# Carers Reference Group for Aberdeen City

Supported by the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP)

The following **'Working Together Agreement'** has been developed in conjunction with current core membership of the Carers Reference Group.

## Aim

*To contribute to the improvement of services and supports for all people who provide unpaid Care to anyone in Aberdeen City.*

## Objectives in Support of the Aim

*During meetings there is an expectation of….*

1. Some sharing of the good, and not so good, experiences of existing support services.
2. The sharing of potentially useful knowledge, skills and insights with other group members related to caring. (**Please note**: the sharing of the experiences of *others* will be carefully considered by group members. Ideally, the permission of the person being referred to will have been sought; or that this is done in a way that makes identification of the person impossible).
3. Close working with representatives from the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership.
4. Opportunities of being heard, and understood, at a level of significant influence within the ACHSCP
5. Identification of, invitations to, and opportunities to speak with guests from disciplines that may be useful for anyone in an unpaid Caring role, e.g., financial inclusion team, care management*.
6. The onward sharing any useful learning from those sessions* with other group members and unpaid Carers more widely.
7. Drawing attention to any training and development opportunities that may be relevant to group members.
8. An awareness amongst group members as to the existence of a Carers Strategy 2023-2026. (**Please note**: a broad understanding of the content and main aims of the strategy are desirable. However, lacking an awareness of the strategy will not act as a barrier to membership).
9. The sharing and documentation of thoughts, feelings and judgements in relation to the Carer Strategy, at any time, but particularly during review periods.
10. Members being open to increasing and diversifying the current membership.

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## Membership

1. Unpaid Carers of any age, who live in Aberdeen City

2. Unpaid Carers of any age who do not live in Aberdeen City, but who care for an individual who lives within the City limits.

3. Former unpaid Carers of any age.

4. One representative from the ACHSCP to (1) organise meeting dates and suitable venues (2) act as a central point of contact for all group members (3) to make an accurate, summarised record of the meetings. (**Please note**: it is anticipated that ongoing support from the ACHSCP will be required to help organise and minute meetings, and act as a point of contact for existing and new members to the group).
   **NB:** the maximum/ minimum number of people required to maintain the group into the medium and longer term has not been agreed by current members. It was felt that we are too early a stage to make such judgements. Group members have also expressed a clear desire to increase the diversity of the membership.

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## Group Contract

1. The ACHSCP values of: honesty, transparency, empathy, equity and respect will guide behaviours between group members during meetings.
2. All views and contributions will be listened to fully and respectfully
3. Trauma Informed: group members will consider the potential impact on other group members of what they wish to share. For example, sharing details on topics like suicide or self-harm may have a negative impact on other group members.
4. A standardised agenda will be used to help guide conversations. The minutes of previous meetings will be checked at each subsequent meeting for accuracy.
5. During the first year (2024), the Carers Reference Group will hold meetings every 4-6 weeks
6. **Confidentiality:** as a starting point, the phrase "what is spoken about in the room, stays in the room" is useful. However some of what group members share will, with their permission, be added to the minute of the meeting.
7. **Limits to confidentiality** - Adult and Child protection: all citizens of Scotland have a duty to report concerns about actual or suspected abuse or exploitation. Therefore confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if current adult or child protection concerns are raised.
8. Whilst supportive during meetings, members of the CRG can, but are not expected to, provide support to other group members out with the meetings.
9. The contact details of group members will not be shared with other group members by anyone working within ACHSCP.
10. The sharing of personal contact details is the choice of individual members.
11. Due to availability of group members, MS Teams or Zoom platforms will sometimes be used instead of face-to-face meetings. These will be used, as-and-when required, as a means of holding meetings more easily, and to facilitate the greatest possible attendance.
12. Time to connect: time will be set aside at the end of each meeting to enable group members to talk informally, and perhaps share their experiences of providing care and support. A detailed minute of those conversations will not be taken unless requested by the relevant group members.
13. Guest speakers attend only an agreed part/ section of each meeting to discuss and receive questions on their specific area of expertise.

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## Reviewing

1. There will be an opportunity for all group members to formally review the 'Working Together Agreement' each year.
2. At any time, core members can call for additions of edits to be made to the 'Agreement'. A change to the 'Working Agreement' will require a minimum of 60% approval from the core membership of the group.