring what that means to respondents in next year’s survey.

**We asked what support unpaid carers had been offered.**

**149 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey.** This question was not asked in 2020.

**34%** of respondents (51) told us they had been offered **‘none’.**

There is however evidence of diverse support being accessed by unpaid carers throughout Fife, with two thirds of respondents stating they access:



**We wanted to understand the confidence among unpaid carers in the advice and support they receive from social workers and voluntary organisations.**

We asked respondents to **rate their experience with** **Social Work** from 1 to 5 (5 being positive).

**5%** of respondents responded (13) to this question, with the overall average score being **2.7**.

We asked around the confidence in support from **Voluntary Organisations**. The average score from **8%** of respondents (19) was **4.5.**

The feedback offers confidence from unpaid carers within the voluntary organisations and opportunity to improve unpaid carers’ confidence in social work with the recent introduction of additional Social Work Assistants.

**We asked unpaid carers if they had been offered an Adult Carer Support Plan.**

**237 responses** were received from the **2024 survey** compared to 49 in 2020.

**76%** (182) responded from **2024**, saying they had **not received an ACSP**, compared to 29% (14) in 2020.

There is a **decreased** in respondents who answered **they had been offered** a plan, which is highlighted from **14%** of respondents (32) in **2024**, compared to 43% (21) in 2020.

The feedback shows while the number of respondents who said yes in 2024 is greater than the 2020 survey, when shown as a percentage against the total number of 2024 respondents (237), it appears less positive compared with the percentage of those who responded in 2020.

This feedback further highlights opportunities for third and voluntary sector colleagues, as well as the Health and Social Care Partnership to increase the offerings of ACSP across Fife.

**For unpaid carers who were offered an ACSP, we wanted to understand which services offered this.**

**32 responses** were received to this question from the **2024** **survey** (this question was not asked in 2020).

**19** offered by **Voluntary Organisations**
**13** offered by **Social Work**

**We asked respondents to tell us if they felt their ACSP’s met their needs for support and personal outcomes.**

**32** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey** compared to 49 in 2020.

The **2024 survey** seen an increase, **59%** of respondents (19) compared to 43% of respondents (21) in 2020, from those who felt their ACSP **was fulfilling** their needs.

The feedback remains the same between **2024** and 2020 for those who told us their ACSP **did not meet** their needs. This tells us that more work is required to understand why unpaid cares feel this way and what supporting organisations, as well as themselves, can do help support improvements in this area. Unpaid carers should be encouraged to raise a request to review their personal Adult Carer Support Plan if they feel that it for not continue to meet their personal needs for support. Additionally, colleagues whose duty it is to support carers to develop their own plan must emphasise each carer’s ownership of the plan which professionals cannot delivery without the carer’s active participation.

**We wanted to understand if conversations during the ACSP process discussed the need to develop an emergency plan.**

**32 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey** compared to 49 in 2020.

We did see improvement in **2024**, with **71%** of respondents (23) answering **‘yes’**.

We also saw improvement in **2024** for those answering **‘no’**, with data from **2024** showing **16%** of respondents (5), compared to 29% (14) in 2020.

The feedback offers opportunities to carry out more work around planning, which should include encouraging all unpaid carers to develop their own emergency plan, using the tools we have available.

**Still looking at ACSP assessment process, we asked respondents if they had participated in a conversation around a break from caring.**

**32 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**, compared to 49 in 2020.

**59%** of respondents (19) from the **2024 survey** told us they **had conversations**, which is an improvement from 2020.

The feedback highlights continuing conversations with unpaid carers would offer more improvements in this area. This is a priority area to meet with duties included in the Act and, to help the partnership prepare for the introduction of the National Care Service as it relates to unpaid carers.

**We asked if unpaid carers were aware there is financial advice and grants available through third sector partners.**

**237 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

**60%** of respondents (143) said they were **unaware** **of financial advice and grants**.

This feedback highlights an opportunity for third sector organisations who provide financial advice to increase promotion around this topic. Consideration to bring this to the Carers Providers Forum, to involve organisations on how this could be positively achieved through collaborative working.

**We then asked unpaid carers to continue to think about their finances and answer the true current position of their financial situation.**

**237 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey.** This question was not asked in 2020.

The top two responses to this question highlighted mixed perspectives, with **38%** of respondents (90) saying they **have enough money** to support themselves and **31%** of respondents (72) **worrying about debt** because of their caring role. The 23% (55) who stated they had not really thought about the financial pressures caring for someone might result in, suggests this group also have no financial concerns at present.

While not all unpaid carers will be entitled to financial support and grants, the feedback highlights there would be benefit in making information about financial support services more accessible.

The feedback highlights there are opportunities during the next survey to explore what the 8% of respondents (20) who answered ‘other’ feel about their financial situation.

**Respondents were provided the opportunity to tell us about their value as an unpaid carer.**

**236** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**, compared to 57 in 2020.

The data shows us that **the majority** of respondents answered, ***‘Sometimes’*** with noticeable responses to ***‘Most of the time’,*** to the series of questions asked around how much they **feel valued** as an unpaid carer.

**Low responses** were received from those answering, ***‘Always’ and ‘Never’***.

It is clear from survey data that **low mood** presents within the unpaid carer community. This report will conclude (page 25) on overall areas organisations and the HSCP can consider helping improve an unpaid carers journey.

The 2020 survey asked similar questions and received 57 responses.



We can again see that the **majority** of unpaid carers feel, to some degree, ‘***depressed’*** *and* ***‘stressed’*** with their caring role and situation**,** with data showing the **majority** of responses coming from those who answered ***‘Sometimes’***. Between 1 in 10 and a third of all carers who responded to this question always have concerns about the impact caring has for their own life control and mental well-being.

Low number of respondents told us they **have control** over **their own life** and **can live** the life they want too.

The feedback highlights opportunities by working alongside unpaid carers to understand what improvements can be considered to help increase the feeling of value for those carrying out unpaid caring roles.

**4.3 Outcome3: Breaks from Caring**

To support this Fife Carers Strategy outcome, we asked unpaid carers questions linked to outcome three, which focused on breaks from caring.

**We first wanted to know if unpaid carers had been provided information about short breaks.**

**237 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**,compared to 49 in 2020.

Data tells us there is an increase in **2024**, with **70%** of respondents (167) answering, they had **not been** involved in conversations about a **break from caring**.

The feedback shows while the number of respondents who said ‘yes’ in 2024 is greater than the 2020 survey, when shown as a percentage against the total number of 2024 respondents (237), it appears less positive compared with the percentage of those who responded in 2020.

Although data shows a reduction in the **2024** survey for those answering **‘yes’,** there are improvements in this area as the actual return was **27%** of respondents (63), compared to 42% of respondents (21) in 2020.

The feedback highlights **improvements** by way of having **more conversations** with unpaid carers around how **breaks from caring** could be facilitated by **third** and **voluntary sectors,** as well as the **Health and Social Care Partnership**. It is a specific requirement within the Act to include as part of the Adult Carer Support Plan (and Young Carers Statement) conversation, discussion about a short break from caring is an identified outcome and, how this might be achieved. While carers recollections may vary, we are confident that there will be room for improvement to ensure this Duty is fulfilled by colleagues.

**We then asked if the information available about short breaks helped unpaid carers to plan a break from caring.**

**70 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey,** compared to 48 in 2020.

We can see an increase in **2024**, by way of **56%** of respondents (39) saying **they could** plan a **break from caring** due to having accurate information, compared to 29% of respondents (14) in 2020.

The feedback highlights that increasing this type of conversation may benefit more unpaid carer and even increase their value, which we previously discussed and noted as being low.

**We then asked respondents if they have taken a short break from their caring situation, either alone or with the person they care for.**

**235** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**, compared to 52 in 2020.

The **2024** **survey** seen an increase to **58%** of respondents (137) in **2024** for those **not being** able to access a **break from caring**.

The data echoes the reduction in unpaid carers access to short breaks, as we see the figure from those who previously had undertook a short break reduce to **37%** of respondents (86) in **2024**, compared to 38% of respondents (20) in 2020.

The feedback highlights that increasing the access to breaks may support unpaid carer to carry on their unpaid caring role, potentially reducing stress and depression, which we saw in the previous questions around how unpaid carers value their current caring situation.

As noted in a previous section, an identified improvement action is to more routinely discuss a break from caring within the Adult Carer Support Plan conversations, as part of the Duty.

**We also wanted to understand for those who took a break, did it make a difference and leave them feeling rested and able to continue in their caring role.**

**97 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

The feedback tells us that **enhancing** unpaid carers ability to take a short break had a **positive impact**. Further focus within this area could continue to strengthen this area of support.

**We wanted to hear from those who had taken a short break, why it made such a difference to them.**

**85 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

Unpaid carers shared with us some of the reasons the break was so positive.

**We asked unpaid carers to share with us how they viewed their quality of life.**

**236** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

Most respondents answered **‘Strongly Disagree or Disagree’** to the series of questions, which tells us many unpaid carers are **not feeling supported – 69%** of respondents(161), **better informed – 71%** of respondents (121)or **value –** 71% of respondents (166) within their role.

Just over half of respondents **had confidence** around being involved in **caring decisions** and also **within their caring role**.

We also asked respondents to rate their **overall caring experience**. **235** responded to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

In terms of unpaid carers overall caring experiences (below), just under half of respondents said they **‘Strongly disagree or disagree’** to feeling **their needs**, **73%** of respondents (106) are considered by professionals nor do they feel the **support, 73%** of respondents (50) they received from professionals was adequate.

This feeling was also observed within the question around unpaid carers feeling and they do not feel they have the practical support needed.

Low number of respondents felt their needs **were considered** by **professionals** and that they had the **practical support** they felt they needed, as well as **information**.

Low responses were received from those who strongly agree with each of the statement questions asked.

**4.4 Additional Feedback**

Our last selection of questions asked unpaid carers to share their experiences around the amount of hours of unpaid care they carry out, their understanding of the carers Scotland Act, and their health conditions.

**We wanted to hear from unpaid carers, how many hours of unpaid care they provide each week.**

**237 responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**, compared to 72 in 2020.

**Over half** of respondents 51% (121) told us they carry out **50+ hours** of unpaid care **per week**.

Data from the 2020 survey tells us that 58% of respondents (42) carry out 50+ hours of unpaid care per week, with the next highest hours being from 22% of respondents (16) who carry out 25-49hrs per week.

**We wanted to know if unpaid carers were aware of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, and if they have a good understanding of the rights.**

**236 responses** were received to this question from the **2024** survey, Compared to 57 in 2020.

Comparison of **2024** and 2020 data highlights there is a **decline** in the proportion of unpaid carers who responded stating they are aware of the act, presenting **opportunities** to **improve** this knowledge gap, therefore supporting unpaid carers to enhance their knowledge around what they may be entitled too.

**The final question we wanted to hear from unpaid carers about, was if they themselves had a health condition and / or a disability?**

**143** **responses** were received to this question from the **2024 survey**. This question was not asked in 2020.

We learned the top 3 most common conditions from respondents answering:

1. **Physical disability** (50)
2. **Disease or condition** (49)
3. **Mental Health** (42)

The feedback highlights the **challenges** unpaid carers also face with manging day-to-day life, with not only managing their own **health conditions** but that of the person they care for.

1. **Conclusions:**

In conclusion the survey has identified several areas and potential priorities for the partnership to consider that could improve carers experiences based on the feedback from this survey.

These conclusions align well with the new carers strategy and demonstrate a good understanding of the priorities unpaid carers have for our improvement actions and investments.

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| **Outcome 1:  Information** – *Access to information, in a range of formats, that helps unpaid carers manage their caring role in the community, where and when they need it.* |

Feedback tells us that unpaid carers are accessing a diverse range of information, with respondents suggesting that more information signposting to the services that are available would be helpful.  This was also a theme from the Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes – Health and wellbeing in Later Life engagements ([Publications and Reports | Fife HSCP (fifehealthandsocialcare.org)](https://www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org/about-us/get-involved/publications-and-reports/). This offers an opportunity to further explore **what having accessible information around care and support needs** could look like.

Feedback tells us that over half of respondents did not feel recognised by their GP as an unpaid carer, nor did they feel that communication by professionals has improved over the past twelve months. This offers an opportunity to **enhance GP's approach to identifying and supporting unpaid carers who present either as a patient, or in support of someone who is a patient** and **strengthen communication between professionals**.

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| **Outcome 2:  Co-ordinated Support** – *To ensure unpaid carers have support to coordinate their caring role, including help to navigate the Health and Social Care systems as they start their caring role.* |

Feedback tells us that many organisations are providing meaningful and diverse support to unpaid carers, however most respondents said they do not currently access support due to not knowing what is available. This offers an opportunity to **raise the profile of services that offer support**. The focus here applies equally to the Health and Social Care Partnership and its commissioned partners, and generally accords with the findings from other participation exercises including specifically the carers strategy development consultations.

Feedback tells us that a about a third of respondents expressed they are concerned about falling into debt because of their caring role, with about the same proportion not having really considered the matter. Improvements around financial advice and grants were identified as important. This offers an opportunity to **develop more signposting methods on financial advice to unpaid carers**.

Feedback tells us we must significantly improve the Adult Carer Support Plan process and understand what unpaid carers need for this to be more effective. Many respondents said their current plans did not improve their caring support needs. This offers an opportunity to **consider and explore further the Adult Carer Support Plan with unpaid carers who have a plan in place**. There is also a direct role for unpaid carers raise questions about their personal plan when it fails to meet their needs and to develop a plan that meets their needs. Part of the improvement opportunity is to ensure carers understand this is their own plan and to take ownership of it, rather than expecting it to be done for and to them.

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| **Outcome 3:  Breaks from Caring** – *To help unpaid carers take a break from caring when, where and how they want to, so that they are rested and able to continue in their caring role.* |

Feedback tells us that short breaks are effective and extremely beneficial, however there is a need for more access to breaks from caring. This offers an opportunity to **further understand what increased access to short breaks would look like**.

There is a desire from respondents to be provided with **more information around short breaks**, as many are **unsure** what services and support are available to them.

While the overall feedback on short breaks was positive, some respondents shared ways to improve this service: ***‘still had caring responsibilities on the break’****,* ***‘only had 2 nights away once a year’****,* ***‘my wife and I can’t go away together, one needs to be there to meet caring needs’****.* This feedback clarifies some of the areas the Carers Strategy group and HSCP may wish to focus on.

Further work will be undertaken on regard to short breaks later in the year as the partnership reviews its Short Breaks Service Statement.

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| **Additional Feedback** – Unpaid carers *shared their experiences around the amount of hours of unpaid care they carry out, their understanding of the carers Scotland Act, and their health conditions* |

We learned that most respondents are providing **50+hrs** of **unpaid care per week,** with many **unpaid carers** having a **health condition** of their own**.** An opportunity presents to **consult with professionals and organisations** within the **caring sector** to understand what **holistic care** and **support** could look like to households in this position.

Additionally, feedback tells us that a significant number of respondents did not know what their rights are as an unpaid carer, under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. **Promotion of the Act** would allow unpaid carers to understand what **support** could be available which could contribute to the **improvement of personal wellbeing outcomes.**

1. **Next Steps:**

The findings from the engagement exercise offer the Carers Strategy Group an opportunity to identify key improvement areas to support the Priority Outcomes.

The development of the Fife Carers Providers Forum and Fife Carers Forum also offers an opportunity to support the development of the identified improvement areas.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – MS Form: Online survey available here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/AqtDph1UiY>

Appendix 2 - List of stakeholders invited to participate:

63 unpaid carers – who were identified through Participation & Engagement activities were also emailed or posted copies of the survey.

Below details organisations placed throughout Fife who were contacted to distribute this survey to the unpaid carers they support. We thank each of them for their support.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Active Glenrothes Group | Al family group | Alzheimer Scotland |
| Asian Older People Group | Autism one stop shop | Autism rocks |
| Barnardos Scotland | Botanic Garden – St. Andrews | Social Work assistants  |
| CARF – Citizens Advice, Rights Scotland | Change Mental Health | Church of Scotland – Glenrothes Club |
| Circles advocacy  | SAMH – Association for mental health | CLEAR Buckhaven |
| Commissioned partners | Community voice | Crossroads |
| DB Scotland  | DMWS | Dunfermline advocacy  |
| SupportED | Enable | Equal Voice in Central Fife |
| Falkland Church Lunch Club | Fife’s Peoples Panel | Fife bus |
| Fife Care Providers Forum | Fife Carers Centre | Pilgrim CareRoyal volunteering services |
| Fife Centre for Equalities  | Fife Chinese Older People | Fife College |
| Fife Day Care Services Ltd | Fife family support services | Fife Forum |
| Fife MacMillian | Fife Shopping and Support Services | Fife sports and Leisure Trust  |
| Fife Young Carers | Forgan arts | Glenrothes Strollers |
| Hearing voices network | Homelands Fife | Home start Glenrothes |
| HSCP Localities  | Hyper club | IJB Public Rep |
| John Fergus Parent Council | Kindred | Kindred Advocacy |
| Kinghorn Community Centre | Later Life Choices | Lead - Scotland |
| Link Living | Marie Curie | NHS Fife - P&E Directory |
| Nourish  | Olivers Army | On your doorstep |
| Options in Life | PAMIS |  |
| Samaritans Dunfermline | Samaritans Kirkcaldy |  |
| Sense | Silverburn park |  |
| Social Workers  | STAND |  |
| The Bayview shed | The well – Fife Health and Social Care Partnership |  |