

Suffolk County Council meeting Thursday 18 March 2021, vote taken on Motion 2 as amended.

Motion 2 – Proposed by Councillor Caroline Page and seconded by Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger.

Motion text:

This Council recognises:

1. During this pandemic Suffolk's social care sector has relied more than ever on carers, both paid and unpaid.
2. The current system only recognises those who claim carers allowance as carers. In August 2019 just 1.3m were in receipt of Carer's Allowance, and of this number, 32% of those entitled do not receive payments ([Gov.uk](#), February 2020). Those who receive Carer's Allowance are in reality a small proportion of carers, as many people who carry out caring duties are ineligible for it, or may not wish to claim it for personal reasons. But even for those who do receive it, £67.25 a week for a minimum of 35 hours labour is not sufficient.
3. Before the pandemic there were an estimated 9.1m unpaid carers in the UK, which has risen by 4.5m during the pandemic to 13.6m people ([Carers UK](#), June 2020). This increase would drive the estimated number of carers in Suffolk from 100,000 to 164,000. Many family carers do not recognise themselves as a carer. It is estimated that unpaid carers save the UK £530m every day of the pandemic, valued at roughly £187bn to date ([Carers UK](#), November 2020). Suffolk's unpaid carers save the UK £6.4m every day of the pandemic.
4. Our current knowledge of the number of carers is incomplete and largely based on the 2011 census. While the rough data for carer numbers will be updated in the 2021 census, it will not give the council the ability to target individuals for help and support.
5. Despite the estimated 164,000 carers in Suffolk, for a number of reasons Suffolk Family Carers only has roughly 16,000 carers registered on their records. With this lack of knowledge on who and where Suffolk's carers are, it is difficult to offer them the necessary support.
6. When a carer becomes ill or otherwise unable to carry out their caring role, practical problems arise. If the Council steps in only once a crisis point has been reached it is significantly more expensive for social care. Offering better targeted, preventive support before this crisis point is reached would be more cost effective in the long term.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Formally commend and thank Suffolk's carers, both paid and unpaid, for their work during this pandemic.

2. Following a new contract with Suffolk Family Carers, support them in enhancing and expanding their database to cover all carers within Suffolk where possible, with initial information to be drawn from community organisations and all GPs, who can offer carers registered with them the option to register on the countywide database.
3. Work with Suffolk Family Carers to run an annual marketing exercise to encourage carers to identify themselves as such and sign up to the database.
4. Use the Suffolk Family Carers' database to help direct the Council's limited social care resources most effectively so as to ensure that there will be maximum support for carers, particularly in times of crisis. This will result in:
 - Improved analytics and insight for the Council.
 - Improved communications to signpost carers to appropriate services.
 - Improved targeting for support offers.
 - Increased consultation with carers who wish to be involved with relevant policies and issues.
5. Work with partner organisations who wish to be involved, alongside Suffolk Family Carers, and include them as appropriate.

Members present agreed the motion by general assent.