

## South Tees Carers Forum

### Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 (on zoom)

### Minutes

**Summary:** The Forum meeting discussed Taking forward [South Tees Carers Strategy Action Plans](#) with Forum members on Task Groups in July. Forum members shared information on their services, challenges and achievements since March, as well as collaborative working and plans. In addition to feedback on Carers Week 2021 and face to face social activities and interaction increasing as restrictions ease, there was a focus on how we share information and join up communications across South Tees to improve outcomes for Carers and We Care You Care developments. Research, reports and calls for engagement were also shared. The Minutes include weblinks and contacts, comments from the zoom chat and information shared after the meeting.

## ACTIONS

- Pt5 **Adopting the South Tees Carers Strategy:** All partners were encouraged to adopt the [South Tees Carers Strategy 2021-26](#) which was approved by the South Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Pt6 **July Task Groups:** All Forum members were asked to register for the Task Group meetings between 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> July to take forward the [Action Plan 2021-22](#). See Appendix for meeting dates and links and relevant papers. All details also available on the Forum's new [Task Group page](#) on We Care You Care. Forum members were also asked to invite any relevant stakeholders or partners who are not involved in the Forum, but who may wish to contribute to taking forward the Action Plan.
- Pt16-17 **Parent Carers:** Forum members to share information about Carers Together and [SEND Family Voice in R&C](#) one-off grants for Parent Carers of children with disabilities in Redcar & Cleveland; Carers Together to contact R&C Council Children's Disabilities Team (Becky Dale) about the grants; and [Shazana Arshad](#) to share information on Parent Carers' activities across R&C and Middlesbrough.
- Pt24 [South of Tees Dementia and Wellbeing Community Hub](#) – Forum members were asked to share news of the new hub across services, networks and with Carers (see Appendix 2 or follow link for details).
- Pt36 **Young Carers Poster Campaign:** Contact [eileen.cowle@thejunctionfoundation.com](mailto:eileen.cowle@thejunctionfoundation.com) for hard copy posters of [We Need Care Too – Young Carers Stories](#) to share across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland. Sarah Ross to share through social prescribers in GP surgeries across Tees Valley.
- Pt46 **Healthwatch South Tees Information and Signposting Service:** Forum members were asked promote the HWST [Information and Signposting Service for Redcar & Cleveland](#) and the [Information and Signposting Service for Middlesbrough](#) across services and to Carers (note in addition to online links, a free text service is available).
- Pt50 **HWST Carers work and engaging partners:** Contact [gill.durdan@pcp.uk.net](mailto:gill.durdan@pcp.uk.net) at HWST to link in with their expansion of work with Carers.
- Pt55 **We Care You Care website review:** Forum partners are asked to respond to the website review survey and encourage partners and Carers to complete this by 23<sup>rd</sup> July to inform its development. The [survey is available online survey monkey](#), as well as a [printable pdf version](#) available for anybody who needs it.
- Pt56 **Carers Communications Focus Group:** Forum members were asked to help engage a diverse group of Carers to participate in a Focus Group to inform a South Tees WCYC publicity campaign to reach more unpaid Carers and raise awareness of caring across South Tees. Contact [hello@wecareyoucare.info](mailto:hello@wecareyoucare.info)
- Pt59-60 **WCYC bloggers, case studies, ex-Carers support:** Forum members are asked to help engage any local carers or ex carers who may be interested in writing a blog post, to help gather local case studies using the [WCYC case study template](#) and to provide any information on support for ex-Carers. Contact [kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk](mailto:kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk)
- Pt64 **Patient Experience:** Jen Little to share the new Patient Experience leaflet on the new amalgamated service.
- Pt67 **Food distribution centre opportunities:** Contact Michael Janes [Michael@clr-uk.org](mailto:Michael@clr-uk.org) for information on the new food distribution centre in Teesside and to explore collaboration

**ATTENDANCE**

Elspeth	Alexander	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care)
Declan	Baharini	South Tees Carers Forum (Chair)
Kelly	Baxter	MVDA - Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (We Care You Care)
Renee	Brady	Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind (Carers wellbeing)
Hazel	Clark	Middlesbrough Council (Education and Partnerships)
John	Cooke	Carer
Emma	Cooper	Carers Together
Eileen	Cowle	The Junction Foundation (Young Carers Service)
Gill	Durdan	Healthwatch South Tees PCP (Engagement and Development)
Hannah	Erdem	Redcar and Cleveland Mind
Gareth	Harding	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Commissioning)
Carol	James	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Commissioning)
Michael	Janes	1600 Systems Ltd and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
Marie	Kerr	Age UK Teesside (Time Out Project)
Jen	Little - formerly Olver	NHS South Tees Hospitals Foundation Trust (Patient Experience and Involvement) James Cook University Hospital
Rebekah	McClelland	Sanctuary Housing
Campbell	McNeill	NHS England and NHS Improvement
Hayley	O'Shea	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Social Work)
Anne	Richards	RCVDA - Redcar & Cleveland Voluntary Development Association
Sarah	Ross	Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind
Mike	Sharman	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care)
Anne	Sykes	Age UK
Sue	Wadwell	Grandparents Plus Kinship Active programme
Joanne	Waldmeyer	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group
Chris	Walker	Middlesbrough Council (Commissioning)

**APOLOGIES**

Paula	Briggs	NHS - South Tees Integration Programme
Sharon	Chappell	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Empowering Communities, Adults and Communities Directorate)
Jo	Cole	Tees Valley Durham and North Yorkshire Neurological Alliance (TVDNY) Neuro Key
Gill	Cree	Alzheimers Society
Maureen	Dodsworth	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)
Daniel	Emmerson	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)
Carolyn	Granthier	Skills for People
Nicola	Hall	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Partnerships and Prevention - Early Help)
Clare	Mahoney	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council (Education)
Beth	Major	The Junction Foundation
Emma	McInnes	Middlesbrough Council (Public Health)
Ian	McNaughton	Middlesbrough Council (Adult Social Care - Learning Disabilities)

## MINUTES

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION

1. The Chair welcomed Forum members to the session and thanked everyone for their input since the last meeting in March. Forum members introduced themselves, including new members Carol James (who has taken on a commissioning role at Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council), Campbell McNeil (representing NHS England and NHS Improvement regionally) and Jo Waldmeyer (Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group) who will be on the Forum until August, after which a new representative will attend the Forum.
2. The Minutes and actions of the Forum meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March had been shared on 1<sup>st</sup> April and most actions had been followed up, apart from the delay in the meeting of the Task Groups.
3. Meeting after an intense period after the lifting of some restrictions, the Chair said that this was an opportunity for the Forum to share information about services, challenges and achievements since March and provide updates on collaborative working and plans. As well as getting feedback from Carers Week 2021 activities, the Forum would also look at maximizing the impact of communications and how we share information across South Tees to improve outcomes for Carers, supporting the Strategy's vision. Finally, the Forum would discuss reconvening Task Groups to take forward [South Tees Carers Strategy Action Plans](#) with Forum members. There would also be an opportunity for Forum members to raise any other business and developments which would benefit from sharing.

### UPDATES AND PROGRESS ON THE CARERS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (since March 2021)

4. The Chair had emailed an update to the Forum on 27<sup>th</sup> May concerning developments since the Forum on 24<sup>th</sup> March, including around the approval of the Strategy and the change to the timeline for commissioning Carers' services. She reiterated these at the meeting for new members, who may not have received the information.
5. **Approval of South Tees Carers Strategy 2021-2026:** The [South Tees Carers Strategy](#) was approved by the South Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Board in April and by the two local authorities and Tees Valley CCG in May and June. All partners were asked to seek adoption of the Strategy through their own Boards or governance mechanisms. The Strategy and [Action Plan](#) had been well received and Forum members were thanked again for their involvement and input into this, in particular throughout the incredibly challenging circumstances caused by the pandemic.
6. **Task Group sessions 5-14<sup>th</sup> July:** Although it was originally intended to have Task Groups in May, they will be meet in July to take the plans forward and dates were shared at the meeting (see Appendix 1). The Action Plan and the combined notes of the two task group sessions for each of the 5 Task Groups will be circulated this week with the zoom meeting links to all Forum members to enable anyone to register to attend and to gain an understanding of the background to the Action Plan and the detailed discussions and information sharing that has already taken place. In addition, the Chair encouraged Forum members to engage any other stakeholders or partners in the Task Groups to help discuss and take forward the Action Plans on the five Strategy themes. The Chair asked that, if possible, people register with her in advance: [declanbaharini@talktalk.net](mailto:declanbaharini@talktalk.net) so there is an idea of numbers and representatives attending.
7. **Recognising and Identifying Carers:** Linked to the Strategy and Action Plan, the Recognising and Identifying Carers document was circulated in March and May and with the reminder for the meeting. This document can be updated, but as no further comments have been received, it can be used to share through the Forum to help raise awareness of different types of Carers, hidden Carers and also ex-Carers or Carers transitioning from their role.

8. **Change of South Tees Carers Services commissioning timeline and extension of current contracts:** The Chair reiterated that the original commissioning timeline has been changed, due to the unprecedented circumstances. Existing commissioned Carers Services contracts have been extended to the end of March 2022. The revised timeline for commissioning South Tees Carers Services, is as follows:
- Invitation to Tender will be issued on 16<sup>th</sup> August with a closing date in mid-September
  - Tenders will be evaluated and there will be a standstill period in November
  - There will be a three-month mobilization period and it is expected that all new contracts and services will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

## FORUM MEMBERS PLATFORM

9. Forum members provided an update on their work, progress and achievements since March, including collaborative working and plans and activities and feedback from Carers Week 2021. Those providing commissioned Carers' services reported first in this session (Carers Together, Age UK Teesside, Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind, Redcar & Cleveland Mind and The Junction Foundation). Local authorities and other providers followed on with their updates. We Care You Care, also one of the commissioned services, was discussed in conjunction with looking at maximizing the impact of joined up communications across Tees Valley (notes are provided in the next section).

## CARERS TOGETHER (CT)

10. Emma provided an update on the work of [Carers Together](#), which supports adult, unpaid Carers across South Tees. Carers Together listen to Carers, give them a voice and provide information, practical and emotional support and promote Carers' rights.
11. **Carers feedback re hospital experiences:** CT's hospital service is supporting Carers and doing a lot of work with the Patient Experience team (Jen Little: NHS South Tees Hospitals Foundation Trust - Patient Experience and Involvement at St James' Cook Hospital). They have undertaken Carers' surveys and have been approaching Carers around visiting restrictions and their thoughts and feelings. There has been some negative feedback in terms of their experiences, which is being followed up.
12. **Carers Week** in June was successful, with lots of face to face, as well as online activities and groups. Emma said that it was good to resume seeing Carers face to face in the community and one of the highlights of the week was a boat trip involving 22 Carers.
13. **Building social interaction opportunities:** Emma said that there has been positive partnership working with Age UK and Redcar & Cleveland Mind, discussing activities and plans to promote and share activities in communities and raising awareness of what is happening in the area to help rebuild social interaction and opportunities for Carers.
14. **Face to face services and contact:** A priority has been to build up face to face contact, as restrictions ease, with a review of home visits and promotion of in person counselling services, as well as continuing to provide telephone contact. CT will go where Carers are going. Emma said that some people are anxious about coming into the office, so they have adapted and are using outdoor spaces, where appropriate.
15. **Parent Carers:** CT has secured funding for and is recruiting a [Parent Carer Practitioner](#), dedicated to supporting Parent Carers across South Tees to reengage with support services. As reported in Task Groups and in the Forum, for this group of Carers, as with others, there has been a breakdown of engagement, contact and support throughout the pandemic. Parent Carers have lost links with social work and support services.

16. Emma reported success in getting funding from Tees Valley CCG for [SEND Family Voice in R&C](#). This is for Parent Carers of children in Redcar & Cleveland with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who can apply for a one-off voucher of up to £100 to access equipment or activities. This is on a first come, first served basis as the fund is limited. To be eligible, the child or young person should have either an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or is in receipt of a Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment. Partners were asked to let people know about this opportunity.
17. Gareth asked Emma to ensure that she links with Becky Dale in the Redcar & Cleveland Children's Disability Team. Sarah Ross said that there is also a Parent Carers support project for Middlesbrough and asked Emma to contact Shazana ([shazana.arshad-ali@middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk](mailto:shazana.arshad-ali@middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk)) to share learning and activities across both areas.

## AGE UK TEESSIDE

18. Marie Kerr provided an update on [Age UK Teesside](#)'s work and partnership activities in relation to Carers.
19. [Befriending Services](#) for the Cared For are provided in R&C and Middlesbrough to allow Carers a break. The person is matched to an Age UK volunteer, based on their interests, background and work experience. Usually face-to-face, throughout lockdown and the pandemic, this service has been provided by telephone calls, often with the Carer and not cared for. Many older people are looking after people with dementia. The service was very fluid and volunteers did what they could to help people. 129 people were referred into the project and their age range was between 33-101. They also offer services in Middlesbrough through the [Time for You](#) project (Carers over 50) and in R&C through the [Time Out](#) project (for Carers over 18 years old).
20. Marie said there had been difficulties with the younger people, due to the vaccine situation. Thanks to the support of the Councils, volunteers had both vaccines, although sometimes the Carer and cared for had not, so there were some delays for those with conditions or who were vulnerable being able to meet in person outside. Marie said that there is a great pool of 50 volunteers in R&C who work across the Time Out and Befriending projects. Since beginning of project volunteers have provided 400 hours of befriending support, mainly by phone. People are starting to meet face to face and socializing, which is a positive development.
21. **Social activities and partnership working:** Age UK have linked in with walking projects in Marske and Redcar, where unpaid Carers and paid Carers are attending, including social prescribers. This has been an inclusive and welcoming place to come for social activity, with peer support and informal discussions being a key feature of the walks. Carers Week involved a walk in a park, with 30 people involved, both Carers and the cared for, which was also an opportunity to let them know about We Care You Care and the opportunity to access information, support and activities.
22. Marie said that Observations from older Carers, are that they feel that they can reach out for help. Many have felt overwhelmed with dealing with issues such as occupational therapy, benefits and Lasting Power of Attorney. Part of the support is to assist them to get the right help for their situation. Age UK works with Carers Together and Mind to ensure that the help is tailored to their needs and they can access collective and joined up support. This is particularly useful if people go off the radar for any reason, as a means to reengage them through their interaction with Age UK or the other services. There is a plan for Mind to come on the walks and introduce them into the casual conversation with Carers rather than formal referrals, in the first instance.
23. Marie said that they can also provide when a Carer's role stops for whatever reason. The sense of loss for the Carer can be overwhelming and they can refer people into the Befriending Service.

24. **South of Tees Dementia and Wellbeing Community Hub:** *After the meeting* Marie Kerr and Emma McInnes shared information with the Forum about the new [South of Tees Dementia and Wellbeing Community Hub](#) (see Appendix 2). This wellbeing and community drop-in hub for people living with dementia and their Carers and has been set up by Tees Esk and Wear Valley Trust. It was developed in collaboration with Public Health and Middlesbrough Council and will officially open on Wednesday 30 June (*the invite to the launch was also shared by email by Emma following the meeting*). The hub is based in Woodside Resource Centre on Cavendish Road in Middlesbrough. It will be a community base for people living with dementia and their Carers to meet up, take part in activities and events, chat to people from various support organisations for support, advice and help and access a 'one session' dementia assessment service. The hub will include health, social care and support organisations from across Middlesbrough, who will run the hub with support from Middlesbrough Council and VCS Organisations. See Appendix 2 for details. *Information shared after the meeting by Emma* also included the [Dementia UK Closer to Home Mobile Clinics](#) for access to Admiral Nurses, offering practical and emotional support for caring for someone with dementia.
25. Marie shared the [NHS Diabetes prevention Programme in partnership with Weight Watchers](#), which includes workshops, 24/7 online coaching, digital tools for activities and resources, as well as activity tracking.

#### MIDDLESBROUGH AND STOCKTON MIND

26. [Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind's Carers' Support Service](#) supports Carers and families across Teesside who care for children with mental health problems and adults with mental health issues, some of whom may not see themselves as a Carer, but are caring for family members or friends.
27. **Services during lockdown and beyond:** Renee said that M&S MIND continued to do walk and talk sessions throughout lockdown, with services also provided over the phone. Where people wanted it, there have been face to face, social activities and support, which is building up now. She said there have been a lot of external and internal referrals, with the best support for the person being determined and more joint working with drug and alcohol and other support networks. They have also been going into [Roseberry Park](#) (TEWV NHS Foundation Trust Hospital in Middlesbrough) 3 times a week to be visible and offer support for visitors to adults with mental health issues. This has been building slowly, as visiting restrictions still apply.
28. **Carers Week and social activities:** Renee said that as well as the walk and talk activities, Carers Week was very busy, with activities including bingo and brunch. The outdoor allotment and garden is popular, where Carers can go to meet, socialize, exercise and relax. There is a trip in August to Ocean Beach in South Shields for Carers and children, with 35 people going.

#### REDCAR & CLEVELAND MIND

29. [Redcar & Cleveland Mind](#) provide their [Carers Support Service](#) in partnership with Carers Together and Age UK's Time Out Service (see above) to support Carers in Redcar & Cleveland, supporting people one to one through a dedicated Mental Health Practitioner who can work with Carers around their mental wellbeing concerns, as well as in groups, including Carers Peer Support.
30. **Partnership working and learning from lockdown:** Hannah Erdem said that throughout the pandemic, they have continued to support any Carers unpaid or paid, or those who don't see themselves as Carers but do support people. They work closely in partnership with Age UK and Carers Together to ensure that Carers get the right support and that they are aware of what support and activities are available to them.
31. Hannah said that some Carers do not have access to internet or email, so they are continually finding other ways to communicate what is going on and to engage Carers. Informal engagement was important during lockdown and they offered support through walks and talks, as well as phone appointments. Telephone support will carry forward, as it is important for some Carers to be able to have a conversation without having to organize sitting services or someone to look after the person/people they care for. Hannah said

they have seen some Carers who are desperate for social interaction and these people benefit from talking to someone face to face and overcoming isolation.

32. The Carers Week coffee morning was held in person and also involved other agencies in a very informal setting, which was a good way for Carers to connect to other services. Mind has decided to have Carers' coffee mornings every month from now on. Emma Cooper said that she will speak in the mental health Carers group. There has been good, shared communications between Carers Together and Mind in both Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough. There is a positive working relationship across South Tees to promote engagement and collaborative work around mental health support and services for Carers.

## THE JUNCTION FOUNDATION

33. [The Junction Foundation](#) delivers the [Young Carers Service](#) across Tees Valley for children or young people under the age of 18 carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person which would normally be taken by an adult. They also provide support to Young Adult Carers, who are young people whose caring role has started or developed up to the age of 25. Their [Youth Employment Service](#) works with young people aged 15-25 (including Carers and Young Adult Carers), who are often furthest away from education and employment opportunities due to low confidence and self-belief, homelessness, relationships breakdown, substance misuse, poor mental health and emotional wellbeing, debt and income problems or often a complex combination of issues.
34. **Recovery of face to face services and support:** Eileen said that all the services are now moving towards more face to face support, which has made a big difference to the young people they work with. Some Young Carers, who had disengaged during the pandemic, are coming back, as many did not want online support or to talk on the phone, due to their personal preferences, circumstances at home or lack of access. She said that assessments are ongoing and face to face work in schools is progressing. They have also started to run group activities face to face outside in parks and other public spaces and this has been popular. She said that in the summer, there will be an activity programme, funded through Cash for Kids.
35. **Vaccine for 16-18 year-olds:** Eileen reported that the Young Adult Carers who are now eligible for the vaccine were really happy to be able to take this up and be vaccinated. Many had been anxious about those they care for and the risk of infection, so were very relieved to be vaccinated themselves.
36. **Carers Week – Young Carers Poster Campaign:** The Junction received a Middlesbrough Council small grant and worked on a poster campaign around Young Carers' stories. They have produced 6 posters, working with Young Carers who chose the themes and provided content and with the support of Redcar & Cleveland College media students. The posters were distributed for Carers Week across the area to 69 venues in Middlesbrough, including schools, pharmacies and GP surgeries, based on suggestions from Young Carers. The posters were also publicized through We Care You Care and are online here and can be downloaded: [We Need Care Too – Young Carers Stories](#). Eileen said that she was keen to share hard copies of the posters across Redcar & Cleveland as well (contact [eileen.cowle@thejunctionfoundation.com](mailto:eileen.cowle@thejunctionfoundation.com)). Sarah Ross said that she could help distribute the posters through social prescribers based in GP practices in Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland.
37. **Social activities and breaks:** Eileen said that the Step-to-Step Challenge in the Easter Holidays had been successful and enabled people to get out and get active and they hope to run this again. Young people were able to send in evidence of what they had done and either met other Young Carers to do it or did it alone, but it did give them the opportunity to do something positive and active.
38. The short breaks provision in R&C is linked in with Young Carers service and family assessments are carried out to highlight any additional needs and enable the child/young person to access these. This will be developing more in September and they will be looking at Parent Carers and children with disabilities. As restrictions ease, the Young Carers will be able to take a break away from the home.

## LOCAL AUTHORITY CARERS' SERVICES AND SUPPORT

39. Local authority partners, Gareth, Chris, Mike and Elspeth gave an update on Carers services and support. They said that some face to face services were operating during lockdown (most, in the case of R&C) and that some were operating at reduced capacity due to restrictions. In both areas, services are coming back and are slowly getting back to normal provision.
40. Gareth said that in Redcar & Cleveland, day services are open and were only closed for a short period of time in first lockdown. Learning Disabilities services are slowly opening back up. The Council carries out risk assessments every time new Government guidance becomes available around the changes in restrictions. He said that all the services are open, although some may be delivering at reduced capacity. The Council is delivering outreach in communities where they are not able to provide face to face services.
41. **Respite Care and visiting:** In Redcar & Cleveland, there has been an issue around respite care in care homes, where social workers are struggling to find homes who will take in people for respite. This has to do with forced isolation periods due to Covid risks. There are some barriers and Gareth suggested that awareness raising is needed. Both local authorities use a capacity tracker to determine what is available. In terms of care home visiting, this is being facilitated and is slowly getting back to normal, although there is no reduction in restrictions in June. Chris said that in Middlesbrough they contact all home care agencies in homes where there is respite, to determine if they are Covid safe and have capacity. She said that all of the day care centres are open and there is availability for respite care. Elspeth said that in Middlesbrough there are issues with one care home around access and the Council has informed them around current guidance and people's rights to visit, including for Carer respite.
42. **Hospital discharges and care homes:** Emma asked whether there are any problems with people getting into care homes after being discharged from hospital. Local authority partners said that there should not be issues now, although they noted the issues around visiting due to restrictions imposed in the lockdown. These were now around consent for people visiting, but these issues should be resolved now.
43. **Alternatives to care homes for breaks and respite:** John Cooke raised the point that not everyone who wants respite wants the cared for person to go to a care home and what alternatives were available. Redcar & Cleveland have sitting services, as well as the Age UK service. There is also domiciliary care available. There are some sector-wide issues around recruitment to domiciliary care and local authorities are seeking to address this through commissioning. Carers and the cared for can also use direct payments to access breaks. Gareth added that if Carers are struggling to access a break from their caring role the local authority can offer a Carer's assessment or review of their existing assessment and will put in services/support as necessary. Elspeth said that [Bankfields Court](#) in Normanby has opened this week and is fully functioning. This facility run by Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and offers respite for people with profound and multiple Learning Disabilities. The Deprivation of Liberty Service (DoLS) links to this facility through the DoLS framework.
44. **The ADASS Activity Survey** was conducted by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and sent to all Directors of Adult Social Services in 152 local authorities in England with adult social care responsibility. 91 completed returns and the survey report shows that: local authorities are seeing increased numbers of people seeking support for mental ill-health, domestic abuse and safeguarding, and homelessness; Closure and unavailability of some services (such as day services) has led to increased numbers of people seeking support for other social care services; and that Carers have taken on significant responsibilities during the pandemic as evidenced by Carers UK and other bodies, including those taking on caring responsibilities for the first time and those choosing not to, or not able to access services for the person they care for due to infection concerns. However, fewer Carers have contacted local authorities for support and fewer carer's assessments have been undertaken. This is despite Directors reporting an increasing number of people seeking support in the event of Carer breakdown or Carer unavailability. [ADASS Activity Survey 2021](#) (released 16 June 2021).

## HEALTHWATCH SOUTH TEES

45. Healthwatch South Tees is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. [Healthwatch Middlesbrough](#) and [Healthwatch Redcar & Cleveland](#) have been working together across Healthwatch South Tees (HWST), since 1 April 2017. HWST seeks to ensure that those running services put people at the heart of care and understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services. HWST speaks out on their behalf and advocates for improvements.
46. **HWST Information and Signposting Service:** Gill asked Forum members to note and promote their [Information and Signposting Service for Redcar & Cleveland](#) and the [Information and Signposting Service for Middlesbrough](#) across services and to Carers. HWST has a statutory duty to provide people with information and signposting so they can make informed choices about accessing health and social care services. Information is provided on both area websites for South Tees and for those people who don't want to use phone or be digital collection there is a free text service as an alternative.
47. [Experiences GP access, ongoing treatments and wellbeing throughout the pandemic \(March 2021\)](#). Gill said that the report is based on a survey response of 395 people's experiences, of which 33% of respondents identified as Carers. The findings show there are increasingly more experiences of people's physical and mental health deteriorating as a result of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions continuing throughout the year lasting longer than may have been initially anticipated. Long waiting lists for appointments, treatments and operations has been impacted by the reduction of face-to-face opportunities, e.g. for appointments, booking systems and communication, by the delays in service delivery and by the ever-increasing need for mental health support. The findings are echoed in the Healthwatch England report that collates national data, showing that these are national trends.
48. Recommendations included offering flexible appointment times, making reasonable adjustments to ensure improved accessibility, effective communication between services and patients throughout their care journey and increased awareness of alternative low-level support amongst professionals and the public. HWST is looking at how go forward with the lockdown research and doing more work on priorities coming from the outcomes of research.
49. [A Parent Carer Perspective: Replacing the Autism Pathway for 5 – 18 Year Olds across South Tees \(March 2021\)](#). Joint conversations have taken place across a range of partners to develop a new pathway for children with autism and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), aged between 5 and 18, which will replace the current autism pathway. Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (TVCCG) are leading these changes. New ways of working will involve a 'needs led' approach, providing a 'Bubble of Support' for families, from the point of referral and throughout this age span. HWST, as an independent stakeholder within these partnerships, was asked to engage with Parent Carers about their experiences of the current pathway, so that family experiences directly influence the new pathway. The report provides information on the proposals and findings from the consultation, as well as the impact of Covid and makes a series of recommendations. HWST are waiting on response from recommendations from the report. There has been a delay in implementation from the original April timescale and this is likely to now be September. Partners are looking at the issues raised by Parent Carers in the report and discussions are ongoing.
50. **Expanding work with Carers:** HWST is continuing virtual meetings with Parent Carers, which have expanded from Middlesbrough engagement to include Redcar & Cleveland. HWST is also holding themed meetings responding to Parent Carers, which includes working with [Tees Valley Buddies](#), a neurodiverse self-advocacy and peer support charity network. HWST is also facilitating a virtual event for Parent Carers across South Tees. They are starting to develop links and would like other Carers to be involved. HWST are to refocus work on health and care, going beyond the neurodevelopment pathway. Gill is seeking to work with a range of partners, joining up some work with organisations such as Carers Together and other Forum members. Contact [gill.durdan@pcp.uk.net](mailto:gill.durdan@pcp.uk.net) at HWST to link in.

## JOINING UP AND MAXIMISING IMPACT FOR CARERS FROM TEES VALLEY COMMUNICATIONS AND WE CARE YOU CARE DEVELOPMENTS

51. The Chair introduced the discussion around communications, which is a cross cutting priority for the South Tees Carers Strategy, supporting activity, collaboration and efficacy across all Action Plan themes.
52. **South Tees Carers Forum communications plan:** The South Tees Commissioning Group oversees the contract for We Care You Care (WCYC) and helps inform the development of the service. It was proposed in the South Tees Carers Strategy and Action Plan that there be an overarching communications plan and this is being considered by a newly formed group, involving the local authorities' and Tees Valley CCG communications leads and Kelly Baxter from We Care You Care. This should both complement and maximise the impact of the significant communications activities of partners, but also inform and help prepare and present coherent Tees Valley wide communications with Carers. It should help maximise the benefit of the collaboration, expand the range of communications tools and media available, as well as expanding the reach of different partners and those providing support to Carers and promoting Carers' voices and experiences.
53. **Forum communications:** The Chair reiterated the priority for the Forum of joining up communications and ensuring that Forum members are maximizing the impact from their collective efforts, in order to improve the outcomes for Carers. Much is already being achieved with Forum members regularly sharing information bilaterally, directly with Forum members (at the Forum meetings and through the mailing list) and through We Care You Care ebulletins and website. There has also been a huge amount of information sharing across the Task Groups, with each one feeding in suggestions around improving communications for the benefit of Carers, linked to the five Strategy themes, as well as the overall vision.
54. The Forum Chair has been having regular meetings with Kelly to discuss We Care You Care developments in relation to the Forum and information sharing. The [Forum page](#) and the [Task Group page](#) are being regularly updated to include the latest information and links. Forum members are encouraged to share details of any services, activities, case studies and opportunities with Kelly to be included in the website and shared through the regular ebulletin. The Chair thanked Kelly for the significant amount of work undertaken to expand the We Care You Care website to cover South Tees, with the addition of Redcar & Cleveland from April 2021 and for her support with the Forum related presence.

## WE CARE YOU CARE COMMUNICATIONS

55. **We Care You Care website review:** Kelly said that the review of the website is underway and seeks to ensure it is fit for purpose and is relevant, useful and easy to use for carers and professionals.. Details of the review will be sent out in the 23 June ebulletin. Kelly called for local carers and professionals who have visited the We Care You Care website, [www.wecareyoucare.info](http://www.wecareyoucare.info) to participate in a survey to help better understand which elements of the site are working well and where improvements are. Forum members were asked to share the survey widely and to complete the survey themselves by 23 July. The [survey is available online survey monkey](#), as well as a [printable pdf version](#) available for anybody who needs it.
56. **We Care You Care campaign and Carers Communications Focus Group:** Kelly is working with communication leads from the two local authorities and Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group to prepare a bigger publicity campaign for WCYC. Most output to date has been online, which misses Carers who cannot access information online. Kelly said that they would like to use resources within organisations and collectively across the Forum. The focus and foundation of campaign will be around sharing local Carers' stories and to aid the recognition and identification of Carers and their access to support and services. The group is establishing a Carers Communications Focus Group so they can feed in and influence the campaign and communications. It will explore what would help them from their perspective and their caring role. Forum members were asked to help engage a diverse group of Carers who may have an interest to contact her to discuss this opportunity further. Email: [hello@wecareyoucare.info](mailto:hello@wecareyoucare.info)

57. **[We Care You Care ebulletin](#)**: Kelly said that most Forum members have signed up to receive the ebulletin, but encouraged any who are not to do so at this link: [Subscribe to We Care You Care ebulletin](#). There has been an increase in information sharing through the website and ebulletin and Forum members are encouraged to continue to share content for the regular bulletins by contacting Kelly at [hello@wecareyoucare.info](mailto:hello@wecareyoucare.info).
58. Kelly responded to a question about GP sign up to the ebulletin, saying as yet none had subscribed, but she was writing a piece for a GP bulletin produced by Tees Valley CCG and will promote GP sign up. Chris suggested that it would also be useful to link with social prescribers.
59. **Seeking local bloggers and case studies**: Kelly reported that there is a resident blogger, Abby, for We Care You Care [sharing her experiences as a Parent Carer](#), her [latest blog post is online here](#) and the posts have been popular. Forum members were encouraged to read the posts, but also to engage any local carers or ex carers who may be interested in writing a blog post as a one-off or on a regular basis please contact Kelly at [kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk](mailto:kelly.baxter@mvdauk.org.uk). [Support and tips are provided to write blogs](#). In addition, Kelly asked for continued support to gather local case studies using the [WCYC case study template](#). WCYC is developing a bank of case studies that showcases the diversity of caring roles as well as the diversity of local Carers.
60. **Carers Week June 2021**: Kelly reported that the co-ordinated sharing campaign up to and during the week had been collaborative and very successful, with partners sharing and promoting local activities and website and facebook visits higher than usual. Local Carers stories were shared and there was a good response to these and to the blogs, with BBC Radio Tees picking up Abby's story. The Junction's Young Carers stories were widely promoted. It was an opportunity to show how local services are bringing back face to face services and Kelly worked with them to share a poster across the area to profile activities. Carers also shared their own pictures engaging in activities. Some ex-Carers engaged with facebook posts, as did people in Carers' roles, who didn't realise it. Kelly would like to prepare a page about support for ex-Carers in response to a comment, highlighting reasons why people are no longer in a caring role and what support is available. Forum members were asked to share any links or information about support.

## **BUILDING RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CARERS**

61. The Chair said that as with communications, building data and evidence is also a cross cutting priority to support and inform the Strategy and Action Plan and influence wider policy and decision making. There is an intention for a Data and Evidence Group involving data analysts from the local authorities and Tees Valley CCG to be established and for the work of Task Group 5 and partners to feed into this. There is already regular sharing of research reports and evidence across the Forum membership and through the We Care You Care bulletins and websites and the Chair thanked all members for their roles in this. By identifying and share data sets, research and qualitative data and evidence (such as case studies) around Carers, the Forum will help build the evidence base to inform future Carers services and support and to identify and address issues and challenges.
62. **ADASSNE Carers Survey**: Chris and Gareth reported that the survey was now closed. This had been carried out with the 12 local authorities in the region to dig deeper into the issues raised in the national Carers survey, as well as the impact of Covid and their feedback on the shape of future services. The data is not yet available, but will be analysed at local authority and regional level. It will be shared when available.
63. **NHS Improvement - Commitment to Carers mapping**: Campbell works as a leadership support manager across the region on the Commitment to Carers agenda from a health perspective. He has taken over from Kerry Knox and has been in post for a few months. He is undertaking mapping of provision for Carers across the region, which includes the North East, Cumbria and Yorkshire, The first layer of mapping is what information is available at the moment. This will not be restricted to health, but also joint working. He said that the Forum is a great example of statutory services, voluntary and community sector and a wide range

of providers and partners working together. The purpose of the mapping is to celebrate what works well, profile achievements, share good practice and look at gaps, i.e., where provision for unpaid Carers could be better. Campbell will engage with the Forum to learn more about the services and support available, as well as to share the map and ask for feedback.

64. **NHS Patient Experience and PALS merge:** Jen Little (formerly Olver) reported that NHS Patient Experience is amalgamating with Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Complaints will be part of one structure from 1 June and a new patient experience leaflet explains what they do and don't do. Jen will circulate this to Forum members shortly.
65. **NHS Patient Experience surveys:** Jen said that there is a lot of work being done around patient feedback. There are currently 26 patient surveys currently running to get feedback and she worked with Carers Together around a Carers survey on patient experience. She said that due to the restrictions in place for hospital visiting, there was a need to collect feedback from patients and Carers. Some of the experiences show that this has not been positive for Carers. Jen will do a presentation for ward matrons and managers to share feedback on how people felt about the lack of understanding of staff in terms of exclusions, restrictions and communications. There is a standard operating procedure for relatives during the pandemic, but infection prevention teams do not want to relax restrict as patients are immune-suppressed and they must ensure their safety. The staff also need to be kept safe and they are mindful that patients are sharing spaces in wards. The feedback will be shared and taken into consideration to inform how to move forward.
66. Gill asked about the communications strategy for patients around the restrictions and how patients and families can communicate. Jen said that the visiting restrictions are on the website with exemptions and all wards and departments are aware of these. Jen will reiterate the exemptions to the managers and departments with the feedback, so they all understand. Forum members can also share communications across their networks and through We Care You Care.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS: MESSAGE TRUST FOOD OPPORTUNITIES**

67. Michael Janes reported that there is an opportunity for Forum members to connect to activities around food parcels and distribution and for organisations like the Message Trust to link in with member to open up access to food parcels. They are creating a food distribution centre as part of a community led regeneration initiative that Michael leads and are seeking support to get the building built as part of an enterprise village. They already have the land and £3.5m to start the project off. The centre will cover the whole of the North East, Yorkshire and Humber. The Message Trust works across the UK and are now moving into the region. Michael felt that there was a great opportunity to work collaboratively. Contact [Michael@clr-uk.org](mailto:Michael@clr-uk.org) (Community Led regeneration email address) and [michael.janes@1600systems.co.uk](mailto:michael.janes@1600systems.co.uk) is the email address for anything web related and bespoke software.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- The Chair will send the Task Group dates and links out this week and Forum members are encouraged to register for Task Groups they are interested in and encourage any other stakeholders or partners to attend relating to the five Strategy themes
- The Minutes will be shared within 7 days, along with the Forum mailing list and Forum members are asked to pick up any actions relating to them and to continue the excellent collaboration across the membership
- The next full Forum meeting will be held in October 2021

#### **CLOSE**

## APPENDIX 1: SOUTH TEES CARERS FORUM TASK GROUPS – JULY 2021

Forum members are asked to register in advance for the Task Group meetings with the Chair by email at [declanbaharini@talktalk.net](mailto:declanbaharini@talktalk.net). They are also requested to invite any other stakeholders or partners who could contribute to these sessions.

All of the Task Group meeting dates and zoom links, as well as the Action Plan and combined notes of discussions of Task Groups from December to February are available on the We Care You Care website here: <https://wecareyoucare.info/professionals/resources/south-tees-carers-forum-task-groups>

### Task Group 1 SERVICES AND SYSTEMS THAT WORK FOR CARERS

**Time: Mon Jul 5, 2021 10:00 -11.30**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83641369547?pwd=ekVXZCsvcCtYM0dBbE5PdFZuT3ZFdz09>

Meeting ID: 836 4136 9547 Passcode: 124902

Refer to: South Tees Carers Strategy [Action Plan pages 2-4](#) and [Task Group 1 Combined Notes](#)

### Task Group 2 EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL WELL BEING

**Time: Tues Jul 6, 2021 10:00 -11.30**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85489066804?pwd=eXFIZDY0a1hFcGtyMCtXY0c2TIVxdz09>

Meeting ID: 854 8906 6804 Passcode: 805206

Refer to documents: South Tees Carers Strategy [Action Plan pages 5-7](#) and [Task Group 2 Combined Notes](#)

### Task Group 3 SUPPORTING YOUNG CARERS

**Time: Weds Jul 7, 2021 10:00 -11.30**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84189915630?pwd=SmdiV1B5R1dLUjFydml6dU9EcDFTdz09>

Meeting ID: 841 8991 5630 Passcode: 780319

Refer to documents: South Tees Carers Strategy [Action Plan pages 8-10](#) and [Task Group 3 Combined Notes](#)

### Task Group 4 RECOGNISING AND SUPPORTING CARERS IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

**Time: Weds Jul 14, 2021 10:00-11.30**

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84256644092?pwd=ZWwrZXdyVII2UUwza2N0NGtaOWwwQT09>

Meeting ID: 842 5664 4092 Passcode: 836140

Refer to documents: South Tees Carers Strategy [Action Plan pages 11-12](#) and [Task Group 4 Combined Notes](#)

### Topic: Task Group 5: BUILDING RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CARERS

**Time: Tues Jul 13, 2021 10:00-11.30**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83765871693?pwd=Q2E0S2d0ZFdx3RLNkl6SFVmQmRYZz09>

Meeting ID: 837 6587 1693 Passcode: 920606

Refer to documents: South Tees Carers Strategy [Action Plan pages 13-16](#) and [Task Group 5 Combined Notes](#)

## **APPENDIX 2: DEMENTIA AND WELLBEING COMMUNITY HUB AND DEMENTIA UK CLOSER TO HOME SUPPORT**

*Shared by Marie Kerr, Age UK Teesside and Emma McInnes, Public Health South Tees and Middlesbrough Council after the meeting (and emailed to the Forum mailing list by Emma McInnes)*

A new wellbeing and community drop-in hub for people living with dementia, and their carers has been set up by Tees Esk and Wear Valley Trust and has been developed in collaboration with Public Health and MBC and will officially open on Wednesday 30 June.

The South of Tees Dementia and Wellbeing Community Hub is based in Woodside Resource Centre on Cavendish Road, Middlesbrough and will be a community base for people living with dementia, and their carers, to meet up, take part in activities and events, chat to people from various support organisations for support, advice and help, and access a 'one session' dementia assessment service. The hub will include Health, social care and support organisations from across Middlesbrough, who will run the hub with support from Middlesbrough Council and VCS Organisations.

Information will be available at the hub for anyone pre- and post-dementia diagnosis. A drop-in dementia referral point will be available with information about TEWV's memory clinic services at Woodside Resource Centre. TEWV staff based at the hub will be able to book people in for a 'one session' clinic appointment for an initial dementia assessment, diagnosis and treatment where suitable. GPs can also refer people to this service. If a diagnosis cannot be offered at the 'one session' clinic, staff will support people to receive the right care via TEWV's dementia care pathway. The hub was also designed with input from TEWV's patient and carer participation group.

Refurbishment of the centre, including Dementia Friendly Furniture and equipment, has been purchased through funding donated by the Teesside Family Foundation, who have also offered long term support and sponsorship for hub, to enable ongoing activities for patients and cares, which will include days out and afternoon tea.

The hub will be open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm and daily activities, will include:

- gardening
- befriending support
- emotional support
- carers groups
- patient and carer activities that can be completed together
- drop in coffee mornings
- carpet bowls
- benefits advice
- and a single point of contact for queries regarding older people's mental health.

The Hub will enable people to stay well, through taking part in activities and events that interest them, to maintain independence and to live as well as possible. The Hub will also offer local older people living dementia and their carers, a base to come along and chat, enjoy activities and keep physically and mentally active. Many organisations will be on hand to support local people who might need advice, support or a friendly chat.

Anyone is welcome to come along to the Open Day on Wednesday 30 June from 10am – 1pm to find out more about the range of services and information on offer. Social distance guidelines will be adhered to and masks must be worn unless exempt.

Please also see the [Dementia UK Closer to Home Mobile Clinics](#) for access to Admiral Nurses. Admiral nurses have been considered a 'lifeline' for families, offering practical and emotional support for caring for someone with dementia.