



Cùram is Slàinte nan Eilean Siar

Western Isles Health and Social Care Partnership

Western Isles Carers Strategy

Examples of delivery and impact 2023-2026

The following case studies highlight examples of how partner organisations have contributed to the delivery of the Western Isles Carers Strategy. Together they demonstrate the impact of information and advice, advocacy, respite, peer support, and community-based services in supporting unpaid carers across the Western Isles.

The case studies have been developed using information contained within partner activity reports and updates submitted to the Carers Strategy Group.

Strategic Outcome 1 – I am recognised as a carer

- [Case Study 1](#): Helping people recognise themselves as carers and access support

Strategic Outcome 2 – I am supported as a carer to manage my caring role

- [Case Study 2](#): Enabling carers to manage their caring role through dementia-specific support
- [Case Study 3](#): Supporting Carers Through Adult Carer Support Plans and Community Engagement

Strategic Outcome 3 – I am listened to and involved in the planning of services

- [Case Study 4](#): Ensuring carers are heard and involved in decisions about their care
- [Case Study 5](#): Improving Carer Support Through Discharge Planning and Staff Training

Strategic Outcome 4 – I am supported to have a life alongside caring, if I choose to do so

- [Case Study 6](#): Connecting carers through peer support and community networks
- [Case Study 7](#): Providing short breaks to support carers' health and wellbeing
- [Case Study 8](#): Sustaining caring roles through flexible respite support in rural communities

Strategic Outcome 1 – I am recognised as a carer

Case Study 1: Helping people recognise themselves as carers and access support

Organisation: Western Isles Community Care Forum

Background

Many people do not identify themselves as carers and may miss opportunities to access support, information, and advice. The Strategy identified early identification as a key priority.

What Happened

- Carers were identified through outreach and awareness-raising activities.
- Information and advice were provided through direct engagement with carers.
- Carers were supported to access the carers register and wider support services.
- Awareness events were delivered through initiatives such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.
- Launch of the Shining Stars newsletter for young carers in June 2024.
- Launch of the HS Carer Card during Carers Week 2025.
- 231 HS Carer Cards issued between June 2025 and June 2026.

Outcomes

- Increased awareness of carers' rights and available support.
- Carers accessed information and advice earlier.
- More carers engaged with support services and community-based programmes.
- Four previously unidentified young carers came forward following publication of newsletter editions.
- Carers were better able to identify themselves as carers.
- Increased access to local discounts, benefits, and support through the HS Carer Card.

Carer Feedback

Feedback highlighted the value of:

- receiving information about available support.
- understanding carers' rights and entitlements.
- being signposted to appropriate services at an earlier stage.
- recognising that they were carers and could access support in their own right.

Strategic Outcome 2 – I am supported as a carer to manage my caring role

Case Study 2: Enabling carers to manage their caring role through dementia-specific support

Organisation

Alzheimer Scotland – Western Isles

Background

Caring for a person living with dementia can create significant emotional, physical, and social pressures. Alzheimer Scotland provides dementia-specific day services, outreach support and peer support opportunities for both carers and people living with dementia.

What Happened?

Between October 2024 and March 2025:

- 527 attendances at registered dementia day services.
- 26 people living with dementia supported.
- 109 attendances by carers at community groups and outreach activities.
- 26 individual carers supported.

Outcomes

- Reduced stress and isolation.
- Improved confidence and wellbeing.
- Increased access to respite and support.

Carer Feedback

Carers reported that:

- access to dementia-specific support increased confidence in managing caring responsibilities.
- opportunities for respite had a positive impact on wellbeing.
- support groups reduced feelings of isolation.
- having access to specialist advice improved understanding of dementia.

Case Study 3: Supporting carers through adult carer support plans and community engagement

Organisation

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Background

Adult Carer Support Plans provide an important mechanism for identifying carers' needs, discussing personal outcomes, and connecting carers with appropriate support and information.

What Happened?

- Adult Carer Support Plans continued to be offered and completed across Adult Services.
- Carers were identified through assessment and care management processes.
- Carers were signposted to information, advice, and community-based supports.
- Partnership working continued with third-sector organisations supporting carers across the Western Isles.
- Learning from practice highlighted the ongoing challenge of identifying hidden carers who do not recognise themselves as carers.

Outcomes

- Improved identification of unpaid carers.
- Greater awareness of available support and services.
- Improved understanding of carers' needs and circumstances.
- Evidence gathered to inform development of the refreshed Carers Strategy.

Carer Feedback

Feedback from staff and partner organisations highlighted:

- the importance of recognising carers at an early stage.
- the need for carers to receive timely information and support.
- the continuing challenge of identifying hidden carers.

Strategic Outcome 3 – I am listened to and involved in the planning of services

Case Study 4: Ensuring carers are heard and involved in decisions about their care

Organisation

Advocacy Western Isles

Background

Carers frequently need support to navigate health and social care systems, particularly during care planning, hospital discharge, and Self-Directed Support processes.

What Happened?

Advocacy support was provided in relation to:

- Self-Directed Support.
- Care planning.
- Hospital discharge.
- Housing and benefits.
- Access to appropriate services

Outcomes

- Increased participation in decision-making.
- Improved understanding of rights and entitlements.
- Better access to support and services.
- Greater confidence in engaging with health and social care services.

Carer Feedback

Carers valued:

- having independent support when engaging with services.
- increased confidence in expressing their views.
- improved understanding of available options.
- greater involvement in decisions affecting them and the person they care for.

Case Study 5: Improving carer support through discharge planning and staff training

Organisation

NHS Western Isles

Background

Carers play a vital role in supporting individuals during admission to hospital and following discharge. Ensuring carers are informed, involved, and supported throughout this process helps improve outcomes for both carers and the people they care for.

What Happened?

- Carer information materials were developed for use across hospital sites.
- Work commenced on revising Admission to Discharge documentation to strengthen carer identification and involvement.
- The revised documentation was tested through NHS Western Isles Quality Improvement processes.
- Staff training materials were updated to support implementation of the revised approach.
- Opportunities were explored to involve carer organisations in testing proposed improvements.

Outcomes

- Improved recognition of carers within hospital settings.
- Greater emphasis on carer involvement in discharge planning.
- More consistent information and support for carers during transitions of care.
- Improved staff awareness of carers' rights and responsibilities.

Carer Feedback

Development work was informed by feedback highlighting:

- the importance of being involved in decisions affecting the person they care for.
- the need for clear and accessible information at discharge.
- the value of recognising carers as equal partners in care.

Strategic Outcome 4 – I am supported to have a life alongside caring, if I choose to do so

Case Study 6: Connecting carers through peer support and community networks

Organisation

Western Isles Community Care Forum (Eolas)

Background

Many unpaid carers report feeling isolated and disconnected from social and community opportunities. The Eolas programme was developed to bring carers together and provide practical and emotional support.

What Happened?

- Regular Eolas gatherings throughout the year.
- Information sessions and guest speakers.
- Social and wellbeing activities.
- Opportunities for carers to share experiences with others in similar situations.

Outcomes

- Reduced isolation.
- Improved wellbeing.
- Increased confidence and resilience.
- Stronger social connections.

Carer Feedback

Participants reported:

- reduced social isolation.
- reassurance from meeting others in similar circumstances.
- improved emotional wellbeing.
- increased awareness of support available locally.

Case Study 7: Providing short breaks to support carers' health and wellbeing

Organisation

Western Isles Community Care Forum (Respitality)

Background

Feedback consistently shows that carers often struggle to prioritise their own wellbeing and have limited opportunities to take a break from caring responsibilities.

What Happened?

Through partnerships with local hospitality businesses, carers were provided with short breaks and respite opportunities via the Respitality programme.

Outcomes

- Reduced stress and exhaustion.
- Improved wellbeing.
- Increased resilience and ability to continue caring.

Carer Feedback

Carers reported that short breaks:

- provided an opportunity to rest and recharge.
- improved their wellbeing.
- enabled them to maintain their caring role.
- offered valuable time away from caring responsibilities.

Case Study 8: Sustaining caring roles through flexible respite support in rural communities

Organisation

Crossroads Care Harris

Background

The geography of the Western Isles can create additional challenges for carers in accessing services and support.

What Happened?

Crossroads provided:

- Flexible respite services.
- Emergency overnight support.
- Transport assistance.
- Person-centred support tailored to individual circumstances.

Outcomes

- Reduced carer stress.
- Greater ability to sustain caring roles.
- Increased access to support in remote communities.
- Positive satisfaction feedback.

Carer Feedback

Carers highlighted:

- the importance of flexible support arrangements.
- improved ability to attend appointments and personal commitments.
- reduced stress associated with caring responsibilities.
- greater confidence in continuing their caring role.

Overall Contribution to the Carers Strategy

Collectively, these examples demonstrate how partnership working across statutory and third sector organisations contributed to achieving the aims of the Western Isles Carers Strategy. The case studies highlight support for carers through identification, information and advice, advocacy, peer support, respite opportunities, and community-based services, helping carers maintain their health, wellbeing, and caring roles.