Appendix C- Five Service Strands

The Five Service Strands represent the core areas of support that shall be available to carers throughout Lancashire. The Provider may deliver support directly, facilitate access through partner organisations, commission support through the VCFSE sector, or utilise a combination of delivery approaches.

The Provider shall ensure carers can access support across all five service strands regardless of their level of need, location, background or circumstances. The Provider shall also ensure that support delivered through the Five Service Strands is coordinated and integrated with assessment, support planning, brokerage and review processes.

Strand 1 – Information, Advice and Guidance

The Provider shall ensure carers have access to accurate, accessible and timely information that enables them to understand their rights, make informed decisions and access appropriate support.

This strand shall include:

1. Information regarding carers' rights and entitlements.
2. Welfare benefits and financial wellbeing information.
3. Information relating to health and social care services.
4. Guidance regarding housing, employment and education.
5. Access to information regarding respite and short breaks.
6. Information regarding opportunities for planned breaks from caring, including access to local, regional and national schemes that support carers to take time away from their caring responsibilities.
7. Access to digital tools, resources and platforms that support carers to access information, advice, wellbeing support, planning tools and self-management resources.
8. Emergency planning and contingency information.
9. Information about local community services and support opportunities.
10. Digital resources and self-help materials.
11. Information tailored to specific caring circumstances and needs.
12. Access to local and national support organisations.

The Provider shall ensure information is accessible through a range of channels and formats and can be adapted to meet the needs of carers with different communication requirements.

Strand 2 – Wellbeing, Prevention and Peer Support

The Provider shall provide access to preventative and early intervention support that enables carers to maintain their wellbeing, resilience and ability to continue caring safely.

This strand shall include:

1. Peer support groups.
2. Carers cafés and informal support networks.
3. Wellbeing and resilience programmes.
4. Emotional wellbeing support.
5. Social connection activities.
6. Health promotion and preventative interventions.
7. Confidence-building and self-management support.
8. Opportunities that reduce isolation and loneliness.
9. Targeted early intervention support for carers experiencing stress or pressure.
10. Activities that improve physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

The Provider shall promote participation in preventative support at the earliest possible stage to reduce the likelihood of carers reaching crisis point.

Strand 3 – Specialist Support

The Provider shall ensure carers have access to specialist support that reflects their individual circumstances, caring responsibilities and personal needs.

This strand shall include access to support for carers of people with:

1. Dementia.
2. Mental health conditions.
3. Learning disabilities.
4. Autism.
5. Long-term health conditions.
6. Physical disabilities.
7. Frailty and age-related conditions.
8. Substance misuse needs.
9. Complex or multiple needs.

The Provider shall also ensure specialist support is available for carers who may experience barriers to accessing mainstream services, including:

1. Carers from ethnically diverse communities.
2. Working carers.
3. Older carers.
4. LGBTQ+ carers.
5. Former carers.
6. Rural carers.
7. Carers experiencing digital exclusion.

The Provider shall work with Lancashire County Council and community partners to identify and address gaps in specialist provision.

Strand 4 – Engagement, Voice and Co-production

The Provider shall ensure carers are actively involved in shaping services and influencing the future development of support across Lancashire.

This strand shall include:

1. Carer engagement activities.
2. Consultation opportunities.
3. Co-production workshops.
4. Carer forums and networks.
5. Service user feedback mechanisms.
6. Participation in service design and improvement activity.
7. Representation within governance structures where appropriate.
8. Support for the Lancashire Carers Partnership Board.
9. Opportunities for carers to influence commissioning and service development.

The Provider shall demonstrate how feedback from carers informs service improvement, development activity and future priorities.

The Provider shall actively seek the views of carers from underrepresented groups and communities.

Strand 5 – Emergency Planning, Safety and Practical Support

The Provider shall ensure carers have access to support when caring arrangements become unstable, unsustainable or are at risk of breakdown.

This strand shall include:

1. Emergency planning.
2. Contingency planning.
3. Crisis intervention and support.
4. Carer breakdown prevention.
5. Practical support and problem-solving.
6. Access to emergency support arrangements.
7. Support to access a range of planned and emergency break opportunities that help maintain carer wellbeing, resilience and the sustainability of the caring role.
8. Facilitation of access to local, regional and national schemes that increase opportunities for carers to take breaks from caring.
9. Access to practical tools and resources that support emergency planning, contingency planning, wellbeing and caring sustainability.
10. Escalation into statutory services where required.
11. Assistance during unexpected changes in caring circumstances.
12. Support following significant events, emergencies or crisis situations.

The Provider shall actively identify and promote innovative opportunities that enhance support available to carers, including digital solutions, wellbeing resources, emergency planning tools and initiatives that increase access to breaks from caring. The Provider shall work with Lancashire County Council to embed and promote approved solutions throughout the Contract Period.

Delivery of the Five Service Strands

The Provider shall ensure that the Five Service Strands operate as a single integrated support offer rather than as separate services.

The Provider shall ensure carers can move easily between strands as their needs change and that support is coordinated through the wider Connecting Service model.

Delivery of the Five Service Strands shall be supported by:

1. Brokerage, Navigation and Support Coordination.
2. VCFSE Development and Market Shaping.
3. Effective partnership working.
4. Integrated referral pathways.
5. Ongoing review and outcome monitoring.

Through delivery of the Five Service Strands, the Provider shall ensure carers:

1. Receive timely support.
2. Can access appropriate information and advice.
3. Experience improved wellbeing and resilience.
4. Feel less isolated.
5. Have access to specialist support when required.
6. Can influence services that affect them.
7. Are supported to plan for emergencies and periods of crisis.
8. Maintain sustainable caring relationships for as long as they choose and are able to do so.