

**Fife Health
& Social Care
Partnership**



2026-2029 Carers Strategy for Fife

Participation & Engagement Feedback Report

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1. Introduction

An unpaid carer is someone who, without payment, helps and supports a relative, friend or neighbour who cannot manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction, or disability ([Who is an unpaid carer](#)).

Recent data shows that around **44,000 unpaid carers** live in Fife ([Census 2022-23](#)), highlighting the significant scale of caring locally and the importance of ensuring the right support is in place.

The **Carers (Scotland) Act 2016** places a legal responsibility on local authorities to develop and publish a Carers Strategy every three years. This ensures that carers' needs are regularly reviewed and that support remains relevant, effective and responsive. Crucially, the Act requires unpaid carers themselves to be actively involved in shaping the strategy, ensuring that their lived experience drives local priorities ([Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016: Statutory Guidance](#)).

At a national level, the **National Carers Strategy**, led by the Scottish Government, sets out a commitment to valuing carers, addressing the challenges they face and ensuring that policy and service design reflect their voices. Fife's refreshed Carers Strategy aligns with this ambition, using meaningful local engagement to ensure that carers' experiences directly inform the direction of support for 2026–2029 ([National Carers Strategy](#))

2. Engagement Purpose

This engagement seeks to ensure that the voices and priorities of unpaid carers are at the heart of the refreshed **Fife Carers Strategy (2026–2029)**.

Through meaningful participation, it aims to validate existing priorities, identify emerging needs and gather insights that will help shape actions with the greatest impact. The findings will inform an outcome-focused, inclusive strategy grounded in the real-life experiences of unpaid carers.

3. The Engagement Timeline





4. Designing the Consultation

The consultation was designed by Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (Fife HSCP) Participation and Engagement Team, working alongside the Change and Improvement Manager from Fife HSCP.

To ensure the inclusion of younger voices, Fife Young Carers supported the development of an adapted, child-friendly version of the survey, enabling Young Carers to engage fully in the consultation.

The consultation included a summary of what had been achieved during the 2023–2026 strategy period. Providing this context gave respondents a shared starting point and helped them offer more informed, meaningful feedback on current support and future priorities.

This approach was well-received. Many carers said that having information clearly signposted helped them understand the range of support available—much of which they had not previously been aware of:

“Completing this survey this week has made me realise there are a lot of things I am unaware of.”

The questions were designed to gather feedback from unpaid carers over five priorities:

- **Outcome 1: Information** – Providing unpaid carers with access to helpful information in different formats, whenever and wherever they need it.
- **Outcome 2: Coordinated Support** – Ensuring unpaid carers get help to manage their caring role and navigate health and social care systems from the start.
- **Outcome 3: Breaks from Caring** – Helping unpaid carers take breaks when and how they want, so they can rest and continue caring.
- **Outcome 4: Early / Upstream Identification** – Developing the skills of practitioners and professionals to identify and support unpaid carers at the earliest possible point in time.
- **Outcome 5: Young Carers** – Ensuring Young Carers in Fife feel they have the right support at the right time in the right place to balance their life as a child/teenager alongside their caring role.



4.1 Engagement Methods

The consultation process focused on unpaid carers living across Fife's seven locality areas.

- The survey was live for an **eight-week period**, running from **January to 2 March**.
- A **'Question a Day'** campaign was used as an interactive engagement method, with daily survey questions shared with **262 email subscribers** and promoted across social media by **Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)**, in collaboration with commissioned and voluntary sector partners.
- **Printed surveys with prepaid return envelopes** were made available through **community carers' clubs** and distributed at **'The Well' pop-up locations** across Fife's seven localities.
- **Accessible versions** of the survey, including **audio and large-print formats**, were made available for sharing through organisations supporting unpaid carers with **visual and hearing impairments**.
- The Participation and Engagement Team delivered **in-person workshops with unpaid carers** across all **seven localities**.
- **Three online engagement sessions** were provided for the **Fife HSCP workforce**.
- **Three 1:1 Interviews** with unpaid carers.
- A **collaborative in-person** event with **Change Mental Health** and **Fife Carers Centre**
- A **in-person carer event** with unpaid carers from **Arden House Project, Leven**
- The Participation and Engagement Team facilitated **in-person workshops in three high schools**, delivered during **Young Carers lunch clubs**.
- **Fife College** supported promotion by sharing the survey through its **Students' Association**.
- **Fife Young Carers** carried out **in-person engagement sessions** with Young Carers through their **dedicated community clubs**.

4.2 Engagement Reach

This survey received responses from **672 unpaid carers**.

- **152** responses were completed via the online link / QR code, **30** of which were part of Fife HSCP, NHS or a Third Sector organisation.
- **153 responses** were completed via in-person engagement sessions, facilitated by the Participation and Engagement Team



- **78 Responses** were received from Young Carers through in person Engagement by Fife Young Carers
- **289 responses** were received from our ‘A question a day’ initiative
- **0 Paper copies** were returned complete.
- **0 copies** were requested to be translated into a different language

A promotional flyer containing a QR code and survey link was distributed to **over 300 organisations** that support unpaid carers.

The flyer was also promoted across **social media platforms** by **Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), NHS Fife, Fife Carers Centre, and Fife Voluntary Action.**

In addition, printed copies of the flyer were displayed in a range of **public locations**, including **gyms, community notice boards, cafés, community centres, The Well venues, carers centres, and schools**, to further increase visibility and reach.

Following on from the request made by unpaid carers via the Carers Forum, promotion within the Fife Free Press, Dunfermline Press and Central Times was also undertaken for 1 month.



4.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

97% (152 people) completed the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion question, enabling an understanding of respondents’ **age, gender and ethnicity**. This information is collected for **monitoring and statistical analysis** and informs the **planning and delivery of health and social care services across Fife**.

Age: A detailed breakdown is shown below:





Gender: A detailed breakdown is shown below:



Ethnicity: A detailed breakdown is shown below:

94% (87 people) said they were **white** (Scottish, English or Welsh)

1% (1 person) said they were **Asian, Scottish Asian** or **British Asian**

1% (1 person) said they were **Caribbean** or **Black**

1% (1 person) said they were **African, Scottish African** or **British African**

1% (1 person) said they were from '**Other ethnic group**' elaborating by saying **Indian, Scottish Indian** or **British Indian**

1% (1 person) said they **preferred not to say**

Localities:

151 respondents responded to what part of Fife they reside in. The **3 highest** lived in localities were:

- 1. Kirkcaldy** (*includes Burntisland and Kinghorn*) – **27%** (41 people)
- 2. Glenrothes** (*includes Thorton, Kinglassie and Leslie*) – **21%** (31 people)
- 3. City of Dunfermline** – **18%** (24 people)



5. Themes from Feedback

The findings presented in this report reflect feedback gathered through a combination of **online survey responses**, the **‘Question a Day’** initiative and **in-person engagement sessions**. Using a range of engagement methods helped to maximise participation, improve accessibility and ensure that the feedback captured represents a broad range of unpaid carers’ experiences and perspectives.

We received **672 responses** in total. Using Fife’s estimated 2024 population of 374,760 ([Fife - National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#)) as the total population, this sample size gives a margin of error of approximately 3.8% at the **95% confidence** level.

Margin of error is a statistical measure that tells us how much the survey results might differ from the views of the full population. Because we are only hearing from a sample of people rather than every resident, there will always be some natural variation. The margin of error helps quantify this by showing the range within which the true population result is likely to fall.

5.1 Outcome 1: Information

In this first section of the consultation, we provided respondents with a clear explanation of what is meant by *‘Information’*, along with an overview of the work undertaken by Fife HSCP and partner organisations to support this outcome over the 2023–2026 strategy period.

Unpaid Carers were asked if they agree that *‘Information’* should remain an Outcome for the 2026-2029 Carers Strategy

A total of **455 responses** was received to this question:

151 responses were received within the **survey**.

231 responses were received from **in-person engagement**

73 responses were received from the **‘A question a day’**

99% (449 people) answered **Yes**

1% (6 people) answered **No**



Unpaid Carers were asked if there was anything missing or additional that should be considered within the outcome of 'Information'.

Most responses came from participants during in-person engagement and feedback from the Carers' Forum, who highlighted a strong need for **clearer**, more **proactive** and **better-coordinated** information. Respondents acknowledged the **diverse communities** within Fife and suggested the need for information that is **accessible in multiple formats**, such as Easy Read, Large print, audio, BSL (British Sign Language) delivered through a single, well-publicised **point of contact**, such as **community group leaders, GP surgeries** and **schools** which are well attended areas. Although many carers recognised that **information does** exist, they consistently reported that it is fragmented, difficult to navigate and not straightforward to find when needed – this includes both on and offline attempts.

A **recurring theme** was the difficulty many people have in **recognising themselves as unpaid carers** – *"I didn't think I was an unpaid carer, I thought I was just a Mum"*. Therefore, by not identifying, people are often walking or scrolling past vital services who are offering support.

Participants highlighted an opportunity for **greater public awareness** and **clearer messaging** about what a caring role involves, explaining that *"we need to try and change people's perception of themselves as unpaid carers"* and that *"there are so many people who don't even recognise they are a carer."*, highlighted the importance of information that reflects **modern caring pressures**, with one explaining that *"there should be more engagement with unpaid carers... who also have to work to keep a roof over their heads."* and *"is there any focus on carers who work full time?"*

Across the consultation, carers were clear that accessing help should not be a struggle. As one person expressed, *"carers have enough to do"*. Participants called for practical improvements, alongside **flexible** ways to access information at a time that can fit in around busy schedules, such as **live chat, evening** and **weekend** opening times for organisations who offer support and advice and **short videos** on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

For those who are not digitally confident, carers emphasised the importance of **traditional offline** routes and suggested a help and advice line *"like the Samaritans, but for carers"* and also public noticeboards and posted leaflets: *"Putting this information in the post/through people's doors... not everyone knows to look for it."*

Carers also stressed the need for all **health and care professionals** to play an active role in sharing information during their routine interactions, for example: *"Think of all health and care workers and their interactions with carers... ensure*



all can have good conversations and share information or navigate people to someone who can.”

5.2 Outcome 2: Co-ordinated Support

In this section of the consultation, we provided respondents with a clear explanation of what is meant by ‘*Co-ordinated Support*’, along with an overview of the work undertaken by Fife HSCP and partner organisations to support this outcome over the 2023–2026 strategy period.

Unpaid Carers were asked if they agree that ‘*Co-ordinated Support*’ should remain an Outcome for the 2026-2029 Carers Strategy

A total of **433 responses** was received to this question:

149 responses were received within the **survey**.

231 responses were received from **in-person engagement**

53 responses were received from the ‘**A question a day**’

99% (429 people) answered **Yes**

1% (4 people) answered **No**

Most responses from came from participants during in-person engagement and feedback from the Carers Forum. Participants highlighted the need for a more **joined-up, responsive and meaningful approach** to co-ordinated support. Many expressed frustrations at having to **repeat** their **story** to multiple services, with one carer explaining how helpful it would be to have *“an IT database that... all professionals can access,”*. One service who has implemented shared notes was said to be a positive experience for one unpaid carer; *“shared notes saved me having to repeat my story.”* Others called for clearer responsibilities and continuity, emphasising the **value** of *“one named worker who can respond to queries and help activate and coordinate support.”*

Carers stressed that support must be **practical** and genuinely improve their day-to-day lives. Some felt that plans alone were not enough, saying *“the document gets filled out but it doesn’t change anything,”* while others highlighted **long waiting times** for services with no communication *“I was on a waiting list for 2 years, with no one checking in on me”*.

Large numbers from the online survey described the emotional burden caused by gaps in services, sharing that being passed from one agency to another makes carers feel *“what is the point?”* when no meaningful help follows.



Participants asked for better **cross-agency communication**, with one calling for “*cross-sector training sessions about carers' rights and the need for coordination.*”

Support for workforces was highlighted as an area that could be enhanced, which was touched on in the previous section of ‘information’, by way of more organisations **recognising staff** as carers and co-ordinating supportive ways to ensure work is being balanced with caring role and staff wellbeing. One carer commented, “*I am having to use sickness to support 4 weeks of radiotherapy for my mum, I'm not sick but there are no other options, there should be flexibility*”. Carers were honest in sharing they want to be able to work as this gives a sense of purpose and can be a positive distraction from caring, however, the emphasis that workplaces could support carers in a more person-centred way was asked for “*I am not giving 100% because of my caring role, 40% to work, 40% to caring 20% to family life and 0% to myself*”.

Carers were clear that co-ordinated support must be **consistent, accessible** and backed by real **resources—not simply paperwork or referrals**. As one participant summarised, “*strengthen information-sharing... and clearer accountability so carers don't have to repeat their story or coordinate care themselves.*” Improving co-ordination is not just about systems; it is about reducing pressure, ensuring fairness and enabling carers to feel genuinely supported.

5.3 Outcome 3: Breaks from Caring

In this section of the consultation, we provided respondents with a clear explanation of what is meant by ‘*Breaks from Caring*’, along with an overview of the work undertaken by Fife HSCP and partner organisations to support this outcome over the 2023–2026 strategy period.

Unpaid Carers were asked if they agree that ‘*Breaks from Caring*’ should remain an Outcome for the 2026-2029 Carers Strategy

A total of **434 responses** was received to this question:

148 responses were received within the **survey**.

231 responses were received from **in-person engagement**

55 responses were received from the ‘**A question a day**’

99% (430 people) answered **Yes**

1% (4 people) answered **No**



Feedback was consistent from participants through the online survey, in person engagement sessions and 'Question a day' initiative that a break from caring should be available **before crisis**, not only once people reach exhaustion - *"So much of this support is only available once you're at crisis point... that's not living, it's survival."* Others highlighted barriers of **long waits** and **administrative burdens**, saying that the process *"took a lot of planning and paperwork which added to the strain"* and called for *"A more streamlined process, I've been waiting 6 months on a break because of all the paperwork"*.

There was strong feedback around the need for **more respite options**, including building-based services and regular short breaks. Carers stressed that **current provision** often **falls short**, explaining that *"having my hair cut is not a break"* and that *"once a year isn't enough."* Many called for **flexible** and short-notice options, with clear information on what support is available and provisions of support for the cared-for person while the carer takes a break.

Employment was again noted as a key theme, with participants from in-person engagement stressing that breaks must be **accessible to carers in employment**, families with complex needs and carers who are older or isolated. As one person said, *"I'm my mum's full-time carer – I don't get a break at all."*

Young Carers told us they want breaks that give them **time away from responsibility**, space to relax and opportunities to have fun. Many said they value breaks that let them **try something new**, learn a skill or do things they normally wouldn't have the chance to do, such as water sports, outdoor activities, crochet, gaming or playing music. Spending time with friends was especially important, including **days out, sleepovers, residential and weekend trips**. Young Carers also described wanting time away from school pressures and home responsibilities, with destinations ranging from local outings like bowling, trampolining or Cluny Clays, to bigger trips such as Blackpool, Alton Towers, or even Disneyland.

The feedback underlines the need for a system that offers carers genuine rest, choice and consistency, one where respite is easy to access, clearly explained, and recognised as essential to preventing burnout and supporting carers to live, not just cope – *"I am already knee deep in everything, this will progress to drowning soon after"*

5.4 Outcome 4: Early / Upstream Identification

In this section of the consultation, we provided respondents with a clear explanation of what is meant by 'Early / Upstream Identification', along with an overview of the work undertaken by Fife HSCP and partner organisations to support this outcome over the 2023–2026 strategy period.



Unpaid Carers were asked if they agree that ‘Early / Upstream Identification’ should remain an Outcome for the 2026-2029 Carers Strategy

A total of **430 responses** was received to this question:

147 responses were received within the **survey**.

231 responses were received from **in-person engagement**

52 responses were received from the ‘**A question a day**’

99% (426 people) answered **Yes**

1% (4 people) answered **No**

During group consultation sessions, respondents said the wording of Priority 4 was unclear and suggested changing it to something more recognisable, such as “*Recognising unpaid carers earlier.*”

Feedback from participants highlights the importance of **recognising** and **supporting** unpaid carers as **early as possible**, long before they reach **crisis point**. Carers emphasised the value of early **conversations** and **future planning**, with one noting that “*if you get into the system before you need it, you are not dealing with it in a state of panic.*” Others stressed the need for clear, practical guidance at the **point of identification**, including an “*information pack – supporting with blue badges, allowance, knowing what support is available.*”

A recurring theme, which we heard through outcome one, was that many people do not recognise themselves as carers, making early identification challenging. Participants called for stronger **public awareness** and **clearer messaging** about what an unpaid carer is, stating that “*people recognising they’re an unpaid carer can be a challenge.*” Several also shared that they had “*never been offered or told about any of these things available,*” highlighting gaps in current information and pathways.

Young Carers shared strong views about early identification, with some carers falling through the gaps for a **prolonged period of time** “*I didn’t realise I was a young carer until S4 when guidance staff helped me understand.*” and “*I didn’t get identified until I was at College, but I had been caring since I was 10 years old*”. An opportunity for a short “day in the life of a young carer” video was suggested for teachers and other professionals could help build empathy and improve understanding, supporting **earlier identification** “*In hospital and Doctors surgery’s as I was in all the time with my mum, but they didn’t see the signs*”. Another respondent proposed involving an unpaid carer during annual school **careers week** to **raise awareness** and give pupils a real insight into what a caring role can look like.



Carers, through the survey, emphasised that needs change over time, so **early identification** must also be accompanied by **regular review**. As one person explained, *“needs are not just one-off; they evolve constantly.”* Participants also called for improved **carer-awareness training** for **professionals**, proactive support at key transition points (such as diagnosis or hospital discharge).

More consistent, systematic **identification** of unpaid carers across **GP practices, schools, hospitals and workplaces** was strongly encouraged, as it was noted *“we are all in any one of these places at some point.”* Feedback also highlighted the need for organisations to better support their own workforce, with a carer sharing, *“Management have never discussed my caring role or acknowledged it.”* In response, participants suggested developing an **e-learning module** for organisations to use with staff teams, which could raise awareness, improve understanding and reach a large audience efficiently.

The feedback shows that early and upstream identification must be proactive, consistent and supported by clear referral routes. Carers want timely information, ongoing follow-up and professionals who recognise hidden caring roles—ensuring that support begins early, evolves with need and prevents carers from reaching crisis before help is offered.

5.5 Outcome 5: Young Carers

In this section of the consultation, we provided respondents with a clear explanation of what is meant of ‘*Supporting Young Carers*’, along with an overview of the work undertaken by Fife HSCP and partner organisations to support this outcome over the 2023–2026 strategy period.

Unpaid Carers were asked if they agree that ‘*Young Carers*’ should remain an Outcome for the 2026-2029 Carers Strategy

A total of **437 responses** was received to this question:

150 responses were received within the **survey**.

231 responses were received from **in-person engagement**

56 responses were received from the ‘**A question a day**’

98% (428 people) answered **Yes**

2% (9 people) answered **No**

Most responses from came from participants during in-person engagement, with respondents reflecting on the **importance** of identifying and supporting Young Carers **early, consistently** and in ways that reduce **stigma** and recognise the pressures they face. Several carers emphasised the need for **clear communication**, noting that *“policy and changes need explained to carers*



champions and to young carers themselves.” Others stressed the importance of recognising **hidden caring** roles, particularly among **siblings**, suggesting that **schools** “ask on application forms if there’s a disabled person at home” to support earlier identification.

Young Carers told us they want support that is meaningful, practical and helps them feel understood. Their priorities included access to **training opportunities**, such as first aid and manual handling, alongside **respite funding** and reassurance that support services will be sustainable in the long term. Many spoke about the need for greater awareness and understanding of their role, emphasising the importance of **reduced stigma**, **kindness**, and having “a space to feel safe.”

Young Carers also highlighted the value of **regular breaks** and **time away** “Time for a break” as well as opportunities to talk openly about their experiences. Support from Fife Young Carers (FYC) was particularly valued and young people expressed a desire for **more information in high schools** and **colleges**, ensuring that services are visible, approachable and responsive to their needs.

Participants emphasised the need for **tailored support** during **key transitions**, such as moving into high school, further education or employment. Suggestions included offering “*tours and taster days*” to reduce anxiety and build confidence. They also stressed the importance of **mental health support**, flexible education arrangements and teachers who understand the pressures Young Carers face, by way of a ‘*Day in the life of a young carer*’ videos.

Views differed on whether support is balanced, with some feeling Young Carers are well supported and others concerned that adult carers may be overlooked. However, all agreed that support should be equitable and that “*kids should be kids.*”

Overall, the feedback highlights the need for proactive identification, school-linked support, smooth transitions and clear information to help Young Carers balance their responsibilities with a safe and fulfilling childhood.

Unpaid carers were asked if they would like to be notified of when the next Carers Forum is.

28 people responded **yes** to this question, which will allow Fife Carers Centre to reach out to these respondents and share with them details of the next Forum meeting.

Unpaid carers were asked if they would like Fife HSCP to share their contact details with Fife Carers Centre, who support unpaid carers by providing relevant, straightforward information as well as practical help.



19 responded yes, which will allow **Fife Carers Centre** to reach out to these respondents.

11 respondents said they were **already supported** by Fife Carers Centre.



6. Conclusion

Improving Information

Carers' feedback shows that accessing clear, consistent information remains a challenge, highlighting the need for a more coordinated and accessible approach. To address this, the report recommends creating a single trusted access point, improving outreach through familiar settings and offering more flexible ways for carers to find support.

- Develop a **central, well-branded information hub** (digital and physical) for all carer information.
- Produce **multi-format, accessible resources** that meet diverse communication needs.
- Strengthen **outreach within trusted community and health settings** to ensure information reaches carers where they already are.
- Deliver a **consistent public awareness campaign** to help people identify as carers earlier.
- Introduce **flexible access routes**, including live chat, out-of-hours support, informal contact options and online discussion spaces.
- Create **practical toolkits** for carers and staff to support consistent signposting and understanding of available support.
- Implement **regular review with carers**, ensuring the information system remains current, accessible and shaped by lived experience.

Improving Co-ordinated Support

Carers highlighted the need for a more seamless, coordinated and responsive support system across Fife, with better continuity, communication and flexibility—especially for those balancing work or navigating key transitions. To improve this, the following recommendations outline practical steps to ensure carers can access the right support at the right time:

- **Improve coordination between services** to reduce repetition, ensure continuity and provide clear accountability across agencies.
- **Strengthen information sharing and communication**, enabling professionals to work together more effectively and avoid carers having to repeatedly tell their story.
- **Introduce named workers** for carers with ongoing or complex needs, providing a single, consistent point of contact.
- **Increase flexible support options**, especially for working carers, including availability outside standard working hours.
- **Enhance support at key transition points**, such as hospital discharge and the move from children's to adult services, to ensure continuity and reduce stress.



- **Develop a more seamless and accessible system overall**, ensuring carers feel confident that help will be available at the right time and in the right way.

Improving Breaks from Caring

Carers made clear that regular breaks are essential for maintaining wellbeing. They asked for a wider range of respite options, simpler processes and reliable replacement care that allows for meaningful time away. Young Carers also stressed the value of breaks that offer fun, learning and social connection. Overall, carers want support that provides ongoing relief, reduces stress and helps prevent crisis—not just one-off interventions.

To meet these needs, carers identified three key areas for improvement:

1. **Expanding replacement care** capacity so they can take time off with confidence.
2. **Increasing the frequency**, flexibility and cultural relevance of breaks, including short-notice options and practical supports like transport.
3. **Ensuring fair access for working carers**, carers without social work involvement and long-term or older carers by avoiding crisis-only thresholds.

Together, these priorities highlight the need for a more responsive, equitable and sustainable system of breaks that enables carers to rest, recover and continue in their caring roles without reaching burnout.

Improving Early / Upstream Identification

Carers highlighted that early identification is essential to ensuring support is timely, preventative and responsive to changing needs. They called for clearer pathways, routine identification across everyday settings and timely follow-up once someone is recognised as a carer. The following recommendations aim to strengthen early identification across Fife:

- **Establish clear, consistent referral routes and pathways** so carers know where to go for help at each stage of their journey.
- **Routinely identify carers across key settings**—including GP practices, hospitals, schools, workplaces and community organisations.
- **Provide accessible, plain-English information** available in both digital and non-digital formats to support early recognition of caring roles.
- **Improve assessment quality and introduce timely follow-up**, ensuring support keeps pace with changing needs and avoids crisis.
- **Increase out-of-hours and flexible support options**, particularly for working carers who cannot access help during standard hours.
- **Strengthen support at key transition points**, such as diagnosis, hospital discharge and the move from children's to adult services.



- **Promote early planning and contingency approaches** to prevent avoidable emergencies and reduce carer stress.
- **Develop a coordinated, proactive system** that recognises hidden caring roles and ensures carers receive support before reaching breaking point.

Improving Support for Young Carers

Feedback from Young Carers shows the need for proactive, non-stigmatising support embedded in education settings. They want earlier identification, clearer pathways and more flexible approaches to help balance learning with caring. The following recommendations set out ways to strengthen support across Fife:

- **Embed Young Carer awareness across schools and colleges**, ensuring staff can identify caring roles early and sensitively.
- **Create clear, consistent pathways to support** within education settings, making it easy for Young Carers to access help when needed.
- **Increase flexibility in education**, including adjusted deadlines, compassionate exam arrangements and tailored transition support.
- **Provide practical and respite support**, including reliable replacement care so Young Carers can participate fully in breaks, opportunities and activities.
- **Adopt a non-stigmatising, wellbeing-focused approach** that protects Young Carers' mental health and helps them develop confidence and skills.
- **Ensure Young Carers can enjoy the same opportunities as their peers**, with support designed to reduce pressure, prevent burnout and promote positive childhood and adolescent experiences.

6.1 Next Steps

The feedback gathered through this engagement will directly inform the 2026–2029 Carers Strategy for Fife, providing strong evidence base rooted in real lived experience. These insights will help ensure the strategy reflects what carers say matters most, with their needs and priorities shaping future planning. By embedding carers' voices throughout, the strategy will be both informed by and genuinely shaped by those it aims to support.