

Home and Well

Carers Support Services

The one stop shop for carers in Hampshire

September 2023



SGN

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1. Description

Funding GDN(s)	SGN
For Collaborative VCMA Projects:	N/A
Date of PEA submission:	04/10/2023
Project contact name:	Kerry Potter
Project contact number/email:	Kerry.potter@sgn.co.uk
Total cost (£k)	£328,217.50
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£328,217.50

2. Problem statement

UK's energy prices have been reported to have almost doubled since 2021, it's currently estimated that there are over 6.7 million households living in fuel poverty in the UK. Nearly half of low-income households are still living in hard to heat homes, and cold homes and poor housing conditions have been linked with a range of health problems in children and young people, including respiratory health, growth and long-term health.

The most recent Census 2021 puts the estimated number of unpaid carers at 5 million in England and Wales. This, together with ONS Census data for Scotland and Northern Ireland suggests that the number of unpaid carers across the UK is 5.7 million. Families provide the majority of care in the UK, outstripping social care services and private care providers combined. This means that around 9% of people are providing unpaid care. However, Carers UK research in 2022 estimates the number of unpaid carers could be as high as 10.6 million (Carers UK, Carers Week 2022 research report).

Over the period 2010-2020, every year, 4.3 million people became unpaid carers – 12,000 people a day (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022), with almost 5% of the population in England and Wales providing 20 hours or more of care per week. 59% of unpaid carers are women (Census 2021). Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men. More women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022).

One in seven people in the workplace in the UK are juggling work and care (Carers UK, Juggling Work and Care, 2019). Between 2010-2020, people aged 46-65 were the largest age group to become unpaid carers, with 41% of people who became unpaid carers during this time being in this age group (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022).

With the current cost of living crisis, carers have faced unprecedented pressure on their finances: a quarter of carers (25%) are cutting back on essentials like food or heating and nearly two thirds (63%) are extremely worried about managing their monthly costs (Carers UK, State of Caring 2022). In addition, caring comes with additional costs that can have a significant impact on carers' finances and many carers suffer financial hardship. 44% of working-age adults who are caring for 35 hours or more a week are in poverty. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK Poverty 2022). Carer's Allowance is the main carer's benefit and is £76.75 per week (2023/24) for a minimum of 35 hours. It is the lowest benefit of its kind. In the UK, 977,506 carers were in receipt of Carer's Allowance in 2022 (X-Stat Explore (retrieved in Feb 2022)).

Unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute a staggering £445 million to the economy every day – that's £162 billion per year. The value of unpaid care is equivalent to a second NHS in England and Wales, which in 2020/21 received an estimated £164 billion in funding (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023). However, caring can come at great cost to carers. Many are forced to give up work to care, at the same time as they are faced with the considerable additional costs of disability. This means that, alongside the personal costs of ill-health, for many families, disability, and caring pushes them into debt and hardship. An estimated one million carers have given up work or reduced working hours to care, over two thirds (68%) of those who had given up work to care were more than £10,000 a year worse off as a result.

As they cope with reduced household incomes, illness and disability bring considerable additional costs, this includes higher energy costs as families are at home all day and disabled, ill and older people need to be kept warm.

A Survey by Carers UK showed that a third (34%) were unable to afford their utility bills (electricity, gas, water, and telephone bills) and almost half (45%) were cutting back on essentials like food and heating in order to make ends meet. 54% were spending more than 10% of their household incomes on energy.

Carers UK has submitted evidence to the independent Hills' Fuel Poverty Review arguing that carers should be recognised as a vulnerable group in its fuel poverty strategies.

Healthcare leaders have warned that if households are not safeguarded from unaffordable energy price hikes, it will fall to the NHS and social care to pick up the pieces, with further increased hospital admissions and demand on GP surgeries, A&E departments, and social care services. This will be particularly tough on those with health conditions that need to run medical equipment. For example, people living with kidney disease, often manage dialysis at home. The dialysis equipment incurs high additional energy costs of between £590 and £1,450 each year – costs which were calculated before energy price increases. Cases such as this have led to a type of 'bed blocking' whereby it is not safe to discharge patients to their home due to maintenance and heating costs.

Those with mental health problems are more than four times as likely to have energy debt. Continuing price rises will undoubtedly exacerbate poor mental health as struggling to pay the bills and cut back on essentials such as food worsens mental health over time. 81% of carers have felt lonely or isolated as a result of looking after a loved one and this number rises to 86% for carers providing more than 50 hours of care a week. There is increasing evidence that caring should be considered a social determinant of health (Public Health England, 2021).

Each year in England over 500,000 carers become bereaved. When a carer loses their loved one, it can be a very traumatic and difficult time for them, not only emotionally but financially too. They have lost the person they have been providing dedicated care too and they will lose all of the benefits that have come with their role including a possible council tax reduction. This can manifest itself in carers struggling to pay their bills in a time when they may already be finding it hard to take the best care of themselves whilst grieving. It is so important whilst navigating this already challenging period of time carers do not have the added worry of being able to heat their home or cook themselves a nutritious meal. This is why we would extend our offer to bereaved carers for up to one year after their loved one has passed.

Hampshire currently has 133,000 identified unpaid carers. There are many more that just consider themselves someone's wife, husband, son, or daughter. Carers are identified in Hampshire in various different ways. Through the local authority who whilst providing the Care Act 2014 legal assessment then signpost carers onto the third sector for support. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Hampshire are commissioned by both Hampshire County Council and the Integrated Care System (ICS) to provide an Emergency Planning service for Carers. The teamwork with Primary Care teams to recognise and identify Carers as well as hospital trusts including Hampshire Hospital Foundation Trust and Southern Health.

The proportion of residents with a limiting long-term illness or disability is comparable to England. However, the size of the Hampshire population means that the absolute numbers of people experiencing ill health or disability are large. There are approximately 87,900 people in Hampshire (6.7%) with a long-term health problem or disability which greatly limits their day-to-day activities; a further 119,400 people (9.1%) are limited a little on a daily basis. More than one in 20 people in Hampshire were providing unpaid care as of 2021, census data shows.

3. Scope and objectives

Working in partnership SGN and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers will bring together a large network of local community partners to proactively support carers with tailored support services across Hampshire that help to

tackle fuel poverty and introduce energy safeguards that help those most vulnerable maintain a safe and warm home.

The partnership is designed to work alongside the Home and Well partnership in Hampshire, providing proactive and preventative support services increasing the support available to carers and those they care for. The shared ambition is to reduce the potential impact on the NHS service and prevent hospitalisation for high-risk people as a result of living in a cold and unhealthy home.

The Home and Well – Carers Support Service is an innovative partnership that aims to support all carers, existing and new. As a provider of Carers services in Hampshire for over 20 years The Princess Royal Trust for Carers currently have approx. 21,000 carers on their database with over 200 new carers being referred in on a monthly basis.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers also work with other carer organisations and specialist organisations such as the Alzheimer Society, the Parkinson’s Society, and advocacy to support carers that they come across. Building upon the existing referral pathways, the partnership will develop new multi-directional referral with new partners to provide support directly to people with complex needs that are struggling to meet their needs which means making difficult choices between heating and food. By tackling issues such as fuel poverty, fuel debt, tariff issues and ensuring homes are safe by discussing issues such as carbon monoxide we will understand the needs of carers and the partnerships’ services will tailor the help they provide based on need.

In addition, we’re keen to better understand and highlight the difficulties carers face in accessing services designed to support those in vulnerable circumstances, to share this insight with others and make a difference to their lives though influencing long-term change.

We plan to deliver tailored energy safeguarding support to carers across Hampshire through a dedicated team of skilled energy ambassadors who will;

- Provide training and resources for frontline teams who support carers so that they can triage and refer carers in energy crisis into the service for case worker assistance
- Create welcoming spaces for carers where they can comfortably access tailored energy safeguarding support within the community that addresses the underlying causes of fuel poverty and access to key utility services designed for customers in vulnerable circumstances
- Provide access to tailored information packs that help to address fuel poverty / energy safeguards that can be shared directly with carers
- Provide resources to carers in households that are in energy crisis including the provision of emergency fuel vouchers, winter warm packs and heated blankets
- Ensure that the provision of energy related support services includes; energy efficiency advice, energy efficiency home audits, energy bill advocacy, carbon monoxide safety conversations, locking cooker valves, and access to the Priority Services Register
- Ensure that the provision of carer related support services are available beyond energy; for example, legal advice on power of attorney, wills and trusts, home library service and trading standards. Also ensuring that a network or partners can help with carer related needs including Citizens Advice. Telecare / Careline, Hampshire Fire and Rescue, dementia advisors, the British Red Cross, local pharmacies, Public Health England, Health Watch Hampshire and Apetito (meals on wheels).

The Home and Well – Carers Support Service will be available across Hampshire in at least 10 venues, advertised and promoted through the broader carers network, the hubs will have a minimum of two carer support workers in attendance alongside the two energy advisors/carers support workers, other visiting volunteers, and project partners.

Each venue will provide engaging, social, and relaxing activities to help create a welcoming environment, with daily newspapers, crossword puzzles, and jigsaws, as well as having a reminiscence area and other activities that can support broader engagement including for example, Better Balance for Life exercise or singing.

Light refreshments such as tea, coffee and cold drinks will be provided and where possible a subsidised hot meal will be provided. Carers will be invited to discuss their concerns and have a skilled adviser work through

the support provisions available for them to help, providing advice and information leading to carers being able to sustain their caring role for longer.

Last year the ICS commissioned The Princess Royal Trust for Carers to provide non-specific Carers Hubs across one area of Hampshire and these proved hugely successful with good attendance. The Home and Well – Carers Support Service will be inclusive as carers have fed back that accessing help is easier for them to access as they are able to bring their cared for person with them. In addition, we know from feedback that the Hubs reduce social isolation as well as providing both professional and peer support which has led to friendships developing outside of the hub.

The Home and Well – Carers Support Service have also made provision, whereby, the minority that are unable to come out to warm and well hubs due to the intense or complex nature of their caring role can in fact receive a home visit therefore not missing out on the critical support that is available to them in respect of keeping a warm home and receiving advice.

4. Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

This project will provide support to Carers around energy advice and in energy crisis, providing access to key support services including carbon monoxide safeguards, interventions that address fuel and water poverty and broader safeguarding and wellbeing services. Delivering a positive forecast Social Return on Investment. The project will work collaboratively with expert agencies to maximise positive impacts beyond energy, increasing the health and wellbeing of the individuals supported and delivering defined outcomes.

5. Evidence of stakeholder/customer support

5.1. Carers UK Survey of Census 2021

Carers UK Survey of Census 2021 data shows an increase in substantial unpaid care in England and Wales. There is a distinct increase in the number of people providing substantial care, of 20-49 hours a week (260,000) and 50 hours a week (152,000) between 2011 and 2021 and a deepening of the amount of care provided over time. This is significant because of the devastating impact that substantial unpaid care of over 20 hours per week can have on carers' health, wellbeing, and ability to juggle work and care. Carers are concerned about how they will pay their bills this winter, increased debt as a result of energy costs, higher energy bills, turning their heating on for longer periods if the weather is colder, only heating one room in the house, and the effect on their physical and mental health.

5.2. 2022 ICS Carers Hubs – feedback

Last year the ICS commissioned The Princess Royal Trust for Carers to provide non-specific Carers Hubs across one area of Hampshire and these proved hugely successful with good attendance.

Feedback from Carers and Commissioners:

Carer – “being a carer can be lonely and isolating. It is wonderful to be able to come along and not worry as there are other people here with the same worries that I have and we can receive support and advice.”

Carer: “I was delighted to attend the hub with my cared for, many groups are only for carers, but I cannot leave my wife. I have found out so much information and guidance relevant to me it has been a lifeline.”

Carer: “I have made a whole group of new friends since attending the Hub, this has been a great support to me and I have also started to claim attendance allowance which until I came here I didn't know I could claim.”

Commission – West CCG area – “The hubs have been a lifeline to Carers. The information that they are able to receive from the wide variety of partners has been invaluable.”

Commission – NEHants – “Thank you for bringing such a rich resource to the Carers in our community.”

5.3. SGN GD2 Business Plan – Stakeholder feedback

In developing our GD2 business plan, we committed to supporting over 250,000 vulnerable customers to use gas safely, affordably, and efficiently over the 5-year price control period. In July 2023, following extensive engagement with strategic stakeholders we extended our ambition to support 500,000 customers in vulnerable circumstances with an enhanced focus on supporting those impacted by living in fuel poverty.

5.4. Vulnerable Steering Group (VSG)

Throughout GD2 our dedicated Vulnerable Steering Group has helped us shape our vulnerability strategy and our priorities to ensure that we meet our Business Plan commitments to support vulnerable customers, those most in need of support to maintain a safe and warm home. It is with guidance and support from our dedicated Vulnerable Steering Group that SGN have a clear approach to delivering support to vulnerable customers, ensuring that we're using relevant data to prioritise targeting priority customer groups and working in geographic areas most likely to be living in cold and unhealthy homes.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers has a track record of supporting the priority customer groups – those living with critical and long-term health conditions. This forms part of a broader Home and Well Hampshire project and is supported by key stakeholders including Citizens Advice and the Integrated Health Board to provide tangible support to carers and those they care for into a safe and warm home.

In 2023, our Vulnerable Steering Group supported the inclusion of unpaid carers as a Priority Customer Group that required tailored support services, underpinned by data and insights that highlight that this group would benefit grateful from tailored support to stay safe and warm.

6. Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria

6.1. Outcomes

The Home and Well – Carers Support Service will promote community engagement and targeted support for Carers across Hampshire. The partnership will bring together a network across the carer community to help identify fuel poverty, share information and resources that help keep those most vulnerable customers safe and warm in their own homes.

Through tailored communications and skilled energy advisers embedded alongside carer support, our partnership will provide guidance, support, and information to carers in a way that works for them, and at a time when the help is most needed.

Carers will receive help with:

- ways to increase energy efficiency and where needed include an in-home energy audit
- how to maximise household income through benefits checks and reduce debts with support to access debt help
- access to energy crisis funds, winter warmth packs and heated blankets
- access to the Priority Services Register (PSR)
- information on CO safety and access to free CO alarms
- information and access to Locking Cooker Valves for those living with dementia(s) or other cognitive impairment(s)
- One-to-One appointments for carer advice
- Information and onward signposting to other support organisations and relevant grant schemes

In addition, the partnership aims to support people with carer responsibilities so that they have less stress and greater wellbeing as a direct result of the support provided, as well as insight that we can evidence which demonstrates an increased awareness of the issues impacting unpaid carers in relation to energy matters and fuel poverty.

6.2. Success Criteria

The partnership will engage between 45,000 and 131,000 carers across Hampshire with information on the support that's available for carers to maintain a safe and warm home. Through this engagement a dedicated team of advisers with skills in energy and carers needs will provide a safe, warm, and engaging space where support services can be bespoke to the carers needs.

The partnership aims to support carers with access to practical help that improves their health and wellbeing, avoiding support from the NHS as well as increasing their confidence to manage their household utility costs.

To monitor the impact of our programme we will monitor outcomes of those using the services provided by capturing data including demographics, vulnerabilities and needs.

Over the two years our ambition is to:

- Provide energy information to between 45,000 and 131,000 carers across Hampshire detailing support that is available locally and promote the hubs. This will be achieved by engaging with The Princess Royal Trust for Carers existing carers and their broader network via agreed contact lists provided by local authorities and GP surgeries
- Reach a minimum of 4,500 carers with information and where possible training on support that's available for carers including via the hubs and via tailored engagement for carers
 - 1,500 customers provided with in person energy efficiency advice at a warm hub
 - 500 customers provided with a CO Awareness session and the offer of a CO alarm where required (circa 250)
 - 1,500 customers provided with information on the Priority Services Register and support to access the PSR where required (circa 500)
 - 500 customers provided with energy crisis support – including fuel voucher (500), winter warm packs (200) and heated blankets (200)
 - 500 customers refer to other support services through the partnership network
 - 1,500 customers provided with information on income maximisation, with support to check entitlement (400)

7. Project partners and third parties involved

SGN – providing funding and support to the delivery team, including training, access to broader referral partners, and direct services for customers including but not limited to Locking Cooker Valves, CO alarms and access to the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers – delivering the Home and Well – Carers Support Service through resourcing the dedicated team, community engagement and coordination of the network of partnerships to deliver detailed outcomes and reporting

Home and Well – the project will form part of a proactive approach to Home and Well and the teams aim to share best practice across the Home and Well initiatives with the Hampshire ICB.

Healthwatch Hampshire – be able to work with Carers and other partners on Health issues that are impacted by lack of a warm home – eg we know Bronchitis and COPD is impacted by lack of heat.

Hampshire Carers Partnership – work with third sector organisations to identify Carers and signpost them to Home and Well – Carers Support Service

Blue Lamp Trust and Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service – CO installations / home safety checks

Hampshire Leadership Forum – a forum that represents all third sector organisations in Hampshire that will be able to identify Carers and signpost to the Home and Well – Carers Support Service

Pharmacists – we already work with Pharmacists for campaigns such as flu vaccination so will work with them to promote Home and Well – Carers Support Service

Fireblitz – supplier of carbon monoxide alarms & Charis Grants – service provider of the fuel vouchers

8. Potential for new learning

Monitoring and evaluation

The following activities will be in place to monitor and evaluate project progress and impacts:

- Quantitative and qualitative service user outcomes and demographics/vulnerabilities recorded/monitored
- Service user before-and-after-support surveys and follow-up calls
- In-bound and out-bound referrals from/to partners and other services recorded/monitored
- Feedback, indicators, outputs, and outcomes reported on quarterly

Learning

We are keen to learn from this project and for successes to be incorporated into future delivery as well as promoted to others both in the Carers Trust network and to broader stakeholders.

9. Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations

We’ve worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIA Partners to carry out an assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership.

Carrying out an in-depth assessment with The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and SGN using common industry tools including the DNO/GDN proxy bank and rule books, they forecast a positive net social return of £3.18 as detailed below.

Social Value Measurement

5-year figures		
Economic	Total cost	£328,037.50
	Total gross present value	£1,371,627.73
	NPV	£1,043,590.23
	SROI	£3.18
	Gross present value per person	£30.48

10. VCMA Project start and end date

The project will run from October 2023 to October 2025

11. Geographic area

Hampshire

12. Internal Governance and Approval

Maureen McIntosh - Director of Customer Services