

## 7 Minute Briefing – ‘Impact on Carers’ – February 2024

### 1. Introduction

In February 2024, the Safeguarding Effectiveness Group (‘SEG’), a subgroup of the Salford Safeguarding Adults Board, completed their third Multi-Agency Assurance Project. Our aim was to develop existing understanding of the impact on adults who provide unpaid or informal care to adults with care and support needs, and to improve our assurance on the effectiveness of processes designed to help carers protect adults at risk in Salford. We wanted to identify how or where the wellbeing of local carers can be improved, as this in turn helps prevent ‘carer stress’ creating safeguarding risks or breakdowns in care for the adults being cared for. This is also an area previously identified in local Safeguarding Adults Review outcomes.

### 2. Self-Assessment Forms

The SSAB worked with Gaddum, a charity commissioned by Salford Council who support carers in Salford, to create an online survey for carers to complete. The survey questions were also sent to Adult Social Care for their input. The survey featured questions for carers about themselves, the adults they care for, the care they provide, and the carer support they receive, as well as asking how caring for someone else affects them personally (whether positively or negatively). We asked them to suggest how organisations in Salford could help improve their role as a carer, their wellbeing, and the wellbeing of other carers.

### 3. Pen Pictures

The online survey link was shared across Salford agencies to pass on to carers they work with. We also shared the survey in an alternative format where requested. We had 36 responses from carers in total. We do not know if the responses are a representative sample of the demographics and opinions of all carers supporting adults in Salford, as there are many unknown variables due to the nature of ‘informal’ care. However, these responses do offer us valuable insight into the lives of carers.

### 4. Adult Feedback

Our average carer responding was a White British female aged 55-64, caring for their parent or adult child on a daily basis for 12 or more hours per day. They were also the only unpaid/informal carer for the adult they support, and they have provided this care for 10 years or more. The most frequent care needs of the cared-for adults were cognitive impairment / disability, physical disability, or long-term illness, but it must be noted that most cared-for adults (66%) had multiple conditions.

### 5. The Audit Session

Almost three quarters of the carers surveyed said that they do not feel appropriately supported in their caring role, and 69% said they hadn’t found it easy to access local carer support information. Carers described caring as isolating, scary and stressful, and said that providing care had made them feel physically and emotionally drained / tired, upset, anxious and depressed. Many also said their social lives were affected. On the positive side, carers said that caring made them more patient, understanding and tolerant and that it made them happy to see their loved ones cared for and happy.

### 6. Key Themes

- Practical training to help with managing other people’s finances and practical care, for example, lifting and moving, personal hygiene.
- Increase awareness of local support and resources available. Carers said that they are already time-poor, and having an awareness campaign on local radio/TV, written leaflets in GP surgeries, Gateway centres and pharmacies would be a great help.

- Reminders about access to carer-related finance / benefits would be helpful, as would being able to easily arrange medical appointments for the cared-for adults.
- One central carer app, where involved agencies can give updates on cared-for adults plus financial, respite, training, and other resources.

## 7. Key Initial Considerations

- What more could be done to raise awareness of the support, practical training, finance, social activities, resources, and respite available for unpaid / informal carers in Salford, including flexible options for carers who work full-time?
- How can the arranging of medical appointments and medication for cared-for adults be less time-consuming, more proactive, easier or more efficient for carers?
- Salford Council Commissioning are currently considering a digital app to support Salford carers.