



Annual Report

2024/25



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Introduction



Welcome to our Annual Report for the year 2024 – 2025. This annual report marks another year of growth and innovation for Carers Federation and a year of further strengthening the foundations of our organisation.

Carers Federation is an organisation dedicated and passionate about providing high quality carer support and training. We are known for our expertise in supporting unpaid carers and delivering accredited Advocacy training. Our reputation for excellence stems from our commitment to taking an innovative and flexible approach to service design and delivery and most importantly having a team of highly motivated and well-trained staff.

Our reputation for excellence continues as we receive positive feedback from our service users and stakeholders alike. This is a testament to the quality of our teams and the integrity in the delivery of all our services.

Over the past year we have continued to remain focused in achieving our key goals and ambitions whilst holding the same vision and values.



Introduction



Our Vision:

Everyone we serve receives individually tailored care, support, or training.

Our Mission:

To become a centre of excellence in provision of care, support and training in the UK.

Our Core Values:

Friendliness – We believe in welcoming everyone with warmth and kindness. We want people to feel individually valued.

Fairness – We believe in equality and strive to be respectful in everything we do. We listen to the needs of others and put them at the heart of our work.

Diversity – Discrimination will have no place in anything we do.

Integrity – We are accountable to people and partners we serve and will transparently share our results, stories and lessons.

Collaboration – We actively seek collaboration and partnerships with other organisations to make our vision a reality.

Continuous Improvement – We actively strive through innovation and hard work to be a centre of excellence.

Co-production – We ensure that all the services we design and deliver are co-produced with carers and the needs of our service users front and centre.

Summary of the Year

By continuing to be guided by these core values, we've had yet another challenging, yet ultimately successful year, most notably extending our Carers Support Services to cover Gateshead in the form of 'Caregivers Connected Gateshead'. The new service provides support for All carers; young, young adult and adult carers across Gateshead.

Our existing Carers Hub Service covering both Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City Carers has gone from strength to strength over the past year, seeing the reach of the service and the number of carers supported increasing at a truly fantastic rate.

The year has also seen the continued delivery of our very own 'Quality Standard in Carer Support' accreditation (QSCS) to more organisations across the country and also seen many more organisations completing the qualification. This is such a positive step in raising awareness and understanding for Carers in education, health settings and the workplace.

The training team have been busy developing and delivering new courses for both internal and external learners, alongside continued delivery of our City and Guilds Advocacy qualification.

Our team of Northeast Advocates have continued to faultlessly deliver a first-class NHS Complaints Advocacy Service (NHS ICA) across County Durham, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Darlington and Newcastle. And additionally adding Stockton in October 2024 after successfully tendering for the new contract. On a less positive note, our Whatton Prison Advocacy Scheme came to an end in January 2025 due to the prison's funding cuts. Carers Federation had delivered the scheme for many years and seen hundreds of individuals gaining advocacy qualifications which benefitted the wider prison population.



The future

During the latter part of 2024/25 work began on the development of a new five-year Corporate Plan which included a full review of our income generation strategy. The finalisation of this comprehensive plan provides a clear direction for Carers Federation in achieving our goals and ensuring we continue to thrive as an organisation.

Ultimately our aim here at Carers Federation remains the same and that is to build a secure and sustainable future for the organisation and continue to serve the communities which have come to rely on us.

Acknowledgments

As always, a special acknowledgment to our Board of Trustees for their continued support, commitment, and leadership to Carers Federation.

Acknowledgement to our team of committed, knowledgeable, innovative, flexible and simply fantastic staff and volunteers who all continue to go above and beyond all expectations in their day-to-day roles ensuring the success of Carers Federation.

A huge thank you to our Chief Executive Officer, Jayne Bell for continuing to drive Carers Federation onwards to bigger and better things with her great vision and hard work, and for the way she continues to inspire people to achieve more with her ongoing enthusiasm and passion.

And finally, thanks to all our funders, partners and supporters for enabling us to continue to provide our services.

We hope you now enjoy reading about all our services in detail throughout the rest of this report.



Carers Hub Service

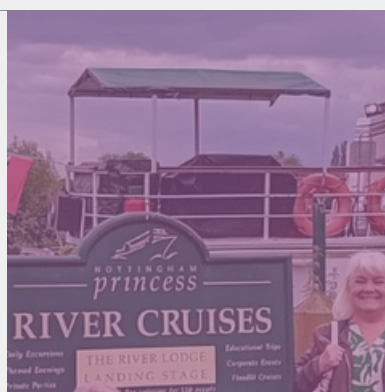
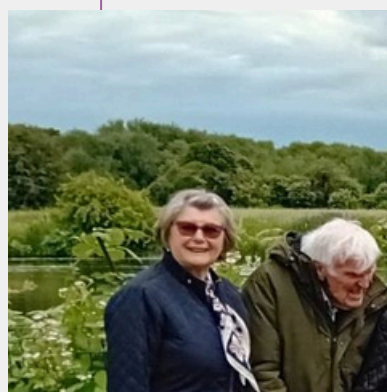


We are delighted to be able to update you on all the exciting work the Carers Federation, Carers Hub Service has been doing to support unpaid carers in Nottingham city and Nottinghamshire County throughout 2024-2025.

In October 2023 Carers Federation was successfully awarded a four-year contract to deliver the Carers Hub Service, jointly funded by Nottinghamshire County council, Nottingham city council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

We are now in the second year of the contract, and the carers hub continues to grow and thrive. Our vibrant website has a vast amount of information for carers to access support and find out more about our services and events.

We love working with our carer's groups in and around Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to organise events and activities and enjoy raising awareness and celebrating events like Carers week ((July 2024) and Carers Day (November 2024). We also love welcoming people to events at our lovely home at Christopher Cargill House in Nottingham City or holding events in community venues like the Oasis community centre in Worksop.



Carers Hub Service



Service delivery

The Carers Hub Service have attended events throughout the year to promote the support services available to carers and to assist with early identification of carers.

During 2024/25, we have received **1938** new referrals for carers to access our service. Our monthly newsletter is sent to **2815** subscribers.

We have developed **2136** support plans and provided **121** carers with ID cards to give support in an emergency situation. We have supported **398** carers by connecting them to other services for information to assist them in their caring role.

Carers Hub Service have provided **12** in person carer support groups per month with a total of **144** groups during the period of 2024-25. In addition, we have provided **3** online evening carer support groups per month with a total of **36 groups**, the online groups are for people who are unable to access face to face groups during the day with dedicated support for parent carers and young adult carers.

The groups provide opportunities for carers to connect with other carers, information, advice and guidance and training. The number of carers attending these groups has increased from **238** people in quarter one to **308** in quarter four.



“I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Nottingham carers federation for providing these local support groups. I’ve gained so much just by hearing shared experiences of other carers. The guest speakers are all relevant and provide helpful information and support, which I believe empowers and encourages carers in their challenging roles”.

Carers Hub Service



Service delivery

Health/GP champions

Each GP surgery within Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County is offered support to develop a staff member to take on the role of Carer Champion. We currently have **107** GP Carer Champions within Nottingham County surgeries and **44** Carer Champions within Nottingham City surgeries.

The Carers Hub Service provides ongoing support and training to Carer Champions through the Health Liaison worker to ensure that carers can access GP services in a supported way

Respite

Carers Hub Service referred **377** carers for respite during the period of 2024/25 to support carers to take a break from their caring role. We have referred **81** carers to Carefree breaks who offer carers a hotel break as an option for respite



“Very friendly and caring. Explained all that was available to me. I didn’t know this help existed. The gym membership at the Arena West Bridgford was particularly helpful to me. I also attend the monthly Carers meetings at St Lukes Church Hall, West Bridgford interesting and relevant speakers. Best of all though, meeting and speaking with other carers and exchanging information”

– Service User for Carers Hub

Caregivers Connected Gateshead



Carers Federation are delighted to announce the success of being awarded the all-age caregiver's contract in Gateshead which began operating in September 2024. Caregivers Connected Gateshead contract objective is to deliver support to Caregivers to get the right help, in the right place, at the right time, through the jointly commissioned service between Gateshead Council and the North East Integrated Care Board (ICB).

We aim to:

- Raise awareness of the role of Caregivers and improve identification
- Keep Caregivers informed
- Ensure Caregivers feel valued in Gateshead
- Support Caregivers to look after their health and wellbeing

Since the service was launched in September 2024, we have developed, and continue to further develop, a vibrant and accessible service with the support of our caregivers and in line with Gateshead's carers strategy.



Caregivers Connected Gateshead



Engagement and involvement of Carers

810	Referrals made to Caregivers Connected Gateshead
29	Adult Caregivers Statutory assessments completed
58	Young Carers Needs Assessments completed
57	Carer groups have taken place (e.g. Craft groups for Adult Caregivers, Young Carers feeling good peer group, male care group for male adult caregivers)
274	Caregivers have attended groups
451	Carers and professionals receive our newsletter
£242,500	Benefits achieved (a mix of carer related benefits e.g. attendance allowance and carers allowance, personal independent payments)
754	1-2-1 support e.g. emotional support, information, guidance and referrals to other relevant services

Caregivers Connected Gateshead



Partnership Working

During the reporting period we have worked with the following

- Age UK, Gateshead
- Adults Principal Social Worker
- Children's Principal Social Worker
- Regional Carers Centre Meetings
- Citizens Advice Gateshead
- Society Mates
- Talking Heads (Primary and Secondary Schools)
- Learning Disabilities team
- Locality teams
- Safeguarding Boards

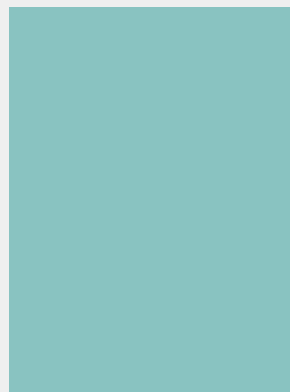
Carers Wellbeing Fund

The wellbeing fund supports carers by covering such things as short breaks, gym membership, mobile phones, theatre trips, spa days, creating a calming space at home.

During the period we have assessed 32 Young Carer applications and granted 29 and assessed 45 Adult Caregiver applications and granted 30. The total value awarded was £10,298

Volunteering Service

Since December 2024, we have started to recruit volunteers to support us with our own activities, administration and digital support as well as recruiting volunteers for the new befriending service. By the end of March 2025, we had 27 adults interested in volunteering with us.



Caregivers Connected Gateshead

Young Caregiver Case Study

In January 2025, we met A, a bright, caring six-year-old who lives with his mum and dad and goes to a local primary school. A loves Lego and has an infectious energy, but his young life has been turned upside down by his dad's illness. A's dad has Stage 4 Glioblastoma, an aggressive and terminal brain cancer. As a result, he often experiences seizures that sometimes mean long stays in hospital.

A does not yet fully understand the seriousness of his dad's condition, but he knows his dad is unwell. He often tries to cheer him up and makes sure he is safe.

For someone so young, A has taken on a big role as a carer, something no six-year-old should have to face alone. His mum worries about the emotional toll this may have on him, especially as his dad's health declines.

When we first visited the family, A was shy and unsure what our service was about. While his mum spoke with our Young Carer Team Lead about support options, we played together on the floor, a small but important step in building trust. We talked with his parents about respite opportunities and activities that could give A a break from the stress at home.

We quickly put a support plan in place. We wrote to A's school so they could understand his situation and offer extra help, and to his GP so they could be aware of his role as a young carer. We also referred his mum to adult services for additional support and shared details of fun activities A could join. Since then, A's world has grown a little brighter. He has been enjoying our young carer activities, especially his local Lego club where he has made friends who understand what he is going through. He is now having regular counselling sessions at school, which his mum says have been a huge help.

We were also able to secure wellbeing grants for both A and his mum. His mum used hers for a spa day, a rare chance to relax and recharge, while A's grant went towards Lego, his favourite hobby. Shopping for Lego together and building it at home with his dad has given the family precious moments of joy. And for his mum, our regular check-in calls have provided emotional support through an incredibly difficult time.

A still faces challenges no child his age should have to, but he now has a network of support and moments of happiness to help him along the way.

Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS)



April 2024 to March 2025 has been another rewarding year for the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) team as we continue to work with organisations up and down the country.

The QSCS is an accreditation for organisations to raise awareness, remove barriers, develop policies and procedures, and improve access and support for carers in education, employment, and healthcare settings. It's fantastic to see the positive impact that the QSCS has on carers of all ages and the organisations that we work with.

This year we were delighted to work with ten schools (8 secondary and two primary) from the Archway Learning Trust. The trust was the first multi-academy trust in the country to undertake a trust-wide accreditation.

“I feel that it was a really valuable piece of work. It has certainly alerted myself and our staff to this vulnerable group of students to whom I do not think we had given enough consideration to before.”

Bluecoat primary school.



Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS)



Not only are we delivering the QSCS in schools and colleges in places as varied as the Midlands, Scotland, Wales and South of England, we are also working with FE colleges who have returned to us to undertake a QSCS reaccreditation (accreditations are valid for 3 years); a clear sign that they are seeing the value in having the QSCS accreditation

Driving Change Project

Carers Federation are 18 months into the Driving Change in Higher Education (HE) project in partnership with the Learning and Work Institute. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund this project enables Carers Federation to deliver the QSCS to Universities across England. Driving Change aims to break down barriers to HE and ensure that young adult carers have the same opportunities to go to university, and achieve their potential, as other young people. We are delighted to be delivering the QSCS to universities in the same way we were involved with the 3-year Driving Change for FE project that ran from 2019-2022

“We are incredibly proud to have received this accreditation, but for us, this is just the beginning. We recognise the immense challenges that young carers face, and we are committed to ensuring they feel seen, supported, and valued. Our goal is to create a nurturing environment where these children can thrive both academically and personally.”

– *The Nottingham Emmanuel School*

Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS)



You're Welcome

In addition to our QSCS work Carers Federation also continue to support hospitals to achieve the You're Welcome accreditation, which has been developed to recognise and further best practice in delivering children and young people friendly health provision. Congratulations to all the Spire hospitals that have so far achieved this accreditation.



We are very excited for the future impact the QSCS will have on carers of all ages and the organisations that undertake it.

A very big thank you to the fantastic QSCS team who offer an incredible and inspirational service delivered with passion, knowledge and experience.

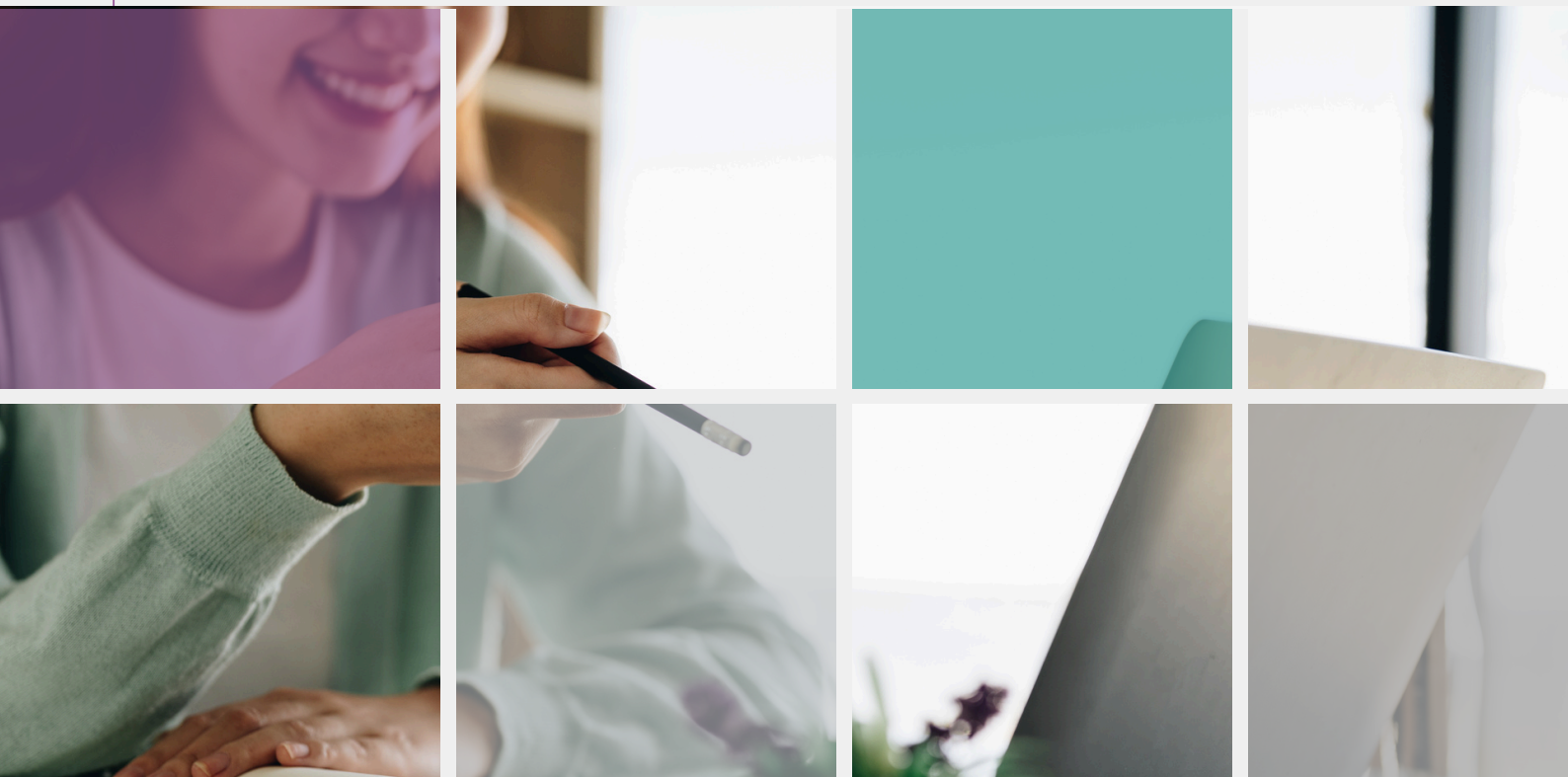
Any profits from QSCS service go back into Carers Federation's carer support services so we can continue to improve and expand our services.

Carers Federation Training



This year Carers Federation continued to deliver high quality City & Guilds qualifications with candidates successfully working towards, and completing, the Level 4 and Level 2 in Independent Advocacy. Working closely with partner organisations we are delighted to be able to train advocates enabling them to offer independent support to those in need.

This year also saw the withdrawal of the popular City & Guilds Level 2 in Independent Advocacy, leaving a gap for many hoping to begin their advocacy training. The training team with their unstoppable passion, commitment and experience have since developed a brand-new course, Step into Advocacy, which is the ideal starting point for individuals who are just beginning their advocacy journey or have an interest in advocacy. As a proud holder of the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM), the only Quality Mark for organisations offering Independent Advocacy, Carers Federation is very well placed to offer this, and the team have enjoyed developing a new, quality course.



Carers Federation Training



Carers Federation successfully passed both six monthly City & Guilds audits this year, continuing to ensure processes and procedures remain robust and candidates are receiving up to date, accurate and quality delivery.

This year Carers Federation has also continued to successfully deliver other training courses through our online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) including Adult Safeguarding, Introduction to Mentoring, NHS Complaints Training and Setting up an Effective Mentoring Programme

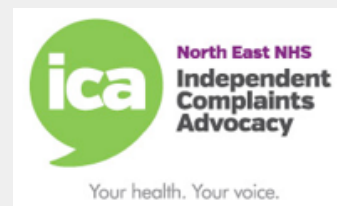
A huge thank you to our training team for all their continuing hard work, their never-ending source of ideas and commitment throughout the year.

“Excellent, because the facilitator was concise, recognised different learning styles of attendees and was very enthused encouraging us to think beyond the standard work experiences.”

“Easy access, the learner is well supported from tutors and from the admin team members which is really helpful when navigating the site and supporting your learning.”

“Really helpful. Jane provided balanced and direct feedback that enabled me to adjust my work to achieve the required grade. I really enjoyed her support”

NE NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy



Our advocacy team continue to offer an exemplary service with consolidation of contracts confirmed for the next few years. Whilst we had to say goodbye to the Newcastle area, we welcomed back Stockton in October 2024 an area we know well. The Team continues to deal with very challenging situations supporting service users and enabling desired outcomes as the NHS continue to deal with high demand and well documented waiting lists.

The external stakeholders' relationships are very positive and during the year we have expanded our involvement and membership on to several new Patient Experience Committees where we are able to share the patients' voice and influence local decision makers.

The team have developed a suite of case studies which are shared with each Local Authority to demonstrate the outcomes achieved through the NHS Complaints process. We remain at the forefront of the NHS complaints standards set by the Parliamentary Health Services Ombudsman and able to understand how this is being interpreted locally

Our deaf advocate is also part of the deaf networks in the North East and there is a drive to make improvements through NHS complaints for the deaf community with several relevant partner organisations.



NE NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy



We are also grateful to all our stakeholders who proactively share our service details widely.

Feedback from service users

“Hi C, I want to thank you for all your help, I would have never had the energy to keep up the fight. I think I must be old fashioned, things like this are never about money etc., always about doing the right thing, you helped me do that.”

“C really helped us. “It was lovely to meet you and to thank you so much for your continued support over the past months. You have always been there for us and to that we appreciate it so much. Thank you for coming to the meeting today, it was lovely to have someone there for us.”

”I could not fault G, she wrote letters and emails for me. Everything I needed help with she did. She talked me through everything. She was friendly and helpful which was just what I needed at a difficult time”

Feedback from NHS Patient experience manager

“Knowing the Trust has a respected NHS complaints advocacy service to refer complainants too is a positive for us. We have a productive long-term relationship with NE NHS ICA - the quality of the advocates who attend our local resolution meeting and the support they offer has helped the Trust to resolve several challenging NHS complaints locally. Indeed their ongoing attendance at our patient experience meetings keeps us all on point in a positive way!”



Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report. For more information on Carers Federation and to stay up to date, please follow us on social media via any of the accounts listed below, or our website.



@carershubservice // @caregiversconnectedgateshead



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The Carers Federation



www.carersfederation.co.uk