



Caring Together Warwickshire Post Conference Round up and Evaluation

22nd March 2023, Benn Hall, Rugby

Background & purpose of report

On 22 March 2023, Warwickshire County Council and the Carers Trust Heart of England held the Caring Together Warwickshire Conference at The Benn Hall in Rugby. This was an opportunity for providers, partners, carers and other stakeholders to get together to share information and ideas on recognising Warwickshire's all age carers and how best to support them. The conference included information stands, guest speakers and roundtable discussions as well as the opportunity for carers and partners to network and share ideas.

Councillor Margaret Bell opened the conference encouraging all partners to work together to support carers better.

"Caring Together Warwickshire is for us all, carers, the public sector, social care and health as well as our community partners and networks. We want to work together to provide the right support for those carers who make such a valuable contribution to our communities" (Councillor Margaret Bell, portfolio holder for Adult Social Care and Health)

One of the guest speakers was a current informal carer who gave a thought-provoking first-hand insight into their experience of caring and what might help carers and those with caring responsibilities to manage their wellbeing.

Seventy-five (75) people attended the conference. This included carers as well as a good mix of professionals from health, voluntary and community sector as well as social care. The outcomes and feedback of this conference will inform the All-Age Carers Action plan to support carers in Warwickshire.

The conference was filmed. The video can be seen [here](#).

The purpose of this report is to provide attendees and other interested parties information on the topics discussed and our plans moving forward.

What you said

During the roundtable discussion section of the conference, delegates were asked to discuss 3 questions:

- Q1 – How can we help carers to have a break from caring? What does having a break mean to carers?
- Q2 – How can we ensure that carers have easier access to information and advice?
- Q3 – How can all partners be better at recognising and supporting carers and working better together?

For each question, we asked delegates to consider what was already working well, what were the barriers to supporting carers better, and what potential solutions could we consider to enable better carers support.

Some of the more popular themes identified as a result of these discussions can be seen below.

Q1 - How can we help carers to have a break from Caring? What does having a break mean to carers?		
What's working well	Barriers	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of service • Meeting individual carers needs • Peer support / carer support groups • Befriender service • Respite with peace of mind • Cress out of hours • Day centres are a type of respite • Timeouts • Practical support • Signposting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of joined up working • Lack of peer groups • Use of agency staff • Transport for going somewhere to have break • Not aware of what caring is • Do not know where to get information • Funding • Carer guilt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better joined up working • More involvement of GPs • Flexible imaginative practitioners • Pathway from point of diagnosis • More resources and awareness raising • Raise awareness using social media • Early Planning • Personalisation - unique to carer • Respite needs to be person centred • Planned and emergency breaks • Trusted regular contact • Identify carers who might not think of themselves as carers (hidden carers)

Q2 - How can we ensure that carers have easier access to information and advice?		
What's working well	Barriers	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information • Signposting • Warwickshire directory • Carers pack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disjointed working • Knowing who social prescribers are • Peer support • Lack of groups / events • Diversity • Communication with ethnic groups • More consideration of diversity, disability and different languages • Person centred approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined up working • Pathway at point of diagnosis • More involvement from GPs • Co-production with carers • Local charities getting together • Access to information and advice • Visual map of services • Move to digital – don't exclude paper/phone • No jargon • Support being available 24/7 • Carers news/information to be distributed widely • Newsletters/advertising billboards • Training / knowledge • Educate workforce/managers to support carers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers have caring role as part of supervision/appraisal • Investors in care award for employers who recognise carers
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Q3 - How can all partners be better at recognising and supporting carers and working better together?		
What's working well	Barriers	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together • Up-to-date information • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of date information • Budget • Not having postcode barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined up working • More involvement of GPs • Early intervention • Leadership from MPs • Creating connections • Sharing information • Carer pack at diagnosis • Face-to-face events • Newsletter • Getting word out about different services • Regular communication • Carer recognition • Focus on smaller number of key actions • Accreditation

Next steps

Supporting carers is a concern for the council and all its partners need to work together to support the over 60,000 Warwickshire carers. For this to be a success all partners agree that we need to work better together to support carers more effectively and use our resources and capacity to have the maximum effect for carers. The outcomes of the conference will help to develop the All-Age Carers Action Plan which will be developed with carers and partners including health, social care and community and based on the priority themes discussed at the conference. Based on the feedback received from the delegates, the following areas should be focused on:

Working better Together

- More focus by all partners and services on identifying carers who may not realise that they are carers - our hidden carers. We may need to alter the way we refer to carers as not all identify with the term carer.
- Work with partners to create a more cohesive and joined up process for people's journeys through the care process. For instance, working with Dementia services, parent carers, mental health, young people services, other community partners and primary care to ensure the carers are supported by all partners effectively.
- Key partners to sign up to and support a charter to Work Together to support all age carers including adult carers, parent carers and young carers.

Accessible information and support

- Producing accessible carers resources for example in different languages and formats
- Improving the effectiveness of sharing information and what services are available to all carers.
- Further development of the Caring Together Warwickshire website to have useful information for carers
- All partners to be a part of Caring Together Warwickshire share their services that support carers across Warwickshire.

- Joined up communications and campaigns by all partners to reach all carers better use of existing directories as well as channels of our partners in health and community to spread information wider to reach more carers.

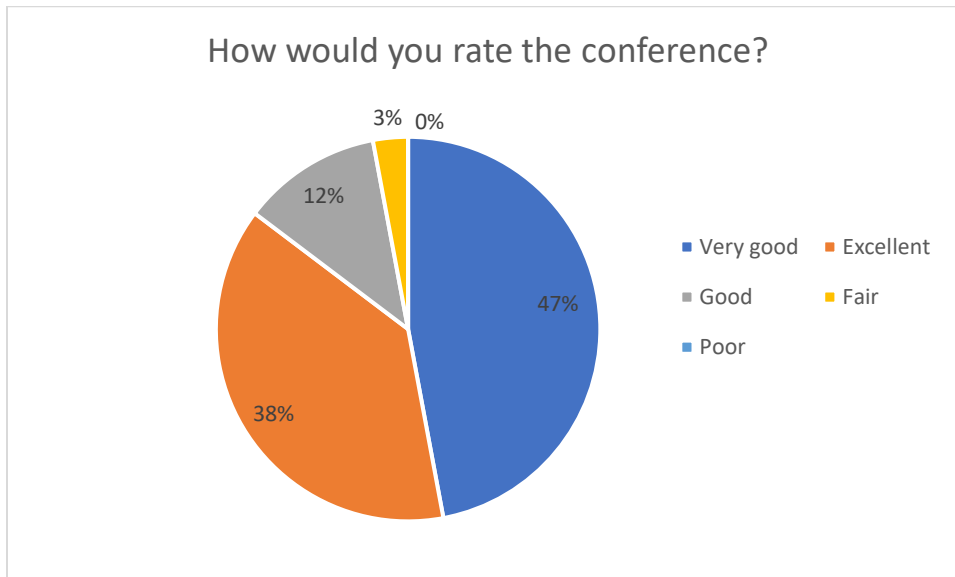
Working with Carers

- Develop and review with carers and partners the different ways carers can access more breaks
- Carers are experts of their experience and should be at the centre of any conversations on the support for carers.
- Create opportunities for carers to feedback on the support they receive and be part of the development of services and prioritise improving on the quality of support carers receive
- Create more opportunities to encourage carers and partners to work together to develop services to better meet the needs of carers like this conference.
- Create a safe space for carers to feedback their concerns and partners to act on them

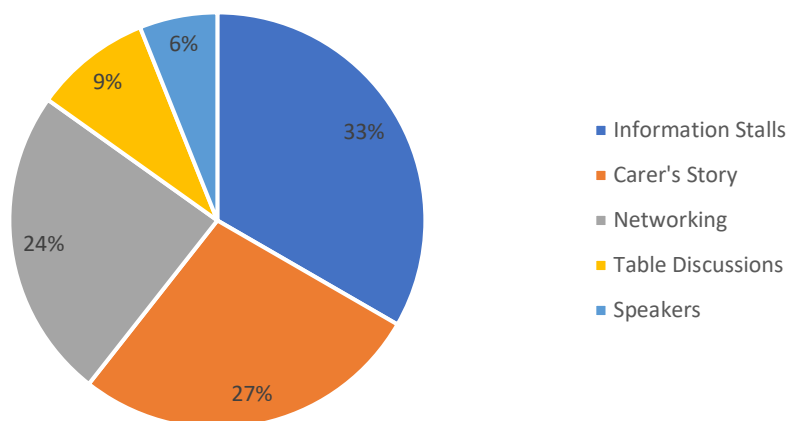
What you thought of the conference

Delegates were asked to complete an evaluation form about the conference. 34 evaluation forms were received. The conference was rated either good, very good or excellent by 97% of delegates who completed an evaluation form.

The main results of this can be seen below.



What aspects of the conference were most useful or interesting?



Responses to other questions revealed that:

- 85% said that the conference was the right length.
- 93% said that the venue was good or great.
- 74% said that their main takeaway from the conference were the links made that could be signposted to.
- Other comments included that the conference was a great opportunity to network, provided useful information and was thought provoking, nice to mix with carers, very powerful and moving, appreciated carer's talk.

This feedback will be used to inform plans for future events.

Appendix

Useful contacts

Information Stands	Contact details
Citizens Advice Bureau	gerry.o'toole@brancab.org.uk
Wellbeing for Warwickshire	fiona.palmer@cwmind.org.uk
Carers Trust Heart of England	Michelle.Sawyer@carerstrusthofe.org.uk
UHCW	Marion.Dalton2@uhcw.nhs.uk
Age UK	Michelle.Diaz@ageukcovwarks.org.uk
Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice	hello@warwickshireparentcarervoice.org
Family Information Service	joannalawton@warwickshire.gov.uk
AmbaCare	ruth@amba-uk.org
Healthwatch	caroline@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk
Alzheimer's Society	Tony.Refson@alzheimers.org.uk
EQUIP	claire@equipequality.org.uk
Warwickshire County Council	peoplestrategyandcommissioning@warwickshire.gov.uk

A list of the conference delegates can be seen [here](#).