

**Fife Health
& Social Care
Partnership**



**Supporting Unpaid Carers in Fife,
to Access Information and Support
- Community Organisations -**

**Participation & Engagement
Feedback Report**

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1. Introduction

Recent data shows that around **44,000 unpaid carers** live in Fife ([Census-Scotland-2022-23](#)), providing essential support to relatives, friends and neighbours who cannot manage independently due to age, illness, disability, or addiction.

Feedback from previous **annual unpaid carers' experience surveys** (appendix 1) and from discussions through the **Fife Carers Forum** and **Fife Carer Providers Forum** (appendix 2) highlight a consistent message that many unpaid carers still struggle to access clear, timely and accessible information and support. Carers and professionals alike emphasised the need to **strengthen** visibility, clarity and reach of available services to ensure carers receive the help they need when they need it.

Because of this feedback, Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (Fife HSCP) recognised the importance of hearing from carers who fall within the **nine protected characteristics** (*Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation*) outlined in equality legislation. By expanding the reach of engagement to these groups, this consultation aimed to better understand their experiences, barriers and support needs, to ensure that future improvements reflect the diversity of carers across Fife.

Under the **Carers (Scotland) Act 2016**, local authorities and Health & Social Care Partnerships must ensure that carers can access information that is clear, accessible and tailored to their individual circumstances. The findings in this report contribute to fulfilling that duty by ensuring voices from across Fife's diverse communities are heard, valued, and used to shape future support.

2. Engagement Purpose

The purpose of this engagement was to develop a clearer understanding of the experiences of **community organisations** that support unpaid carers in Fife, to better understand:

- How organisations identify unpaid carers within the groups they support.
- How organisations access information and support related to unpaid caring.
- How organisations support unpaid carers to find and navigate relevant information and services.
- Organisational perspectives on how unpaid carers currently obtain information and support.
- Levels of awareness among unpaid carers of the support available to them.



- What improvements are needed to increase organisational awareness of resources and improve access for unpaid carers.

3. The Engagement Timeline



4. Designing the Consultation

The consultation was designed to ensure that the perspectives of **Community organisations** that support unpaid carers were fully represented.

Engagement was also carried out with **unpaid carers**, which is presented in a **separate feedback report**. This can be accessed via the following link: [Publications | Fife HSCP](#)

4.1 Engagement Methods

The consultation took place between **20 October 2025 and 16 February 2026** and used a range of engagement methods to maximise reach, inclusivity and accessibility.

Printed Surveys

Printed surveys, including large-print versions, were distributed to carers' clubs with prepaid return envelopes.

Promotion Through Key Networks

The survey was promoted through Fife HSCP's Equalities Network, Fife Carers Centre, Fife Young Carers, Fife Inclusion Network, SDS Disabled Persons Housing Group, LGBTQ+ hubs, Fife Centre for Equalities and Fife Voluntary Action.



School-Based Carer Champions

Carer Champions in primary and secondary schools helped share the survey link.

In-Person Engagement Sessions

The Participation and Engagement Team delivered in-person sessions in colleges, health and wellbeing hubs, health and social care events, community clubs and a mosque.

Online Interviews

Engagement was supported through online interviews.

Engagement With Cultural Groups

Cultural groups were invited to participate online, in person, or through their group leader. One group leader from the African community contributed meaningful feedback on behalf of their members.

4.2 Engagement Reach

The survey was shared via a QR code and email to over **100 organisations** that support unpaid carers across Third Sector and Carer Support Organisations, Equality, Inclusion and Community Based Organisations, Faith and Cultural Organisations, Education and Children's Services, Statutory Services and Staff Networks

This survey received responses from **29 Community Organisations**

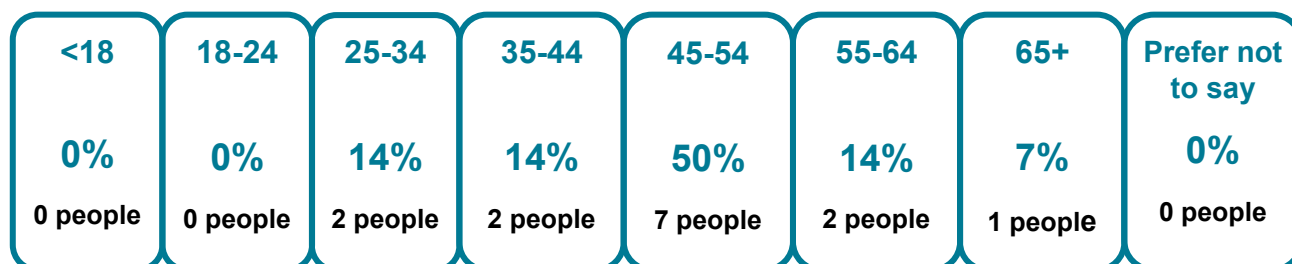
- **28** responses were completed via the **online link / QR code**.
- **0 Paper copies** were returned complete.
- **0 copies** were requested to be translated into a language other than English.
- **1 one-to-one** interview took place with group leader who supports people from the African community.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

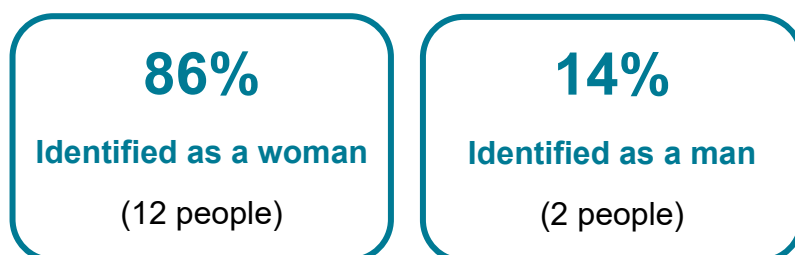
Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion questions provided an understanding of respondents **age, gender, and ethnicity**.

Fife HSCP use this data for monitoring and statistical purposes in the planning and delivery of health and social care services in Fife.

Age: 14 respondents provided their age.



Gender: 14 respondents provided their gender (*other genders were available to choose from*)



Ethnicity: 14 respondents provided their ethnicity (*other ethnicities were available to choose from*)

86% (12 people) said they were **white** (Scottish, English or Welsh)

7% (1 person) said they were **Caribbean** or **Black**

7% (1 person) said they were from '**other ethnic group**', providing further details as '**Slovakian**'.

5. Themes from Feedback

Feedback gathered from **community organisations** reflects their real-life experiences and provides insight into how organisations that support unpaid carers perceive barriers when delivering services.

As outlined earlier, **one-to-one interviews** were also conducted with a community group lead from the **African community**. This group lead supports **5 unpaid carers**. Feedback is captured within this report and referenced where relevant.



5.1 Understanding the Landscape

We asked community organisations how they currently support unpaid carers in Fife which included questions on what community clubs and groups they run, their experiences of how unpaid carers currently access support and information available to them and what awareness organisations feel unpaid carers have of the range of support and information available to them. We also asked if we need to consider improvements to increase awareness and access to supports and information.

We first asked Community Organisations what the name of their organisation / group was and where they deliver their service in Fife?

29 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their feedback.

- **Children, young people and family services:** Barnardo's, Fife Council Youth Work, Support for Learning, Community Use Fife, Crossgates Primary School, Markinch PS, Castlehill PS, Bell Baxter High School, MCR Pathways, Levenmouth Academy (FYC Champion).
- **Carer-focused and rights organisations:** Citizens Advice and Rights Fife, Carers Income Maximisation Project, Fife Carers Centre, Fife Forum, Fife Centre for Equalities.
- **Health, wellbeing and condition-specific services:** Change Mental Health, Fife Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey, HSCP (Fife-wide), Social Work Older People Services.
- **Community clubs, cultural and equalities groups:** Later Life Choices Glenrothes, AYT Foods – Africa in Fife, People First (Scotland), Paxton Centre at Homelands Trust, Fife Pride.
- **Veterans and sensory services:** Sight Scotland Veterans.
- **Fife-wide programmes and advocacy groups:** Link Life Fife, People First (Scotland).



Community organisations were asked to share the purpose of the support they offered

27 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their feedback.

Feedback highlighted that wide range of support is provided to people in Fife. Their work covers **mental health, education, carer support, community wellbeing, advocacy, income advice, health, disability support** and **equalities-focused work**, supporting unpaid carers with:

- **Strong local networks** supporting mental health, wellbeing and resilience.
- **Significant role in supporting carers**, both practically and emotionally.
- **Wide representation of equality and rights-based work** across Fife.
- **Schools and youth services** play a key role in early support and identification.
- **Cultural and community groups** provide vital trusted spaces for marginalised communities.
- **Holistic and person-centred support** appears across all sectors.

We asked organisations what groups of people they support

26 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their feedback.

- **Children and Young People** – strong focus on ages 5–24, including nursery, primary, secondary, care-experienced young people and young carers.
- **Unpaid Carers** – support for carers of all ages, including those caring for adults, people with mental ill health, or those needing specialist care.
- **Mental Health Support** – resilience-building, sensory disturbance support, emotional wellbeing, and help for teens experiencing difficulties.
- **Disability Support** – learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairments and support for disabled young people and veterans.
- **Older Adults (65+)** – services for older people, long-term care, and adult protection.
- **Equality & Inclusion** – LGBTQIA+ groups, ethnic minority communities (including African community), and work across protected characteristics.
- **Health & Condition-Specific Support** – people affected by cancer and those with complex health needs.
- **Open Access / Whole Community Support** – some organisations support all adults (16+), whole school populations, or all community groups.



We asked community organisation if they were aware of unpaid carers within the group of people they support

28 responses were received to this question.

89% (25 people) answered **Yes**

11% (3 people) answered **No**

Feedback from the one-to-one interview within the **African community** group lead confirmed that **5 members** of their community were unpaid carers.

Feedback highlights that the majority of community organisations have good knowledge of the people attending their groups as being unpaid carers.

We asked community organisations a follow up question - if they had specific clubs or groups for unpaid carers.

28 responses were received to this question.

39% (11 people) answered **Yes**

61% (17 people) answered **No**

Feedback from respondents highlighted most organisations **do not** run dedicated carers' groups, but **they do recognise** unpaid carers within their existing services, which highlights an **Opportunity** identified to develop clearer, more visible, and more targeted carers' support options.

Where dedicated carers' groups do exist, they vary widely and meet different community needs, including:

- **Young carers support in schools** – e.g., lunch groups and weekly check-ins at Castlehill Primary, offering safe and familiar spaces.
- **Culturally specific support**, such as WhatsApp-based groups for the African community, helping people engage in ways that feel comfortable and accessible.
- **Regular in-person sessions** every six weeks in locations like St. Brycedale Church (Kirkcaldy) and North East Fife, giving carers structured opportunities to meet, share experiences, and access support.

Community organisations were asked if they would know where to direct an unpaid carer who needs information or support within their caring role

29 responses were received to this question.

83% (24 people) answered **Yes**



17% (5 people) answered **No**

Feedback from group lead within the African community confirmed **Yes**, they would know where to direct members of their community to information or support, which would be through an internet search for dedicated community unpaid carer support.

Community organisations were asked if they think information and support for unpaid carers is easily available for those who need it

28 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences.

Positive experiences with existing support

- *“Services and support... are really excellent, especially through the Carers Centre.”*
- *“For primary age children there is a clear process to follow.”*
- *“For our young people Fife Young Carers... are regular visitors to the school.”*

Online information helpful but not accessible to all

- *“Yes, assuming they are familiar with using the internet.”*
- *“Yes, there is a lot online.”*
- *“Online – Yes, Offline – Not sure.”*

Limited awareness and understanding of support

- *“Very little is known... about what is available.”*
- *“Many unidentified unpaid carers may not know they are entitled to support.”*

Language and cultural barriers

- *“Language barrier can be difficult for those who don’t speak English.”*
- *“African community... don’t want to draw attention to themselves due to temporary visa status.”*
- *“In some cultures, asking for help is seen as a sign of weakness.”*

Need for more physical and accessible information

- *“There needs to be more physical copies of leaflets in public accessible areas.”*



- *Faith-based suggestion: circulate leaflets **during prayer**, using trusted community touchpoints.*

Inconsistent communication between services

- *“Agencies speaking to one another... information can get lost.”*

Professionals rely on their own limited knowledge

- *“I only know the support I come across in my role.”*

Community club leads from **African** and **Muslim** communities also described cultural and practical barriers. Some individuals feared drawing attention to themselves due to their temporary visa status, while others felt that seeking help outside the community could be perceived as a sign of weakness.

One community group lead from a mosque suggested a practical solution for improving access to information - circulating leaflets alongside the collection tub during prayer, as this is a trusted and familiar point of contact within their community.

Community organisations were asked what they think prevents unpaid carers from accessing the range of support that is available to them

28 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences:

“Lack of awareness, knowledge and their entitlement”

“I don't think people always see themselves as carers. They are just doing what they need to do”

“Lack of publicising of support Organisations available”

“Some cultures see it as a weakness for people to ask for help out with their community”

“We help our community through the power of prayer”

“Some of our unpaid carers are here on a temporary visa, they don't know if they are entitled to help and don't want to draw attention to their family by asking”

Feedback highlighted uncertainty around entitlement to support, particularly among unpaid carers within the following key areas:

Uncertainty about entitlement – Many carers, especially those on temporary visas from the African community, are unsure whether they qualify for support, which prevents them from seeking help even when it is available.



Need for clearer, more accessible information – Carers require simple, confidence-building guidance on their rights and the support they are entitled to.

Culturally sensitive communication – Inclusive, respectful messaging is essential to reduce fear and ensure carers feel safe accessing services, regardless of language, background, or immigration status.

Low identification as unpaid carers – Many individuals do not recognise themselves as carers, which limits early help-seeking and highlights a wider need to raise awareness of what the unpaid carer role involves.

Community organisations were asked what improvements would help unpaid carers in being able to access information and support easier

24 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences.

Feedback highlighted improvements to make information and support for unpaid carers easier to access. A key theme was the need for **information** to be available **offline** in the **places people already use**, such as **GP practices, Opticians, hospitals** and wider **community settings**, such as **supermarkets** and **Foodbanks** helping support feel more visible and familiar, ensuring that people who are not online can still access essential guidance.

Another theme was the call for a **single, easy-to-navigate landing site** so carers do not have to search across multiple sources. Respondents also emphasised the continued role of **schools and colleges** in sharing information and raising awareness.

To ensure information and support reaches diverse communities, respondents stressed the importance of **providing materials in multiple languages** and distributing information **through community groups** so it can be shared directly with their members.

Community organisations were asked what would help improve their understanding of knowing what information and support is available to unpaid carers

26 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences.

Respondents identified several ways to strengthen their understanding of available information and support. Many emphasised the need for *“training workshops”* and



“*more in house training*” to build confidence and improve knowledge for organisations.

Others highlighted the value of having “*a single point of information – like a database or directory*”, supported by “*a visual map or list*” to make navigation easier.

Additionally, respondents suggested providing “*information sessions for group leaders*” to ensure those in community-facing roles can share accurate and up-to-date guidance, which may provide an opportunity to review the current Carers Providers Forum (appendix 2) to enhance this ask from community organisation.

Community organisations were asked what they think prevents people identifying as an unpaid carer

28 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences.

“It’s a label”

“Many parents or children see it as their role / obligation”

“There is a lack of knowledge about entitlement”

“Not fully understanding the difference between being a carer and ‘life’ responsibilities”

Stigma”

“They may be here on a temporary visa and not sure if asking for support will effect their status”

“Culture and belief – it being a sign of weakness to ask for support out with the community”

Feedback highlighted that many people **do not recognise themselves as unpaid carers**, often due to **social, cultural, or personal beliefs**. For many, caring is seen as a **family responsibility**, and the term “carer” is viewed as a **label** that can **feel stigmatising**.

A key barrier highlighted was **limited understanding of entitlement**. Many individuals are unsure what support they qualify for or struggle to distinguish between **everyday family responsibilities** and the **additional demands of a caring role**. This lack of clarity was said to reduce the likelihood of people to seek help.

For some communities, these challenges are intensified by **cultural expectations** that discourage seeking support outside the family and by **fears among those with temporary visas** that asking for help could negatively affect their immigration status.



Community organisations were asked what would help improve people identifying as an unpaid carer

24 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences.

Feedback highlighted several ways to help more people **recognise themselves as unpaid carers** and feel confident seeking support. Respondents emphasised the value of providing **information sessions** and making support **more visible and accessible** within **community settings**, helping individuals better understand their caring role.

A re-occurring theme was the need for **wider awareness-raising**, including **radio** and **social media campaigns**. Ensuring that **GP practices** and **hospitals actively share information**, was suggested as being a helpful point of contact, as these services are often the points where carers first realise they may need help.

To support those unfamiliar with local systems, respondents called for **tailored information for people on visas**, helping them know where to seek support safely and with confidence. It was also noted that professionals need to be more aware of unpaid carers, so they can identify individuals who may not recognise their caring responsibilities and guide them towards appropriate support.

Community organisations were asked if there was anything else they would like to share on how to better support unpaid carers

11 responses were received to this question.

Respondents were provided with a text free box to share their views and experiences.

Feedback highlighted a notable **challenge** within the **Glenrothes locality**, where one provider reported having *“we support over 170 clients, yet low numbers attend the carers group meetings”* This gap suggests that many unpaid carers may not feel able or aware to engage in group-based support, potentially due to **awareness**, **accessibility**, or **stigma**-related barriers, which has been highlighted through participant feedback within this report.

Respondents identified several ways to **strengthen engagement**, including the need for a *“dedicated advertising campaign”* which was highlighted as being *“a positive move”* to improve visibility and reach. Participants also emphasised *“the need for improved resources and more community groups”* noting that a wider range of accessible, well-promoted options may help unpaid carers see meaningful improvements in their daily lives. Together, this feedback indicates that increasing awareness, diversifying support opportunities and enhancing promotional efforts could improve participation and support outcomes for unpaid carers.



For those who completed this survey, we heard how many Community organisation group leads were unpaid carers themselves

20 responses were received to this question.

35% (7 People) answered **Yes**

65% (13 People) answered **No**

We asked if respondents 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.

11 responses were received to this question.

27% (3 People) answered **Yes**

45% (5 People) answered **No**

27% (3 People) answered they were **already supported by Fife Carers Centre**

6. Conclusion

Feedback from community organisations across Fife demonstrates a strong foundation of awareness, commitment and connection in supporting unpaid carers. Many organisations recognise unpaid carers within their services, demonstrating that carers are already embedded in everyday community settings where support feels familiar and less stigmatising.

Feedback highlighted that **barriers** continue to limit access to information and support for some. These include **low awareness** of available services, uncertainty around entitlement, cultural and language barriers and challenges faced by carers with temporary visa status. Many individuals do not identify as unpaid carers, delaying early help-seeking and reducing engagement.

Organisations highlighted opportunities to strengthen visibility, consistency and cultural accessibility of information, by Improving both online and offline pathways, expanding community-based communication and providing better tools for staff to help ensure carers across Fife receive the support they need in a way that feels safe, inclusive and easy to navigate.

The example from the Glenrothes locality reinforces the need for greater awareness, targeted communication and wider choice of accessible community-based support options.



Recommendations

- **Increase visibility of support and offline access** by placing information in GP practices, hospitals, schools and community settings, such as supermarkets, opticians and foodbanks.
- **Develop a single, easy-to-navigate landing site** featuring clear pathways, visual maps and up-to-date information.
- **Provide culturally sensitive and multilingual resources** to support minority communities and those with limited English.
- **Deliver information sessions and workshops** for group leaders, staff and volunteers to build confidence in signposting.
- **Expand community-based approaches** such as school check-ins, WhatsApp groups, faith-based distribution and local meet-ups.
- **Support carers with temporary visa status** through tailored, reassuring information sessions about rights and entitlements.
- **Prioritise relationship-based models** by continuing to invest in the Carers Centre, Fife Young Carers and similar proactive supports.
- **Develop targeted advertising campaigns** to help people recognise their role earlier.

6.1 Next Steps

The findings from this engagement exercise will help inform the refreshed 2026–2029 Carers Strategy for Fife, guiding further developments that enable Fife HSCP, and partners across the third and voluntary sectors, to work together more effectively to deliver what matters most to carers.

As of February 2026, a year-long communications campaign will be delivered by Fife HSCP, designed to raise awareness of information and support for unpaid carers in Fife, which will draw on this feedback to strengthen and enhance its delivery.

The Fife Carers Providers Forum and Carers Forum platforms also offers an opportunity to support the development of the identified improvement areas.



6.2 Appendices

Appendix 1

- [annual-unpaid-carers-experience-survey-2025.pdf](#)
- [fife-young-carers-experience-survey-2025.pdf](#)
- [annual-unpaid-carers-experience-survey-2020-and-2024-data-report.docx](#)

Appendix 2

Fife **Carers Forum** offers unpaid carers a supportive network and supports access to relevant resources and information, to improve the support and wellbeing for unpaid Carers in the community. More details can be found, by clicking the link below:

<https://www.fifecarerscentre.org/carers-forum>

The **Fife Carer Providers Forum** is a forum for Service providers from the third sector, public sector and private sector who work with unpaid carers.

Facilitated by Fife Voluntary Action (FVA). Its purpose is to bring together management-level organisations that provide support to unpaid carers across Fife, to exchange knowledge, insights, examples of good practice and review feedback from the Carers Forum.