

Appendix 3

Feedback from City of London Unpaid carers:

I am writing to you from the perspective of unpaid carers from the north of the city. During April 2020, we had no choice but to set up a weekly pop up support group for Adult carers, utilising free Zoom which still runs to this day. We scrambled together as much as we could to help to address the need remotely from our homes. This was due to the lack of any practical support from Adult social services and City connections in March and April 2020 even with the requests for help.

In August an initial feedback document had been created and sent to Adult social services on request, one conversation did occur with an officer, the carer group are still waiting to walk through the points in the documents. These are observations in the August document from 13 city carers across a wide age range.

In the UK many may understand the lives of some carers during lockdown. **If we lived less than a mile away, in any neighbouring borough the support provided for unpaid carers during the pandemic increased exponentially.** Many city unpaid carers are unaware of the standard of carers support in London and Nationally to be able to determine what help to ask for.

What has worked well in the City's response to the Covid-19 crisis:

- Golden lane and barbican volunteers to help with emergency shopping, prescription collection and 'in person' befriending
- Some carers are recipients of square mile food bank an essential service.
- Age uk city of London acted quickly to offer telephone befriending at the start of the pandemic. Along with other acts of kindness, easter eggs and information of square mile food bank.
- Radio culture mile offer of a free meal to carers
- The Cleaning Manager from barbican estate office who rang elderly over 70, every two weeks, a gem and a lifeline for those in receipt of the call, whoever put her in place understood resident have needs and need time to build trust back in to the system before they open up with their own needs. She is aware of large numbers of elderly with no access to technology.
- Healthwatch City of London undertook "listening to carers" sessions the only group to do so. Three sessions have been well attended. They realised a safeguarding request needed to be raised, perhaps should have been noticed by City connections or adult social services since March.
- Neighbours/ volunteers/ estate staff had to help to post letters or get cash whilst banks closed
- Carers taught other carers to use free zoom in the first month. Barbican library IT helped to teach zoom etc remotely
- carers assessments started via the phone from adult social services
- dragon cafe online – only for those with access to technology and knew to go to the website to find out whats on
- Barbican house group letter & email received for any help needed during covid
- Barbican library/ healthwatch and age uk city of london shared the Carers week events documents. City connections did not share not put on to the

website as promised.

- The city resident newsletters to bring everyone together
- Barbican estate email with information on estate services and changes, again only for those with access to technology.
- Opening of the library/ Local cafes

What has not worked well in the City's response to the Covid-19 crisis:

- Lack of understanding of the number of people who were isolating/shielding versus the strict 'extremely vulnerable' list. The list included a handful of conditions. There are many cared for/carers with multiple health conditions, mobility issues who did not have one of the items listed and therefore did not appear on anyone's radar. This caused countless pressure, stress and lack of food for some. The vulnerable list could be added to by social services/ GP. We had instances of carers and cared for receiving letters at the end of July 2020 that they were meant to shield.
- Loss of the only carer support worker in March without any communication to carers. The dedicated carer support worker mobile phone number (for last 4 years) went to voicemail. Some carer only have a basic mobile and lost the ability to ask for help with a text as no new number was given. City connections website in March and April has a notice the staff were redeployed to hospital.
- No temporary carer id's issued to carers, this was important for carers under 70 who were unable to go shopping in the first hour and some were unable to get any food as could not be out of the home for that long. Examples of councils have been given to adult social services of a letter headed paper to state the individual is a carer. We still do not have this to this day. Long term carers have mentioned an id has been requested countless times over the last 10 years which city year to deliver.
- Requests were made by carer for help with prescriptions or lack of food and assumptions made another service was dealing with it. Result some days without food and unaware of square mile food bank. Once we knew shared our food resources.
- The only communication from city connections was a letter sent by XXXXX to introduce themselves as the new wellbeing coordinator taking over from XXXX, uncertain at the time if support carers also.
- No out of ours support line for city connections, no help available in the evenings or weekends.
- Every Monday pop up support group city connections were invited to, they attended - the first one/two to meet carers and then not again. Promises were made by city connections to take over the Monday support group to relieve carers of the stress. This was not done, promise back tracked. Instead two of the Monday sessions were overwritten by City connections own speaker meetings to 'increase' carer numbers. We lost two session in the month from August for open share and learn sessions.
- No support available for working carers as all meetings during the working day.
- No support for parent carers/young (adult) carers
- No weekly/fortnightly calls to carer to check their wellbeing similar offered to elderly by xxxx above. Some carers received a call from adult social services twice to this present day.

- No mental health for carer specific sessions delivered. In Hackney and in Lewisham, the former ran sessions with Mind in early April/May. Lewisham ran two sets of 6 sessions in May and September to support carers' mental health whilst recognising that care for mental health deteriorated.
- City Connections, XXXX does not have a mobile number to contact directly; the landphone sometimes connected, sometimes did not.
- Carers not clear what services City Connections contracted to provide versus adult social care.
- Different carers have had information sent to them or they have sent information to services lost in the post with personal data.
- Assumption everyone has access to internet, a printer, or can fill in forms online when they can't or struggle to or don't have access. Using council tax rebates as a benchmark to help with technology misses a large chunk of people that do not have access to technology.
- Carers are tired of repeating themselves to say things once, not to be stuck in the system (different city departments) for months or have to restart processes, carers said they felt forgotten.
- an in-person befriender to take out for tea or a walk one for the carer and one for cared for was needed.
- No COVID-19 page for carers as is seen in neighbouring boroughs
- required practical help, which supermarkets are open, when what time to book online slots, how to get on to the supermarket priority list if you are not on the extremely vulnerable list. These are the issues we captured as carers and created our own A-Z. This information was provided by other boroughs.
- lots of visitors for residents living near Beech Street Tunnel as location can not be directed to via Google Maps by car.
- Carers not on Facebook and did not have access to the mutual aid group or know what it was.
- no access to ethnic foods as required travel
- no support in other languages or link to COVID health information in 28 languages.
- no information to be easily found which local hospital/urgent care/ minor injuries/ GP/ private GP's were open. What information was shared between the local NHS providers and city residents.
- no access to testing/PPE for carers, as was provided in other regions
- no access to local COVID funds such as carers trust fund or worshipful company funds for city residents
- extremely difficult to find a process and apply for respite care during these times
- no marquees put up in spaces for people to meet outside in a socially distanced manner. The 50+ project in Hackney managed to meet in secret gardens.
- Zoom events were free access if pay as you go phone it's chargeable per minute and carers with monthly phone contracts were charged after an hour.
- people where I live packs not received many too busy in July & August to have time to sort out art
- no online or exercise for elderly - MCS in Hackney sent out large print exercise books to those they new of to stay healthy
- no access to printing - library and mailbox closed
- lack of hand sanitizer/ soap/masks available for carers

- public toilets closed, many not able to take out cared for due to this
- walking buddies were needed to shops as scared too quiet to go to shops
- helping city businesses and residents to realised those coming out of shielding
- city departments not recognising a carer and respecting the stress they are containing/managing in this time.

City connections are behind on their meeting minutes a backlog of 5 meetings so far.

- During the July 2020 committee meeting there was an omission in the original notes of the commitment made for a report carers in the September 2020 committee meeting, this did not occur. At the time live streamed meetings were not stored on youtube and carers felt forgotten again. Good to note this will now happen in January 2021.