

Programme Evaluation

Invitation to Tender

Introduction

Carers Trust is inviting suitable applicants to tender to complete an evaluation of the Making Carers Count programme. The evaluation will inform the delivery and structure of support available for unpaid carers, specifically those who are under-represented in accessing health and social care support and have faced additional barriers due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Making Carers Count programme is led by Carers Trust, working in partnership with Carers UK and local carer focused organisations on the delivery of UK wide programme outputs between January 2021 – March 2024.

Making Carers Count is funded by the [Covid-19 Support Fund](#).

About Carers Trust

[Carers Trust](#) is a UK based charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services, and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems. Carers Trust's vision is of a world where the role and contribution of unpaid carers is recognised and valued; and where carers have access to the trusted quality support and services, they need to live their own lives.

Carers Trust works with a federated network of 124 quality assured, independent, local carer organisations to support carers in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. Together we offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities. In 2020/21 we directly supported 429,195 carers across the UK Network, with a wider reach of 858,286 carers registered across our Network. Our 2021 impact report is available [here](#).

Background on under-represented carers across UK

The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for unpaid carers of all ages, adding to their already stressful lives.

A Carers UK reportⁱ highlighted that 70% of unpaid carers are providing more care due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. An update to this report in October 2020ⁱⁱ showed that unpaid carers have been unable to access formal help during the lockdown, including services they had previously been reliant on.

The 2021 State of Caring reportⁱⁱⁱ found that only 45% of carers stating they had full access to support from paid care workers.

A Carers Trust report^{iv} showed that 40% of young carers (aged up to 18) and 59% of young adult carers (aged 16–25) have reported their mental health being worse since the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, unpaid carers were seven times more likely to be lonely compared with the general population^v. Now, the pandemic is having a devastating impact as unpaid carers struggle with the impact of restrictions and reduced incomes on their lives. Some unpaid carers are housebound and/or shielding because of the pandemic. Carers UK experienced a 40% increase in activity on its online forums and a 600% increase in readers of online information throughout the first year of the pandemic. Their online peer support groups created as a response to the pandemic have seen active attendance and positive feedback from unpaid carers.

Carers Trust, local carer organisations and Carers UK have quickly adapted their services. However, we have faced capacity challenges in effectively meeting the greatly increased need for support.

It has been particularly difficult to engage and support groups already facing social exclusion, including carers from under-represented groups.

Carers Trust's 2019/20 Network Partner survey showed that of the unpaid carers supported across the UK, only 12% were from ethnic minority communities and only 0.6% were from LGBTQ communities. Only 7% of Carers UK's membership of unpaid carers are from ethnic minority groups.

There was also patchy coverage of support services for young carers and young adult carers. Out of Carers Trust's 124 Network Partners in the UK, 63% provide support to young carers and/or young adult carers. Carers Trust's 2019/20 Network Partner survey showed that only 36% of our Network Partners have contracts with Local Authorities specifically for young carers in England. Across the UK, as many as one in five children and young people are young carers.

Making Carers Count

Carers Trust received £5.8m of funding from the Covid-19 Support Fund (December 2020) to increase the capacity of the carers sector and improve our collective ability to support more carers who were likely to face additional barriers, namely those detailed as under-represented in receipt of support.

Making Carers Count programme partners are working together to:

- Build understanding and ability to engage and support carers from under-represented groups
- Adapt existing support, information, advice and services to make them relevant, accessible and inclusive to carers from under-represented groups
- Increase, adapt and extend service provision for young carers and young adult carers and for adult unpaid carers from under-represented groups
- Build formal links, collaborations and relationships with groups of under-represented carers and organisations which support their wider needs
- Facilitate the meaningful inclusion of unpaid carers from under-represented groups at all levels of the programme.

The programme is being delivered via three strands:

Adult carers (18+) from under-represented groups.

17 carer organisations¹ have received funding to create local, meaningful and strategic projects to improve engagement with unpaid adult carers, currently under-represented in receiving local carer support services. This includes unpaid carers from ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ carers and male carers. Details of the organisations who received funding can be found [here](#).

Within this strand, Carers UK are also leading an action research project which has begun to compile existing knowledge and expertise on support available to under-represented carer groups. Working alongside carers, the action research project will also investigate challenges, barriers and establish examples of good practice. The outputs of the action research project will inform how services, including those supported via Making Carers Count, can best support these under-represented carers.

Young carers (up to 18) and young adult carers (16–25).

10 carer organisations have received funding to develop new services where dedicated support for young carer and young adult carer services is inconsistent or does not exist. Details of the organisations who received funding can be found [here](#)

Increasing access to online peer support (18+)

Led by Carers UK, this strand of work will improve, extend and diversify online support for unpaid carers who have seen face-to-face support severely reduced due to lockdown restrictions.

¹ Carers Trust used the OCED DAC criteria in the assessment and selection of the 27 organisations who received funding.

Northern Ireland: There is currently no dedicated Making Carers Count delivery in Northern Ireland. Carers Trust has commissioned a feasibility study on the carer population and existing carer support services in and across Northern Ireland. The report findings and recommendations, available from June 2022, will inform the extension of Making Carers Count support for unpaid carers under-represented in accessing health and social care support in Northern Ireland.

Over three years (Jan 2021 – March 2024), Making Carers Count programme aims to address and change the experience of over 36,000 unpaid carers across the UK in accessing inclusive and appropriate carer support. The programme Theory of Change is documented in Annex A.

Evaluation scope and requirements

Making Carers Count is an innovative, flagship programme for the carers sector, delivered by experienced programme partners who understand the local context in which their work is placed. Each programme partner will be charting and leading the implementation of their learning throughout the delivery of the Making Carers Count programme.

Carers Trust is inviting suitable applicants to tender to complete an independent evaluation of the Making Carers Count programme. The evaluation objectives are:

1. To evaluate the intended and unintended results (positive and negative) of the Making Carers Count programme, including:
 - on the lives of specific under-represented carer communities. Insights and feedback from carers from these communities is central to the identification and evidencing of effective strategies, techniques, enabling approaches and support packages,
 - the experiences of organisations involved in the delivery of Making Carers Count. This will include all direct programme partners, indirect beneficiary organisations across the UK and those who may be involved in development and capacity building activities. This will specifically examine:
 - what the programme has enabled for programme partners (direct and indirect) and any other identified stakeholders,
 - what they have learned about their organisation and the needs of the targeted community members,
 - what can be sustained, and the ongoing support needed to do so.
 - the role of partnership working (national and local) on the delivery of Making Carers Count.

2. To deliver an interim report that presents a clear and targeted set of recommendations which can be used to inform remaining programme delivery.
3. To identify a clear set of principles that enable those interested in delivering inclusive carer support to replicate.

How it will be used

This evaluation will provide an independent assessment of the programme against its intended outcomes. In identifying and synthesising key learning points, recommendations and principles as per the evaluation scope, Making Carers Count will also be able to:

- Provide robust evidence and good practice examples for carers services and relevant organisations to replicate effective service delivery.
- Influence project planning, learning and development for carers, the wider carers sector and other identified stakeholders.
- Provide recommendations for delivery partners on the focus of future funding and impact for under-represented carers.
- Report back to the funders on the impact and effectiveness of the Making Carers Count programme.

Budget and oversight

The maximum budget for this work is **£50,000 inclusive** of all expenses and VAT. The payment schedule will be agreed with the selected consultancy partner.

The **Carers Trust Project Manager** is Trisha Thompson, Head of Grants & Programmes who will act as the main point of contact for this evaluation. The Project Manager will facilitate engagement and feedback from wider Making Carers Count stakeholders as required.

The Project Manager will be supported by an **evaluation steering group** which will include the Making Carers Count Programme Leads, Head of Young & Young Adult Carers & Head of UK Social Impact at Carers Trust and a representative from Carers UK, who will attend formal meetings with the selected consultancy partner. The Executive Director of Programmes and Impact at Carers Trust will act as Executive Sponsor and provide oversight at key stages.

Methodology, deliverables and schedule

We welcome bidders' proposals of suitable methodologies and approaches in conducting this evaluation. Please consider the below elements in drafting proposals, timelines and budgets:

- **Primary data collection:** Making Carers Count is collecting monitoring and evaluation data at quarterly intervals throughout its delivery (see Annex C), which will form a significant basis for this evaluation. Primary data collection by the evaluator is expected to include a mix qualitative and quantitative data collection (e.g. surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions) with key programme partner staff, unpaid carers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Any written evaluation reports should follow 1:3:25 formats and be accessible in terms of language use to aid replicability from a range of audiences.
- Other learning resources (e.g. written and visual case studies, short guides etc.) and other accessible methods to disseminate stories of change and impact would be welcomed.
- Time may be needed for the translation of research materials. Making Carers Count will cover reasonable costs and will work with programme partners to understand the likely projects that this may be required for.
- Carers Trust will undertake final design and branding of all outputs to be published externally. These costs and time **should not** feature in proposals, budgets or time allocated.
- Stated dates for deliverables are when all content from the consultant/team will have been agreed with the evaluation steering group. Project plans should include **at least three weeks** for review and feedback. Exact dates will be decided within the methodology plan and reviewed as needed throughout the contract.

Alongside the stated evaluation reports, the following deliverables will be required:

- The consultant/team will be required to present on findings at Making Carers Count and/or programme partner events and seminars (estimated to be no more than five throughout the evaluation period). It is anticipated that meetings, workshops and presentations will be delivered both face to face and online.
- Whilst we would like the final evaluation report to cover data across the breadth of delivery (January 2021 – March 2024), we are keen to ensure that those involved in delivering the programme are able to contribute to the development and dissemination of the findings. To that end, the consultant/team will work with the evaluation steering group to disseminate and review emerging recommendations in a learning and recommendations paper which will be shared at stakeholder event in February/March 2024.

Key target dates are:

Milestone	Target Dates
Submission deadline	24 May 2022
Interviews with shortlisted consultants	Between 09.00 – 14.00, 31 May 2022
Notification of outcome	2 June 2022
Introduction meeting (1.5hrs)	PM, 9 June 2022
Inception meeting (2.5hrs)	w/c 20 June 2022
Final methodology plan agreed with evaluation steering group	w/c 27 June 2022
Interim Report (evaluating activity Jan 21 – Sep 22). Written for an external audience	30 November 2022
Learning and Recommendations draft paper (shared with identified stakeholders)	31 January 2024
Learning and Recommendations event	February/March 2024
Final report (evaluating activity from Jan 21 – March 24). Written for an external audience	May/ June 2024

The evaluation steering group anticipate working closely with the consultant/team to reflect on data analysis, emerging lessons and to make evidenced evaluation focus adjustments. Regular project check-in points will be confirmed once the project is underway.

Consultancy partner selection criteria

Carers Trust is seeking to work with a consultant/team who demonstrates **a mix of the following attributes, experience and knowledge:**

- Demonstrable experience of conducting programme evaluation, particularly those which have identified common themes and learning from a variety of documentation and partners.
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of the principles of inclusion, systemic barriers to inclusion, and experience of overcoming these barriers during the delivery of an evaluation.
- Demonstrable experience of using a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies collect data and articulate evaluation findings in an engaging and accessible way.
- Excellent communication including comprehension, listening, verbal and written skills that will enable positive engagement with Making Carers Count programme stakeholders, including carers.
- Knowledge and understanding of unpaid carers, the carers support sector and/or the under-represented groups outlined would be advantageous.

Submission

Submissions should cover the following in **no more than 10 sides of A4**:

- Summary of the consultant/team that will be leading the work.
- Detailed outline of how you meet the required selection criteria.
- Outline of the approach and methodology from June 2022 – (at least) May 2024. This should include a high-level delivery timeline.
- Details of how your approach will address issues of data protection and consent, diversity, safeguarding, equity and inclusion and any other ethical considerations.
- Highlight any potential challenges, risks and limitations of the evaluation process that should be considered and how these will be addressed.
- Full budget breakdown, with clear costings including day rates, VAT, expenses and any other costs.
- Brief outline and hyperlinks to **two** relevant pieces of work you have delivered. **We will not review more than two.**
- Details of two individual referees, outlining the relationship and work carried out, full contact details and confirmation that you have permission to share their details with those involved in the review of the submission. Carers Trust will contact you ahead of contacting any named referee.

In addition to the 8 sides, please also submit an annex of CV's for each individual (no more than one page per individual), involved in the delivery of the work, stating the role they would play. Their stated experience should relate to the role they are to play in your proposed approach.

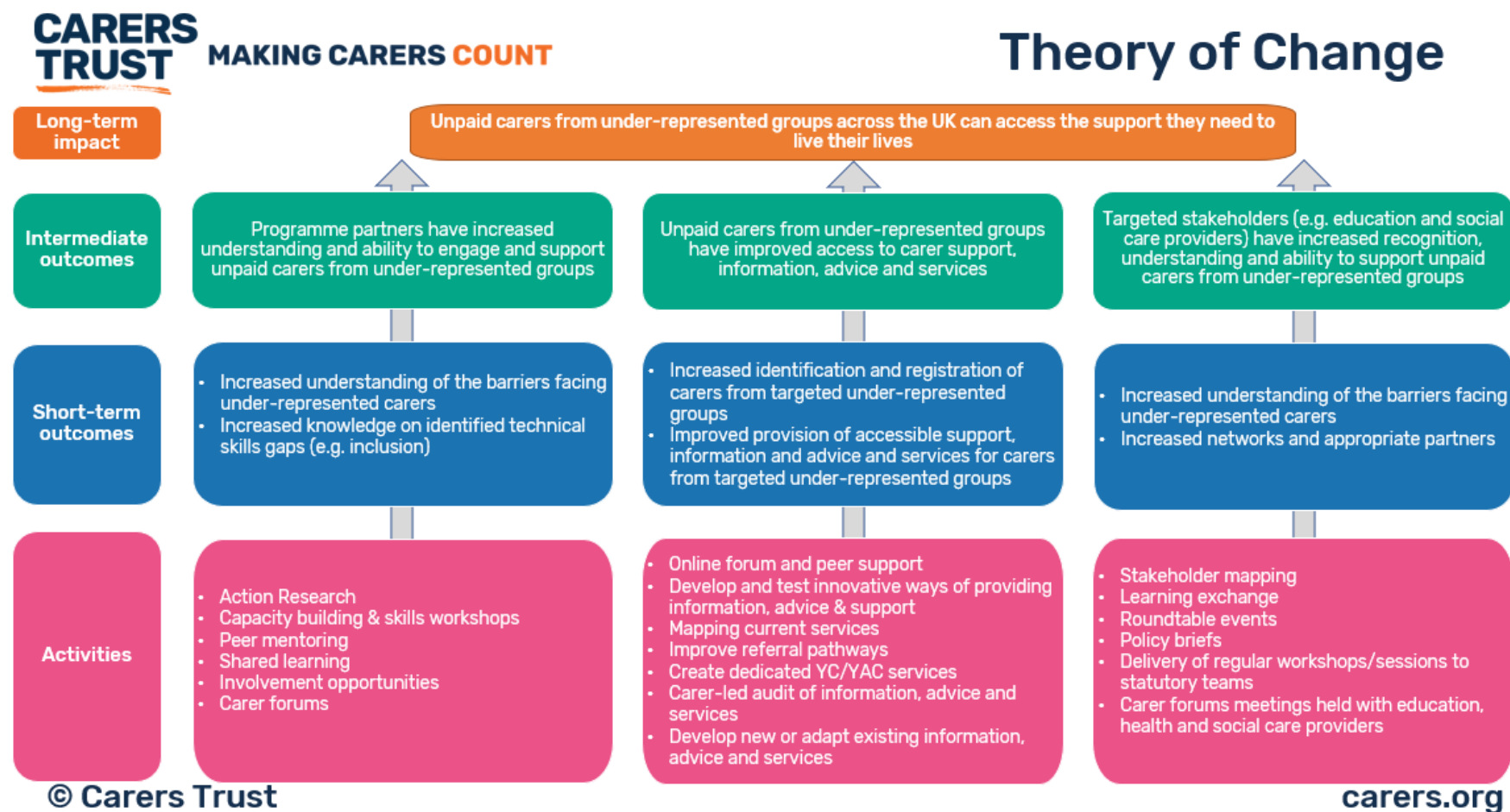
Submissions should be received to grants@carers.org by end of day, 24 May 2022. The subject line should be **"Making Carers Count Evaluation – [name of consultancy partner]"**

Carers Trust will process your data according to UK data protection law (the General Data Protection Regulations). Please see our [Privacy Notice](#) for further information on how we will use and store it.

Queries

Queries and/or requests for an informal conversation about any aspect of this ITT should be sent to grants@carers.org. A response will be provided within 48 working hours of receipt.

Annex A: Making Carers Count Theory of Change and narrative



The barriers experienced by under-represented groups of unpaid carers include:

- Insufficient understanding and ability about how to engage and support carers from under-represented groups
- Insufficient understanding of the barriers preventing carers from under-represented groups from accessing information, advice and support
- Lack of existing service provision for young carers and young adult carers
- Insufficient adaption and targeting of support, information and advice for carers from under-represented groups
- Insufficient identification and registration of young carers, young adult carers and carers from under-represented groups

To remove these barriers there must be:

- **Widespread understanding and ability to engage with under-represented groups**, including a more detailed understanding of the specific barriers experienced by under-represented groups
- The **existence of targeted, accessible services**
- An active process to **identify and register under-represented carers.**

Carers from under-represented groups themselves **must be at the centre of this process of change**. This follows the 'nothing about us, without us' principle which recognises that meaningful inclusion is their right. It is also a necessary precondition to deliver the change which the programme aims to achieve.

To achieve this, Making Carers Count will:

- Build understanding and ability to engage and support carers from under-represented groups
- Adapt existing support, information, advice and services to make them relevant and accessible to carers from under-represented groups
- Increase service provision for young carers and young adult carers
- Adapt and extend provision for unpaid carers from under-represented groups
- Build formal links and relationships with groups of under-represented carers and organisations which support their wider needs

- Facilitate the meaningful inclusion of unpaid carers from under-represented groups and all levels of the programme

Annex B: Making Carers Count Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning framework

Attached as an Excel document.

Annex C: Outline of monitoring and evaluation data (collected quarterly)

- Narrative report on programme partner activities – types of activities, number of people engaged (directly and indirectly), successes, challenges and mitigating actions, significant changes and risk updates.
- Reach (direct and indirect) reports on programme partner activities – numbers of carers from targeted under-represented communities, other carers. Demographic information (age, ethnicity and sexual orientation) is only collected on carers directly reached.
- Expenditure reports.
- Project partners engaged.

ⁱ [Caring Behind Closed Doors](#). April 2020. An update to this research in October 2020 ([Caring behind Closed Doors: six months on](#)) found that this number had increased even further to 81%.

ⁱⁱ [Caring behind Closed Doors: six months on](#), October 2020

ⁱⁱⁱ [State of Caring 2021](#).

^{iv} [My Future, My Feelings, My Family](#). July 2020

^v [Getting Carers Connected, Carers Week](#). June 2019.