

Assessment No	1258	Owner	mjcardno
Resource	HSCP	Service	Joint
	FirstName	Surname	Job Title
Head Officer	Margaret-Jane	Cardno	Head of Strategy and Transformation
Members	HSCP Senior Management Team		
	<i>(Please note: the word 'policy' is used as shorthand for strategy policy function or financial decision)</i>		
Policy Title	Reduction in Core Funding to Carers of West Dunbartonshire		
	The aim, objective, purpose and intended out come of policy		
	To achieve a saving, whilst seeking to prioritise immediate and critical care health and social care services.		
	Service/Partners/Stakeholders/service users involved in the development and/or implementation of policy.		
	Carers of West Dunbartonshire		
Does the proposals involve the procurement of any goods or services?			Yes
If yes please confirm that you have contacted our procurement services to discuss your requirements.			No
SCREENING			
<i>You must indicate if there is any relevance to the four areas</i>			
Duty to eliminate discrimination (E), advance equal opportunities (A) or foster good relations (F)			Yes
Relevance to Human Rights (HR)			Yes
Relevance to Health Impacts (H)			Yes
Relevance to Social Economic Impacts (SE)			Yes
Who will be affected by this policy?			
HSCP staff Service users and carers Partner organisations			
Who will be/has been involved in the consultation process?			
HSCP Senior Management Team Carers of West Dunbartonshire HSCP Board			

Please outline any particular need/barriers which equality groups may have in relation to this policy list evidence you are using to support this and whether there is any negative impact on particular groups.

Specific group to consider	Needs	Evidence	Impact
Age	Carer needs include access to services, financial support and health and wellbeing support.	In 2023/24, Carers of West Dunbartonshire provided support to 1,865 carers, of which 534 were new to the service. The organisation has experienced an increase in the number of new carers and those requiring support; they have also seen a rise in the level and range of support needed. A significant number of carers have benefitted from emotional support, information and advice. Female carers continue to be the highest represented group and of those supported, the majority are living with the person that they care for and providing more than 50 hours of care per week. Across Scotland a significant proportion of known carers are aged 55 or over and the gender split demonstrates that women are over-represented in unpaid caring roles. Scotland's Census March 2022 shows that 13.1% of people aged 3 and over in the West Dunbartonshire local authority area provide unpaid care. This is broadly comparable with the comparator authorities within West Dunbartonshire's Local Government Benchmarking Framework family groupings for children, social work and housing indicators.	Negative
Disability	Unpaid carers play a vital role in the lives of disabled people, ensuring they receive the care and support needed to thrive, for example:	When unpaid carers' services are reduced, disabled people can face several significant impacts: Increased Isolation: Without the support of unpaid carers, disabled individuals may	Negative

	Daily Living Assistance: Unpaid carers help with essential daily activities such as bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility. This support is crucial for individuals who may have physical limitations. Medical and Health Management: Carers assist with managing medications, attending medical appointments, and monitoring health conditions. This ensures that the disabled person receives proper medical care and adheres to treatment plans. Emotional Support: Unpaid carers provide companionship and emotional support, which can significantly improve the mental well-being of disabled individuals. This support helps reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Advocacy and Coordination: Carers often act as advocates, helping to navigate complex healthcare and social service systems. They coordinate care and ensure that the disabled person's needs are met effectively. Financial Management: Many carers assist with managing finances, paying bills, and handling other administrative tasks. This support is vital for those who may struggle with these responsibilities due to their disability. Enhanced Quality of Life: Overall, the support provided by unpaid carers helps disabled individuals maintain a higher quality of life, enabling them to live more independently and participate in community activities.	experience greater social isolation. Carers often provide essential companionship and help maintain social connections. Decline in Health and Well-being: The absence of regular care can lead to a deterioration in both physical and mental health. Disabled individuals might struggle to manage daily activities, leading to increased stress and potential health complications. Higher Risk of Institutionalisation: Without adequate support at home, disabled people are more likely to be placed in institutional care settings, which can be more costly and less personalised. Financial Strain: Reduced carer support can lead to increased financial burdens for disabled individuals and their families. They may need to pay for professional care services, which can be expensive, or enter statutory services which will increase costs for the public sector. Reduced Quality of Life: The overall quality of life for disabled individuals can decline without the consistent support of unpaid carers. They may face difficulties in accessing necessary services, participating in community activities, and maintaining independence.	

Gender Reassign	Unpaid carers transitioning from their assigned gender at birth may have specific needs that can differ from those of other carers. While there isn't extensive national data specifically on transgender carers, some key considerations include: Recognition and Respect: Transgender carers may face challenges related to their gender identity, including misgendering and lack of recognition of their gender. Access to Inclusive Services: Transgender carers might need access to health and social care services that are inclusive and sensitive to their specific needs. This includes services that understand and respect their gender identity. Mental Health Support: The mental health of transgender individuals can be impacted by societal stigma and discrimination. Financial Support: Like all unpaid carers, transgender carers may face financial challenges. Community and Peer Support: Access to support groups and communities that understand their unique experiences can be beneficial, however these are limited within West Dunbartonshire.	There does not appear to be extensive national data specifically on transgender carers. Whilst in the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (2021), around 95% of the Scottish population self-identified as straight, 3% identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. It is recognised that health inequalities are compounded by differing experiences based on a person's identity including those characteristics protected under the Equality Act. This includes those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, those who are transgender and those who have a non-binary gender identity (LGBT+). Although the data is very limited, The Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Evidence Review highlights that the limited findings for Transgender people report a higher incidence of poverty.	No Direct Impact It is challenging to assess the direct impact on this group as the national and local data is limited. Although a reduction in service may potentially impact negatively on all unpaid carers, there is no specific impact on this protected characteristic at this point. The lack of data in this area is acknowledged, however there are no specific pieces of work targeted towards unpaid transgender carers which would be impacted by this decision. Should additional data become available which highlights the unmet needs of transgender carers within West Dunbartonshire as an emerging issue this matter will be addressed at that time. At a personal level, the needs identified within this assessment would be identified and met via an Adult Carers Needs Assessment.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	N/A	The Scottish Census of March 2022 shows that 39.6% of people aged 16 and over in the West Dunbartonshire local authority area have never married and never registered in a civil partnership.	N/A

Pregnancy & Maternity	Pregnant unpaid carers may have specific needs which differ from those of other carers. For example: Health and Wellbeing: Pregnant carers need access to appropriate prenatal care and support. This includes regular medical check-ups, nutritional advice, and mental health support to manage the additional stress of caring whilst pregnant. Physical Support: Pregnancy can limit physical capabilities, making certain caring tasks more challenging. Financial Support: Pregnant carers may face additional financial pressures, such as costs related to pregnancy and preparing for a new baby. Emotional Support: Pregnancy can be an emotionally challenging time, and pregnant carers may benefit from additional support to help them manage their dual roles.	Female carers continue to be the highest represented group and of those supported, the majority are living with the person that they care for and providing more than 50 hours of care per week. Across Scotland a significant proportion of known carers are aged 55 or over and the gender split demonstrates that women are over-represented in unpaid caring roles. There is no specific data held locally in respect of pregnant unpaid carers.	No Direct Impact Although a reduction in service may potentially impact negatively on all unpaid carers, there is no specific impact on this protected characteristic. The lack of data in this area is acknowledged, however there are no specific pieces of work targeted towards unpaid pregnant carers which would be impacted by this decision. The needs identified within this assessment would be met by other health and social care services and would be identified via an Adult Carers Needs Assessment.
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Race	Unpaid carers from ethnic minority backgrounds have specific needs that can differ from other unpaid carers, for example: Cultural Sensitivity: Ethnic minority carers may face unique cultural challenges and require services that are sensitive to their cultural and linguistic needs. This includes understanding cultural norms and practices related to caring. Access to Information: Ensuring that ethnic minority carers have access to information and resources in their preferred language is crucial. This can help them navigate the healthcare and social care systems more effectively. Discrimination and Bias: Ethnic minority carers may experience discrimination or bias, which can impact their ability to access support services. Community Support: Building strong community networks and support groups can help ethnic minority carers feel less isolated and more supported. These networks can provide emotional support and practical advice. Mental Health Support: The mental health of ethnic minority carers can be affected by the additional stress of facing discrimination and cultural barriers.	The Scottish Census of March 2022 shows that 89.4% of people in the West Dunbartonshire local authority area are White Scottish, with 4.4% other White British.	No Direct Impact Although a reduction in service may potentially impact negatively on all unpaid carers, there is no specific impact on this protected characteristic at this point. There are no specific pieces of work targeted towards unpaid ethnic minority carers which would be impacted by this decision. Should additional data become available which highlights the unmet needs of ethnic minority carers within West Dunbartonshire as an emerging issue this matter will be addressed at that time. At a personal level, the needs identified within this assessment would be identified and met via an Adult Carers Needs Assessment.

Religion and Belief	Unpaid carers from different religious backgrounds have specific needs that can differ from those of other carers, for example: Cultural and Religious Sensitivity: Carers may require services that respect and accommodate their religious practices and beliefs. Access to Information: Providing information and resources in a way that is culturally and religiously appropriate is important. This can help carers navigate the healthcare and social care systems more effectively. Community Support: Building strong community networks and support groups that understand and respect religious practices can help carers feel more supported and less isolated. Mental Health Support: The mental health of carers from different religious backgrounds can be impacted by the additional stress of balancing caring with religious obligations. Flexibility in Services: Offering flexible services that can accommodate religious practices, such as home care visits that do not interfere with prayer times, can be beneficial.	The Scottish Census of March 2022 shows that 41.9% of people in the West Dunbartonshire local authority area have no religion; 19.5% are Church of Scotland; 28.2% are Roman Catholic and 2.7% are other Christian.	No Direct Impact Although a reduction in service may potentially impact negatively on all unpaid carers, there is no specific impact on this protected characteristic at this point. There are no specific pieces of work targeted towards unpaid carers from specific religious groups which would be impacted by this decision. At a personal level, the needs identified within this assessment would be identified and met via an Adult Carers Needs Assessment.
Sex	Unpaid carers often face a range of challenges and have specific needs that require attention and support, for example: Financial Support: Many unpaid carers struggle financially due to the demands of their caregiving roles. They often need better financial assistance, such as Carer's Allowance, to help cover living expenses. Respite Care: The	In 2023/24, Carers of West Dunbartonshire provided support to 1,865 carers, of which 534 were new to the service. The organisation has experienced an increase in the number of new carers and those requiring support; they have also seen a rise in the level and range of support needed. A significant number of carers have benefitted from emotional support, information and advice.	Negative

	opportunity to take breaks is crucial. Many carers experience burnout and exhaustion because they can't get regular respite breaks. Access to reliable respite care services can help carers maintain their well-being. Access to Services: Carers often find it challenging to access support services, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds, lower socioeconomic groups, or the LGB+ community. Improved access to these services is essential. Emotional and Mental Health Support: The emotional toll of caregiving can be significant. Carers need access to mental health services and support groups to help them cope with stress and isolation. Training and Education: Providing carers with training and education on caregiving tasks can help them feel more confident and capable in their roles. This can include, financial management, and self-care techniques Recognition and Advocacy: Carers often feel undervalued and overlooked. Greater recognition of their contributions and advocacy for their needs can help improve their quality of life and ensure they receive the support they deserve.	Female carers continue to be the highest represented group and of those supported, the majority are living with the person that they care for and providing more than 50 hours of care per week. Across Scotland a significant proportion of known carers are aged 55 or over and the gender split demonstrates that women are over-represented in unpaid caring roles. Scotland's Census March 2022 shows that 13.1% of people aged 3 and over in the West Dunbartonshire local authority area provide unpaid care. This is broadly comparable with the comparator authorities within West Dunbartonshire's Local Government Benchmarking. Framework family groupings for children, social work and housing indicators.	

Sexual Orientation	Access to Services: Carers often find it challenging to access support services, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds, lower socioeconomic groups, or the LGB+ community. Improved access to these services is essential.	There is evidence indicating that LGBTQ+ unpaid carers in Scotland face specific disadvantages, for example; Isolation and Discrimination: LGBTQ+ carers often experience isolation and discrimination, which can impact their mental health and well-being. They may face additional barriers when accessing support services due to fears of discrimination or lack of understanding from service providers. Reduced Social Networks: Many LGBTQ+ carers or the individuals they care for may have reduced social networks due to a lack of acceptance of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This can lead to increased feelings of loneliness and a lack of informal support. Health Inequalities: LGBTQ+ individuals are less likely to report good or very good health compared to their heterosexual counterparts. This can exacerbate the challenges they face as carers, as they may have their own health issues to manage alongside their caregiving responsibilities. Barriers to Accessing Services: Research has highlighted that LGBTQ+ carers in Scotland face specific barriers when accessing social care services. These include concerns about how they will be treated if they disclose their sexuality or gender identity, and difficulties in recruiting and working with personal assistants. Addressing these challenges requires targeted support and inclusive policies to ensure that LGBTQ+ unpaid carers receive the recognition and assistance they need. Source: National Care Service - adult social care: equality evidence review	Negative
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Human Rights		The right to carers' support services is closely linked to human rights principles. International human rights law recognises the rights to health, social protection, and participation in public life, which encompass the needs of both those providing unpaid care and those they care for. The United Nations has emphasised the importance of establishing support and care systems that are human rights-based, gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and age-sensitive. In the UK, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 provide a framework to protect the rights of carers and those they support. These laws ensure that carers have the right to fair treatment and support in their role. Human Rights Act Info for Unpaid Carers Carers Trust	Negative

Health		Reduced care support services can have negative impacts on the health of unpaid carers. For example: Mental Health: Many unpaid carers experience increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression when support services are reduced. In Scotland, a survey found that 36% of unpaid carers reported their mental health as "bad or very bad" in 2024, up from 28% in 2023. Overwhelming feelings are common, with 57% of carers feeling overwhelmed often or always. Physical Health: Unpaid carers are more likely to develop long-term physical health conditions, disabilities, or illnesses compared to those without caring roles. A significant number of carers reported that their physical health was "bad or very bad". Isolation and Burnout: Reduced support services can lead to social isolation and burnout. Many carers feel isolated and alone in their roles, and the lack of respite care means they cannot take breaks to focus on their own health and wellbeing Ability to Provide Care: The health and wellbeing of carers directly affect their ability to provide care. When carers' health deteriorates, their capacity to care for others diminishes, potentially leading to a cycle of declining health for both the carer and the person they care for. These impacts highlight the importance of adequate support services for unpaid carers to maintain their health and wellbeing. state-of-caring-health-and-social-care-2024.pdf	Negative

Social & Economic Impact	West Dunbartonshire contains the 3rd= highest share of the most deprived datazones in Scotland	Unpaid carers often face several socio-economic disadvantages that can significantly impact their lives, for example: Financial Hardship: Many unpaid carers experience financial strain due to the demands of their caregiving roles. They may have to reduce their working hours or leave their jobs entirely, leading to a loss of income and financial security. Employment Challenges: Balancing caregiving responsibilities with employment can be difficult. Unpaid carers often face challenges in maintaining stable employment, advancing in their careers, or finding flexible work arrangements that accommodate their caregiving duties. Poverty Risk: The financial pressures and reduced earning potential can increase the risk of poverty for unpaid carers. This is particularly true for those who provide high-intensity care or care for extended periods. Health and Well-being: The stress and physical demands of caregiving can take a toll on carers' health. They may experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as physical health issues due to the strain of caregiving. Social Isolation: Unpaid carers often face social isolation as their caregiving responsibilities limit their ability to engage in social activities, maintain friendships, and participate in community events. Gender Inequality: Women are disproportionately represented among unpaid carers, which exacerbates existing gender inequalities. This can limit their opportunities for education, career advancement, and economic independence.	Negative
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Cross Cutting

Actions

Policy has a negative impact on an equality group, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Justifying the reduction in funding to unpaid carers, especially when the impact on protected groups is negative, is a complex and sensitive issue. An options appraisal was undertaken in partnership with the Carers of West Dunbartonshire to determine the impact on services delivered to carers, the funding reduction proposed can be effectively managed through the removal of two vacant posts.

Will the impact of the policy be monitored and reported on an ongoing basis?

We will continue to work in partnership with Carers of West Dunbartonshire through our contract monitoring processes to evaluate impact.

Q7 What is your recommendation for this policy?

Introduce

Please provide a meaningful summary of how you have reached the recommendation

Justifying the reduction in funding to unpaid carers, especially when the impact on protected groups is negative, is a complex and sensitive issue. However, given the IJB is experiencing severe budget constraints a reduction in this service means that steps can be taken to prioritise immediate and critical care health and social care services.