



Carers Strategy 2025-2028

Caring Together

Involving and Supporting Young and Adult Carers

EAST AYRSHIRE

Health & Social Care
Partnership



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Thank you to everyone who contributed to this strategy, particularly the unpaid carers who took valuable time to provide us with their views. The support we offer to carers could not be delivered without our partners.

Thanks to every one of them for their support in delivering this strategy, and for supporting East Ayrshire’s unpaid carers.



Foreword



We are delighted to share our Carers Strategy, setting out our commitment to supporting young and adult carers across East Ayrshire. Carers play an essential role in the lives of those they care for, often balancing complex responsibilities while managing their own wellbeing. This strategy reflects our dedication to recognising and valuing carers contributions, ensuring 'the right support in the right way at the right time', setting out how we respond to our responsibilities and duties to carers.

The development of this strategy has been a collaborative effort, informed by carers sharing their experiences and insights along with service providers and stakeholders. Crucially the strategy places carers at the heart of our planning and decision-making processes and sets out our commitment to continue that collaboration with carers on the implementation of the strategy. Allowing us to focus on carers priorities and ensure we work towards recognition and continuous improvement.

Our vision is to build a community where every carer feels supported, respected, and empowered to thrive. As a Health and Social Care Partnership working with carers and the voluntary sector enables us to support carers to sustain their caring role and have a fulfilled life alongside caring. Together we will work to create a more inclusive and compassionate East Ayrshire, where carers can maintain their health and wellbeing while making invaluable contributions to our communities.

I'd like to express heartfelt thanks to our young and adult carers for their kindness, commitment and support to loved ones, friends and neighbours. Many of us will share this unique experience at one stage in our lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig McArthur'.

Craig McArthur

Director of Health and Social Care Partnership



Foreword



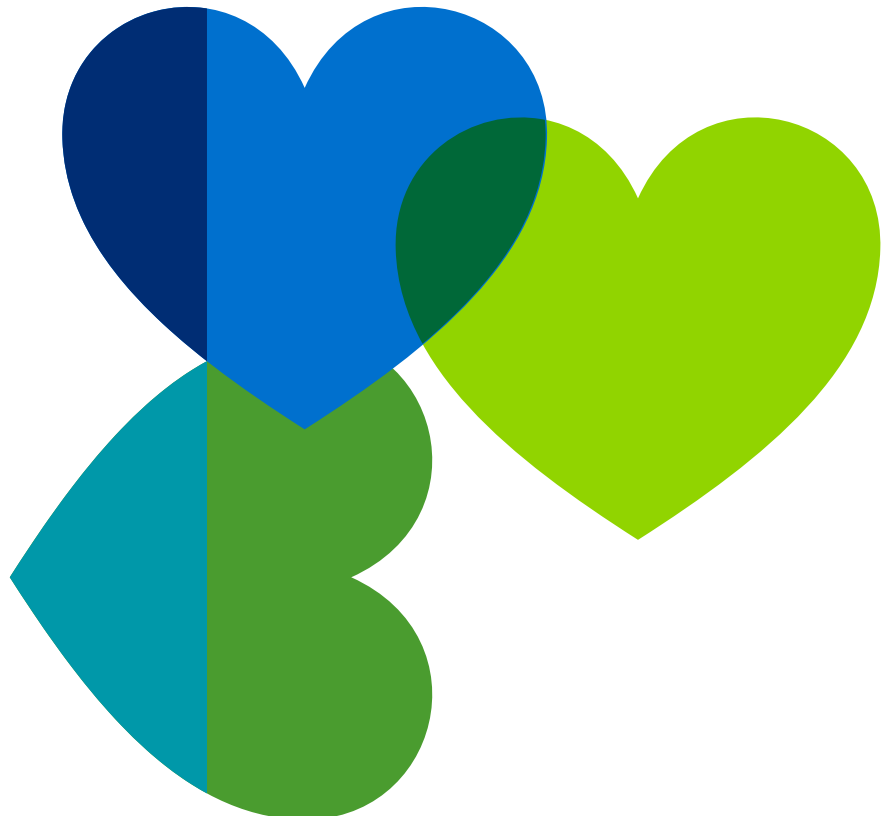
East Ayrshire Carers Centre is dedicated to supporting unpaid carers across East Ayrshire and we warmly welcome the launch of this new Carers Strategy. It is both timely and essential, recognising the invaluable role that carers play in our communities. Unpaid carers often navigate complex and demanding responsibilities, and this strategy's commitment to delivering "the right support in the right way at the right time" aligns perfectly with our mission to ensure carers feel seen, heard, and supported.

We are particularly encouraged by the collaborative approach taken in developing the strategy, with carers voices placed at the heart of planning and decision-making. This inclusive process reflects a deep respect for unpaid carers lived experiences and ensures that future support is shaped by carers who understand the challenges best. As a centre that works closely with carers every day, we look forward to continuing this partnership and contributing to the strategy's implementation, ensuring it remains responsive to carers evolving needs.

The vision of building a community where every carer feels respected, empowered, and able to thrive resonates strongly with our values. We believe that through continued collaboration with the Health and Social Care Partnership we can help create a more compassionate East Ayrshire—one where carers are supported not only in their caring roles but also in leading fulfilling lives. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all carers for their dedication and resilience, and we are proud to stand alongside them as this strategy moves forward.

Fiona Robson & Fiona Pirrie

Co-Chief Executives East Ayrshire Carers Centre



Context

National Policy

[The Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) became law on 1 April 2018 and places a duty on local authorities and health boards to prepare and publish a local carer's strategy. Within East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) the Integration Joint Board (IJB) is responsible for planning health and social care services in East Ayrshire. The Health and Social Care Partnership currently commission East Ayrshire Carers Centre to deliver on these requirements.

The statutory requirements set out in the act includes:

- **To offer an Adult Carer Support Plan or a Young Carer Statement to anyone identified as being a carer**
- **Publishing a local Carer's Strategy**
- **Provide advice, information and support to carers including a range of information and advice**
- **Publishing a local Short Breaks Services Statement**
- **Publish local eligibility criteria and support 'eligible needs'**
- **Involve carers in the setting of local eligibility criteria and in preparing strategies for short breaks and hospital discharges**

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 requires each local authority to set local eligibility criteria which help local authorities to prioritise support and to ensure resources are directed effectively and efficiently as possible. It aims to ensure a clear and transparent system to determine eligibility so that carers in East Ayrshire are appropriately supported.

The principle of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 is to provide preventative support to carers to support them in their caring role and assist carers to continue to care in good health and wellbeing. Providing good quality, appropriate and timely information and advice to carers has the dual benefits of improving health and wellbeing of carers, and the cared-for person, reducing the potential need for, and cost of crisis management.

The aim of information and advice services for carer's is to enable them to access independent and comprehensive information and advice, to assist with decision making in relation to their caring role and to have a life alongside caring. The areas of information and advice identified within the Carer Scotland (Act) 2016 are:

- **carers' rights**
- **income maximisation**
- **education and training**
- **advocacy**
- **health and wellbeing (including counselling)**
- **bereavement support services**
- **emergency care planning and future care planning**

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 introduced many of the same rights for young carers as it provides for adult carers. The Act gives young carers a right to a young carer statement. This involves an outcomes-based conversation about the young carer's personal circumstances and must include information about the impact of caring on their wellbeing and whether the care they provide is appropriate. If any of the young carer's identified needs meet local eligibility criteria then they

have a right to support to meet those needs. The authority must consider whether the young carer would benefit from a short break as part of this conversation.

The principles and values embedded in the [Getting it Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) approach apply for young carers. GIRFEC is Scotland's approach to promoting and improving the wellbeing of every child, including those who hold a caring role. GIRFEC is underpinned by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#).

The Promise Scotland concluded its root and branch [review of care](#) in February 2020 by publishing [The Promise](#). It is a pledge to do what the Care Review revealed were required to make things better for the children, young people and their families who need help and support. The Promise is based on the principles of listening to children and families and building relationships within families and with professionals. One of the five Foundations of the Promise is Family. This underpins the importance of families being supported to stay together, being nurtured and helped to overcome difficulties. The Carers Strategy is focused on supporting families so they can thrive together.

The [Social Care \(Self-Directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#) Carers should be provided with information and advice about Self-Directed Support (SDS) options. If a carer has eligible needs, staff must offer and explain a range of choices to carers about how support can be provided

[Scotland's National Carers Strategy](#) was published in December 2022, recognising the increasing role of unpaid carers in supporting the safety and wellbeing of those being cared for particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. The national strategy takes a human rights-based approach where carers are seen as people with rights and lives of their own, with choice and control over the support that can best support them to sustain their caring role.

The [Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#) introduces significant new duties and entitlements for unpaid carers. These include a statutory right to personalised breaks from caring, new timescales for preparing carer support plans, better recognition of carers within local systems and improved monitoring of carers outcomes. This Act passed into legislation in July 2025 and is currently awaiting the publication of associated regulations providing the timelines for implementation.

Local Policy

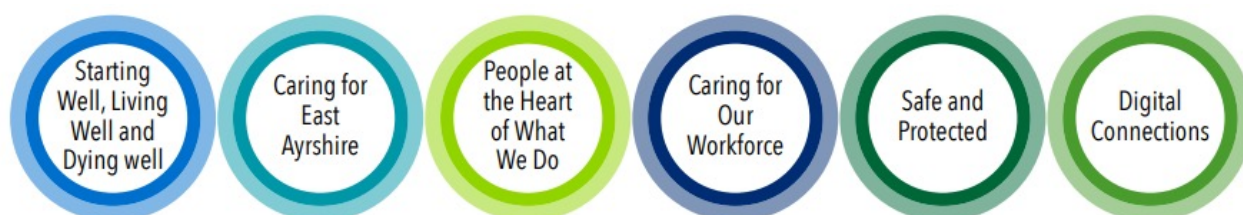
In East Ayrshire, the Integration Joint Board (IJB) has delegated authority for the carers' strategy, with oversight through the Strategic Planning/Wellbeing Delivery Plan Group to ensure alignment with the [IJB's Strategic Plan 2024-27](#).

This strategy will support the Wellbeing theme of East Ayrshire's [Community Plan 2015-2030](#) and the Health and Social Care Partnership to achieve its vision and strategic priorities for East Ayrshire. The Strategy links directly to the 'People at the Heart of What We Do' strategic priority.

Our vision:

Working together with our communities to improve and sustain health, wellbeing, care and promote equity.

Our strategic priorities:



Who Are Our Carers?

A carer is someone who provides some form of support to family members or friends who could otherwise not manage without this help. This role could include caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. Carers can support with a wide range of activities including household tasks, personal care and social or emotional support. This does not include or relate to 'paid' care workers.

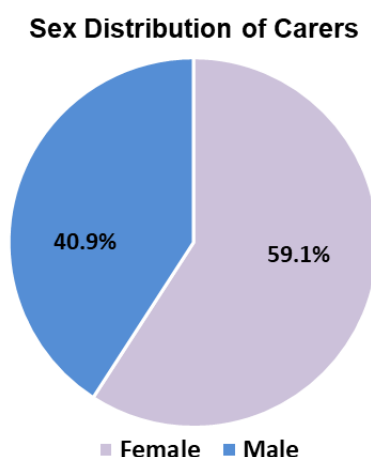
Carers exist across the age spectrum and come from all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. The extent and remit of caring roles (including activities and hours provided) will differ from one carer to the next depending on circumstances and the needs of the person being cared for. Caring can also affect different people in different ways and may need support to balance the role with everyday life and to maintain their health and wellbeing. We know that many carers, may not self-identify as carers. Often, this is because they see themselves as a spouse or family member with a 'duty' to care for their loved ones.

This diversity means that the needs of one carer will not necessarily reflect the needs of another carer therefore as a community we need to have a range of flexible options to support local carers to continue to care and have a life alongside their caring role.

Profile of East Ayrshire's Carers

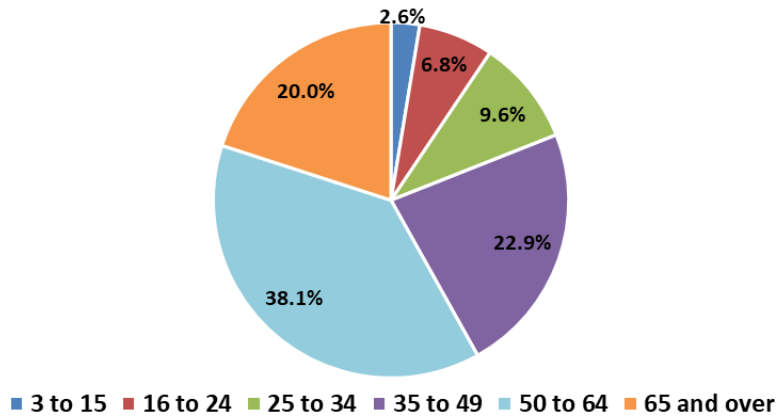
[Scotland's Census 2022](#) reports a total of 15,485 unpaid carers in East Ayrshire (13.2% of age 3+ population). This represents a 22.7% increase from the 2011 Census figure reported (12,620). As detailed above, many people do not identify themselves as a carer, therefore the actual number is likely to be higher. Previous local surveys indicated that care is most commonly provided to a partner, however respondents were also found to care for elderly relatives, children and neighbours.

In terms of the sex distribution of unpaid carers in East Ayrshire, six in ten carers were found to be female, indicating that women in East Ayrshire are more likely to perform a caring role than males. This finding is consistent with the national average.



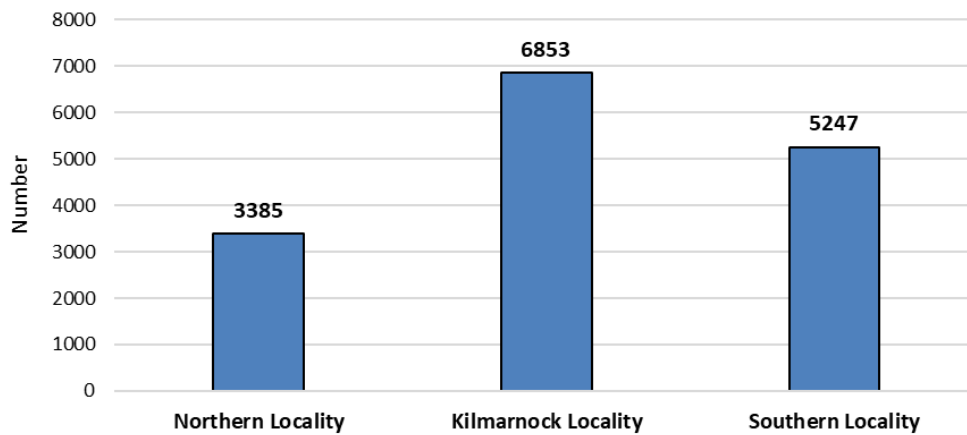
Unpaid carers in East Ayrshire are most likely to be aged between 50 and 64, with this age group accounting for over a third (38.1%) of the total carer cohort. People aged between 35 and 49 also comprise a significant proportion (22.9%) of the carer population. One in five carers are aged 65 or over and young carers aged under 16 account for 2.6% of the carer population in East Ayrshire. These figures are relatively comparable to the 2011 Census results.

Age Distribution of Unpaid Carers



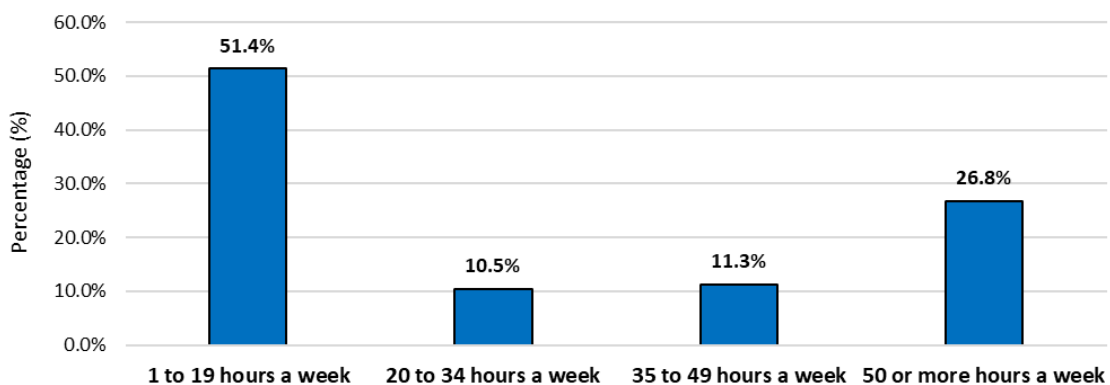
The highest number of unpaid carers in East Ayrshire is concentrated within the Kilmarnock Locality with a total of 6,853 people, which is not unexpected due to the Kilmarnock Locality comprising the largest population in East Ayrshire. 5,247 unpaid carers reside in the Southern Locality, and 3,385 unpaid carers live in the Northern Locality.

Distribution of Unpaid Carers by Locality



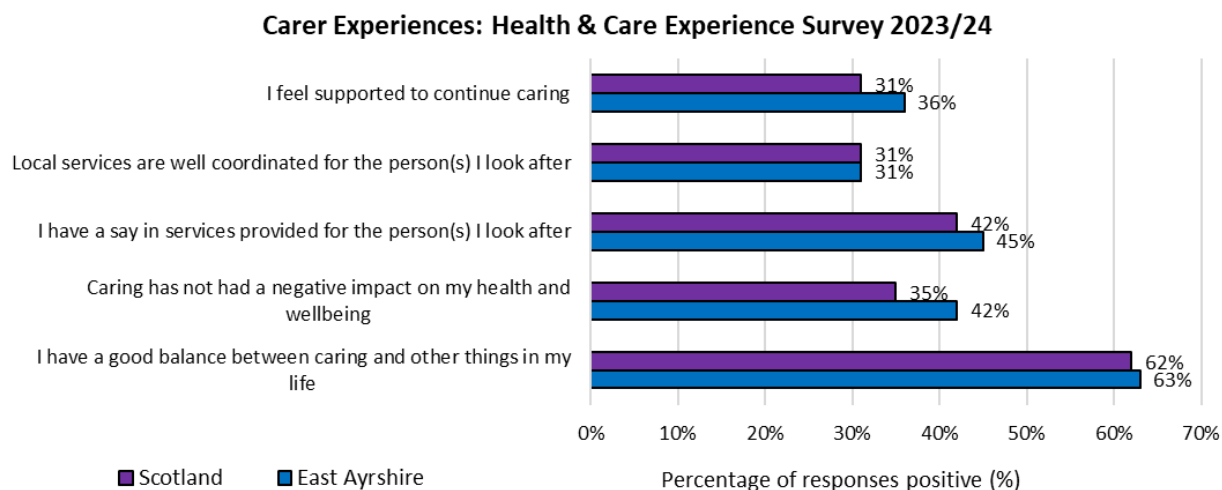
The duration of care provided on a weekly basis will differ from one person to another depending on the level of need and the capacity of the individual providing care. The majority of carers in East Ayrshire (51.4%) provide between 1 and 19 hours of unpaid care per week. 26.8% of carers regularly provide 50 or more hours of care per week, which could indicate that over a quarter of the unpaid carer population in East Ayrshire are at a high risk of experiencing fatigue and stress as a result of exertion. Of these individuals who provide 50 or more hours of care per week (4,148), 66% were aged 50 or over and 58.2% were female, rendering the older aged female carer group to be at a higher risk of circumstances which can harm wellbeing.

Hours of Unpaid Care Provided



There is also strong evidence that the number of carers who care for longer amounts of time is increasing and this has a detrimental impact on carers' financial security and personal health. This is likely to be the case in East Ayrshire with a significant number of communities featuring in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 20% of most deprived.

Results from the most recent (2023/24) national [Health and Care Experience Survey](#) suggest that carer experiences relating to various aspects of care provision in East Ayrshire have been more positive compared to national average experiences, particularly in relation to the impact of caring on health and wellbeing, and support to continue caring.



Taken together, this evidence suggests the position for the future will be challenging, with fewer people available to provide care, either in a paid or unpaid capacity, and greater demand caused by an ageing population. It is for this reason we need to ensure carers are supported well and enabled to continue their role and have a good balance between caring and other things in their life.



Importance of Supporting Carers

People are living longer but often the increase in longevity comes at a cost of increased years in poor health with complex care needs. This is putting more pressure on the health and social care system.

In response, we are working to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and premature admissions to long-term residential care, to reduce delays in discharge from hospital, reduce demand for formal support services, and to help people remain as independent as possible in their own home.

Unpaid carers in Scotland represent a larger workforce than the paid health and social care support workforces combined. They are integral to good care and are often best placed to understand and advocate for the needs, rights and preferences of the person they support. We are also mindful that a large percentage of our Health and Social Care workforce across East Ayrshire may also be carrying out a caring role as well.

Although for many, caring can have positive and rewarding aspects, it is profoundly challenging. Carers often put the interests of the person they care for ahead of their own needs. The care provided by unpaid carers is often physically and emotionally demanding, with consequences for the carer's own health and wellbeing. Caring responsibilities can affect a carer's own health and wellbeing, their relationships with others, their access to education, employment opportunities and finances, and limits the time and energy they must do things for themselves.

We recognise the value carers bring and importance of ensuring they are included as equal partners in care. This strategy sets out our commitment to supporting carers to:

- Uphold their human rights
- Reduce the impact of their caring role
- Promote their health and wellbeing
- Sustain them in their caring role if they so wish
- Help people to continue to live in their own homes and communities
- Achieve better outcomes for carers
- Achieve better outcomes for the cared for person
- Sustain the health and social care system
- The right to a family life, to have and maintain family relationships

Impact on Young Carers

Caring can be a positive experience for many young people, where they are supported to manage that role appropriately, and to have a life alongside it. Through caring, young people often develop skills and values, as well as a sense of pride and increased self-esteem from their role. Young carers often go above and beyond what is expected of them as young people.

However, caring can also put pressure on young people, especially where they undertake inappropriate caring responsibilities or spend long hours providing care. Without the right support, young carers are at risk of negative impacts on their educational attainment, relationships with their peer group and their mental health. Young carers often find it challenging to recognise that they have additional responsibilities. Many have grown up with caring being part of their family

dynamic and these extra tasks can feel normal to them. Sometimes families or young people will have concerns about potential negative repercussions of social work intervention, leading to young carers actively avoiding seeking help or support.

Research also shows that young carers feel that their experiences and knowledge about the cared-for person are often overlooked by professionals, leaving them feeling excluded and undermined. There can also be stigma associated with a younger person undertaking a caring role. Coupled with a lack of awareness or support for their caring role, this can leave young people feeling lonely and isolated.

Young people aged 16-18 are often at a transition point in their lives as they finish school, get their first job, or undertake further study and training. However, opportunities that are open to most young people can be restricted for young carers due to the additional responsibilities and pressures that come with caring.

To assist with the transition from young carer to adult carer, the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 requires a young carer statement, and any support that comes from it, to be maintained until an adult carer support plan is prepared. We will continue to work with authorities to ensure that this is done consistently in a way that best supports the specific needs of each young carer.



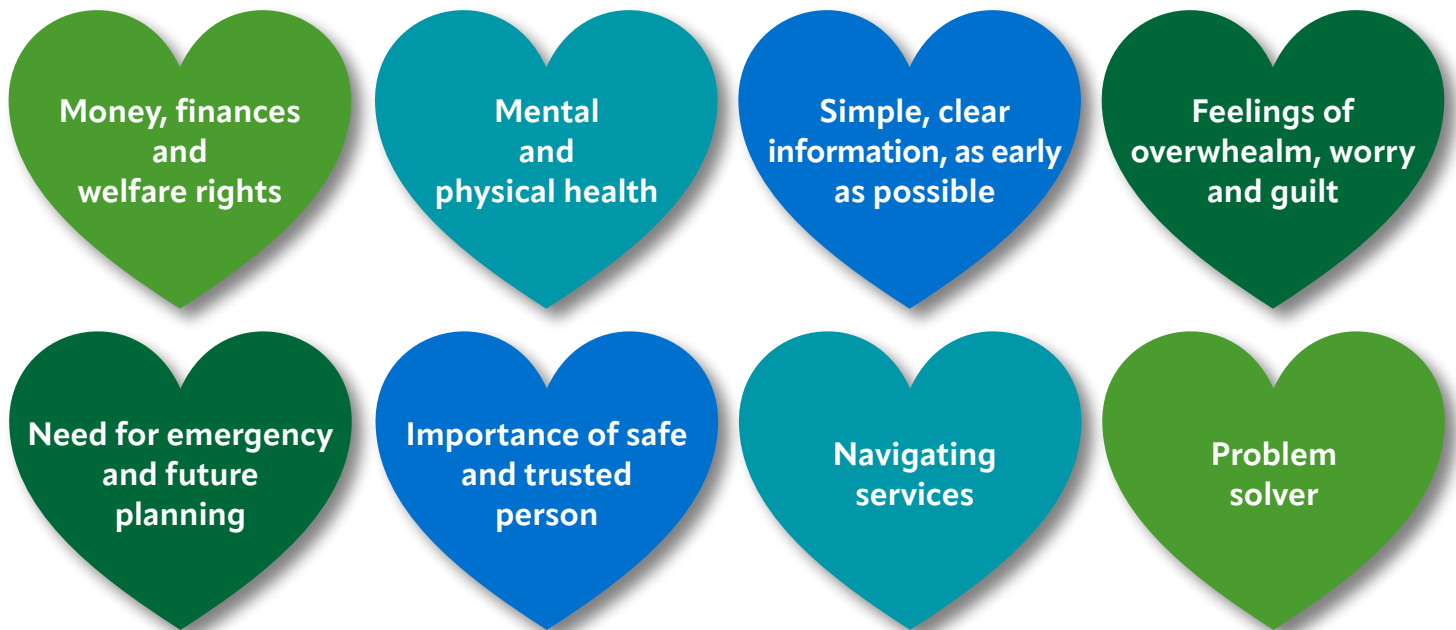
Consultation and engagement with Carers

East Ayrshire's Carers Strategy 2025-28 has been informed by ongoing engagement and consultation with carers. We have drawn from anonymised feedback provided to the East Ayrshire Carers Centre collected from general enquiries and direct feedback from carers given while creating an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) and a Young Carer Statement (YCS).

A dedicated consultation was carried out on the contents of the draft Carers Strategy from 10th March to 18th April 2025. We focused on hearing from unpaid carers (young and adult) and people who use our services. Additionally, we captured views from our workforce, third sector organisations and the wider public.

A priority from the consultation was to hear from carers what matters most to them and the top themes were:

What matters to you as a carer?



Findings focused on the overall strategy:

- Overall support for the strategy priorities in particular 'A Life Outside of Caring', with request for clarity of the actions needed and who will have responsibility for them.
- A more mixed, unsure, picture as to whether carers feel they are linked to these priorities, whether their role and what matters most to them is reflected in the strategy overall and if they see the support they receive within it.
- The importance and necessity of clear information in plain English, not only on services and supports available for carers but related to the strategy contents and format.
- Concerns around the delivery of the strategy in the current financial climate and a need for honest reflection within of the impact.
- The impact that a caring role can have on an individual is substantial and multi-faceted and therefore requires a range of approaches, supports and opportunities.
- The importance of being able to take a break from your caring role (short break/ respite) was highlighted throughout the majority of online and in person responses.

Findings on the impact of caring role:

Participants in the consultation were asked if they could describe in more detail how they feel their caring role has affected them. The top themes heard:

- Lack of support
- Lack of respite
- Impact on physical and mental health
- Impact on own self, quality of daily life and relationships
- Loneliness and Isolation
- Work/Life Balance

"Caring has had a major impact on my entire life."

Findings on supports accessed or what would be helpful:

Positive feedback on the use of and support from Alzheimer's Scotland, East Ayrshire Carers Centre, Social Work Services, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy:

"I found the carers centre extremely helpful both care plan, financial and break wise they gave me the care and support and help and listened to our circumstances."

"Alzheimer's Centre is great and trying to get help with daycare and respite."

"Setting out clearly what supports are available."

A number of participants stated that they were unsure or didn't know what would help or be available to them.

Suggestions on how to improve supports and what they should focus on:

- Time to self / respite / short breaks
- Greater financial support and help linked to the impact on employment, reduced earnings and the current cost of living crisis.
- Increased choice and flexibility of supports on offer linked to clarity and ease of access to what is available for carers from eligibility criteria, short break statements to self-directed support.
- More awareness from Health and Social Care workforce, specifically Social Work Officers, as to carers rights and entitlements and in promoting Young Carers Statements and Adult Carer Support Plans.
- More local (East Ayrshire focused) public communication and information sharing activities around carers and disability rights, sharing local stories and experiences.
- Need for disability accessible facilities particularly in the places that carers are being signposted to use.

From young carers we specifically heard about the importance of:

- Supports that are specific to young carers
- Importance of breaks and respite from caring providing opportunities to relax, have fun, be brave and try new things and make friends.
- Friendships often formed from specific young carers supports with peers who are experiencing similar situations
- Being able to be yourself, talk openly and freely about being all elements of being a young carer and not be judged or encounter any stigma.
- Feeling included and reducing feelings of loneliness
- Support and opportunities to build confidence and see more than caring role, to consider own dreams and future.
- Food and freedom from the responsibility of shopping and cooking themselves.
- Feeling welcomed, safe, appreciated, supported and treated with kindness.

"The young carers staff are also there for me when I need to talk when my caring role gets tough."

"Some from school, some from home and new ones at young carers."

For further information, see the full [Consultation and Engagement Report](#).

"I was nervous because I didn't know anyone but that feeling washed away quickly because of the kindness and support from everyone."

"Having friends is a huge part of feeling included in the world and coming to young carers for nearly 10 years now has given me that."



Key Priorities

After considering carers rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, key policies, exploring local needs, seeing what's already being done, and hearing from the consultation, we've set out the main priorities for development over the coming years. The actions associated with each priority are outlined below:

1. Promoting Health, Wellbeing, Respite, Short Breaks and Enjoyable Activities

Ensuring carers have access to regular short breaks, respite and enjoyable activities as well as the support required to promote their mental and physical health and maintain a life beyond caring.

We aim to support this by:

- Streamlining access to short breaks, respite and enjoyable activities through clear, simple processes
- Supporting carers mental health through counselling, peer support and trauma informed services
- Promoting activities that allow carers and young carers to connect socially, pursue hobbies and maintain physical health
- Developing local community and third sector partnerships to deliver inclusive, flexible options.

Measures of Success:

- More carers reporting improved wellbeing and reduced stress.
- Increase in uptake of respite/short breaks/enjoyable activities, including young carers group activities.
- Positive feedback and evaluation from carers on opportunities for personal time and social inclusion.

2. Strengthening Financial Security and Employment Opportunities

Supporting carers to achieve financial stability through fair access to employment, training and benefits, while addressing the economic impact of caring.

We aim to support this by:

- Providing clear pathways to benefits advice and income maximisation.
- Promoting Carer Positive Employer accreditation across local employers.
- Supporting young carers with tailored transitions into education, training, and work.
- Ensuring carers have fair access to flexible working, training opportunities, and financial supports.

Measures of Success:

- Reduced proportion of carers reporting financial hardship.
- Growth in number of local Carer Positive Employers.
- Increase in carers accessing employability support and training

3. Ensuring Voice, Recognition and Inclusion

Embedding carers' voices in service design and decision-making, tackling stigma, and raising awareness of carers vital contributions across communities, services and policy.

We aim to do by:

- Establishing and strengthen carer forums and safe spaces for engagement.
- Embedding co-production in planning, review, and service development.
- Delivering local and national awareness campaigns to increase recognition of carers' roles.
- Training frontline professionals in carer awareness, including use of Young Carers Cards.

Measures of Success:

- Higher proportion of carers feeling listened to and valued in decision-making.
 - Increased recognition of carers in schools, workplaces, and communities.
 - Evidence of carer involvement in service co-production and governance.
-

4. Improving Support, Information and Care transitions

Providing timely, accessible information and practical support, with a strong focus on improving hospital discharge processes and ensuring smooth transitions between services, settings, and stages of caring

We aim to do this by:

- Ensuring information on rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, supports, and services is accessible in and multiple formats.
- Improving visibility of carer support services in community hubs, schools, and health settings.
- Supporting carers during hospital discharge and other care transitions through early, proactive involvement.
- Providing outreach and early intervention to prevent crisis situations.

Measures of Success:

- Increased satisfaction with information and advice services.
- Improved experiences of hospital discharge and transitions between services.
- Fewer crisis situations linked to lack of information or poor planning.

5. Digital and Technology

The Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 and Care in the Digital Age Delivery Plan 2025-2026 mandates that all supported individuals receiving health or social services must have integrated digital care record. This will provide better access for carers to patient records and summaries of care.

Use digital tools and technology to enhance accessibility, engagement, and support for carers and young carers

We aim to do this by:

- Delivering online learning, skill development, and e-training for carers and professionals.
- Using digital campaigns, social media, and email newsletters to raise awareness and capture feedback.
- Implementing digital/TEC tools for early intervention, monitoring, and proactive support.

Measures of Success:

- Increased uptake of online services and digital resources.
- Positive feedback from carers and young carers using digital/TEC tools.
- Improved engagement, wellbeing, and access to support through digital channels.



How will we know if we have made a difference?

The delivery of this strategy and associated implementation plan will only be achieved by working with carers themselves, alongside partners in the third sector, education, housing, employment support, and health and social care, to support and meet the needs of young and adult carers.

Our aim is to have a clear, shared understanding and consistent approach for everyone and to develop an easy read carers development/implementation plan. The strategy will be made available in multiple formats and promoted through community networks, ensuring accessibility for all.

Carers have requested an easy-read version of the strategy which is easy to understand, with no jargon, and contains clear actions for delivering on the priorities.

Delivery and Monitoring

- Establish a Carers Strategy Implementation Group to oversee all priorities.
- Monitor progress of our Delivery Plan using both traditional and digital metrics, ensuring carers are meaningfully involved in evaluation.
- Maintain flexibility to adapt to changing needs, policy developments, and emerging technologies.

This is a working document which will be reviewed, and progress monitored through the Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Planning/Wellbeing Delivery Plan Group. Specific actions will be added, updated or amended in response to emerging or changing needs.

We are also mindful of the challenging financial picture across our services, and nationally, which may require us to review our actions. However, this reinforces the need for continued engagement and involvement of carers and our partners in the delivery of the strategy that ensures open and honest conversations focusing on what we can achieve together.



Carers Strategy Delivery Plan 2025-2028

| Priority Area | Key Actions | Timescales | Success Criteria | Anticipated Benefits |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Promoting Health, Wellbeing, Respite, Short Breaks and Enjoyable Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline access to short breaks and enjoyable activities Provide counselling, peer support, trauma-informed services Promote social, hobby-based and physical health activities Develop community and third sector partnerships | 2025–2028 (Ongoing annual review) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased uptake of breaks/ activities More carers reporting improved wellbeing Positive feedback on social inclusion opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced carer stress and burnout Improved mental and physical health Greater community participation |
| Strengthening Financial Security and Employment Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide benefits advice and income maximisation Promote Carer Positive Employer status Tailor support for young carers' education and work transitions Ensure fair access to training and flexible working | 2025–2028 (Annual metrics monitoring) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer carers reporting financial hardship Growth in Carer Positive Employers More carers accessing employment/training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved financial wellbeing Increased employment and training opportunities Reduced inequality |
| Ensuring Voice, Recognition and Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen carer forums and safe spaces Embed co-production in planning and review Deliver awareness campaigns Train professionals in carer awareness | 2025–2028 (Evaluated through engagement feedback) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More carers feel listened to and valued Increased visibility of carers' roles Evidence of co-production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowered and recognised carers Better-designed services Reduced stigma and increased inclusion |

| Priority Area | Key Actions | Timescales | Success Criteria | Anticipated Benefits |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Improving Support, Information and Care Transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure rights and service info in accessible formats • Improve visibility of support services • Support carers during hospital discharge • Provide outreach and early intervention | 2025–2028 (with mid-term review in 2026) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher satisfaction with information/advice • Better discharge and transition experiences • Fewer crisis situations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence in navigating services • Reduced emergency interventions • Smoother care transitions |
| Digital and Technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver online learning and training • Use digital tools for awareness and feedback • Implement digital/TEC tools for support | 2025–2026 (Linked to Digital Care Delivery Plan) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of digital services • Positive digital engagement feedback • Improved wellbeing through digital access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater access to support • Flexible and remote support options • Improved digital inclusion |





Appendices

Appendix 1

East Ayrshire Carers Centre



East Ayrshire HSCP has a duty to establish and maintain an information and advice service, covering a range of mandatory areas for carers who either reside in East Ayrshire, or for someone caring for someone who lives in East Ayrshire.

East Ayrshire Carers Centre are commissioned by the Partnership to provide this service for carers and also receive grant funding.

A summary of services provided by the Carers Centre are below:

- Provision of information
- Reduce isolation
- Improve health and wellbeing
- Referring to other relevant organisations
- 1:1 support
- Benefit advice, form completion and maximisation of income
- Outreach work including home visits
- Dedicated Hospital Discharge support for carers
- Carer led forums
- Money management/debt management and personal finances
- Fuel poverty awareness including energy efficiency measures
- Assistance to access other key services
- Emotional support
- Respite breaks for young carers, adults and families
- Training sessions and well-being support sessions
- Group support via coffee mornings and dedicated carers support groups, fun days, days out and other social activities during festive and seasonal holiday periods
- Dedicated and age specific weekly young carers and young adult carers respite groups
- Next Steps employability skills and training for young people aged 14-25

East Ayrshire Carers Centre activity for 2024/25 is summarised below:

- 673 new adult registrations
- 137 new young people registrations
- 602 Adult Carers Support Plans completed
- 46 Young Carers Statements completed
- 21,266 instances of 1:1 support for young people
- 7,510 instances of 1:1 support for adults
- 462 benefit applications completed on behalf of adult carers
- 296 adult carers supported to access the Time to Live Fund to get short breaks from their caring role.

Case Study 1:

Mrs. Q, an older adult carer, who was feeling isolated due to a decline in friendships as a result of her caring role, attended a registration session and chose to be supported to complete an Adult Carer Support Plan. Her feelings of loneliness meant she wanted to connect with other carers who shared similar interests. To achieve this, she began attending support groups in Kilmarnock every Tuesday. These sessions proved to be a source of great joy and fulfilment for her, as she has formed meaningful friendships and taken part in activities that have supported her wellbeing.



Unpaid Carer:

"I've made so many good pals at the weekly support groups, it's my lifeline. I go home ready to face the week!"

Unpaid Carer:

"It's the highlight of my week, those two hours where I can simply escape, have a cup of tea, and engage in meaningful conversations with others."

East Ayrshire Carers Centre delivers a Young Carers service to support children and young people who have caring responsibilities. The service is varied and includes:

- **Weekly Groups:**
Young carers take part in weekly sessions across East Ayrshire, combining social interaction, creative and sporting activities, peer support, and training on topics such as internet safety and healthy living.
- **Respite Opportunities:**
Young carers access day trips, residentials, and unique experiences, from theatre visits to sailing adventures.
- Leadership and personal development programs to build skills and confidence.
- Funding for hobbies and equipment, providing valuable breaks and enriching experiences.
- Special events, seasonal celebrations, and community initiatives that offer recognition and social connection.
- Participation in local and national events, raising awareness and celebrating contributions.
- **Schools:**
The service is embedded in primary schools across East Ayrshire, with Carers Champions identifying hidden carers.

Case Study 2:

Mr. S, a young person who cares for his mother with epilepsy, plays a vital role in providing her with emotional support. He is protective of his mother as she struggles to control her seizures. Her neurodiversity also brings various complications, so he ensures that people are patient with her. Additionally, he makes an effort to understand and empathise with her feelings. He has attended weekly young carers groups in recent years and recently joined an additional music group. It has been remarkable to witness his growth in confidence. Initially, he was reserved and hesitant to sing or participate in dancing, however in recent months he has progressed significantly. He now has solos in shows and actively participates in the dances. Moreover, he has become more comfortable and engaged in group conversations, even helping others when he notices someone struggling.



Appendix 2

Resources and Support for unpaid carers



Kilmarnock Dementia Resource Centre: run by Alzheimer Scotland, is a resource for people with dementia, their families, and carers they also run a support group in Cumnock at Netherthird Community Centre Location: 8-12 College Wynd, Kilmarnock, KA1 1HN Services Offered: Information and advice, community activities, peer support groups, and technological aids. You can reach them at 01563 542621 or visit their website.



East Ayrshire Council: They provide various supports and services for carers. More information can be found on their [website](#).



East Ayrshire Citizens Advice Bureau: is a local, independent charity that provides free, impartial, and confidential advice and information to help you deal with various issues. You can contact them at 01563 543379 or visit their website for more information.



Ayrshire Hospice: are committed to reaching and improving the lives of those affected by life-limiting illness in Ayrshire by delivering exceptional care. They also run a carers support group. <https://www.ayrshirehospice.org/Pages/Category/carers>



East Ayrshire Advocacy Services: is a registered charity providing independent advocacy for local residents who support various groups.

Their services are free, independent, and confidential, ensuring that local people with support needs are heard. You can contact them at 01563 574442 or visit their website for more information. Digital resources for carers



Carers in East Ayrshire can access a range of digital resources from **Carers UK**, providing free advice and information that is available 24/7.

Technology can play a key role in helping individuals and their families to enjoy a better quality of life. It can support independent living within the home and the community by providing an immediate response to emergency situations. Around 4,000 people in East Ayrshire are supported through our Smart Supports and [Community Alarm services](#).

A range of specialist equipment technology can support carers by helping the person they care for

live at home independently or alert the carer if help is needed. The range of technology available from Health and Social Care includes [SMART support](#).



Care Opinion provides people and carers an online platform with which to provide anonymised feedback on their experiences of health and care support. www.careopinion.org.uk

Equal partners



Equal Partners in Care (EPIC) is a joint initiative between NHS NES and the Scottish Social Services Council.



Honey Pot based in New Cumnock is a newly opened respite centre providing a level of support for young carers aged between 5-12 years old.

Scotland's National Carer Organisations are Carers Scotland



[Carers Trust Scotland](#)



[The Coalition of Carers in Scotland](#)



Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project ([MECOPP](#))



[Shared Care Scotland](#)



[The Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance](#)



At [Community Brokering Network](#), we provide free information and advice on Self-Directed Support (SDS) for carers and the people they support across Ayrshire. It doesn't matter what your circumstances are, your age, or the level of need, we're here to help.

We don't provide hands-on care, but we do work with carers and individuals to help them get the right support in place. Our service is fully funded by the Scottish Government, so it's free to access. We use our local knowledge and networks to link carers with statutory and community-based opportunities, helping families achieve what matters most to them, in a way that works for their lives. No formal social work assessment or care budget is needed. We're here every step of the way.

Appendix 3

Relevant Policy and Legislation

[Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) came into force on 1 April 2018, with Carer involvement being a key principle. Carers should be involved in individual level decisions that affect them as well as strategic decision making.

[East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-2030](#) provides the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all Community Planning Partners and has the guiding principle to ensure effective community engagement in the planning and delivery of local services.

[East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2021-2030](#), the Strategic Priority of 'People at the Heart of What We Do' sets out that people are at the centre of all we do and support is a positive experience.

[Ayrshire Shared Equality Outcomes](#), progress towards achieving our equality outcomes and to mainstreaming equalities is detailed in our Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2020-2022

[East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan \(2024-2027\)](#):

This plan outlines the shared priorities for health and social care in East Ayrshire, focusing on improving Community Wellbeing Support for Children and Young People and reduced poverty and inequality.

National Health and Wellbeing outcome 6 People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and wellbeing.

[East Ayrshire Community Plan \(2015-2030\)](#): This plan emphasises the importance of wellbeing and aims to work with communities to improve and sustain health, care, and promote equity

[Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\)](#): This plan focuses on achieving better outcomes for local communities, including the wellbeing of carers and those they care for. The LOIP is developed in alignment with the East Ayrshire Community Plan and is reviewed every three years to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

[Children and Young People's Services Plan \(2023-2026\)](#): This plan aims to ensure that children and young people get the best start in life, which includes supporting their carers

[Digital Strategy \(2022-2027\)](#): This strategy aims to use digital technology to improve local wellbeing and transform health and care services

[The Participation and Engagement Strategy \(2023-2026\)](#): focuses on ensuring that people are involved, consulted with, and actively engaged in the design and development of health and social care services.

[Communication Strategy \(2024-2027\)](#): aims to meet the communication needs of the partnership and its workforce.

[Human Rights](#)

[Rights of the Child](#)

[Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014](#)

[Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#) in Scotland carried out by Derek Feely in 2021, which sets out a number of recommendations for Social Care moving forward with user and carer involvement throughout.

[The Promise](#) was developed in 2020 following the Independent Care Review which took into account the views of over 5,500 children, adults and families with lived experience of care. The Promise Plan 21-24 outlines key outcomes that aim to ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential.

[Social Care \(Self-directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013 \(SDS\)](#)
[Self-directed Support Framework of Standards \(2021\)](#).

SDS is for everyone in Scotland who needs social care services or support, including children, adults and unpaid carers. The guidance sets out what local authorities should do to make sure people are able to access the support that is right for them. The act ensures that local authorities give access to SDS in a way that supports people's rights to choice, dignity and ability to take part in the life of their communities.

[Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#) was passed into legislation in July 2025 and is currently awaiting the publication of associated regulations providing the timelines for implementation. This Act introduces significant new duties and entitlements for unpaid carers.

[Caring for Ayrshire](#), is a transformational change programme led by NHS Ayrshire and Arran and the three Health and Social Care partnerships in the area (South, North and East) with the principles of engagement and collaboration with our communities embedded within.

[The Scottish Government's Carers' Charter](#) tells you more about your rights under the act and there are a range of organisations on hand to give you any information or support you may need.

The Carers' Charter (published March 2018) sets out carers' rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. These are as follows:

- The right to a personalised plan to identify what is important to them
- The right to support to meet their eligible needs and to choose how that support is delivered through self-directed support
- Every area must have a local carer strategy and carer information and advice service
- The rights to be involved in assessing the needs of the cared-for person and in decisions about discharging the cared-for person from hospital

[The Local Government \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) gave a statutory basis to partnership working between all agencies responsible for delivering public services in an area, at the heart of which is 'making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in decisions made on public services which will affect them'.

[Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) gave new rights to community bodies and new duties to public sector authorities to help empower communities by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

[Equality Act \(2010\)](#) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society and places a duty on Public Sector organisations to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

All public authorities in Scotland must comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and show how they will:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Fairer Scotland Duty places a responsibility on public bodies to seek to alleviate the effects of inequality created by socio-economic disadvantage when making decisions.

Scottish Health and Care Experience Survey (HACE):

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/health-and-care-experience-survey/> asks a sample of carers about their experiences of specific aspects of caring and the impact on their wellbeing.





This information can be made available, on request, in braille, large print or audio formats and can be translated into a range of languages.



Scan the QR code or visit east-ayrshire.gov.uk/translationservices for further information.

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Designed and produced by EAC Communications Section.

