

Stand Up For Carers

This council meeting notes that:

- Carers – whether in receipt of Carers Allowance or not, young and old – do a remarkable and important job. They are an integral part of our Stockport community. They deserve our support, but are far too often forgotten and unrecognised;
- Carers in Stockport and across the country face big challenges every single day; challenges that have been made even harder by the Covid-19 pandemic. Most are having to spend more time looking after loved ones during the pandemic; most haven't been able to take a single break since it started; and the majority are simply exhausted;
- Situations provoking care interventions can happen with little warning. Often those giving care have to reduce their working hours or give up work to juggle competing demands;
- The pressures on young carers can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances; and
- Many carers are unaware of their entitlement to financial support, a carers' assessment or break, and the support services available.

This council meeting further notes that:

- A significant number of full-time working-age carers in Stockport rely on Carer's Allowance, with over 5,500 residents entitled to carer's allowance but almost 2,000 of those receiving no payment (at May 2020).
- At just £67.25 a week, Carer's Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind.
- In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government increased the Universal Credit standard allowance and the Working Tax Credit basic element by £20 a week above the planned uprating in April 2020, but it has not increased Carer's Allowance.
- Many unpaid carers are facing extreme financial hardship. A recent survey by Carers UK found that more than a third of those on Carer's Allowance are struggling to make ends meet. Many have been struggling for months, often relying on foodbanks to feed themselves and the people they care for.

- The Carers UK survey found that “43% of carers felt that a rise in Carer’s Allowance would help them, given the financial pressures they are facing.”
- The importance of schemes such as Carer’s Passports and Stockport’s Connecting Carer card in recognising caring as a valued undertaking as well as offering access to discounts and support to holders.

This council meeting recognises the important work of many organisations who provide support to carers in Stockport, including Signpost Stockport for Carers, Mind and Age UK as well as the umbrella organisation, Carers UK.

This council meeting further recognises the importance of Stockport becoming a Carer Friendly Borough, and undertakes urgently to work toward this, for example using NHS guidance on building carer friendly communities.

This council meeting resolves that:

- We must stand up for carers, do more to support them and recognise their contributions, and build a more caring society as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Asks Cabinet to review how carers in Stockport are made aware of existing support that is available including improving the information available through the council’s own website and other resources; what further actions the council could take to support and promote the Carer’s passport and Connecting Carers card scheme and to expand the support and discounts available to holders; how Stockport could take steps towards formally becoming a Carer Friendly Community; and to report back to the CRMG and ASC&H Scrutiny Committees in the April scrutiny cycle;
- The council should promote Young Carers Action Day on March 16th 2021 as widely as possible, particularly to young carers and their families, as well as Carers Week (8th to 13th June 2021) and Carers Rights Day on 26th November 2021, and do so on an annual basis; and
- Asks the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, making them aware of this motion and urging them to raise Carer’s Allowance by £20 a week immediately, in line with the increase in Universal Credit.

Moved by: Cllr Lisa Smart

Seconded by: Cllr Keith Holloway