

**south ayrshire**  
health & social care  
partnership

# Age Well: South Ayrshire HSCP Adult Carers Strategy 2025-30 Engagement Report



## Contents

Summary.....	3
Community Planning Participation and Engagement Group.....	3
Locality Planning Partnerships.....	4
Ayr North.....	4
Ayr South and Villages .....	5
Girvan and South Carrick.....	6
Maybole and North Carrick.....	7
Prestwick and Villages.....	7
Troon and Villages.....	8
Ageing Well Champions Board.....	9
Oversight Group.....	9
Ayr.....	9
Troon.....	9
Girvan.....	10
Adult Carers Reference Group.....	10
Alzheimer Scotland Social Group.....	11
Care Home Forum.....	12
Care at Home Forum.....	12
League of Champions.....	13
Community Groups/Events.....	13
Ayr Carers Event.....	14
Ayr United Strollers Group.....	15
Carers Week Town Hall Event.....	16
Carrick Lowland Gathering.....	17
Cosy Spaces Girvan Community Garden.....	18
Crossroads South Ayrshire.....	19
Dalmilling Family Gala Day.....	20
Maybole Carrick Centre.....	21
Troon Carers Event.....	22
Workforce Engagement Event.....	23
Service Engagement.....	24
Online Survey.....	25
Key Themes.....	33
Communication.....	33
Resources and Capacity.....	33
Accessibility of Transport.....	33
Respite.....	34
Support for unpaid Carers.....	34
Administrative Burden.....	34

## Summary

South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to developing an Adult Carers Strategy as part of the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. This strategy must contain, amongst other things, plans for identifying Carers, Carer pathways and plans for helping relevant Carers put arrangements in place for the provision of care in emergencies.

In 2024 several strategies were developed and refreshed, this early engagement ties in well with Carers which has been used to form a starting point of what stakeholders, services and the wider public have told us they need to support a new strategy.

To help shape initial thinking around the key themes and priorities for the strategy, we launched our first stage of engagement between March and May 2025. During this period, we engaged with both external stakeholders and staff, which informed the development of the draft strategy. Multiple approaches were used to engage participants, such as focus groups, online surveys, and information sessions.

We carried out a formal consultation between June and July 2025, inviting people to share their views and feedback on the proposed new strategy. From July to August, we launched the second stage of engagement, during which we reviewed and analysed the responses and produced an engagement report.

During the engagement period, we heard from approximately 400 individuals of all ages, representing all six localities across South Ayrshire.

## Community Planning Participation and Engagement Group

On 19th August 2025, the Adult Carers Strategy Engagement Plan was presented to the Community Planning, Participation and Engagement Group, a multi-agency forum facilitated by VASA with members from both the public and third sectors. This session provided an opportunity to outline the engagement approach and connect with a range of services across South Ayrshire. The plan was shared with 12 group members, who then helped distribute the survey through their networks.

## Locality Planning Partnerships

Over the engagement period we attended all 6 Locality Planning Partnership meetings (LPPs). In total we engaged with 83 people over six meetings. We utilised the LPPs to gain information and feedback from members on specific Carer support groups as well as general support groups we could engage with.

We asked attendees to take part in the 'Carers Outcomes' task. We also opened the floor for further discussion asking people why they chose the priorities they did and how can we improve Carers services in South Ayrshire.

### Ayr North

The Ayr North LPP meeting took place on the 24th April 2025 and here we engaged with 16 people.

Ayr North LPP selected the following as the most important national and local priorities to them:

- Health and Social care supports;
- Social and financial inclusion;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role.



The Ayr North LPP supplied 9 feedback comments. Of these, five comments were in relation to what benefit support is available and, in some cases, not available. Four comments were in relation to communication and asked for information to be accessible and in various formats.

***“it’s good to talk and sometimes being known as a Carer comes with the stigma of embarrassment.”***

The group members agreed community resilience was key. They agreed that ensuring community groups work closely together could provide essential support for individuals within the locality as often all someone needs is an ear to listen and someone that can relate to their position.

We revisited the Ayr North LPP on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2025 as part of our ongoing engagement with local communities across South Ayrshire.

## Ayr South and Villages

The Ayr South and Villages LPP meeting took place on the 29th April 2025 and here we engaged with 10 people.

Ayr South and Villages LPP selected the following as the most important national and local priorities to them:

- Health and Social care supports;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

The Ayr South and Villages LPP provided four feedback comments. Of these, three comments were in relation to waiting times for support. Members stated that the waiting times for support take too long until the point where the Carer is at breaking point and time the cared for person has to be admitted to gain respite.

***“To have a health professional ‘check in’ with the Carer would put their mind at rest and give them the opportunity to raise any questions they have.”***

The LPP members also highlighted training and communication regarding unpaid Carers as an area for improvement. They advised better use of GP practices and support services available within them to ensure staff and individuals know what support is available and how to access it. The group told us it is vital to ensure staff are trained to signpost to the right place to reinforce a ‘no wrong door’ approach.

We revisited the Ayr South LPP on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2025 as part of our ongoing engagement with local communities across South Ayrshire.

National Carers Objectives	
Living with COVID - 19.	
Valuing Recognising and Supporting Carers.	♥♥♥♥♥
Health and Social Care Supports.	♥♥♥♥♥
Social and financial inclusion.	
Young carers.	♥
Monitoring.	

South Ayrshire's Carers Objectives 2019-2024	
I am recognised and valued in my caring role.	
I am supported in my caring role.	♥
I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health.	♥♥♥♥♥
I am not defined by my caring role.	★♥

*if waiting times for support is too long  
looking for young & elderly is a challenge  
lack of funding info.*

## Girvan and South Carrick

The Girvan and South Carrick LPP meeting took place on the 14th May 2025 and here we engaged with 12 people.

Girvan and South Carrick LPP selected the following as the most important national and local priorities to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am supported in my caring role.

In Girvan a total of six feedback comments were received. Of these comments, four were in relation to improved communication and information sharing and signposting. Two comments highlighted the importance of educating workforce development on being 'Carer aware' and that Carers are well-informed in the medical care of the cared for person.

The people of South Carrick voiced that there are barriers to accessing services due to the geographical challenge living in rural areas within the locality. Experiences were shared over the lack of support and access to transport for Carers, particularly in the very rural parts of South Carrick.

***“Because people think we live in the back of beyond, doesn’t mean we’re not entitled to the same support.”***

There was valuable discussion around building community networks and workforce development to improve knowledge and share information. In addition, there was also suggestions around having a permanent base such as a hub that could be used for services supporting Carers, with the opportunity of respite provision.

We revisited the Girvan LPP on 30th August 2025 as part of our ongoing engagement with local communities across South Ayrshire. During this session, we connected with 12 attendees, representing a mix of local services and stakeholders. The discussion was generally well received, with participants showing interest in the work underway to support unpaid Carers in South Ayrshire.

A key question raised during the meeting focused on how we plan to identify unpaid Carers at an earlier stage, particularly those who may not yet recognise themselves in a caring role. The attendee also queried what benchmark data we are currently using to track progress in early identification. This highlights a growing awareness of the importance of data-driven approaches and the need for clearer pathways to support Carers from the outset of their journey.



## Maybole and North Carrick

The Maybole and North Carrick LPP meeting took place on the 17th April 2025 and here we engaged with 14 people.

Maybole and North Carrick LPP selected the following as the most important national and local priorities to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role.

The Maybole and North Carrick LPP voiced a total of seven feedback comments. Of these, the clear theme was improving support for Carers. This included education for Carers through a Carers college, respite, and continuous offerings of a Carers assessment.

The group reflected that early intervention is significant for getting support in place as soon as the caring role starts. The LPP members suggested the idea of a Carers college, similarly to that of the Mental Health Recovery college, to provide an educational training and learning environment for Carers and all front facing staff to help identify unpaid Carers at the earliest possible stage with the tools required to be the best Carer they can be.

***“There should be more awareness raising of what an unpaid Carer is and examples shown so people can identify if they are one.”***

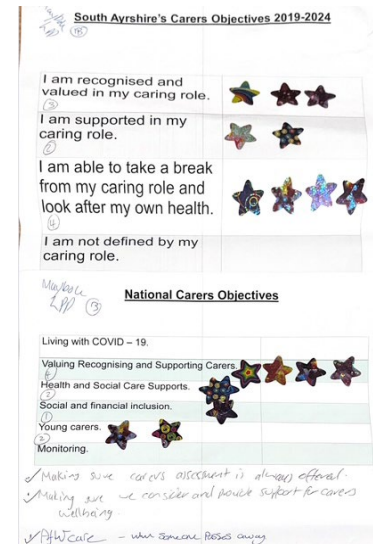
Maybole and North Carrick LPP told us that Carers need to know what to expect if/when the cared for person has a diagnosis and that there should be flexible timescales for support being offered, as well as aftercare support once their caring role ends. A suggestion of follow up phone calls from the point of diagnosis would be beneficial to ensure the Carer has digested the information properly.

***“It is so vital Carers get support, especially if their loved one goes into a care home or passes away.”***

We revisited the Maybole LPP on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 as part of our ongoing engagement with local communities across South Ayrshire.

## Prestwick and Villages

The Prestwick and Villages LPP meeting took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 and here we engaged with 14 people.



South Ayrshire's Carers Objectives 2019-2024

I am recognised and valued in my caring role.	★★★★
I am supported in my caring role.	★★★
I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health.	★★★★★
I am not defined by my caring role.	

Maybole LPP

National Carers Objectives

Living with COVID - 19.	
Valuing Recognising and Supporting Carers.	★★★★★
Health and Social Care Supports.	★★★★★
Social and financial inclusion.	★★★★★
Young carers.	★★★
Monitoring.	★★★

Handwritten notes:

- ✓ Making sure carers assessment is always offered
- ✓ Making sure we consider and provide support for carers wellbeing
- ✓ Aftercare - when someone passes away

Prestwick and Villages LPP selected the following as the most important national and local priorities to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Health and Social care supports;
- I am supported in my caring role; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

The Prestwick and Villages LPP provided nine feedback comments. Of these, a significant seven comments were in relation to not being defined as a Carer. Other thoughts emphasised the concern on the capacity and resources available if the identification of unpaid adult Carers increases.

*“You can feel really stuck as a Carer.”*

Again, highlighted was that respite for Carers is essential. They voiced that being classed as an unpaid Carer is role dependant and role acceptant. Further discussion on this detailed that some Carers, if having the choice would rather not be a Carer, they discussed at length that some people became Carers overnight with no warning and felt completely alone.

Respite alongside training for those caring for an individual with a health condition was emphasised as a priority. Training was suggested for Carers, which could lead to the development of ‘Carers Champions’ to share knowledge and fight stigma.

We revisited the Prestwick LPP on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025 as part of our ongoing engagement with local communities across South Ayrshire.



## Troon and Villages

The Troon and Villages LPP meeting took place on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and here we engaged with five people.

Troon and Villages LPP selected the following as the most important national and local priorities to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

Those who were present emphasised the critical importance of respite for Carers, noting that caring for a loved one, particularly someone with specialist needs, can often be overwhelming and isolating.

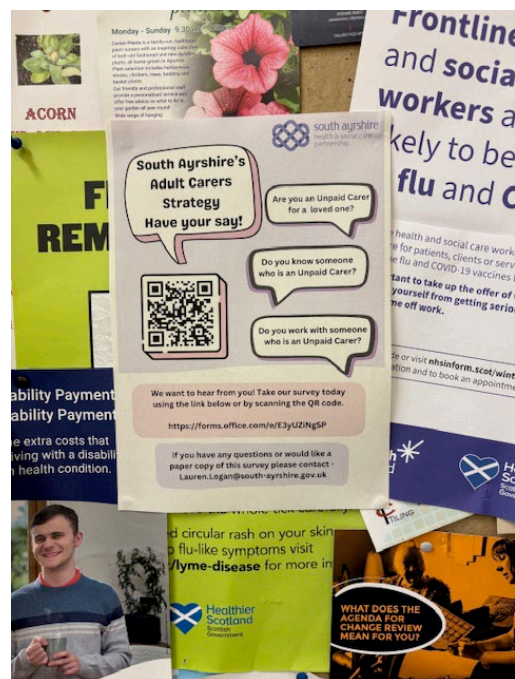
We revisited the Troon LPP on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025 as part of our ongoing engagement with local communities across South Ayrshire.

## Ageing Well Champions Board

Throughout the engagement period, we attended each meeting of the Ageing Well Champions Board. The Ageing Well Champions Boards are community-driven groups that empower older residents to actively influence local priorities and decisions related to ageing well. As with other engagement activities, participants were invited to complete the 'Carers Outcomes' task and share our survey. We also facilitated open discussions, asking attendees why they selected certain outcomes and how we could improve support and services for unpaid Carers in South Ayrshire.

## Oversight Group

On 14th August 2025, we attended the Ageing Well Oversight Group, which was attended by 13 members. This group forms part of South Ayrshire's Ageing Well programme, a strategy and action plan led by the Health and Social Care Partnership in collaboration with VASA and other partners. Members provided positive feedback and shared valuable insights on the development of the new Adult Carers Strategy.



## Ayr

The Ayr Ageing Well Champions Board took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025 and was attended by 8 people.

## Troon

The Troon Ageing Well Champions Board took place on the 21st August 2025 and was attended by 10 people.

A number of common themes emerged across the Ayr and Troon groups, particularly around the need for improved communication. This applies both to communication between services and how information is shared with the wider community. Groups pointed out that support and services for unpaid Carers are not always promoted consistently. This can make it confusing for Carers to know what's available and can

result in similar services being offered by different groups without working together. As a result, important opportunities to support Carers more effectively may be missed.

## Girvan

We attended the scheduled Girvan meeting on 21st August 2025, however, on this occasion, no participants were able to attend the session. As a result, we were unable to carry out the Adult Carers Strategy consultation draft task or engage in open discussions on the draft. This limited our ability to gather feedback in the South Carrick area regarding how support and services could be improved.

## Adult Carers Reference Group

On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025 we attended the Adult Carers Reference Group at Carers Gateway South Ayrshire in Ayr. The Reference Group is a space for Carers and previous Carers to gather and chat to like-minded people and link in with strategic partners to influence work in South Ayrshire.

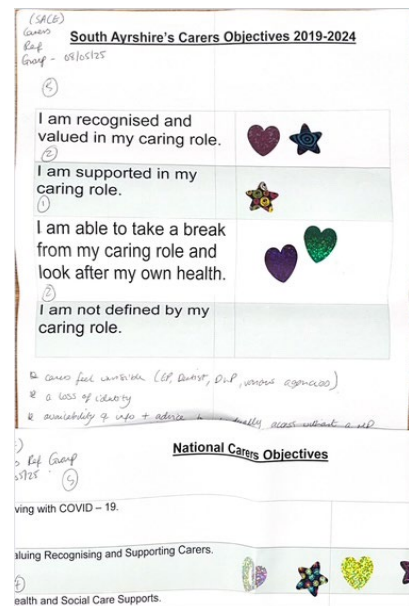
As with other engagement activity we asked the attendees to take part in the 'Carer Outcomes' task. We also opened the floor for further discussion asking people why they chose the outcomes they did and how can we improve services for Carers in South Ayrshire.

The Adult Carers Reference Group chose the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role; and
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health.

***“At times I feel like I have lost myself.”***

The Reference Group indicated that community resilience and supports are key to supporting Carers. The need for face-to-face support was important to them as Carers expressed that they often feel overlooked or unacknowledged by mainstream services including GPs, dentists, hospitals, and agencies such as the DWP. Furthermore, they find it difficult accessing appointments or priority services despite their caring role. It was suggested that the introduction of Carer flags or alerts on GP systems be rolled out and that the coordination between services and Carers is improved.



## Alzheimer Scotland Social Group

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 we attended the Alzheimer Scotland Social Group at Millrock Court, Troon where we engaged with eighteen people. The community group welcomes anyone living with dementia or memory difficulties, along with their families and friends. It offers a supportive environment where participants can take part and receive advocacy and assistance tailored to those affected by dementia.

The Social group selected the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Health and Social Care Supports;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am supported in my caring role.

***“We understand services are stretched, but there needs to be a way to prioritise the urgent cases, some people can’t wait over a year.”***

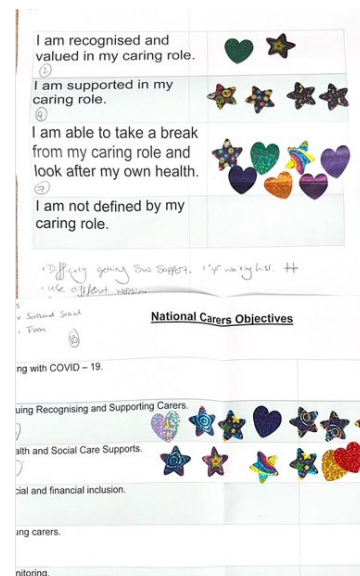
***“We don’t know who to call half the time. It would be so much easier if there was just one number or person to speak to.”***

***“Not everyone can manage a phone call. I struggle to hear, and it makes it really hard to get anything sorted.”***

The group, which includes individuals living with dementia, their Carers, and family members, expressed challenges in accessing social work support. They highlighted concerns about a waiting list exceeding one year, noted that the terminology used by health and social care services can be confusing, and felt that the overall process for accessing support is not straightforward. Additionally, they emphasised the need for a range of communication options, particularly for those with hearing difficulties who may struggle with telephone calls.

The group offered several constructive suggestions aimed at improving access and communication within dementia-related services. It was proposed that a triage or prioritisation system could be introduced to ensure urgent cases are identified and addressed more promptly. Additionally, the creation of a dedicated dementia care coordinator role was suggested, to help individuals and families navigate the system more effectively and reduce service bottlenecks.

To improve understanding, the development and distribution of plain language guides or 'what to expect' booklets, specifically tailored for people living with dementia and their Carers, was recommended. Alongside this, offering short



information sessions or accessible videos explaining key terms and processes in a user-friendly way could be helpful.

*“Even a short video or guide would help. Sometimes it feels like we’re trying to figure everything out on our own.”*

*“Being able to speak to someone face-to-face would take a lot of the stress away.”*

Finally, the introduction of a single point of contact, or a 'no wrong door' approach, was seen as a positive step towards simplifying access to services. The group also highlighted the value of offering in-person support appointments as an alternative to telephone-based interactions, particularly for those with hearing difficulties.

## Care Home Forum

On the 22nd July 2025, we attended The Care Home Forum, a valuable platform that enables Care Home representatives to engage with wider services and gain a clearer understanding of the care service landscape in South Ayrshire.

During the forum, we facilitated a discussion with 10 attendees to explore what is currently working well for unpaid Carers and to identify the key challenges they face.

One important insight shared was the need for greater support for Carers whose cared-for person has recently moved into a care home. This transition period can be particularly challenging, and attendees highlighted the importance of ensuring ongoing emotional and practical support for Carers during this time.

## Care at Home Forum

On 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 we attended the Care at Home Forum of which we engaged with 9 service providers. The South Ayrshire Care at Home Forum is a collaborative group focused on improving home care services. It brings together care providers, service users, Carers, and health and social care representatives to discuss challenges, share best practices, and promote better coordination. The forum aims to ensure high-quality, consistent care that supports independence and meets local needs. Members provided positive feedback and shared valuable insights on the development of the new Adult Carers Strategy.

## League of Champions

On 22nd August 2025, we attended a meeting of the League of Champions, a group that provides a supportive space for adults with learning disabilities to connect, share experiences, and advocate for their rights. The League of Champions plays a vital role in empowering its members and raising awareness about the challenges faced by people living with learning disabilities. During the session, members offered positive feedback and contributed valuable insights that will help shape and strengthen the new Adult Carers Strategy.

## Community Groups/Events

We got in touch with several community groups prior to and during the consultation period to engage with staff and those who access these services/supports.

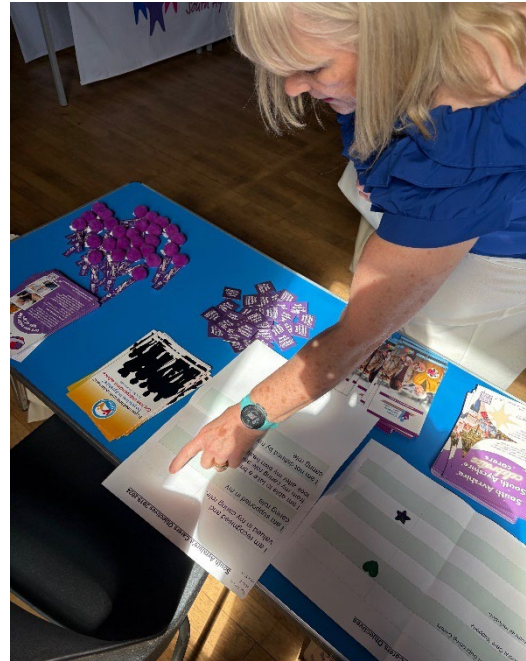
We utilised each of the events we attended to speak to people who lead/work within community support groups to network and arrange to attend groups to carry out workshops. There was reasonable uptake for these workshops, however with the carer specific groups, we found that attendance on the day was dependant on the carer's current circumstances at the time. Carers had intended to attend, however were unable to due to last minute changes that can occur in the caring role.

## Ayr Carers Event

On 2nd May 2025, we attended the 'Together We Care' event held at Dalmilling Church, which celebrated the contributions of unpaid Carers in Ayr and the surrounding villages. We engaged with six individuals on the day. While a higher turnout was anticipated, many Carers were unable to attend due to unexpected changes in their caring responsibilities, which arises often at short notice.

Individuals selected the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Young Carers; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.



*“Sometimes it feels like what we do goes unnoticed.”*

Feedback from attendees highlighted that many Carers feel their role is not always fully recognised or valued by services or wider society. There was a shared sense that greater acknowledgment of the emotional and practical contributions Carers make in supporting their loved ones would be both welcome and beneficial. Additionally, feeling appreciated can help enhance wellbeing, lessen feelings of isolation, and build more positive connections between Carers and professionals.

Many recognised that Young Carers experience a range of unique challenges, such as juggling their education, social lives, and emotional pressures from a young age. It was felt that this group can sometimes be overlooked, with some young Carers missing out on the support and recognition they deserve in schools, communities, and services. It was suggested by giving young Carers priority, early support can be provided which would lessens potential long-term effects on their wellbeing and development, while also creating opportunities for them to flourish both within and beyond their caring responsibilities.

*“Young Carers face so much, often they’re overlooked and don’t get the support they really need.”*

Finally, Carers shared how important it is for them to be seen as more than “just a Carer.” Many spoke about how their own personal goals, interests, and social lives can sometimes be overlooked which highlights the need for support that acknowledges Carers as individuals with their own hopes, needs, and rights.

Emphasis was also made on the value of respite, opportunities for personal growth, and services that help Carers enjoy fulfilling lives alongside their caring roles.

## Ayr United Strollers Group

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 we joined the Ayr United Strollers group where we engaged with sixteen individuals. Ayr United Strollers is a welcoming, weekly walking group coordinated by the Ayr United Football Academy. The walks are free of charge and welcome individuals of all ages and abilities, where the majority of attendees are male. After the walk, participants usually return to the Ayr United Hub to enjoy some refreshments and friendly conversation.



As with other engagement activities, we invited group members to take part in the 'Carer Outcomes' task. We also spent time at each table discussing the priorities they selected and exploring ideas on how Carer services in South Ayrshire could be improved.

The Strollers group selected the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Health and Social Care Supports;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

The group raised several points regarding support for Carers. They highlighted the need for regular check-ins by service providers and that a consideration may be to introduce a scheduled support review system or occasional wellbeing check-in calls, potentially led by a designated Carer liaison officer, to help ensure Carers feel supported and connected.

It was also noted that there is a general lack of awareness about local support group, South Ayrshire Carers Gateway. Additionally, it was mentioned that GPs often do not inform individuals about the support available for unpaid Carers. Alternative suggestions to this would be to launch a targeted awareness campaign through community centres, social media, and GP practices to improve visibility of South



## Carrick Lowland Gathering

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 we attended the Carrick Lowland Gathering event, where there was wide selection of local organisation and charity stalls, who use the event to raise awareness and increase the profile of their organisation within the community. It was a fun filled day out for people of all ages and where ten individuals were happy to share their thoughts.

Participants chose the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Social and Financial Inclusion;
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health; and
- I am supported in my caring role.

The main theme of the feedback from people was that they didn't recognise themselves as a Carer;

***“he’s my husband so of course I’d look after him.”***

It was clear that those who shared their thoughts had been in a caring role purely because they cared. Individuals also admitted that they weren't sure where to access information from, if they wanted support, suggesting further awareness raising and accessibility of service support for unpaid Carers within the locality needs to be a key focus.



## Cosy Spaces – Girvan Community Garden

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 we attended Girvan Community Café which is a community initiative that takes place once a month and provides warm and welcoming spaces for people to gather, in particular Carers. They can enjoy refreshments, and socialise, predominantly during the colder months.

Equal to other engagement activity we spoke with forty-two attendees who were keen to take part in the 'Carers Outcomes' task.



The Cosy Space attendees felt in general, all four of the Local Outcomes were extremely significant, therefore all four were positioned highly. The following was chosen as the most important priority areas to them:

- Social and Financial Inclusion;
- Health and Social Care Supports;
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

At the Community Café, the group reflected on support for Carers and what we can do to improve the provision on support across South Ayrshire.

***“Carers should get the recognition they deserve; it is an honour to be a Carer.”***

There was mixed feedback on experiences of support from health and social care services and financial support. Various people told us support from health services had been good and social work was a lifeline but getting support in place can take some time and that can be taxing on the Carer. The group also added that for those who have connected with Carers Gateway, that they do great work. However, they also shared that they find services to be disjointed with a lack of co-ordination between agencies and that they found there was no structured support from point of diagnosis. One member told us that they feel that communication between services and Carers could be improved as they feel like they are constantly chasing up information and repeating themselves.

Furthermore, the group emphasised that mental health care is key for a Carer and companionship for Carers is something that should be considered as a support. Suggestions were also made for support for those who are digitally excluded but also to be mindful that offline support is also offered, recognising that not everyone can access online services.

## Crossroads South Ayrshire

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 we attended Crossroads Care Attendants team meeting at the Biggart Hospital. Crossroads South Ayrshire is a local charity who provides a domiciliary service to relieve Carers and their families in South Ayrshire from the stress of caring for persons who need constant supervision.

Like other engagement activity we asked the thirteen attendees to take part in the 'Carer Outcomes' task. Whilst each outcome was explained, we described why each one is so important with the group, emphasising the importance of getting the right support at the right time.

The Care Attendants chose the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role; and
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health.

The group were clear that 'valuing, recognising and supporting Carers' was a priority outcome for them. Care attendants have witnessed many individuals experiencing delays in receiving necessary support, which often leads to a decline in their health or wellbeing by the time help is finally provided.

***"People are waiting longer to get support and deteriorate by the time support is in place."***

The group also expressed the importance of communication from professionals to patients. They agreed that when a patient is given a diagnosis, little information around the new diagnosis is offered. It was advised that it would be helpful if there was support and information given at the point of diagnosis and going forward, would be beneficial if this could be a standard way of practice if a loved one was to become a Carer.

Several attendants stated that many of the Carers they support are part of the "sandwich generation" where balancing the demands of caring for aging parents while raising children is a strain. It was expressed that the impact causes emotional and physical exhaustion to the Carer, time constraints, and feelings of guilt or insufficiency were common reports. It was suggested that tailored support services for multi-generational Carers would be beneficial, such as counselling or peer groups, furthermore, planned flexibility and targeted care packages that consider the Carer's entire family context.

It was also suggested that there is better education around being an unpaid Carer, respite, care homes and how to cope emotionally because if we don't look after the Carer, then they will no longer be able to care to the best of their ability.

## Dalmilling Family Gala Day

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 we attended Dalmilling Primary School's family gala day. It was a well-attended event by families of the school, where there were various partners attending with stalls. Activities for children were timetabled and there were also free times throughout the day for parents to explore our various information stalls. We spoke to many parents and family members throughout the day highlighting what an unpaid Carer was and the support available, several parents identified themselves as Parent Carers.

Similarly, we asked attendees if they would like to take part in the 'Carers Outcomes' task. The participants chose the following as the most important priority areas to them:

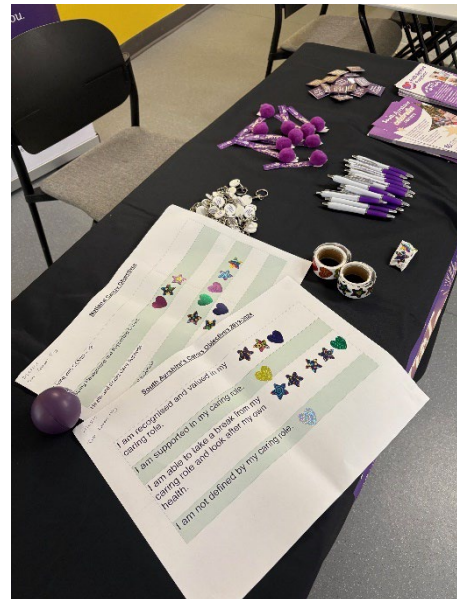
- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Health and Social Care Supports;
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role; and
- I am able to take a break from my caring role and look after my own health.

Seventeen individuals shared the pressures of being a parent Carer and that receiving respite can be challenging, stating that;

***“Being a parent, you don’t get a break regardless, but being a parent Carer is a whole different level.”***

Many parent Carers stressed that they were unsure of the support available as any free time they have, they are also being a “normal parent” to the cared-for’s sibling(s), therefore it is difficult to access services/support. It was also shared that caring for a young individual means that siblings are and can be left out, which is an added worry of guilt.

They also shared their experiences of services. Families told us it can be difficult to communicate with services as they feel like they are constantly chasing up information, however linking in with the school is a good way to being signposted to the service requested.



## Maybole Carrick Centre

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 we attended the Carrick Centre in Maybole. The centre is a safe and open space where members of the community can socialise, be healthy and learn new skills. Whilst here, we engaged with eighteen people over three different groups that were taking place at the time – Vibrant Communities group, Mother and Toddler group and The Pantry Food Bank.

The most important priority areas from the three groups were:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am supported in my caring role; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

The main theme across all three groups was the need for greater emphasis on ensuring that Carers feel respected, heard, and valued for their contributions. Carers are not simply "helping out," they play a vital role in health and social care and deserve appropriate recognition and support. From the group, current Carers voiced that being truly supported means more than just a one-off service. It's about:

***“Feeling included in decisions about the person they care for.”***

***“Getting clear information and advice.”***

***“Having access to flexible support, like breaks or help at home.”***

***“Being able to balance caring with work, family, and other parts of life.”***

Furthermore, many individuals highlighted how important it is for Carers to feel listened to by professionals and treated as part of the care team.

The group acknowledged that many Carers don't necessarily identify themselves as "Carers," they see it as simply supporting someone they love. Continuing with this, individuals however, expressed how easy it is for the caring role to become all-consuming, making it hard to maintain a sense of personal identity. It was identified that support groups and organisations often stress the importance of Carers being recognised as individuals, with their own interests, careers, relationships, and lives beyond their caring responsibilities.



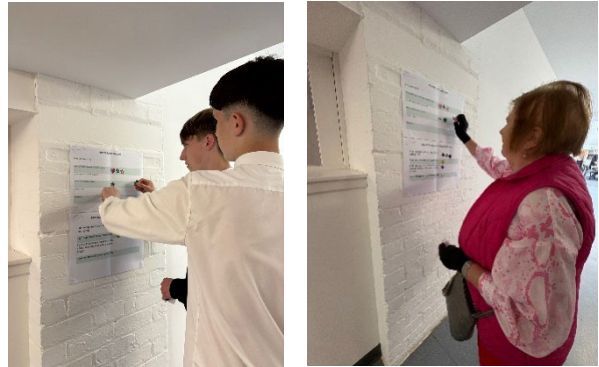
## Troon Carers Event

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 we attended the Troon Carers Event which took place at Marr College. As part of the ongoing commitment to supporting unpaid Carers in the community, the event was held to provide a welcoming and relaxing environment for Carers and the people they support. The event was open to all Carers, with the aim of encouraging connection, promoting wellbeing, and increasing awareness of local support networks. Local organisations hosted information stalls, offering advice and guidance on a variety of support services available to Carers.

During the event, we spoke with nineteen attendees to gain insight into what is currently working well and the challenges they face in their role as Carers.

On the day, participants chose the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- I am supported in my caring role; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.



Attendees told us there needs to be better promotion of Carers Gateway and the support it offers to Carers, and that local services should do more to promote each other.

It was also highlighted that once a care plan is in place for a loved one, social work support, including contact with the assigned social worker, often ends. If additional support is needed later, Carers must start the process over again by contacting the duty social work team and repeating all their information, which can be frustrating and time-consuming. There was a strong feeling that not having a consistent, named social worker breaks trust and disrupts continuity of support.

A suggested solution was to introduce a system where Carers retain a named point of contact within social work services, even after a care plan has been put in place. This person would not necessarily need to be involved day-to-day but would act as a familiar and consistent link, helping to maintain trust and ensure continuity.

## Workforce Engagement Event

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025, we attended the Central Locality Workforce Engagement Event held at Ayr Town Hall, where we engaged with nineteen people. The event was held to allow staff and community groups to network and showcase the great assets and services we have within the central locality. Throughout the day, participants were able to connect and share their experiences of working across Ayr during informal moments, with a few stalls set up around the meeting space for further, more relaxed conversations.



Individuals selected the following as the most important priority areas to them:

- Valuing, recognising and supporting Carers;
- Health and Social Care Supports;
- I am recognised and valued in my caring role; and
- I am not defined by my caring role.

We heard that Carers want to feel truly valued and respected for everything they do. By being recognised by their families, communities, and support services, as well as having access to practical help such as information, guidance, emotional support, and financial aid. It was also shared that Carers benefit from health and social care services that are easy to access, well-coordinated, and adaptable to their needs and those they care for. This support includes timely medical care, opportunities for respite, clear advice, and help with navigating often complex systems.

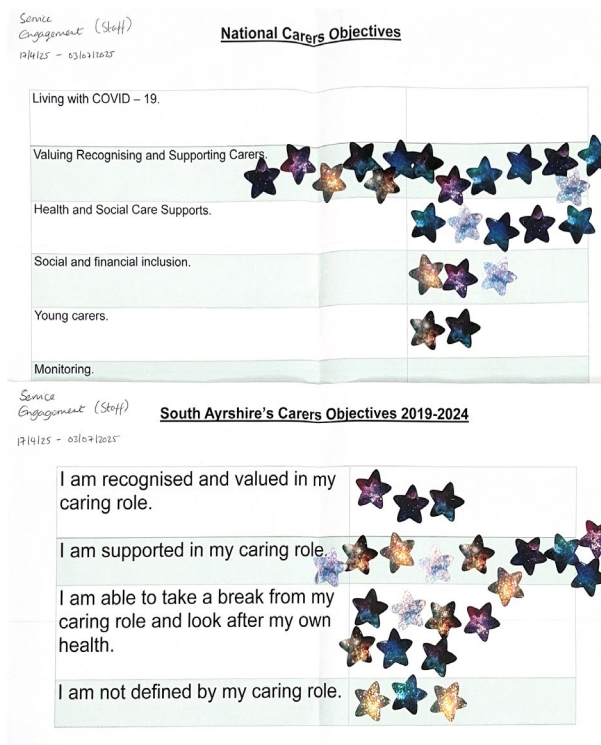
Some said that it is important for Carers to be involved in care planning and decision-making, with professionals genuinely listening to their insights and experiences. Carers want to feel that their knowledge and efforts are truly appreciated as it is vital to the wellbeing of their loved ones.

Consultation responses indicated that Carers benefit from having opportunities and support to nurture their own identity, follow personal interests, and enjoy social connections. Access to respite and chances for personal growth can help prevent feelings of overwhelm or isolation in their caring role.

## Service Engagement

During the formal consultation period, initial engagement with services was carried out through focus groups. In addition, the National Carers Strategy outcomes and South Ayrshire’s Carer Outcomes were shared across several Health and Social Care Services, distributed by email or displayed across various office bases, providing staff with the opportunity to reflect on and identify which national and local outcomes mattered most to them.

Feedback from this engagement highlighted strong alignment between the priorities identified by service staff and those highlighted by Carers and the wider public, demonstrating a shared understanding of what matters most in supporting unpaid Carers.



We reached out to 181 individuals on the SAHSCP Engagement mailing list and over 1,200 unpaid Carers (including adult, young adult, and parent) through Carers Gateway South Ayrshire. Information was also shared on the South Ayrshire Council’s ‘Have Your Say’ webpage and the Connect South Ayrshire website. Additionally, objectives were circulated online to just under 2500 contacts via the HSCP Communications team mailing list and discussed in person during focus groups. We also reached out via email to all 20 Care Home providers and the 2 Day Care services within South Ayrshire.

## Online Survey

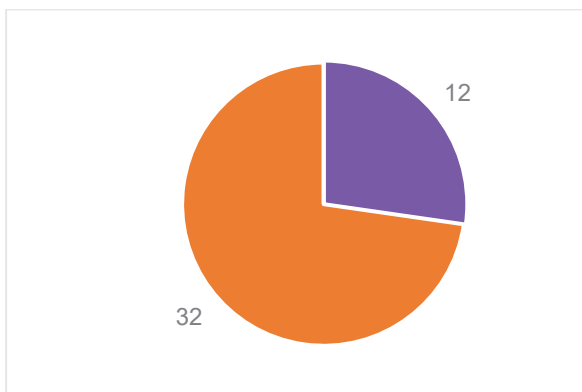
To help shape the strategy, a survey was developed for unpaid Carers, as well as staff and others with an interest in supporting unpaid Carers. The purpose of the survey was to better understand how unpaid Carers are currently accessing support, what their experiences have been, and how services in South Ayrshire could be improved to meet their needs.

The survey launched on 31st July 2025 and remained open for just over five weeks, closing on 5th September 2025. A total of 45 people took part and shared their views.



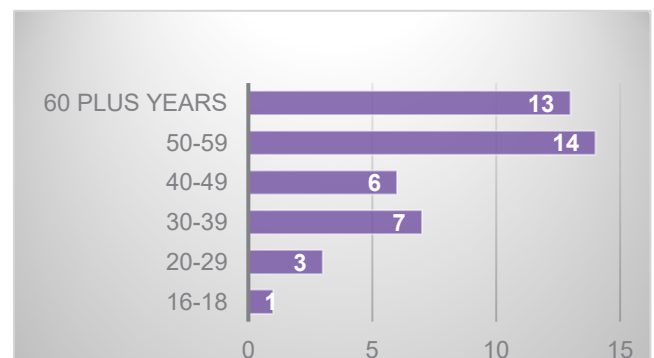
### 1. Are you:

Male	12
Female	32
Other	0



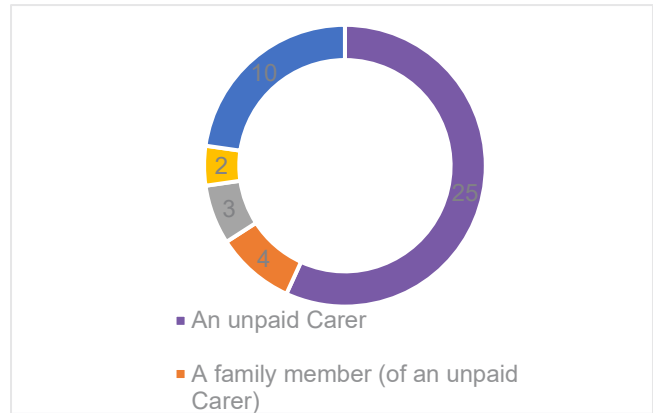
### 2. Which age group are you?

The majority of respondents were aged 50 years and over, with 14 individuals in the 50–59 age group and 13 aged 60 and above. The 30–39 and 40–49 age groups were moderately represented with 7 and 6 respondents respectively. Younger age groups had lower representation, with only 3 respondents aged 20–29 and just 1 in the 16–18 category.



### 3. Are you:

The majority of respondents identified as unpaid Carers (25), followed by those selecting "Other" (10). Smaller groups included family members of unpaid carers (4), professionals (3), and those with no experience (2).



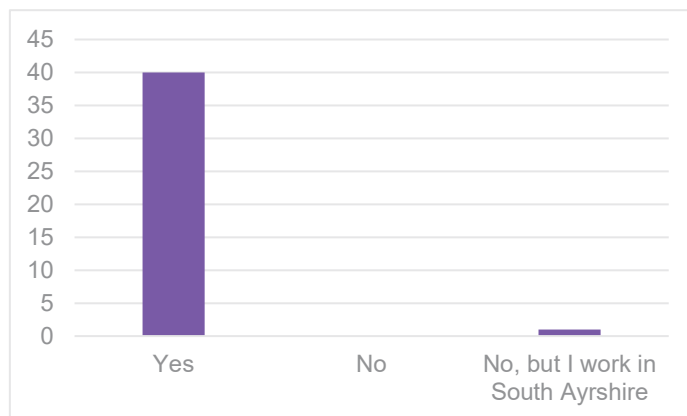
### 4. Which service area do you work in?

Question 4 was available to those who previously selected that they were a professional.

## 3 Responses

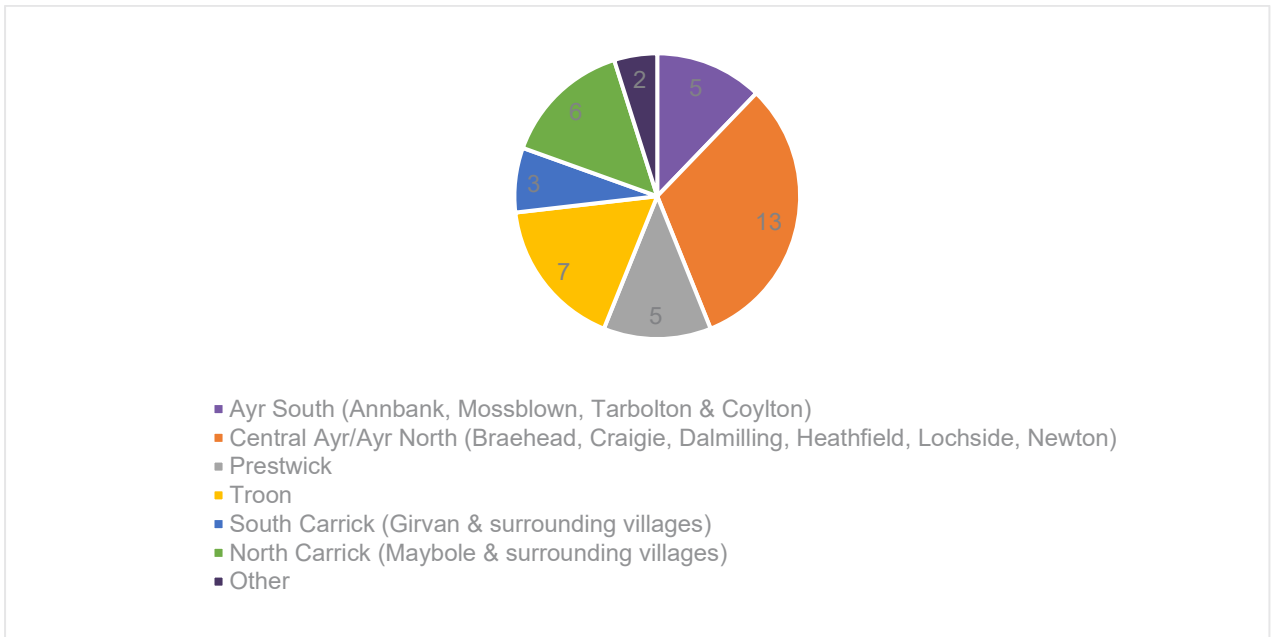
*“Social work”*  
*“Local Authority”*  
*“HSCP”*

### 5. Do you live in South Ayrshire?



96.7% of respondents live in South Ayrshire. A small proportion, 2.4%, indicated they work in the area but do not live there. No respondents reported having no connection to South Ayrshire.

**6. Which area of South Ayrshire do you or the person you care for live in?**



Respondents were spread across various parts of South Ayrshire, with the largest proportion living in Central Ayr and Ayr North. There was also notable representation from Tron, North Carrick, Ayr South, and Prestwick, while fewer respondents came from South Carrick and other areas.

**7. We want to identify unpaid Carers and provide them with access to information, advice, and support. Can you tell us your experience?**

There were 44 responses to this question, some reflected:

*"Until I started working in the service, I had no knowledge of support, information and advice for Carers in South Ayrshire."*

*"Experience when started working at Carers Gateway South Ayrshire."*

*"Unpaid Carer for my husband."*

13 respondents (30%) answered unpaid carer for this question.



Respondents shared a wide range of experiences in their caring roles. They highlighted the challenges of unpaid caring, including emotional and practical strains. Many expressed a need for better access to clear information, guidance, and consistent support. The feedback underscores the importance of improving outreach and tailored assistance for unpaid Carers.

**8. Do you think having access to information, advice and support should be a priority area within our strategy?**

With an undivided agreement from respondents, it's clear that access to information, advice, and support is essential for unpaid Carers. Providing these resources helps Carers navigate their roles more effectively, reduces stress, and improves overall wellbeing. Prioritising this area in the strategy ensures Carers receive the guidance and assistance they need to sustain their vital contribution.



**9. We want to hear from the voices of Carers, can you tell us about your experience as a Carer in South Ayrshire?**

*"Can be extremely stressful and not knowing what services to access can be stressful  
"?"*

*"Being a Carer can be hard. I look after someone I care about, and sometimes it feels I  
onely or tiring. But I do it because I love them."*

*I didn't realise I came under the category of unpaid Carer because it was my family & I choose to do it."*

20 respondents (45%) answered carer for this question.



Carers shared honest thoughts on the challenges they face, describing their role as often stressful and isolating, especially when unsure about which services to access. Many expressed deep personal commitment, caring out of love despite the emotional and physical toll. Some were unaware they fit the definition of an unpaid Carer, highlighting the need for greater awareness and recognition.

**10. What do you think currently works well within Carers services in South Ayrshire?**

*"Carers Gateway South Ayrshire."*

*"Staff helpful - nothing is too much trouble."*

*"Friendly help, staff are kind and caring when I ask for help."*

14 respondents (32%) answered carers for this question.



Respondents praised Carers Gateway South Ayrshire for its helpfulness and friendly support. Many highlighted the kindness and dedication of staff, noting that they are approachable and willing to go the extra mile to assist Carers.

## 11. What do you think could improve Carers Services in South Ayrshire?

11 respondents (25%) answered service for this question.



*“More funding”*

*“A commitment and energy to improve & value role of Carers especially respite.”*

*“Engagement with the general public. Not with people who are already engaged but getting the word out there and promoting to unpaid Carers who are in dire need.”*

*“Feedback from social services.”*

*“Faster access to respite, better awareness of financial support options.”*

Respondents called for increased funding and stronger commitment to valuing Carers, especially through better access to respite care. They emphasised the need for wider public engagement to reach unpaid Carers who are not yet connected to services. Improved communication and feedback from social services, along with faster access to respite and clearer information on financial support, were also highlighted as key areas for development.

12. The vision for our strategy is **"To ensure that Adult Carers in South Ayrshire are valued, supported, and empowered to provide care while maintaining their own health and wellbeing"**, what are your thoughts?

*“Need more funding and support from social work to make this happen.”*

*“Absolutely.”*

*“Agree.”*

14 respondents (32%) answered carers for this question.



Respondents strongly supported the vision of valuing, supporting, and empowering adult Carers. While there was clear agreement, some emphasised the need for increased funding and stronger support from social work services to fully achieve these goals.

**13. Following on from consultations with Carers in South Ayrshire, we have developed the following 4 outcomes on what they have told us would best support them in their caring role.**

**Do you agree these outcomes will help us achieve the vision of supporting Carers within South Ayrshire?**

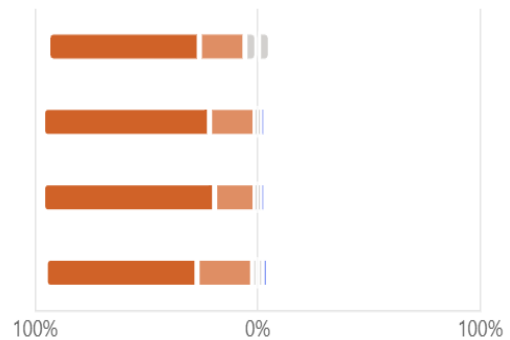
● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Neither Agree or Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree

Outcome 1 - 'We will improve how we identify Carers earlier in their caring journey with a focus on preventative support'

Outcome 2 - 'We will ensure Carers have access to information and advice to support them in their caring role'.

Outcome 3 - 'We will value, recognise and support Carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing in their caring role'.

Outcome 4 - 'We will work to ensure the involvement and voice of Carers influences the work of the HSCP and wider partners'.



**14. Are there any further comments regarding the draft strategy and any areas of improvement you would like us to know?**

2 respondents (7%) answered unpaid carers for this question.



*“Thank you for doing this, I really hope it makes a difference to the life of Carers locally.”*

*“Please take note of what unpaid Carers are telling you.”*

*“I appreciate the effort that’s gone into the draft strategy, it’s clear that Carers are being recognised more than before. But from my perspective as a male unpaid Carer, there are still some key areas that could be strengthened - visibility and recognition of male Carers, flexible support options and involving Carers in decision making.”*

## Key Themes

The following key themes emerged from a review of the consultation responses. These insights will help shape the priorities outlined in the delivery plan that supports the Adult Carers Strategy.

### **Better Communication;**

*“It’s hard to know what support is out there or who to ask. Sometimes the information doesn’t reach you until things become really tough.”*

- People have told us that communication between services can often be confusing or inconsistent, making it hard for unpaid Carers to know what support is available. Carers have said they want clearer, more joined-up communication from services so they can get the right support at the right time.

### **Resources and Capacity;**

*“If all unpaid adult Carers were to be identified, do we have the resources/capacity to support them?”*

- People have told us that there often aren’t enough services or staff in place to meet the needs of unpaid Carers. Some shared that when they reached out for support, they were put on long waiting lists or told that services were overstretched. Others said they felt there simply wasn’t enough capacity in the system to offer the practical help or emotional support they needed. Carers have told us they want to see more investment in services that support them directly, and better recognition of the vital role they play.

### **Accessibility of Transport;**

*“Carers struggle with transport due to limited options, cost, and lack of support.”*

- People have told us that getting to appointments, services, or community activities can be a real challenge for unpaid Carers, especially in rural areas or when public transport is limited. Some Carers shared that they’ve had to miss support groups or medical appointments because they simply couldn’t get there. Others said that transport options aren’t always suitable for the person they care for. Carers have told us that more accessible, affordable, and reliable transport would make a big difference to their ability to get support and stay connected.

### **Respite;**

*“It’s a struggle to access respite when needed because of limited availability, long waiting times and a lack of flexible or affordable options.”*

- People have told us that getting a break from their caring responsibilities is often difficult, even when they are in urgent need of rest. Some unpaid Carers shared that they didn’t know what respite options were available, while others said the process to arrange it was complicated and slow. Many Carers told us that even when respite is available, there aren’t enough spaces or staff to meet demand. Carers have said they need easier, more flexible access to respite so they can take time to recharge and look after their own wellbeing.

### **Support for unpaid Carers;**

*“Local support for Carers needs to be more visible.”*

- People have told us they often feel invisible or overlooked in their caring role, and that more support is needed to help them cope day-to-day. Many unpaid Carers said they didn’t know where to go for help, or that they only found out about support by chance. Others spoke about feeling isolated, especially when juggling work, family, and caring responsibilities. Carers have told us they want better access to practical, emotional, and financial support, as well as recognition for the important role they play in the lives of those they care for.

### **Administrative Burden;**

*“Too many forms to fill in, duplicate info asked frequently, no time to repeat consistently.”*

- People have told us that the amount of paperwork involved in accessing support can be overwhelming. Unpaid Carers shared their frustration at having to fill in multiple forms for different services, often repeating the same information again and again. Some said it feels like they are constantly retelling their story, which is emotionally exhausting and time-consuming, especially when they’re already under pressure. Carers have told us they want a simpler, more joined-up system that reduces duplication and respects their time.