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Lancashire Carers Service Specification

1. Introduction

This Specification has been developed through a co-production approach involving unpaid carers, partner organisations and professionals across Lancashire. Lancashire County Council recognises that unpaid carers are experts by experience, and their views, insights and lived experiences have directly informed the design, priorities and requirements set out within this document.

1.1 Vision for the Lancashire Carers Service

Lancashire County Council is committed to delivering a modern, preventative and person-centred carers support service that helps unpaid carers access the right support at the right time. The Service will focus on early identification, improving wellbeing, preventing crisis, and enabling carers to maintain their own health, independence and quality of life alongside their caring role.

The Service will adopt a neighbourhood-based approach, working collaboratively with health, social care, community and VCFSE partners to strengthen local support and improve outcomes for carers. A key principle of the Service is ensuring carers are recognised, valued and supported as equal partners in care.

The Council expects the Service to reduce barriers to support, increase the identification of hidden carers, improve access to information and preventative services, and empower carers to influence the ongoing development and improvement of support available across Lancashire.

1.2 Lancashire Carers Profile

Unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting residents across Lancashire and are essential to the sustainability of health and social care services.

According to Census 2021 data, approximately 112,737 people across the Lancashire County Council area provide unpaid care, representing 9.6% of the population aged five years and over. This is higher than the national average of 8.8%. More than half of unpaid carers are female, and the estimated value of unpaid care provided across Lancashire is approximately £3.7 billion annually.

The Council recognises that many carers remain unidentified and unsupported and may not access support until they experience significant pressures, deterioration in wellbeing, or risk of caring breakdown.

1.3 Current Service Activity

The current Lancashire Carers Service supports a significant number of carers across Lancashire.

Current activity demonstrates:

- Approximately 48,500 carers registered on the current service database.
- Approximately 5,900 carers receiving direct support each quarter.
- Approximately 1,700 referrals received each quarter.
- Approximately 960 assessments completed each quarter.

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- More than 2,100 annual reviews completed each quarter.
- More than 2,100 carers supported to access breaks from caring each quarter.

Detailed demand and activity information is provided within **Appendix G**.

1.4 Purpose

Lancashire County Council commissions services that support unpaid carers to maintain their health, wellbeing, independence and resilience whilst undertaking their caring responsibilities.

The Lancashire Carers Service shall provide a countywide, integrated system of support for adult carers (aged 18+), ensuring carers are identified, recognised, assessed and connected to appropriate support at the earliest possible opportunity. The Service shall work together with commissioned Young Carer services to ensure a smooth transition into adult services.

The service shall support the delivery of the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and contribute to wider strategic objectives including prevention, early intervention, strengths-based practice, neighbourhood working and the development of resilient communities.

The service shall operate through a coordinated model that enables carers to access assessment, information, advice, community support, preventative interventions and specialist services through a seamless pathway.

The Service must support a shift towards earlier recognition of carers and ensure support is provided before carers reach crisis point. The Council seeks to improve the visibility of carers within health, social care and community settings and ensure carers are recognised as equal partners in care, support planning and decision-making.

1.5 Service Aims

The Lancashire Carers Service shall deliver a person-centred, strengths-based and preventative approach that recognises carers as equal partners in care and support. The Service aims to identify carers early, respond to changing needs and help carers maintain their wellbeing, resilience and independence throughout their caring journey.

The Service must:

- Identify carers at the earliest opportunity.
- Improve access to support.
- Improve wellbeing and resilience.
- Reduce isolation.
- Prevent crisis and caring breakdown.
- Improve access to respite and breaks from caring.
- Increase support for hidden carers.
- Strengthen community-based support.
- Improve coordination across services.
- Support carers to achieve outcomes that matter to them.
- Recognise carers as equal partners in care, support planning and decision-making.

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2. Policy and Strategic Framework

The Lancashire Carers Service shall operate within a policy and strategic framework that reflects national legislation, statutory guidance, local priorities and wider system transformation objectives. The Service shall support Lancashire County Council in delivering its responsibilities towards carers whilst contributing to improved outcomes through prevention, early intervention, strengths-based practice, neighbourhood working and partnership-based approaches.

2.1 Legislative and Policy Context

The Lancashire Carers Service shall be delivered in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and local policies. The Provider must ensure that all aspects of service delivery support the Council in meeting its statutory responsibilities towards carers and are underpinned by principles of wellbeing, prevention, safeguarding, equality and person-centred practice.

The Service must support Lancashire County Council in meeting its statutory duties under:

- Care Act 2014.
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Data Protection legislation.
- Lancashire safeguarding policies and procedures.

2.2 National Policy Context

The future Lancashire Carers Service aligns with the UK Government's 2026 Unpaid Carers Action Plan, Recognise, Refer, Reach, which sets out a cross-government commitment to improve outcomes for unpaid carers through earlier identification, stronger referral pathways and improved access to support.

The Action Plan recognises that carers often remain unidentified, experience fragmented services and face challenges relating to their health, wellbeing, employment, education and financial circumstances. The Government has identified three key priorities:

1. Recognising carers.
2. Referring carers to appropriate support.
3. Supporting carers to achieve their potential.

The Lancashire Carers Service must contribute to these national priorities by ensuring carers are identified at the earliest opportunity, connected to appropriate support and enabled to maintain their own wellbeing, aspirations and independence alongside their caring role.

2.3 Strategic Context

The Lancashire Carers Service forms part of Lancashire County Council's wider Adult Social Care transformation programme and wider approach to improving outcomes through prevention, early intervention and community-based support.

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The Lancashire Carers Service forms part of the Council's wider approach to improving outcomes through prevention, early intervention and community-based support:

- Strengths-based practice.
- Prevention and early intervention.
- The Three Steps model.
- Neighbourhood working.
- Community-led support.
- Integration between health, social care and the VCFSE sector.

The Service also aligns with the Government's 2026 Unpaid Carers Action Plan, reflecting the principles of:

- Recognising carers.
- Referring carers to support.
- Supporting carers to reach their potential.

2.4 Strategic Outcomes

The Council intends to move towards a model that places carers at the centre of support and provides timely access to assessment, information, advice, preventative services and community-based support.

The Provider must contribute towards the following strategic outcomes:

1. More carers are identified and recognised.
2. Hidden carers are identified earlier.
3. Carers receive support before reaching crisis point.
4. Carers experience improved wellbeing and resilience.
5. Carers feel less isolated.
6. Carers can access support more easily.
7. Carers receive coordinated and person-centred support.
8. Caring relationships remain sustainable for longer.
9. Access to respite and preventative support improves.
10. Community capacity to support carers increases.
11. Lancashire benefits from a diverse, sustainable and responsive carers support system.

Strategic Outcome	**Example Measures**
More carers identified	Number of new carers identified
Improved wellbeing	Carer-reported wellbeing measures
Reduced isolation	Participation in peer support/community activity
Increased access to support	Time from referral to intervention
Sustainable caring arrangements	Reduced caring breakdown

These outcomes shall inform service delivery, performance monitoring and contract management arrangements.

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3. Scope of Service

The Lancashire Carers Service shall provide a coordinated and accessible countywide offer that supports carers throughout their caring journey. The Service shall ensure carers are able to access assessment, information, advice, support and community-based opportunities appropriate to their individual circumstances and needs.

3.1 Eligible Service Users

3.1.1 Service Eligibility

a) Adult Carers (18+) who provide or are intending to provide care for another individual (who is 18+) deemed (at relevant times when the Carer provides the care to that other person) to be Ordinarily Resident within the Authority's administrative area.
b) Former Carers (18+)- the Service Provider will support the Carer for no more than one (1) year following their caring role coming to an end as long as the cared for person continues to be an Ordinary Resident of the administrative area of the Authority

3.1.2 eligibility for Carers' Assessments is restricted to:

a) Adult Carers (18+) who provide or are intending to provide care for another adult (18+) deemed to be Ordinary Resident of the administrative area of the Authority.

3.2 Geographic Coverage

The Service must be available across the Lancashire County Council administrative area.

The current service footprint covers the North, Central and East Lancashire localities. The Provider must be capable of delivering equitable access to services across all communities within the Contract Area.

Lancashire is currently subject to national Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals. Consequently, the administrative boundaries and local government arrangements applicable to this Service may change during the lifetime of the Contract. The Provider shall be required to work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council and any successor authority or authorities to ensure continuity of service delivery and support any reasonable changes to service geography, operating arrangements, referral pathways, reporting requirements or contractual arrangements arising from LGR implementation.

3.3 Access Arrangements

The Provider must operate a countywide single point of access. The Provider must make reasonable adjustments to ensure services are accessible to carers with communication, Cultural needs, sensory, physical, cognitive or digital access needs.

Referrals must be accepted from:

- Self-referrals.
- Family members.
- Health services.
- Adult Social Care.
- Community organisations.
- VCFSE organisations.

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- Other professionals.

The Service must be accessible via:

- Telephone.
- Digital channels.
- Community venues, including health services.
- Face-to-face support.

3.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Provider must ensure services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of Lancashire's diverse carer population.

The Service must actively seek to identify and engage carers who may be less likely to access support, including but not limited to:

- Hidden carers.
- Carers from minority ethnic communities.
- Working carers.
- Rural carers.
- Older carers.
- LGBTQ+ carers.
- Carers supporting individuals with mental health needs.
- Carers supporting individuals affected by substance misuse.
- Carers experiencing multiple disadvantages.

The Provider should demonstrate how barriers to access shall be identified and addressed to support equitable outcomes for all carers.

3.5 Regulatory and Legal

The Service Provider shall comply with all relevant legislation relating to the Service, including any updates and amendments. It is the Service Provider's responsibility to keep up to date with any such developments. Listed below is some of the Legislation or Policy Guidance relevant to the Service:

a) Care Act 2014, including the Care and Support Statutory Guidance and carers' rights provisions.
b) Children and Families Act 2014.
c) Equality Act 2010.
d) Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
e) Human Rights Act 1998.
f) Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations.
g) Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.
h) Mental Capacity Act 2005 and associated Code of Practice.
i) Health and Care Act 2022.
j) Carer's Leave Act 2023.
k) Care Quality Commission (CQC) Regulatory Framework (where applicable).
l) NHS Long Term Plan and any subsequent national NHS policy relating to unpaid carers.
m) NHS England guidance relating to the identification, involvement, and support of unpaid carers.

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n) Government policy relating to unpaid carers, including the current *Unpaid Carers Action Plan: Recognise, Refer, Reach* and any successor strategy or action plan.
o) Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) good practice guidance relating to carers and community-based support.
p) Any relevant Lancashire County Council strategies, policies, procedures, and partnership frameworks relating to carers, prevention, wellbeing, community capacity, and neighbourhood working.

4. Service Operating Model

The Lancashire Carers Service shall operate through an integrated model that combines statutory assessment responsibilities with coordinated support, navigation and community-based interventions. The model is designed to ensure carers receive timely, proportionate and person-centred support whilst promoting prevention, resilience and sustainable caring relationships.

4.1 Overview

The Lancashire Carers Service shall comprise two interconnected service functions. Both functions shall be delivered by a single contract Provider, ensuring carers experience a seamless and coordinated pathway of support.

Assessment Service

Responsible for:

- Assessment.
- Review.
- Support planning.
- Eligibility considerations.
- Risk identification.
- Care Act responsibilities.

Connecting Service

Responsible for:

- Delivering support.
- Coordinating support.
- Developing community capacity.
- Building and maintaining strong relationships with VCFSE organisations.
- Strengthening support systems.

The relationship between the two functions is illustrated in the Service Model Diagram contained within **Appendix A.**

4.2 Carer Journey and Service Delivery Principles

The Lancashire Carers Service shall provide a coordinated, person-centred and strengths-based model of support that enables carers to access the right support at the right time. The Council intends to appoint a single Provider to deliver all elements of the Service, ensuring

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carers experience a seamless and integrated pathway from identification and initial contact through to assessment, support, review and ongoing engagement.

The Service shall be designed and delivered in a way that promotes early intervention, prevention and the sustainability of caring relationships. The Provider shall ensure that carers can easily access information, advice, guidance and support through a range of channels, and that support is proportionate to individual need, circumstances and desired outcomes.

The Service shall be underpinned by the following principles:

- **Person-centred:** recognising carers as experts in their own circumstances and tailoring support to individual strengths, needs and aspirations.
- **Strengths-based:** building upon the capabilities, assets and support networks available to carers, their families and local communities.
- **Preventative:** promoting wellbeing, resilience and caring sustainability though early intervention and timely support.
- **Accessible and inclusive:** ensuring all carers, including those from underrepresented and seldom-heard communities, are able to access support.
- **Integrated and coordinated:** providing a seamless experience across all elements of the Service and minimising duplication for carers.
- **Outcome-focused:** supporting carers to achieve outcomes that matter to them and regularly reviewing progress against these outcomes.
- **Responsive and flexible:** recognising that caring circumstances change over time and ensuring support can adapt accordingly.
- **Co-produced:** involving carers in the planning, delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement of services.

The Provider shall maintain oversight of the carer journey and ensure carers are supported to move between different elements of the Service without unnecessary barriers, delays or repetition of information. A detailed illustration of the carer journey can be found in **Appendix F.**

The Provider shall work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council and wider system partners to ensure carers receive coordinated support and are connected to appropriate statutory, community and voluntary sector services where required.

4.3 Seven Keys to Citizenship

The Provider shall deliver the service in accordance with the Seven Keys to Citizenship framework, recognising carers first and foremost as citizens with strengths, aspirations, rights, relationships and opportunities beyond their caring role. The Provider shall embed the Seven Keys to Citizenship throughout the service design, assessment, support planning, delivery, workforce development, partnership working and co-production activities. The framework comprises seven interconnected elements: Purpose, Freedom, Money, Home, Help, Life and Love.

The Provider shall demonstrate how the Service supports carers to:

- **Purpose:** identify and pursue goals, aspirations, interests and opportunities that are meaningful to them, recognising that carers should be supported to achieve outcomes beyond their caring responsibilities.

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- **Freedom:** exercise choice, control and influence over decisions affecting their lives, ensuring carers are supported to make informed decisions and shape the support they receive.
- **Money:** access information, advice and support relating to financial wellbeing, benefits, grants and entitlements, enabling carers to achieve greater financial security and independence.
- **Home:** maintain safe, stable and sustainable living arrangements that support their wellbeing and ability to continue caring where appropriate.
- **Help:** access timely, personalised and proportionate support from formal services, community resources and informal networks, ensuring carers receive the right support at the right time.
- **Life:** participate in community life, maintain interests, develop skills, access opportunities and make valued contributions within their communities.
- Love: develop and maintain relationships, friendships, family connections and support networks that are important to them and contribute to their wellbeing.

The Provider shall ensure that assessments, support planning and outcome measurement consider the extent to which carers are able to achieve and maintain these seven elements of citizenship. The Provider shall adopt a strengths-based and asset-based approach, recognising carers' existing capabilities, networks and community connections, and shall work with carers to identify actions that promote full and equal citizenship.

The Provider shall evidence how the Seven Keys to Citizenship framework informs service delivery and contributes to the achievement of the Service outcomes set out within this Specification.

5. Assessment Service

5.1 Purpose

The Assessment Service shall be the statutory gateway into the Lancashire Carers Service and shall be responsible for identifying carers, assessing need, determining eligibility, supporting decision-making and ensuring that carers receive an appropriate and proportionate response.

The Assessment Service must operate in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance whilst supporting Lancashire County Council's ambition to deliver strengths-based and preventative interventions wherever possible.

5.2 Responsibilities

The Provider must:

- Receive referrals.
- Identify carers.
- Undertake assessments.
- Complete statutory Carer's Assessments.
- Complete reviews.
- Undertake reassessments.

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- Identify eligible needs.
- Complete support planning.
- Develop contingency arrangements.
- Record activity on approved systems.
- Escalate any risks to the Council.

5.3 Assessment Model

The Provider must deliver the Lancashire Living Better Lives assessment model.

The Provider shall deliver the statutory assessment function in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and the requirements set out within **Appendix B.**

The Provider shall ensure carers have timely access to strengths-based, person-centred and outcome-focused assessments that identify individual needs, desired outcomes, available support networks and opportunities for preventative intervention. The Provider shall be responsible for completing statutory Carer's Assessments, support planning, reviews and the administration of Carer Payments in accordance with Lancashire County Council policies, procedures and guidance.

The Provider shall ensure assessments are completed within the timescales specified in **Appendix B** and that all assessment activity, support plans and review outcomes are recorded and maintained in accordance with Lancashire County Council requirements.

Where eligible needs are identified, the Provider shall work with carers to develop personalised support plans focused on achieving agreed outcomes, maintaining wellbeing and supporting the sustainability of the caring role. The Provider shall utilise Lancashire County Council's Resource Allocation System (RAS) and administer Carer Payments in accordance with agreed policies, procedures and delegated responsibilities.

The Provider shall undertake ongoing review activity to ensure support remains appropriate, effective and responsive to changing circumstances. Reviews shall be outcome-focused and used to assess progress against identified outcomes, the effectiveness of support arrangements and whether changes to support plans, Carer Payments or wider support arrangements are required.

The Provider shall be able to demonstrate that assessment, support planning, review and Carer Payment processes contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes for carers and support carers to maintain their health, wellbeing and independence.

5.4 Service Expectations

The Provider must deliver a timely, proportionate and strengths-based response to carers, ensuring support is responsive to individual circumstances and focused on improving wellbeing, resilience and caring sustainability.

The Provider shall be expected to:

- Prioritise early intervention wherever possible.
- Undertake assessments and reviews and support planning activities within timescales agreed with the Council.
- Identify risks to carer wellbeing, resilience and the sustainability of the caring role.

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- Promote strengths-based approaches, community assets and local support networks.
- Work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council, health partners, district councils, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure carers experience a coordinated and seamless journey through the service, minimising duplication and reducing the need to repeat information.
- Maintain accurate, timely and auditable records of assessments, interventions, decisions and outcomes.
- Monitor outcomes and demonstrate the impact of support provided to carers.
- Ensure support remains flexible and responsive to changing needs and circumstances.

Detailed operational requirements and performance standards shall be developed through the procurement process.

5.5 Digital Solutions

Lancashire County Council recognises the role that digital solutions can play in improving access to information, advice, guidance and support for unpaid carers. The Provider shall utilize and promote appropriate digital tools and platforms as part of a comprehensive carers support offer, enabling carers to access support in a timely, flexible and accessible way. Digital provision should support the delivery of preventative, person-centred and strengths-based approaches, improve the reach of the service, and contribute to the identification and engagement of carers who may not otherwise access support. Any digital offer must complement and enhance, rather than replace, direct personal support and ensure that carers who are digitally excluded are able to access equivalent support through alternative channels.

The Provider shall:

- Promote and facilitate access to any Council-approved digital carers platform, application or online support too, including the Lancashire Service Finder.
- Support carers to register for and make effective use of digital services where appropriate to their needs and preferences.
- Ensure that digital solutions form part of an integrated support pathway and are aligned to assessment, information and advice, wellbeing, emergency planning and ongoing support arrangements.
- Use digital methods to support early intervention, self-management, preventative approaches and improved access to support.
- Work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council to implement, promote and embed any new digital solutions introduced during the term of the Contract.
- The Provider shall work collaboratively with external partners, including Carefree and Carers Card UK, to maximise opportunities for carers to access breaks from caring, wellbeing opportunities, discounts, benefits and other practical support that contributes to their resilience and quality of life.

The Council reserves the right to introduce, amend or commission additional digital solutions during the Contract Period. The Provider shall be required to work collaboratively with the Council and relevant partners to integrate such solutions into the Lancashire Carers Service and ensure carers are able to derive maximum benefit from available digital resources.

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5.6 Emergency Planning and Contingency Support

Lancashire County Council recognises that effective emergency and contingency planning is a key component of supporting carers to maintain their caring role, reduce anxiety and improve resilience. The Provider shall ensure that carers are supported to consider and plan for situations in which they may be unable to fulfil their caring responsibilities due to illness, accident, personal circumstances or other unforeseen events. Emergency planning should form part of a wider preventative approach that helps carers prepare for potential disruptions and reduces the risk of crisis for both the carer and the person they support.

The Provider shall be responsible for supporting carers to develop, review and maintain personalised emergency and contingency plans that are proportionate to their individual circumstances. This should include consideration of available family, community, voluntary sector and statutory support networks, as well as the recording of key information required to support an effective response should an emergency occur.

The Provider shall work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council and relevant partners to promote awareness of emergency planning, encourage uptake across the carer population and contribute to the ongoing development of emergency support arrangements. The Council may review, redesign or introduce enhanced emergency support models during the Contract Period and the Provider shall be expected to support the implementation and continuous improvement of these arrangements.

The Provider shall monitor the effectiveness of emergency planning activity and provide information to the Council regarding uptake, outcomes, identified gaps and opportunities for service improvement.

5.7 Co-production and Carer Voice

Lancashire County Council is committed to ensuring that carers have a meaningful influence on the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of services that affect them. The Provider shall adopt a co-production approach that values the expertise, experiences and perspectives of carers and ensures that their voices are embedded throughout service delivery and continuous improvement activity.

The Provider shall establish and maintain mechanisms which enable carers to contribute to service redesign, review and development, ensuring opportunities are accessible, inclusive and representative of the diverse carer population across Lancashire. Co-production activity should move beyond consultation and demonstrate how carers have actively influenced decisions, service improvements and future priorities.

The Provider shall be expected to:

- Develop and maintain a structured approach to co-production and engagement with carers.
- Ensure opportunities are available for carers to contribute to both operational and strategic service development.
- Seek and promote participation from a diverse range of carers, including those from seldom-heard and underrepresented communities.
- Gather, analyse and act upon carer feedback to support continuous improvement.
- Demonstrate how feedback and co-production activity have informed decision-making through regular "You Said, We Did" reporting.

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- Support carers to participate in relevant partnership boards, engagement forums, service reviews and commissioning activity where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council to identify emerging issues, opportunities and priorities identified by carers.
- Ensure carers are informed of the outcomes and impact of their involvement.

The Provider shall evidence how co-production activity has influenced service delivery, improved outcomes for carers and contributed to the ongoing development of the Lancashire Carers Service.

5.8 Identification and Engagement of Hidden Carers

Lancashire County Council recognises that many carers do not identify themselves as carers and may therefore be unaware of the support available to them. The Provider shall take a proactive approach to identifying, engaging and supporting hidden carers, ensuring that groups who may be less likely to access support are able to receive timely information, advice and assistance.

The Provider shall work with statutory services, health partners, employers, educational settings, community organisations and voluntary sector partners to increase awareness of caring roles and improve opportunities for early identification and intervention.

The Provider shall be expected to:

- Develop and implement an ongoing approach to identifying and engaging hidden carers across Lancashire.
- Promote awareness of carer's rights, available support and routes into the service. The Provider shall make referrals where appropriate to the commissioned Lancashire Carers Advocacy Service, Carers Count.
- Undertake targeted outreach activities designed to reach communities and individuals who may not traditionally identify as carers.
- Work collaboratively with health services, primary care, hospitals, social care teams and community organisations to improve identification and referral pathways.
- Promote the identification of carers within workplaces, educational settings and local communities.
- Ensure support is accessible and culturally appropriate for carers from diverse backgrounds.
- Utilise digital, community and partnership-based approaches to increase awareness and engagement.
- Monitor and report on activity undertaken to identify hidden carers, including outcomes achieved and learning identified.

The Provider shall demonstrate how its approach contributes to increased awareness, earlier identification of carers and improved access to support for individuals who may otherwise remain unknown to services.

6. Connecting Service

6.1 Purpose

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The Connecting Service shall act as the central coordination and delivery function of the Lancashire Carers Service.

The purpose of the Connecting Service is to ensure that carers can access the right support, at the right time, through the most appropriate pathway, whilst contributing to the development of a sustainable and responsive carers support system across Lancashire.

6.2 Component One – Carer Support

This component represents the support available to carers.

Support must be delivered through the following five service strands:

1. Information, Advice and Guidance.
2. Wellbeing, Prevention and Peer Support.
3. Specialist Support.
4. Engagement, Voice and Co-production.
5. Emergency Planning, Safety and Practical Support.

Detailed requirements are contained within **Appendix C.**

The Provider will be expected to develop and maintain relationships with organisations that can enhance the support available to carers. This may include working with partners such as Carefree and Carers Card UK to promote access to short breaks, wellbeing opportunities, discounts, benefits and other resources that help carers maintain their health, wellbeing and resilience in their caring role.

6.3 Component Two – Navigation and Brokerage

This component ensures carers can access and navigate support effectively.

The Provider must:

- Coordinate access to services.
- Undertake managed referrals.
- Undertake warm handovers.
- Coordinate multi-agency interventions.
- Support access to respite.
- Support crisis prevention activity.
- Facilitate joined-up working across organisations.

Detailed requirements are contained within **Appendix D.**

6.4 Component Three – Community Capacity and System Development

The Provider must support development of a sustainable and responsive support system for carers across Lancashire.

The Provider must:

- Develop VCFSE partnerships.

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- Maintain intelligence regarding local provision.
- Identify service gaps.
- Promote community capacity building.
- Support innovation.
- Improve support available to underserved communities, ensuring services are visible and recorded on the Lancashire Service Finder.

Detailed requirements are contained within **Appendix E.**

6.5 Service Expectations

The Connecting Service must provide an accessible and coordinated approach to supporting carers following assessment or self-identification.

The Provider shall be expected to deliver or facilitate access to a range of support options which may include:

- Information, advice and guidance.
- Peer support opportunities.
- Wellbeing and preventative interventions.
- Support groups and community activities.
- Access to breaks from caring.
- Specialist support pathways.
- Emergency planning support.
- Community-based solutions and resources.

The Provider may determine the most appropriate delivery methods provided contractual requirements and service outcomes are achieved.

7. Partnership Working, Community Capacity & System Development

7.1 Community Capacity & VCFSE Development

Lancashire County Council recognises the important role that VCFSE organisations play in supporting unpaid carers and contributing to preventative, community-based support. The Provider shall play an active role in strengthening and developing the support available to carers across Lancashire by working collaboratively with VCFSE organisations, community groups and wider system partners.

The Provider shall contribute to the development of a sustainable and diverse market of support for unpaid carers by identifying gaps in provision, supporting collaboration and partnership working, sharing intelligence regarding emerging need and facilitating opportunities for service development and innovation. This should include promoting community-based solutions, supporting asset-based approaches and increasing the range of local opportunities available to carers.

The Provider shall work with Lancashire County Council and partner organisations to support the development of new and existing VCFSE provision that improves outcomes for carers. This may include supporting organisations to understand identified needs and community priorities,

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promoting partnership opportunities, facilitating networking and collaboration, and supporting initiatives that complement and enhance the wider Lancashire carers offer.

The Provider shall actively support VCFSE organisations to identify, access and maximise external funding opportunities that contribute to improved outcomes for unpaid carers. This may include promoting relevant grant programmes, sharing intelligence regarding funding opportunities, supporting partnership and consortium development, facilitating collaboration between organisations and supporting the development of funding applications or bid proposals where appropriate.

The Council may, during the Contract Period, introduce grant funding, innovation funding or other investment opportunities intended to strengthen support available to carers. The Provider may be required to support the promotion, coordination, administration and monitoring of such arrangements and work collaboratively with VCFSE organisations to maximise their impact and reach.

The Provider shall utilise intelligence gathered through service delivery, engagement activity, co-production and partnership working to inform community capacity building, market development and service improvement activity across Lancashire.

The Provider shall deliver these requirements in accordance with the principles and expectations set out within **Appendix E**.

7.2 Strategic and Operational Partnerships

The Provider shall establish, maintain and develop effective partnerships with organisations across Lancashire to support the delivery of a coordinated, integrated and outcome-focused carers support system.

Partnerships should support improved identification of carers, effective referral pathways, coordinated responses to identified need and seamless access to support across organisational boundaries.

The Provider shall work collaboratively with, but not be limited to, the following partners:

- Lancashire County Council services;
- NHS organisations and Primary Care Networks;
- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System partners;
- District and Borough Councils;
- Housing providers;
- Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise organisations;
- Educational establishments;
- Employer networks;
- Community and neighbourhood organisations; and
- Other commissioned services and providers that support carers and the people they care for.

The Provider shall ensure that partnership arrangements support effective communication, coordinated planning and improved outcomes for carers and communities.

7.3 Lancashire Carers Partnership Board

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Lancashire County Council is committed to ensuring that unpaid carers have meaningful opportunities to influence the planning, development and continuous improvement of services, policies and systems that affect their lives. The Provider shall establish, facilitate and coordinate a Lancashire Carers Partnership Board as a strategic forum through which carers, commissioners, statutory partners, health organisations and VCFSE organisations can work collaboratively to improve outcomes for carers across Lancashire. The Board shall provide a formal mechanism for co-production, engagement and strategic dialogue, ensuring that carers lived experiences inform service development, commissioning decision and wider system transformation activities.

The Provider shall be responsible for the administration, facilitation and ongoing development of the Board, ensuring that it operates effectively and remains focused on improving outcomes for carers. As a minimum, the Provider shall:

- Facilitate and coordinate quarterly Partnership Board meetings, including administrative responsibilities, room hire and arranging refreshments.
- Ensure opportunities for participation are accessible, inclusive and representative of Lancashire's diverse carer population.
- Support the recruitment, development and participation of carers with lived experience.
- Develop meeting agendas, reports, action logs and supporting documentation.
- Coordinate engagement and co-production activity to inform Board discussions and priorities.
- Ensure issues, recommendations and actions arising from the Board are communicated to relevant stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Maintain oversight of agreed actions and provide regular progress updates.
- Demonstrate how feedback and intelligence gathered through the Board has informed service development, policy, commissioning and system improvement activities.
- Provide regular "You Said, We Did" feedback to carers and stakeholders.

The Partnership Board shall act as a vehicle for collective problem-solving, continuous improvement and system-wide collaboration. The Provider shall ensure that the Board is informed by engagement activity with a broad range of carers and shall establish appropriate mechanisms to gather views from carers who are unable or unwilling to participate directly. The Provider shall work with Lancashire County Council and partner organisations to ensure appropriate representation from Adult Social Care, Health Partners, relevant commissioned services and the VCFSE sector, enabling discussions to be informed by individuals with the authority and influence to support system-wide change.

The Provider shall evidence the impact of the Partnership Board through reporting on participation, engagement activity, actions completed, service improvements implemented and wider outcomes achieved for carers.

7.4 Neighbourhood Working

The Provider shall align service delivery to Lancashire's neighbourhood-based approaches and wider health and care transformation programmes. Services will support the delivery of

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integrated, preventative and community-based models of support that improve outcomes for carers, reduce inequalities and strengthen community resilience.

The Provider shall contribute to the ambitions of the Lancashire County Council Carers Strategy, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System, place-based partnership arrangements and wider neighbourhood health approaches. Service delivery should also support national priorities relating to prevention, personalised care, community resilience, early intervention and integrated working.

The Provider shall demonstrate how services shall:

- maintain a visible presence within local communities;
- work alongside neighbourhood teams, place-based partnerships and locality-based services;
- support the identification and engagement of hidden carers;
- develop relationships with community organisations and local assets;
- improve access to support across urban, rural and diverse communities;
- strengthen community resilience and preventative support;
- contribute to multidisciplinary and integrated approaches to supporting carers; and
- support wider ambitions to improve wellbeing, independence and social inclusion.

The Provider shall seek to ensure carers are able to access support within their local communities wherever possible, and that local assets and community resources are utilised effectively to improve outcomes.

7.5 Integrated Service Delivery and Information Sharing

The Provider shall ensure that all elements of the Lancashire Carers Service operate as a single integrated service model. Assessment, support planning, information and advice, wellbeing support, navigation and brokerage, emergency planning, co-production activity and community capacity development should work together to provide a seamless experience for carers.

The Provider shall maintain effective arrangements for communication, information sharing, referral management and coordinated support planning, ensuring carers can access the right support at the right time without unnecessary barriers, delays or duplication.

The Provider shall work with Lancashire County Council and partner organisations to establish appropriate information-sharing arrangements that comply with relevant legislation, information governance requirements and data protection standards.

The Provider shall utilise insight, feedback, performance information and learning from partnership activity to identify opportunities for improving pathways, strengthening collaboration and enhancing outcomes for carers. Continuous improvement should be embedded throughout service delivery and partnership working arrangements.

8. Workforce Requirements

8.1 Workforce Competency

The Provider shall ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of the Lancashire Carers Service possess the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience and competencies required to undertake their roles effectively and safely. The workforce should be capable of delivering a

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high-quality, person-centred and strengths-based service that supports carers to achieve positive outcomes and maintain sustainable caring relationships.

Staff shall demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- The Care Act 2014 and carers' rights.
- Strengths-based and asset-based approaches.
- Outcome-focused assessment and support planning.
- Safeguarding responsibilities and procedures.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Hidden carers and barriers to accessing support.
- Co-production and engagement approaches.
- Community capacity building and neighbourhood working.
- Partnership working and integrated care systems.
- Relevant local and national policies affecting unpaid carers.

The Provider shall ensure that staff are equipped to work effectively with carers from diverse backgrounds and are able to respond appropriately to differing communication, accessibility and support needs.

8.2 Recruitment and Retention

The Provider shall maintain a suitably skilled, experienced and resilient workforce capable of delivering all aspects of the Service throughout the Contract Period.

The Provider shall:

- Recruit staff with the appropriate skills, values and experience required for their roles.
- Maintain workforce capacity sufficient to meet contractual requirements and service demand.
- Seek to minimise workforce turnover and promote continuity of support for carers wherever possible.
- Implement effective workforce planning arrangements to support service resilience and business continuity.
- Ensure appropriate succession planning arrangements are in place for key roles.
- Promote staff wellbeing, retention and engagement.

The Provider shall take reasonable steps to ensure carers experience continuity of support and are not adversely impacted by avoidable workforce disruption.

8.3 Training and Development

The Provider shall maintain a comprehensive workforce development programme to ensure staff remain competent, confident and capable of delivering high-quality support.

The Provider shall ensure all staff receive:

- Appropriate induction and role-specific training.
- Mandatory training relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- Ongoing learning and development opportunities.
- Regular updates relating to legislation, policy and best practice.

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- Training that supports strengths-based, person-centred and outcome-focused approaches.

Training and development activity should support continuous improvement and ensure the workforce remains responsive to emerging needs, changing policy requirements and developments within the wider health, care and community support system.

8.4 Supervision and Workforce Support
The Provider shall maintain appropriate supervision, management and support arrangements to ensure service quality, workforce wellbeing and professional development.

This shall include:
- Regular supervision and performance review arrangements.
- Access to management advice and support.
- Opportunities for reflective practice and professional development.
- Mechanisms for identifying development needs and supporting continuous learning.
- Appropriate support for staff undertaking complex or challenging work.

The Provider shall foster a positive organisational culture that promotes accountability, learning, continuous improvement and high-quality service delivery.

8.5 Volunteers and Lived Experience
The Provider may utilise volunteers to complement service delivery where appropriate. Where volunteers are engaged, the Provider shall ensure suitable arrangements are in place relating to recruitment, induction, training, supervision, support and recognition.

Volunteers shall complement and enhance the service offer and shall not be used as a substitute for appropriately skilled and qualified paid staff.

The Provider shall actively seek opportunities to incorporate lived experience into service delivery, workforce development and continuous improvement activities. This may include involving carers in training, engagement activity, service development, quality assurance and co-production initiatives.

The Provider shall ensure individuals with lived experience are appropriately supported to participate in such activities.

8.6 Workforce Values and Behaviours
The Provider shall ensure that all staff and volunteers demonstrate behaviours and values consistent with the principles underpinning the Lancashire Carers Service.

The workforce shall be expected to:
- Treat carers with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Recognise carers as experts in their own circumstances.
- Promote choice, independence and wellbeing.
- Adopt strengths-based and asset-based approaches.

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- Support prevention and early intervention.
- Embrace co-production and meaningful engagement.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Work collaboratively with partners and communities.
- Focus on outcomes that matter to carers.
- Commit to continuous learning and improvement.

The Provider shall ensure these values and behaviours are embedded throughout recruitment, induction, supervision, training and performance management arrangements and are reflected in the culture and delivery of the Service.

9. Information Governance

9.1 Digital Systems and Data Management

The Provider must maintain appropriate systems and processes to support effective service delivery, performance reporting and information management.

The Council may require the successful Provider to utilise Council-approved systems and reporting arrangements. Further details regarding digital requirements, system access and data management arrangements shall be confirmed during the procurement process.

Providers should ensure that any systems utilised support secure information sharing, accurate reporting and effective coordination of support across partner organisations.

The Provider must maintain robust information governance arrangements that support lawful, secure and effective management of information. Information must be handled in a way that protects confidentiality whilst enabling appropriate information sharing to support carer outcomes, safeguarding responsibilities and integrated working across organisations.

The Provider must comply with all relevant legislation and Council requirements regarding:

- Information governance.
- Data protection.
- Confidentiality.
- Information sharing.
- Record keeping.

Appropriate policies, procedures and staff training must be in place to ensure compliance with legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements. The Provider must cooperate with any information governance audits, reviews or assurance processes requested by the Council.

10. Performance and Outcomes

10.1 Performance and Quality Management

The Provider shall operate robust performance management arrangements to ensure the Service is delivered effectively, achieves the outcomes set out within this Specification and supports continuous improvement throughout the Contract Period.

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The Provider shall collect, maintain and report accurate and timely performance information that enables Lancashire County Council to monitor activity, quality, outcomes, equity of access and contractual compliance.

The Provider shall use performance information, service user feedback, complaints, compliments, audits, engagement activity and learning from contract delivery to support service improvement and the ongoing development of the Lancashire Carers Service.

Detailed performance requirements, reporting arrangements and key performance indicators are set out in **Appendix H.**

10.2 Contract Monitoring

The Provider shall participate in contract monitoring arrangements established by Lancashire County Council and shall provide information and assurance as reasonably requested.

This shall include:

- Submission of performance information.
- Contract review meetings.
- Quality assurance activity.
- Service audits.
- Review of outcomes and impact.
- Sharing of service user feedback and learning.
- Action planning and continuous improvement activity.

The Council reserves the right to amend performance and monitoring requirements during the Contract Period to reflect changes in legislation, policy, local priorities or service development requirements.

10.3 Quality Assurance

The Provider shall maintain effective quality assurance arrangements to ensure compliance with this Specification and the continuous improvement of service delivery.

Quality assurance activity should include:

- Case file and support plan audits.
- Review of service user feedback.
- Review of outcomes achieved.
- Workforce supervision and quality checks.
- Learning from complaints, compliments and incidents.
- Identification and implementation of improvement actions.

The Provider shall demonstrate how quality assurance activity informs service development and improves outcomes for carers.

10.4 Outcomes and Continuous Improvement

The Provider shall focus on achieving positive outcomes for carers and demonstrate the impact of the Service on wellbeing, resilience, caring sustainability and access to support.

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The Provider shall use performance information, co-production, partnership working and feedback from carers to identify opportunities to improve service quality, accessibility and effectiveness.

The Provider shall actively contribute to innovation, continuous improvement and the development of best practice throughout the Contract Period.

11. Governance and Contract Management

The Provider must maintain effective governance arrangements to ensure the safe, effective and efficient delivery of services. Governance arrangements should support accountability, quality assurance, risk management and continuous improvement throughout the lifetime of the Contract.

The Provider must participate in:

- Operational meetings.
- Performance monitoring meetings.
- Contract review meetings.
- Quality assurance activity.
- Continuous improvement activities.

The Provider must nominate an appropriate contract lead who shall act as the primary point of contact for Lancashire County Council and be responsible for contract performance, quality assurance and operational oversight.

The Provider must promptly notify the Council of any significant risks, service issues, safeguarding concerns or incidents that may affect service delivery, carers or contractual performance.

11.1 Complaints, Compliments and Feedback

The Provider must maintain accessible arrangements for receiving, investigating and responding to complaints, concerns, compliments and feedback from carers, partners and stakeholders.

The Provider must utilise learning from complaints and feedback to support service improvement and demonstrate how this learning has informed changes to service delivery.

11.2 Quality Assurance

The Provider must maintain appropriate systems and processes to monitor the quality, effectiveness and safety of service delivery.

Quality assurance arrangements should include audit activity, case file reviews, service-user feedback, performance monitoring and continuous improvement processes.

12. Mobilisation, Transition and Exit

The Provider must work collaboratively with the Council to ensure a smooth mobilisation and implementation of services and to minimise disruption for carers at all stages of the Contract lifecycle. Arrangements must support continuity of support, retention of service knowledge and effective communication with carers, staff and partner organisations.

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The Provider must maintain plans covering:

- Mobilisation.
- Service commencement.
- Business continuity.
- Contract expiry.
- Service transfer arrangements.

The Provider must cooperate with any transition activities required at the commencement or conclusion of the Contract and ensure that relevant information, records and operational knowledge are transferred in a timely and secure manner to support continuity of service delivery.

12.1 Workforce Transfer

The Council anticipates that workforce transfer provisions may apply to some or all elements of the future service arrangements.

Relevant information relating to staffing and potential Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) implications shall be made available during any subsequent procurement process where appropriate.

12.2 Indicative Procurement and Mobilisation

The timetable for procurement, award and mobilisation has not yet been finalised and may be subject to change.

The Council welcomes feedback from Providers regarding appropriate mobilisation periods and any factors that may influence successful implementation of the proposed service model.

12.3 Business Continuity

The Provider must maintain and periodically review business continuity arrangements to ensure continuity of support in the event of service disruption, workforce shortages, loss of premises, IT failure or other unforeseen circumstances.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Service Operating Model and Carer Journey

Appendix A-Service Operating Model and

Appendix B- Assessment Function Requirements and Assessment Pathways

Appendix B- Assessment Function

Appendix C- Five Service Strands

Appendix C- Five Service Strands

Appendix D- Brokerage, Navigation and Support Coordination Requirements

Appendix D- Brokerage, Navigatior

Appendix E-Community Capacity and Market Shaping Requirements

Appendix E-Community Capacit

Appendix F- Carer Journey

Appendix F- Carer Journey

Appendix G- Current Activity, Demand and Service Profile

Appendix G- Current Activity, Demand and

Appendix H- Performance and Monitoring

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