

Committee: Community and Children's Services	Dated: 22/09/22
Subject: Unpaid Carers Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For information
Report author: Zoe Dhami, Strategy and Projects Officer	

Summary

This report updates Members on current work around unpaid carers in the City of London.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Members have previously received reports regarding ongoing work to support unpaid carers in the City of London. This report provides an update on that work and the development of a new Carers Strategy for the City of London.
2. A Carers Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG) was established to support ongoing action and promote the engagement of carers in various improvement and development processes. The CSIG meets every 6 – 10 weeks. The group includes a small number of unpaid carers, the voluntary sector and a range of City of London Corporation Officers.
3. A national Carers Survey (SACE) was recently carried out by all local authorities and results are now being validated and benchmarked. A more detailed report on this will be brought to Committee in due course. 23 carers responded to this survey in the City of London (from a sample of 44).

Current Position

4. There has been a significant amount of work which has been taking place with regard to unpaid carers in the City of London.

Pilot for additional support

5. Engagement with carers indicated that there was a need for dedicated, more high-level support for unpaid carers above the support already provided by City Connections.
6. This will be tested out through a nine-month pilot and evaluation. Funding has been established and Tower Hamlets Carers Centre, contracted by City Connections, are now beginning mobilisation.
7. It is anticipated that the pilot will run from September 2022 to June 2023.

Carer specific counselling

8. A specific carers counselling service was piloted through the City Wellbeing Centre. The CSIG was instrumental in helping shape the advertising to ensure that it appealed to, and was accessible, to carers. These adverts were widely distributed and targeted but take up for the service remained low. The pilot ended in June 2022 and the findings from the pilot will be explored with Tavistock Relationships (who provide the services) through the development of the Carer Strategy 2023 – 2027.

Making the City of London Corporation website more accessible to Carers

9. City of London Corporation Officers worked with Carers to review the carer pages on the website to make them more useful and user friendly for carers. These changes have been implemented.

Carers Audit

10. An audit was undertaken in October 2021 to provide assurance on the process and quality of Carers Assessments in Adult Social Care. Audits were completed on work undertaken with eight carers all of whom were given the opportunity to share their experience and to feedback on how it could be improved. The findings were largely positive with carers reporting feeling both valued and listened to, while auditors noted evidence of good practice from social workers.
11. However, the audit also identified some inconsistencies in practice and suggested experiences would benefit from increased clarity and oversight of processes. An action plan has been drawn up to address the individual findings to provide a greater consistency in practice, process, information, and experience of carers assessments.

Development of the Carers Strategy 2023 - 2027

12. A key priority for the upcoming Carer Strategy 2023-2027 is carer identification and engagement. Through the engagement period for the strategy, due to start in July 2022, there will be an effort to begin identification of unpaid carers that are either not aware of their role, or that so far declined to engage with City Corporation services.
13. Engagement will be undertaken in part by peer researchers; City of London residents trained by Volunteer Centre Hackney (VCH) to undertake community research. A 12-week contract with VCH in 2021 to recruit peer researchers for another strategy engagement piece resulted in 91 responses and a third of these from Portsoken and Aldersgate residents. Due to this, funding has been sought for a 12-month programme. The next phase of peer researcher work will focus on gaining a greater understanding of City of London residents across all the square mile.
14. The peer researcher engagement will be supplemented by further online questionnaires and in-person group discussions at locations and times convenient to some unpaid carers. There are also engagement sessions planned with voluntary and community sector organisation staff as well as front line Adult Social Care staff.
15. There are key areas highlighted in the recent SACE carers survey and national evidence that will be explored further. These include:
 - Financial issues for carers, with many experiencing more of their own pay going towards products for the cared-for. In addition, the rising cost of energy is having an impact on people that need to keep their cared-for warm.
 - Information sharing and communication
16. The key dates for the development of the strategy are:
 - June - November - Engagement and analysis (on-going process).
 - January 2023 - Community and Children's Services Committee sign-off on consultation draft strategy.
 - January - April 2023 - public consultation period.
 - April 2023 - Community and Children's Services Committee sign-off on final document.

Implications

Strategic implications

The development of the Carers Strategy 2023 – 2027 will ensure that findings are linked with the work being undertaken to reduce poverty, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026, and the upcoming Early Help Strategy (which supports parent carers and young carers).

Financial implications

None

Resource implications

None

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

None

Equalities implications

Equalities considerations are considered throughout the strategy development process and an Equalities Impact Assessment will be shared with Members alongside the draft strategy.

Demographic analysis from the Carers Survey will also allow us to identify any specific equalities issues arising.

Climate implications

None

Security implications

None

Conclusion

17. The City of London Corporation has continued its work in relation to unpaid carers as detailed in this report.

18. The development of a new Carers Strategy for 2023 – 27 is key in responding to the needs of carers and this will be informed by innovative engagement through the peer research programme.

19. A national survey of carers has been carried out by the DHSC and when findings are validated and benchmarked this will also be used to inform strategy development.

Appendices

None

Zoe Dhami

Strategy and Projects Officer

E: zoe.dhami@cityoflondon.gov.uk