

REPORT

Carer Finance

Edinburgh Integration Joint Board

9 February 2024

Executive Summary	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) with details on how Carers Act funding is optimised to support carers in Edinburgh. This matter is escalated to EIJB following recent discussions at Council, and with carer providers and the Chief Officer on how best to utilise unallocated funding for 2023-24, to optimise carer support in the context of the challenging fiscal position.</p> <p>The report demonstrates how carer support has been optimised through Carer Act funds available, to deliver against the Edinburgh Joint Carer Strategy (EJCS).</p> <p>As we move into year 2024-25, the report highlights the priority areas for development.</p>
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Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge that Carer Act funding has been optimised. 2. Consider the position for the unallocated funding 2023-24, in parallel with the Chief Finance Officer’s Report at this same Board meeting.
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Directions

Direction to City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian or both organisations		
	No direction required	✓
	Issue a direction to City of Edinburgh Council	
	Issue a direction to NHS Lothian	
	Issue a direction to City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian	

Report Circulation

1. This report has not been circulated to any other group or committee prior to the 9 February 2024 EIJB. The key financial aspects were discussed at the EIJB Development session focussing on unpaid carers on 18 January 2024.

Main Report

Purpose of the Carers Act, and Edinburgh's Carer Strategy

2. Following co-production of the Joint Edinburgh Carer Strategy and support at the Strategic Planning Group in 2019, it was recommended to the EIJB in August 2019. The strategy was developed in response to the implementation of the Carer (Scotland) Act 2016. Funding to support implementation of the strategy was included in the settlement which Local Authorities receive from the Scottish Government. This in turn forms part of the budget which the City of Edinburgh Council delegates to the EIJB. Prioritisation of these funds is a devolved matter for the EIJB who ensure that the Carer Act monies are optimised for carers, whilst recognising that the level of funding is insufficient to meet the full aspirations of the Carers Act, particularly as demand continues to grow.
3. The Act sets out a system of carers' rights designed to listen to carers; expand and transform carer support; and prevent problems – helping sustain caring relationships and protect carers' health and wellbeing. This includes the provision of support to carers, based on their identified needs which meet the local Eligibility Framework, such as access to information and advice, access to a variety of short breaks, benefits support, and self-identified support need by the carer.
4. As indicated in Edinburgh's Joint Carer Strategy, the Act indicates a carer's right to a personalised plan (an adult carer support plan or young carer statement to identify what is important to them. For example, returning to work or undertaking studies or training. The Act indicated that the nature and extent of the care provided and the impact on the carer's wellbeing and day-to-day life; the extent to which the carer is able and willing to provide care; emergency and future care planning. Carers have the right to support to meet their eligible needs, and consideration given to whether that support should include a break from caring.
5. The Act also indicates that there should be provision of an information and advice service for carers in such areas as:
 - Emergency and future care planning
 - Advocacy
 - Income maximisation
 - Carer's rights

6. The Act is designed to meet The Scottish Government’s National Health and Wellbeing Outcome 6 that states:

“People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and well-being.”

7. Edinburgh’s carers strategy was developed based on the requirements of the Act. The 6 agreed priority areas reflect this and were further informed by feedback from carers, their families and carer providers. Funding was allocated against the 6 key priority areas, with the table below indicating the agreed funding position from 2021/22 till 2025/26. Prior to the Carer Act funding, the partnership had an allocation of core funding c£400-500k to support carers.

Table 1 Carer Strategy Funding

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Identifying Carers and Information & advice	1.22	1.27	1.40	1.45	1.49
Health and Wellbeing	0.63	1.01	1.12	1.14	1.15
Short Breaks	0.59	0.99	1.16	1.09	1.09
Young Carers	0.51	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69
Personalising support	2.75	3.34	2.92	2.93	2.95
Contingency and Innovation	0.14	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.13
Total	5.84	7.51	7.50	7.51	7.50

Source: Edinburgh Joint Unpaid Carer Strategy 2019-23 and 2023-2026

8. The majority of the delivery of carer support is commissioned through our valued voluntary sector, and progress reported through the Performance and Delivery Committee. Edinburgh took the decision to award contracts for a much more sustained period of up to 8 years (5 + 3x1years), reducing short termism, allowing development work to take place and which was commended by Scottish government. This aligns with the commissioning recommendations in the 2021 Independent Review of Adult Social Care¹. Many partnerships across Scotland have followed this lead. The fund also supports the Edinburgh Hospital Discharge Team, replacement care, as well as supporting the commission of action research and development of the carer outcomes framework, and project support to implement the key priority areas. Progress against each of these areas is reported though the Performance and Evaluation Report at the Performance and Delivery Committee.

¹ [Adult social care: independent review - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/06/Adult-social-care-independent-review-2021.pdf)

9. The funding position was restated in the refreshed Edinburgh Joint Carer Strategy 2023-26, which was ratified by the EIJB 8 August 2023.
10. The multiagency Edinburgh Strategic Carer Strategic Partnership Group has overseen the development of the strategies, implementation plans and co-produced many of the areas of associated developments. Governance associated with delivery is through the Performance and Delivery Committee.

Optimising Carer Act Funding

11. As recently discussed at the EIJB development session on unpaid carers on 18 January 2024, in 2021/22 the spend was £5.647m against a budget of £5.840m, the £0.193m slippage was carried forward through reserves.
12. For year 2022-23, the full financial position was reported through the Year 2 Contracts report accepted at Performance and Delivery Committee, and the available starting budget of £7.8m was optimised in year to the value of £7.4m, with c£400k being carried forward into 2023-24.

The position for 2023-24

13. For 2023-24, the starting position is a budget of £7.5m. The forecast indicates that £6.67m (89%) has been allocated, giving slippage of c£830k. In addition to this the £400k carried forward from 2022-23, gives a total of £1.23m as yet unallocated.
14. A discussion took place at the Carer Strategic Partnership Group (CSPG) meeting 19 October, indicating the difficult financial position of the EHSCP and EIJB, and that unfortunately, this may not see unallocated funds distributed as had happened in previous years.
15. Recently, some carer organisations felt compelled to write a letter of concern to the Chair of EIJB and some board members because they believed Carers Act funds had not been ringfenced as they had been in previous years. As described in the separate finance report to this meeting, the Chief Officer is recommending that this slippage is used to offset increased care provided for cared for people, thereby supporting carers.
16. Providers indicated that *there was a delay to rolling out Adult Carer Support Plans and therefore to issuing the accompanying Carer Payments to the city's unpaid carers*. This is regrettable, and was mainly as a result of reduced capacity to undertake the work. Carers who have subsequently had a completed Support Plan, and are eligible for carer payment, have received this. The forecast for year end 2023-24 for care payments is c£60k.

17. Providers indicated that *Scottish Government's Winter Preparedness Plan made it clear unpaid carers have a critical role as part of a 'whole system' approach and that, despite being equal partners in care, City of Edinburgh Council has not currently allocated funding to carers to support them over the winter.* The Council is experiencing similar fiscal challenges. The partnership is not appraised of the range of influencing factors which has seen Council winter funding adjusted this year. In response, partnership officers have indicated their support of the carer providers' suggestion slippage from their allocated funds associated with the partnership contracts, is used flexibly to meet winter demand. This has now been actioned, and will support carers.
18. Providers indicated that the *Edinburgh Carer Survey returns show that many carers are near burn out, emotionally, physically and financially. Carers will face even more pressure over the winter months with 82% saying their mental health is impacted, nearly 20% need to borrow money due to their caring role, 32% use their own money to pay for care and 65% have given up work or reduced hours.* The survey was discussed as part of the focus on carers at the 18 January EIJB development session. An associated aspect of the survey emphasised the importance of replacement care as a key contributing factor to relieving some of these pressures and stresses for carers. This is taken into consideration further within this paper, and the separate finance paper.
19. *Providers indicated that proposals developed would allow organisations to continue to support cares.* One of the drivers of the financial position is the increased costs of purchased services. An element of which is due to replacement care to support carers where demand has increased.

Considerations for 2023-24 Unallocated Funds

20. The decision about the £1.2m unallocated funds for 2023-24, forms part of the Finance Report at this same EIJB, with it being clear that funding the growth in demand for replacement care will continue to support unpaid carers.
21. The work being undertaken to reduce the number of people waiting for a package of support from approximately 900 at the beginning of 2022, to 300 more recently is well documented, at the same time increasing the demand for replacement care. It is well rehearsed through national reports, and more recently confirmed through the Edinburgh Carer survey that carers indicate that their loved ones receiving care and support following assessment, significantly reduces pressure on them.
22. The Chief Officer recently met with providers who raised their concerns, and highlighted in that discussion the impact of growth and demand on the IJB budget position. It was clarified that the EIJB was facing financial pressures because of population growth, increase in demand and associated cost pressures with no additional funding commensurate with demand. This has required the partnership to

refocus efforts on packages of support which ensure those in greatest need are assessed and provided with the correct care.

23. It is becoming more evident that as needs have been assessed, to address them, there has been a commensurate increase in expenditure on the services we purchase. What this means in practice is that an element of the projected overspend on the purchasing budget is attributable this additional replacement care.
24. It is on this basis that the Chief Finance Officer's report recommends to the EIJB, that investing in replacement care is a legitimate use of the slippage in the unpaid carers funding. The Chief Officer clarified with providers that it is important to stress that this is not being used to offset a budget deficit, but to partially compensate for services put in place to provide care for people – and we know that this directly impacts on carers needs.
25. The Chief Officer indicated to providers that more would be done to ensure carer assessments were undertaken and any associated eligible carer payments made. And that the financial consequences of the 2024-25 budget and savings plans would be considered and that informed discussions should consider how the EIJB will target financial support for individuals, and that there is due process for highlighting concerns in response to partnership decisions and are clearly articulated. Views would be welcomed on proposed savings as we move into the new year to enable our thinking and ensure resource is targeted as best as possible, with further discussions being arranged in the coming months.

Moving into 2024-25 and beyond

26. The key priority areas in the Carers strategy have been co-produced as has the implementation plan. The capacity to undertake the strategic work has recently increased, including a project support officer, following a recommendation by the Edinburgh Carer Strategic Partnership Group. The key priorities will see new developments, meaning spend against the allocation will be planned to occur in year. Any new work will be seen in the context of the overall financial position, and considered as part of the ongoing budget development process.
27. Areas already identified for focussed work in 2024-25 onwards are indicated in the Strategy, and includes:
 - Self-Directed Support for carers
 - Identifying, reaching and supporting Female Carers
 - Reporting both qualitatively and quantitatively to produce better understanding and inform response
 - Development of Young Adult Carer Action Plan
 - Focus on Short Breaks implementation

- Continuing the roll out of Adult Carer Support Plans
 - Reporting against refreshed Key Performance Indicators
 - Continuing to Optimise available funding for carer benefit
28. Once all carer providers have had detailed feedback about the recent carer survey, there will be ongoing engagement with providers and wider stakeholders in the first quarter of 2024, to determine how the Carer Strategy priorities and progression of actions are informed in relation to the carers survey findings, within available funding.
29. It has also been recognised with providers that much more of the implementation plan sits in the operational space, with assurance mechanisms in place, alongside the performance and evaluation framework being more established. Work will get underway to review the Terms of Reference for the Carer Strategic Partnership Group to continue to develop the strategic focus, and will remain the forum for escalating any concerns in the first instance.

Implications for Edinburgh Integration Joint Board

Financial

30. As indicated above, despite there being insufficient funding to meet the full aspirations of the Carers Act, the intention is to continue to support the principle of optimising carer support with the Carer Act funding. It should also be noted that all of this funding is used to directly benefit and support carers.

Legal / risk implications

31. In accordance with the implications within the Chief Finance Officer's report, the risks associated with insufficient funding to support growing demand through the purchasing budget is evident.

Equality and integrated impact assessment

32. People with assessed needs and unpaid carers will benefit from this recommendation and respond to the recent findings in the Edinburgh Carer survey about the importance and requirement for replacement care, to alleviate carer stress and distress.

Environment and sustainability impacts

33. Nil relevant to this report

Quality of care

34. Directing the resource in this way will contribute to meeting the growing demand for replacement care, meeting needs of individuals and their carers.

Consultation

35. No formal consultation has occurred, with the proposal aligning with the principle of optimising carer support, and meeting individual needs.

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Background Reports

1.	Link to Carers Strategy approved 08 Aug 2023 EIJB: Edinburgh Carer Strategy 2023-26
2.	Link to 02 Aug 2023 Performance and Delivery Report- Year 2 Carer Contract Performance and Evaluation Report: Unpaid Carers Year 2 Performance and Evaluation

Appendices – Nil
