

A photograph of two women standing in front of a red brick wall. The woman on the left is younger, with dark curly hair tied in a bun, wearing a black top and a denim jacket. The woman on the right is older, with short, curly brown hair, wearing a white shirt and green overalls. Both are smiling warmly at each other, with the younger woman's arm around the older woman's shoulder.

# Impact Report 2023/2024



# About

## Carers Leeds

3 in 5 of us will provide unpaid care at some point in our lives.

Carers Leeds believes all care counts.

### What is an unpaid carer?

An unpaid carer is someone who provides help and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who couldn't manage without their help. This could be due to illness, disability, mental health problems or substance misuse.

Established in 1996, Carers Leeds is a charity that provides information, advice and support to unpaid adult and parent carers across our city.

This includes our Advice Line, carers support groups, one to one support and support in hospitals. Some of our services are universal – open to all carers – and some are targeted at specific groups of carers. Our services are provided to communities throughout Leeds.

We work in partnership with others to deliver our service and to influence them to act to benefit unpaid carers. This involves those working in health and social care and employers.



# Foreword

## Andy Rawnsley, Chair of Trustees

I am pleased again to provide the foreword for our latest Impact Report.

All our activity is focused on our mission of improving the lives of unpaid carers. We do this to ensure that they are supported, recognised and valued for their role in caring for their loved ones, many of whom are some of the most vulnerable citizens of Leeds.

In the pages that follow you will find not only evidence of the volume and reach of our activity, but most importantly the impact we have had for individuals, groups and communities.

In what continues to be a challenging financial climate for charities,

I am delighted that we have continued to be able to reach more, and more diverse carers across the city. Additionally, we have continued to strengthen and grow our partnerships to support and influence others to act in the best of interest of carers.

I would like to thank the staff team, volunteers, partners and funding organisations – without whom, none of the impact we collectively make, would be possible. To all the carers out there, providing support to your loved ones – you have my best wishes and respect.



**Andy Rawnsley,  
Chair of Trustees, Carers Leeds**

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# Review of the year

## Claire Turner, Chief Executive

### Our Vision and Mission

Our vision at Carers Leeds is that all unpaid carers in our city are recognised, valued and supported to live a fulfilling life. Our mission is to improve the lives of unpaid carers across the city.

We provide information, advice and support to unpaid adult and parent carers in Leeds, and aim to influence others to act and create positive change for unpaid carers.

Many unpaid carers do not see themselves as carers. But if you provide help and support such as shopping, managing medication, cooking, cleaning, emotional support or personal care, like helping someone get dressed – you are an unpaid carer.

Being an unpaid carer can be rewarding but it can also be challenging. No-one should provide unpaid care at a cost to their own health and wellbeing, finances or relationships.

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**“Being an unpaid carer can be rewarding but it can also be challenging. No-one should provide unpaid care at a cost to their own health and wellbeing, finances or relationships.”**

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### Being an unpaid carer

For some, caring has always been a part of life. For many, a caring role evolves over time. Others are thrown into a caring role. Some people live with the person they care for, some don't.

Some unpaid carers care for more than one person. Caring for someone can take up a few hours a week, or an unpaid carer may be caring for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.





Carers Leeds wants unpaid carers to have the information, advice and support they need to be able to care and live a fulfilling life.

This annual report sets out what we did and the impact we made between April 2023 and March 2024. I am very proud of what the Carers Leeds team of staff, volunteers and trustees have achieved over this period.

**“Carers Leeds wants unpaid carers to have the information, advice and support they need to be able to care and live a fulfilling life.”**

April 2023 to March 2024 was the second year of our 3-year strategy. Our focus has been on making progress against our strategic ambitions and this report is structured around these – delivering an excellent service, influencing others to act and four key pillars:

- equality, diversity and inclusion
- carer engagement
- partnerships
- digital

Our strategy is underpinned by five strategic principles, which guide our work. You will see these running through the activities and achievements set out in this report.

## Our guiding principles

- To reach more, and more diverse, carers.
- To start with carers' strengths and skills, working with carers to improve their own lives, rather than doing for or to carers.
- To communicate and engage earlier; working preventatively or on the cusp of crisis, rather than once carers are already in crisis.
- To provide direct information, advice and support to carers and work to influence others to act to benefit the lives of carers.
- To be more intentional. Decide what we want to do, based on what carers tell us and tested through our strategy criteria and seek funding to do it.



**Claire Turner,  
Chief Executive, Carers Leeds**

# Service Delivery

## Universal services for carers

9,680 unpaid carers turned to us for help, with 3,666 reaching out for the first time. We received over 11,318 telephone calls via our advice line, which continues to be a vital first point of contact.

The majority of new referrals came directly from carers themselves, with Primary Care services being the second highest source of referrals.

We continued to take concrete steps to reach the diverse carer population of Leeds, although data shows that a large proportion of new carers accessing our services are women and identify as White British.

During this period, we introduced a new triage process across our service, enabling us to support more carers timely and effectively, with the right support. It also reduced waiting lists for our targeted support for carers.

Our annual group evaluation revealed high carer satisfaction, with carers reporting improved wellbeing and reduced isolation.

Monthly walk-and-talk groups were introduced in Leeds parks, providing carers with opportunities to socialise and enjoy health and wellbeing benefits. Additionally, 60 discounted massage therapy sessions were made available to carers.

We supported carers to set up their own groups too, a great example is Lotus Links, a peer support group providing emotional support to parent carers of SEND children with distressed behaviour.

## Service Excellence

Out of a maximum score of 5, unpaid carers reported high levels of satisfaction with Carers Leeds services. Overall ratings this year were 4.68 for overall experience and 4.71 for likelihood of recommending Carers Leeds to others.

This year we also achieved the Carers Trust Excellence in Carers award for delivering a high-quality service for unpaid carers.



# Year in numbers

## 2023/2024

**51**

Staff  
members



**9,680**

Referrals  
recieved



**205**

Peer support  
sessions delivered



**1,721**

Face to face  
appointments



**£225k**

Grants and vouchers  
provided to carers



**11,318**

Telephone  
calls



## OUR EXPENDITURE 2023/2024

Our total expenditure for the year ending March 2024 was £1,885,103.



**77%**

Providing support and  
advice to unpaid carers



**12%**

Small grants paid out to  
unpaid carers



**11%**

Organisational  
development and costs

# Service Delivery

## Targeted support for carers

Our teams have continued to provide high quality targeted support to carers. This is at a time of high demand for us, a squeeze on public services and increasingly complex needs (both for the carer and the people they care for). Of the overall referrals to Carers Leeds this year, 938 carers went on to receive more intensive one to one support.

We use the Carers Star evaluation tool to measure the impact of our one to one support. Carers are asked to report on outcomes, on a scale of 1-5. This year we used the tool, before and after 1:1 support, with 130 carers. The following table shows the breakdown of the 7 key areas and the impact achieved as a result of our support work.

Outcome areas	Start Point	End point	Impact score
Health	2.7	3.3	+0.6
My Caring Role	2.6	3	+0.4
Managing at Home	2.8	3.5	+0.7
Time for myself	2.5	3.4	+0.9
How I feel	2.4	3.5	+1.1
Finance	3.1	4.3	+1.2
Work	4.3	4.4	+0.1

Alongside this, we interviewed a sample of carers to help us better understand the impact our support has. Common themes from this year's qualitative evaluation were:

- Improved carer mental health and wellbeing - through emotional support and talking to someone who understands. Also because of practical help and advice on things like coping strategies, setting boundaries, accepting help from others (paid or unpaid) and making time for a break.
- Improved physical health - through take up of activities such as our Walk and Talk group and signposting and information, advice and support on self-management of health conditions, and access to health services.
- Increased income and reduced anxiety - about money through to welfare benefits applications and access to grants for food, energy and essentials.
- Reduced isolation and loneliness and increased social connections - through participation in peer support groups, befriending support, digital inclusion support and signposting to social and wellbeing activities.





**“Being a carer means supporting someone, but also finding ways to make people understand the person you’re caring for. And if you’re struggling with that then you’ve got Carers Leeds. That’s where you should go.”**

Unpaid carer supported by  
Carers Leeds.

# Service Delivery

## Bereaved Carers

Our Bereaved carers project received 75 referrals this year. As well as offering 1-1 and group bereavement support, we also offered training for the wider Carers Leeds team, to enable more staff to feel confident in supporting carers who have recently experienced bereavement.

## Befriending

Our befriending project received 60 referrals this year, providing vital support for carers who are lonely or isolated.

*'A carer who has been supported for 3 months by a befriender in the community, has finally booked a trip to visit his elderly parents abroad. Previously, he was too fearful to even leave his house due to social anxiety.'*

## Supporting carers of someone dementia

For carers of someone living with Dementia we held a piano competition, tea dance and ran 9 understanding dementia sessions for family carers, with 84 attendees.

Overall, 263 carers were offered 1:1 support, with 140 in person appointments and 11 digital appointments.

## Concerned Others

Our Concerned Others project, supporting people affected by someone's alcohol or substance use, received 94 referrals over this period. We ran 3 monthly support groups for carers and developed a new family restorative practice approach, in partnership with Forward Leeds.

## Leeds Hospitals and Recovery Hubs

321 carers were supported by our Hospital Project, with referrals coming from a wide range of wards and a noticeable increase in referrals from the Stroke wards at Chapel Allerton Hospital.

162 carers were supported via our work with Leeds Recovery Hubs, which focuses primarily on self-funders of care. Our staff support carers whilst their family member is in hospital or a recovery hub and with discharge. This includes helping carers find care home places or care at home.





## Parent Carers

Our Parent carer team supported 180 parents of children with additional needs this year. This was through a peer support group and 1-1 sessions, including help with claiming welfare benefits.

We held our summer Family Fun Day, our annual event for parents and their children with additional needs. We sat on the Leeds Parent Carer Forum and attended other networks and events to influence others to act to support parent carers and their families.

## Mental Health and Learning Disability

250 carers were supported this year, by our Mental Health and Learning Disability team. We facilitated three monthly peer support groups, alongside 1:1 support.

We assisted Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust (LYPFT) in developing the Triangle of Care framework, which helps identify and value the contributions carers make.

## Mental Health Transformation

This year, our Mental Health Carer Involvement Worker ensured carers' voices shaped mental health service transformation in Leeds,

Feedback from just over 300 carers was captured and carers were recruited to be part of different work streams, which included working groups, sitting on the delivery oversight group and attending Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust (LYPFT) meetings.

Outcomes include carer awareness training, the adoption of the Triangle of Care approach by LYPFT, and a WRAP (Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan) course to support carer wellbeing.



# Influencing others to act

As well as providing a direct service to unpaid carers, we have worked hard this year to influence others to act to improve the lives of carers in our city. This is helping reach more, and more diverse carers across Leeds.

Our external partnerships team and others continue to raise awareness, deliver training, and share good practice with our priority stakeholders across Adult Social Care, Health, and Employers.

This year we have seen 7 new employers join our Employers Forum, bringing the total to 19 active employers. We delivered 9 training sessions to employers in Leeds, to increase awareness and encourage action to recruit and retain working carers. We ran a series of webinars focused on working carers, which reached around 200 employees.

Work to improve the number and quality of Carers Assessments has paid off with a 100% increase in the number of assessments carried out in 2023/2024 as compared to the previous year. Our local authority Carer Champions Network also saw new members, including attendance from mental health and learning disability teams.

This year we delivered 25 Carer Awareness sessions with 437 attendees from health and care. These were often in collaboration with Leeds Young Carers Support Service.

We delivered 9 sessions to GP practices and have named Carer Champions in most of the 90+ Leeds GP practices and a quarterly Carer Champions network to share ideas and best practice. We ran 6 sessions for staff in Leeds hospitals providing understanding of carer issues and the benefit of early identification and support.

Carers are visible in key transformation projects in Leeds including Home First, Community Health and Wellbeing Service and Mental Health Transformation. This is, in part, due to our influence. Carers are now a priority in the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Leeds Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Carers Leeds were active contributors at a West Yorkshire level, for example as part of a Consortium which secured £1.5 million of funding to support unpaid carers in our region.



# Partnerships

We re-established the Leeds Oak Alliance (LOA) this year. This is a partnership of 5 city wide charities working in Leeds Teaching Hospitals to provide information, advice and support to older people, people living with a terminal illness and their carers. The aim is to provide one point of access to the five organisations, making it easier for patients, carers and professionals to access support.

We worked with carers organisations and the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board to develop a Carers Hospital Discharge Toolkit (published in February 2024) to encourage hospital staff across the region to be more carer aware and to involve carers in decision making about those they care for.

Carers Leeds remained involved in all Local Care Partnerships across the city, including planning dementia roadshows for people with dementia and their carers in Otley & Rawdon (March 2024) and Wetherby (April 2024).

We have increased membership of our Employer Forum and have developed a new partnership with Mindful Employer in Leeds with several exciting opportunities to promote the importance of supporting working carers to follow next year.

***"I care for my wife who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and MS-related Dementia. I work full time, and Carers Leeds has been very supportive in terms of providing advice on benefit entitlements and wellbeing."***

***"As a member of the Carers Leeds Employers Forum, it is great to get feedback from other employers as to how they support working carers in their organisations."***

Unpaid carer supported by Carers Leeds.

# Digital

Our pilot project with Carers UK, to promote their Digital Resource for Carers through social media marketing, more than trebled the numbers of unpaid carers in Leeds who have registered with this digital platform.

Carers Leeds became a Digital Health Hub, enabling carers to get online to support their health and wellbeing and that of the people they care for.

This year we supported 120 carers to become more digitally included, through one-to-one support sessions in the community.

Support sessions are carer-led and have covered topics such as connecting with friends and family, booking GP appointments, ordering prescriptions, managing finance and online shopping.

We provided 11 carers with digital equipment and 22 carers with free data-enabled SIMs.

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**“I feel a lot more confident now with technology and I had no idea about it and the things I'd be able to achieve before.**

**It's opened up so much and it's been amazing being able to do everything on the tablet like shopping and emails...to order my injections to the pharmacy and look at diabetes recipes to help me out.**

**It's made a difference being able to get 1-1 support as I can't do groups and being able to receive the support in my own home.”**

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We set up a digital inclusion befriending service, where volunteers offer digital support in a befriending-style match to help carers feel more confident online. This year we had 3 active digital befriending volunteers, supporting 11 carers to become more digitally included, through a total of 96 one-to-one befriending sessions.



# Marcella's story

Marcella is a carer for her neurodivergent child, who was diagnosed in primary school.

"My child is really loving, funny and massively creative. They see the quirky side of life, they have firm views about the world, and they will never conform."

Caring for her child has brought significant financial and professional challenges for Marcella.

For the past five years, Marcella has found a lifeline through Carers Leeds.

Attending a carers' group has provided her with both practical guidance and emotional support. "It's amazing to meet others in the same position and to hear from carers further along in their journey," she says. "We share sad and challenging experiences, but we also laugh—a lot. That's so important. I've found my tribe."

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**"My child is really loving, funny and massively creative. They see the quirky side of life, they have firm views about the world, and they will never conform."**

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Working in a demanding industry, she found little flexibility or support from her employers. "I had no choice but to go part-time because adjustments weren't made for carers," she explains.

This decision had long-term financial consequences. "I couldn't build up a workplace pension, and now, while my friends are enjoying comfortable retirements, I'm still working."

The support network has transformed Marcella's experience as a carer. Through the group, she has gained valuable advice, emotional resilience, and a sense of community. "Being part of this group has been invaluable. I feel understood, supported, and no longer alone in this journey."

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We define equality, diversity and inclusion in its broadest sense, to include all protected characteristics, social class and carer status. To succeed at making a positive difference to the lives of all unpaid carers in Leeds, we know that Carers Leeds must become a more equal, diverse and inclusive employer and service provider.

As an employer we have an ED&I statement and policy. Alongside this we have a learning and education programme for staff and volunteers, which is focused on 'hearts and minds'. This year, the programme has included internal workshops focused on Disability, Gender Identity, Ethnicity and Neurodiversity.

We also completed our second ED&I survey of staff, volunteers and trustees. This helps us understand our workforce better and how it reflects the communities we serve. The findings also inform what action we should take to help ensure that Carers Leeds is an equal, diverse and inclusive organisation.

As a service provider, our aim is to reach more, and more diverse carers. This year, we have been focused on building relationships with community organisations and groups across the city, organisations who have a much better reach into certain communities than we do. For example:

- In partnership with Hamara, ABA Leeds, Touchstone and Leeds City Council, we held two roadshow events in community venues aimed at identifying and supporting carers from diverse ethnic communities.
- Joint workshops with Aspire, aimed at carers of someone with a learning disability
- Translating our promotional materials into the five main community languages in Leeds

We acknowledge that although we have made progress towards our commitment to ED&I, we also need to do more.





# Gender Pay Gap Report

## 2024

### Our Team



**48**

Employees  
(April 5th 2024)



**39**

staff identified as  
female



**9**

staff identified as  
male

**MEAN 10.0%**

Gender pay gap as % based  
on average men's hourly pay.

So for every £1 men earn,  
women earn 90p

**MEDIAN 0.0%**

Gender pay gap as % based  
on average men's hourly pay.

So for every £1 men earn,  
women earn £1.

### CLOSING THE GAP

Carers Leeds will adopt the following recommendations:



Review our  
recruitment processes



Train our staff on bias in  
candidate selection



Carry out improved  
monitoring

# Carer Engagement

We strengthened our approach to carer engagement and voice over this period.

We published our first State of Unpaid Caring in Leeds report, based on the views and experiences of 523 unpaid carers on different aspects of their lives: health and wellbeing, social life and relationships, access to services and money and the cost of living.

The top three concerns for unpaid carers were: my own health and wellbeing, the changing needs of the person I care for and money and the cost of living. We have shared the report widely across the city, to influence others to act on the recommendations.

We also increased our work to make sure carers are more visible and heard, by sharing their stories with service providers, policy-makers and through our website and social media

## State of Unpaid Caring in Leeds

At the end of 2022, we surveyed unpaid adult and parent carers in Leeds.

Our aim was to understand what unpaid carers were most concerned about; their experiences as unpaid carers and what matters most to them.

The report, based on the findings of the survey, was published in April 2023. Our second annual carers survey was launched at the end of 2023







**"Caring is still a lonely task, and no matter how many people are around you can still feel very sad at times, lost."**

Unpaid carer

Carers Leeds Annual Survey 2022

# Volunteering

We had 40 active volunteers at Carers Leeds over this period, working in numerous ways across the organisation.

This year, we renewed our Investing in Volunteers award for the third time. This UK quality standard reflects our commitment to best practice in volunteer management, engagement and support and the importance we place on volunteering.

Our commitment to include volunteers, is evident throughout this report. For example, volunteers assessed 496 Time for Carers grants, which supported carers to take a much needed break.

As part of our admin and reception team, volunteers helped to process emergency cards and plans, yellow card GP referrals forms and grants for essentials such as food and energy.

**"I feel the training, support, opportunities and engagement is excellent at Carers Leeds. It has exceeded my expectations."**

Volunteer proof-readers also help us maintain the quality of key documents and information.

## VOLUNTEER IMPACT 2023

Volunteers are vital to Carers Leeds. Below are just some of the ways volunteers have supported unpaid carers this year.



**240**

One to one befriending sessions delivered



**50**

Yellow Card GP referrals processed



**8**

Book Group meetings facilitated



# Values and Culture

## Working at Carers Leeds



Our ED&I survey of staff, volunteers and trustees showed 1 in 2 of our team are working carers, including our leadership team (the UK workforce average is 1 in 7). 75% of our trustees are carers or former carers. A third of our volunteers are carers or former carers.

We aim to have a gold standard approach to supporting carers in our workforce. We have achieved Carers UK Carer Confident Levels 1 and 2 and have submitted our application for Level 3 (the highest award) this year. We have a working carers group within Carers Leeds, which informs our internal policies and practice.

## Communications



Over the past year, we have strengthened our connection with carers and stakeholders while enhancing the visibility of Carers Leeds. This has included producing impactful reports that highlight the needs of carers and showcase the outcomes of our work, expanding our reach via our growing newsletter subscriber list, which now totals over 8,500 and starting preliminary work on a new website.

We've also taken steps to implement a brand refresh, ensuring consistency and making our communications clearer and more engaging for all audiences.

## SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

We couldn't provide our service to carers or influence others in our city, without our support functions. This year, highlights from our admin team have included:



**781**

Emergency Cards posted out



**311**

Message in a Bottle pods distributed



**369**

Emergency care plans sent out to carers

# Thank You!



To all our staff,  
volunteers,  
trustees, partners  
and funders.



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# Carers Leeds

Working together to support carers

## Need advice?

**Call us** Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri: 9am - 4.30pm

Tue: 9am - 6.30pm

**Email** [advice@carersleeds.org.uk](mailto:advice@carersleeds.org.uk)

## Socials

**Twitter / X** @CarersLeeds

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carers advice line  
**0113 380 4300**

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