

City of London Corporation Carers Strategy 2023-2027



The Care Act 2014 defines a carer as ‘an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult.’ This is unpaid and doesn’t include caring as part of a contract or as voluntary work for an organisation.

In this Strategy, the term ‘carers’ is used throughout to refer to unpaid carers. The Strategy primarily focuses on adult carers who live or care for someone in the City of London.

The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) recognises that parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can share some similar needs to adults caring for another adult and some of these needs have been addressed in this Strategy. However, we also recognise that parent carers can experience specific needs relating to their individual caring experience and the SEND system. These needs will be considered as part of the development of a new SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy in 2024.

The City Corporation recognises that carers can care for relatives, friends, neighbours or their child with SEND, and that each caring experience is unique depending on the needs of the cared for and the carer themselves. We also appreciate that each carer may need different types and levels of support.

Young carers are considered in, and supported through, our Early Help strategy.

1 Introduction

The 2021 census estimates that there are 4.7 million carers in England.¹ Being a carer can have significant impacts for the carers’ health and wellbeing, finances and employment.

The Census 2021 states that there are 496 self-identified carers in the City of London.² However, not all of these carers have approached services for support and it is recognised that there are likely to be more who have not self-identified as carers.

The City Corporation is committed to supporting carers in their caring role and ensuring that the impact of caring on their lives is minimised.

This Strategy has been developed with carers and sets out priorities to focus our activity and shape our services for carers.

The Strategy helps to deliver our vision that:

Carers are identified and supported through the complexities of their caring journey and to deal with the impact caring can have on their own health and wellbeing.

Five priorities have been identified with carers that will drive our activity over the next four years to meet this vision:

- Tailored and universal services that work for carers.
- The health and emotional wellbeing of carers.
- Early identification of carers.
- Information and advice for carers.
- Engaging with carers.

An action plan will sit underneath this strategy to ensure that we remain on track but also responsive to change if needed.

A special thanks must go to carers in the City of London who have given up precious time to take part in surveys, engagement sessions and be part of the Carers Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG) which informed the development of this strategy. Carers will continue to be at the heart of delivering this strategy and in shaping our services.

2 Strategic context

This strategy sits within the context of national and regional policy, as well as a range of City Corporation strategies and responsibilities.

2.1 National

The UK Government sets the legislative framework for carers. This includes giving carers certain rights, for example through the Care Act 2014³, which is mainly for adults in need of care and support and their adult carers and includes the right to a carer's assessment based on the appearance of need. There is also the Children and Families Act 2014⁴ which gives young carers and young adult carers in England a right to a carers assessment and to have their needs met (if the assessment shows this is needed).⁵

Carers also have rights around employment. In 2023, the Carer's Leave Act⁶ was passed and the law will be enacted in 2024. This will introduce a flexible entitlement to one week's unpaid leave per year for employees who are providing or arranging care for a relative or dependent. The Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 gives carers the right to request flexible working from the first day of their employment.⁷ The Human Rights Act and the Equality Act 2010 can also relate to carers rights, for example 'a carer cannot be discriminated against on the basis of their association with a disabled person.'⁸

Key components of the Care Act 2014 are prevention, assessment and support. The Act sets out the entitlements for adult carers to have a carers assessment when it appears they have a need for support. They are then entitled to this support if they meet the national eligibility criteria. Similarly, the Children and Families Act 2014⁹ gave young carers and young adult carers in England a right to a carer's assessment and to have their needs met. This would be managed within the Children and Families Service at the City Corporation.

In Dec 2021, the Government published a White Paper (a policy paper that sets out plans for reform) on wider adult social care called 'People at the Heart of Care'.¹⁰ This included a focus on unpaid carers. It aimed to 'empower' unpaid carers by focusing on three core strands: services to support unpaid carers; identifying, recognising and involving unpaid carers; and supporting the economic and social participation of unpaid carers.

The Health and Care Act 2022¹¹ amended some of the measures in the Care Act 2014 and gave the Care Quality Commission (CQC) new powers around inspecting care at a local authority and Integrated Care System (ICS) level. A new single assessment framework uses quality statements to assess levels of care. This includes looking at how carers are involved in planning, managing and making decisions for those that they care for. It also considers how local authorities co-produce person-centred care with carers and how carers are treated as equal partners.

The NHS Long Term Plan in 2019¹² includes a commitment that carers will benefit from greater recognition and support.

Each year, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) undertakes a national survey of adult carers in England (SACE) which considers the impact of caring on individuals.

2.2 Regional

The Health and Care Act 2022 placed a duty on NHS hospital trusts to ensure that unpaid carers of all ages are involved as soon as feasible when plans for the patient's hospital discharge are being made. In response to this duty, the London Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Carers UK and other partners co-produced the London Carers Hospital Discharge Toolkit for hospitals and community providers. The Toolkit was launched in March 2022 and aims to help providers improve the experiences of carers during hospital discharge or during an admission or discharge to a virtual ward.¹³

The East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) provides integrated community and mental health services for people living in the City of London. ELFT's Carers, Friends and Families Strategy (2022-2026)¹⁴ focuses on the needs of carers and people using ELFT services. It was co-produced with carers and staff and sets out five priority areas:

- Improve identification and recognition of carers including young carers.
- Staff should be aware of carers and trained to engage with carers effectively.

- Clear pathways to access support for carers and help in a crisis.
- Clearer voice and involvement.
- Ensure the right support is in place for carers.

ELFT is also running a training programme for its workforce about carers focusing on ensuring content is sought, as matter of course, to share information with carers; and then to ensure that the carers' expertise is taken into account when developing Care Plans.

It is also a requirement of the Better Care Fund (BCF) that some of the joint funding between the North East London Integrated Care Board (health) and the City Corporation is spent on providing support to carers.

2.3 Local

The City of London is unique in its size and position; 8,600 residents living in the square mile that is surrounded by seven local authorities. The number of residents in the City of London has increased by 16% since 2011. The majority are working age but there are 1200 people (14%) who are aged 65 and over. Although the percentage of population aged over 65 has stayed the same between the censuses, the actual number of people has increased. 51% of households in the City of London are one person-households.¹⁵

Life expectancy in the City of London is better than both the London and England average¹⁶ and the City Corporation aims to help people stay at home as independently as possible for as long as possible.

The City Corporation's activity is driven by our Corporate Plan; a new one is due to be published in 2024. The Department for Community and Children's Services Departmental Business Plan includes outcomes around safety, choice and independence, health and wellbeing and community.

This Carers Strategy sits within the context of the Corporate and Departmental Business Plans. It also sits alongside other City Corporation strategies including the Early Help Strategy and the emerging Adult Social Care Strategy, Housing Management Plan and the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The City Corporation SEND Strategy for children and young people 2020-24 will expire in 2024 and a new SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy will be developed. This will include parent carers specific needs within the context of those systems.

The City Corporation commissions some services directly, such as a carers support service, but there may also be some services and provision for resident carers that are commissioned by other partners, such as the Integrated Commissioning Board or local health place based partnership, that covers both the City of London and Hackney.

3 Background

3.1 Carers and the caring journey

The Care Act 2014 defines a carer as ‘an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult.’ This is unpaid and doesn’t include caring as part of a contract or as voluntary work for an organisation.¹⁷ We recognise that carers can care for relatives, friends, neighbours or children and young people with SEND. We also know that people can become carers at any point. As carers told us:

“You can fall into caring. [It’s] some people’s regular life.”

“My life changed overnight for three months.”

Many carers don’t see themselves as such and it can be difficult to separate their caring role from the relationship they have with the person they are caring for. Carers are unique and can provide a range of support including help with daily tasks such as getting out of bed and personal care such as bathing, to emotional support such as helping someone who has mental health issues.¹⁸ This is different to a paid carer who is employed by social care services to provide support to people in their homes. This can be known as homecare, domiciliary care or home help.¹⁹

A range of national research and evidence gives a flavour of who carers are and the impact it can have.

Demographics:

- 59% of carers are women. Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men.²⁰
- 27% of carers said they had a disability.²¹
- Carers from a Black, Asian and ethnic minority background were more likely to be struggling financially than White carers (37% vs 27%).²²

Health and wellbeing:

- 30% of carers said their mental health was bad or very bad.²³
- 60% of carers report a long-term health condition or disability compared to 50% of non-carers.²⁴
- 29% of carers feel lonely often or always.²⁵

Employment:

- 44% of working-age adults who are caring for 35 hours or more a week are in poverty.²⁶
- 75% of carers in employment worry about continuing to juggle work and care.²⁷

It has also been suggested that the challenges faced by carers, such as managing stress and responsibility, negative impacts on their physical and mental health, and not being able to take time away from caring, were intensified by the pandemic.²⁸

The cost of living crisis has continued to exacerbate problems; 25% of carers are cutting back on essentials like food or heating and 63% are extremely worried about

managing their monthly costs. Furthermore, 27% said they were struggling to make ends meet.²⁹

3.2 Carers in the City of London

I care for my wife. We have been together for 45 years. Seven years ago, she developed health problems which make it difficult for her to socialise, travel or enjoy leisure activities.

She needs little personal care but I have to do almost all of our domestic chores, including cooking all our meals from scratch because of her stomach/gut issues. I accompany her on a short walk most days and go with her to medical appointments.

I am in good health and would be able to see my friends occasionally or go for long walks. However, cautious attempts to do this remind her of what she can't do, so I restrict my outings to food shopping, short walks for exercise and attending carers groups and drop-in sessions.

Caring for my wife gives me pleasure and a sense of purpose. I have acquired new skills and learnt to be very patient and tolerant. However, adapting to her changes in behaviour has been challenging, and losing our social life, the regular visits to our children and grandchildren and other activities has been difficult to cope with. My social contacts are now mainly with other carers, who don't talk about all the things we can't do. And, most important, the weekly drop-in sessions with our wonderful carer support worker keep me going.

Every caring experience is unique. Carers have told us how a caring experience can depend on the individual carer and the needs of the person being cared for. It could involve different levels of care at different life stages. Carers also shared how people can transition in and out of being a carer, and experience key transitions during that time, e.g. their cared for going into residential care or experiencing an improvement in their health.

We include some case studies of people who are carers in the City of London throughout this section. These are from carers who have agreed to share their experiences as part of the strategy. We recognise that they might not reflect all caring situations but we hope that they provide an insight into some carers' lives.

I care for my dad. This can involve making each meal, helping him shower, taking him shopping, taking him for walks and out for the day. Going to hospital and doctors appointments. Sitting in A&E with him. Ordering medication, dealing with telephone calls and important documents. Making sure someone is with him 24 hours a day now. Going on holidays. Arranging care if I want to go away with my husband or if I'm unwell.

For me, being a carer means my dad is getting the best care. I know his likes and dislikes. He isn't limited to a time having carers coming in and different people coming in daily who don't know him. I'm able to do the things he likes, maybe sit and chat about memories and good times we had, but also sit quietly watching TV sometimes. I also get to spend precious time with my dad and we are still making memories. Something I can cherish later on.

There are 496 self-identified carers (6% of the population) in the City of London. Nearly a third of these, (32%) provide 20 or more hours of unpaid care a week. 298 of these carers are aged over 50.³⁰

At the start of October 2023, 33 carers were being supported by the City Corporation's Adult Social Care team. The average age of carers (of the 29 carers for whom we know the age) was 61. Of those 29 carers: 3 were 18-30 years old, 3 were 31-50 years old and 14 were 51-70 years old. 9 were 70 years old and over (of which 4 were over 80 years old).

Findings for the City of London from the national carers survey in 2021-22³¹ (23 respondents) told us:

- 13% of carers did not find it easy to find information about services.
- The average Quality of Life score for carers was 7.3 (out of 12) which matched the national average and was higher than the inner London average of 7.0.
- 44% of carers who had received support or services were extremely or very satisfied with Social Services. This compares to 36% nationally and 33% in inner London.

The City Corporation's Peer Researcher Programme ran a survey which included questions regarding caring. In June 2023, 152 residents had replied, of which 39 identified as carers. These carers told us that:

- 26% sometimes or always feel lonely in their role.
- Over half stated that their mental and physical health sometimes stopped them from carrying out their caring role.

I care for my mother who is 90 and who has advanced Dementia and share her full-time care with my partner. This can involve assistance with feeding, personal care and toileting on a 24-hour basis. It can also involve domestic care tasks, e.g. laundry, cleaning and cooking... administrative tasks dealing with benefits, financial management... liaising with healthcare professionals e.g. GP surgeries, district nurses, community mental health services. We also liaise with social services and care agencies who provide care.

For me, providing care is my main priority and provides me with reassurance that my mother is being cared for properly and is nourished emotionally and physically as much as possible. Whilst difficult and has resulted in many sacrifices, it has proved the most worthwhile, rewarding and meaningful experience of my life so far.

I care for my 20-year-old son who has very complex, severe epilepsy. This involves organising his medication including raising money to pay for it every month. He is seizure free on this medication but has days when he's very tired and can't look after himself. We both suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) from the years of uncontrolled seizures and he needs a lot of emotional support.

For me, being a carer means always being available to help my son on the bad days and he still can't be left alone at nights because of the risks of SUDEP (sudden unexpected death in epilepsy). And my life involves organising any dealings with clinicians and struggling to afford to pay for the medication which keeps him well.

I care for my 91-year-old neighbour/friend who has Alzheimer's. She recently moved permanently into a care home following discharge from hospital as [she] now needs 24-hour care. Prior to her moving to the care home, it involved me seeing her nearly every day, taking her shopping, ensuring that she ate properly and being on call in emergencies which increased as her Alzheimer's progressed.

For me, my need to care for her has changed as her physical needs are now taken care of by the home so I'm not so physically tired. However I remain her closest contact. I am still the emergency contact for the care home so I visit regularly, take her to hospital appointments, look after her flat until it is vacated, post etc, and ensure she has all she needs. There is still the possibility that I can get an urgent call at any time from the care home should my friend fall or be ill bearing in mind her age etc, so I still worry about her.

City Corporation services

The City Corporation's Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Early Help teams fulfil our legislative duties in relation to carers. Where respite care is required, this is assessed and considered for the cared for person.

The City Corporation commissions a number of services including City Connections with a sub-contract Carers Connections (providing specific support to adult carers including information and advice about their caring role as well as general wellbeing activities and drop-in sessions which have also been attended by some parent carers) and City Advice.

The Carers Connections service was a pilot run by City Connections which is now continuing. The service was accessed by 80 unique carers between October 2022 and September 2023. 46 of those were previously unknown to City Connections. Of the 80 carers:

- 36 were White British and 24 were Bangladeshi. The remainder were a mix of ethnicities.
- 58 were female and 22 were male.
- 16 were aged between 35-44 years old, 14 were aged between 45-54 years old and 15 were 55-64 years old.
- The majority (65) did not report having a disability.

Between July and September 2023 there were 10 unique carers accessing the services, all of which had been previously unknown to City Connections. Overall, there were 179 contacts with carers including four carers assessments completed by the City Corporation's adult social care team, 26 contacts through peer support sessions and 34 1-2-1 support talk sessions in person or on the phone.

Feedback received from carers by the Carers Connections service has included:

- [The project manager] has helped me talk about my emotional and mental health needs as a carer... I am happy that they speak Bengali, easier to communicate.
- The carers connection service has allowed us to connect as a community and peers.
- Although the resources are limited, I am grateful for the services provided... As a carer it can still feel isolating in the City of London but the knowledge that individuals such as [the project manager] and places like Portsoken [Community Centre] are available provides a sense of comfort.
- I was signposted to [another] organisation by [the project manager] which I never knew existed.

A City Wellbeing Centre provides psychological support services to City of London residents and workers on an innovative pay model. Within this, there was a pilot to provide a counselling service to carers although carers felt that this wasn't carer specific enough and take up was low.

Overall, support through these services includes:

- General wellbeing support and minimising of social isolation.
- Navigating and accessing the health and social care system.
- Welfare rights and benefit entitlement advice.

Carers have told us that there are some gaps in services and that there could be some strengthening in relation to carers needs. These will be considered as part of the action plan and specifically as part of the recommissioning of Carers Connections, the carers support service.

3.3 Our strengths

- Strengthened understanding of City of London carer needs and identification of more carers, particularly in the east of the City of London, through specific Carers Support Service and Peer Researcher Programme.
- Focus on improved practice with carers in the Adult Social Care service by introducing a carers assessment guide and training of staff (there will continue to be a focus on this so that improvement is continuous).
- Targeted support for carers through a carers support service.
- This strategy was developed with carers.
- All carer assessments in the City of London are carried out by qualified social workers.

3.4 Our challenges

- Ensuring consistency of knowledge around carers across frontline staff.
- Ensuring our information is kept up-to-date, accessible and inclusive for our diverse group of residents.
- Ensuring carers are supported by professionals to access the full range of information and services available (specifically carers who are registered with Tower Hamlets GP Practices are aware of, and able to access, support as a carer in the City of London).
- Sharing information and building networks within the voluntary and community sector.
- Services working with carers – including health, local authorities and voluntary sector services - are facing significant pressures.
- Building on what is already in place to strengthen our co-production work with carers.

4 Progress since the last strategy

The City Corporation's key achievements since the last Carer Strategy 2019-23 include:

- Establishment of the CSIG which includes five carers. This meant carers' voices were heard in the delivery of the 2019-23 strategy and formation of this new strategy.

- Strengthened our offer for unpaid carers through Carers Connections, a sub-contract of City Connections, which involves a dedicated coordinator supporting carers. This has resulted in more carers being identified and supported.
- Gained a better understanding of unpaid carers within our Bangladeshi community through Carer Connections and the Peer Researcher Programme. This insight will inform the recommissioning of the Carers Connections service.
- Worked with carers to improve our offer through the pandemic, including Adult Social Care-funded Zoom licenses for an informal carers peer support group.
- Worked with the CSIG to make the City Corporation website more accessible to carers.
- Adopted a Parent Carer Strategy in our Children's Social Care and Early Help teams.
- Created and adopted a Parent Carer Needs Assessment template for use in Children's Social Care and Early Help.
- Applied an uplift to carers individual budgets, benchmarked against other local authorities. This resulted in payments increasing and levels of payment widened so that more carers received payments.
- Completed a Carers Assessment guide and checklist, and delivered a Carers Assessment training session for Adult Social Care staff. The guidance has been embedded in practice and improved the way staff work with carers.
- Trialled a specific carers counselling service as part of the City Wellbeing Centre.

5 Developing this strategy

This strategy has been developed with carers as well as wider engagement and consultation with key stakeholders.

There was a 12-week consultation exercise which involved roundtables with stakeholders and specific focus groups with carers.

A range of data and evidence was also analysed including findings from the Peer Research surveys.

This engagement enabled us to identify the priorities for this strategy. They reflect what carers have told us and how we think we can make the most difference as the City Corporation.

6 Priorities

The five strategic priorities for this strategy are:

- Tailored and universal services that work for carers.
- The health and emotional wellbeing of carers.
- Early identification of carers.
- Information and advice for carers.
- Engaging with carers.

6.1 Priority 1: Tailored and universal services that work for carers

Carers have told us that they want community services that reflect carer needs around health and social care navigation, financial advice and wellbeing support.

“We’ve lost all our social life and all our holidays, it’s like living in a permanent lockdown, we haven’t been on holidays in years. What I long for is human contact, information is useful.”

“What they need is an emergency plan, you have a card with you that social services can see if something happens to you.”

We know that carers are the experts by experience and to provide the best possible experiences for carers we need to co-design services. We want to build on how we have engaged carers in the development of this strategy, and extend this approach to different areas. We also know that by co-designing services, we can better reflect and meet the diversity of need among carers. This directly links to priority 4.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, we will:

- Co-design the core offer to carers and improve the way organisations work together to provide more joined-up support for carers.
- Support carers to have a plan in place in the event of an emergency where they are unable to provide care.
- Ensure that carers in employment can access the support services they need.

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- Recommissioning the Carers Support Service, reflecting carers’ views and needs (including those in employment).
- Connecting carers to a wider range of relevant activities and support to reduce social isolation and promote wellbeing.
- Exploring a carers emergency card and plan scheme, and any discount schemes for carers.

Key measures of success are:

- Recommissioned Carers Support Service is co-designed with carers.
- Number of carers linked / referred to other services.
- Number of carers taking up any agreed emergency card and plan scheme.

6.2 Priority 2: The health and emotional wellbeing of carers

Carers told us that caring can have a significant impact on their health and emotional wellbeing, and that this can be experienced in different ways depending on the individual. Carers also told us that transition points, such as becoming a carer, when the cared for goes into a home or when caring responsibilities cease, can be particularly hard and negatively impact on their health and emotional wellbeing.

“As a carer what I need is emotional support. If all I get is information, it feels like a scarily empty statement to me.”

“Support for my own physical well-being”

We want to better support carers with their health and emotional wellbeing, and have focused on specific activities that the City Corporation can influence. Some of the support available to carers around health and emotional wellbeing is commissioned by the Integrated Care Board or the City and Hackney Place Based Partnership which covers both the City of London and Hackney. This priority crosses over with priorities 1 and 3.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, we will:

- Ensure that carers residing in the City of London can access and benefit from health and emotional wellbeing services offered in the City of London and that may be linked to neighbouring boroughs.
- Explore how the gaps in service provision around carers’ health and emotional wellbeing either can be met through targeted or universal support, particularly around key transition points.
- Improve carers’ social connectivity so they feel part of their local community.

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- Ensure that wider services which are commissioned for City and Hackney residents can be accessed by City of London carers.
- Addressing identified gaps in existing provision and considering this as part of, or outside of, the recommissioning of the carers support service.
- Connecting identified carers with targeted and universal provision so they feel part of the community and less isolated.

Key measures of success are:

- Health and emotional wellbeing services have a physical presence in the City of London.
- Carers can access and benefit from a range of health and emotional wellbeing services commissioned as part of the wider health and care system.
- Carers tell us they feel less isolated.

6.3 Priority 3: Early Identification of carers

Carers have told us that they want frontline workers across health, social, community and education services to be able to identify unpaid carers, respect carers’ experiences and offer support where appropriate.

“If somebody from housing finds out there’s a family struggling with care, are they passing that on?”

Carers have highlighted to us the importance of the experience of their contact with frontline workers and we know the crucial role these workers can play in identifying

and meeting carers' needs. We want to build on our existing provision and work with partners to make this the best possible experience for carers in the City of London.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, we will:

- Ensure professionals are trained and supported to proactively identify and recognise carers.
- Ensure carers are supported by professionals to access the full range of information and services available.
- Support people to recognise when they are in a caring role and where to seek help.
- Identify where systems could work together more effectively so that carers do not have to keep telling their story to different services.

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- Providing training and induction activities to support professionals' awareness and knowledge of carers.
- Embedding working with carers into the standard operating procedures across the City Corporation and partner organisations.
- Improving information sharing between professionals and community services to support the identification of carers.

Key measures of success are:

- Increased number of carers identified.
- Increased number of frontline workers trained in Making Every Contact Count (with carer focus).
- Carer awareness embedded in induction programmes across different organisations.

6.4 Priority 4: Information and advice for carers

Carers have told us that they need easy access to information to help them look after the person they care for and to look after themselves. Carers also told us about the importance of knowing what to do in a crisis so that the person they care for will be safe and looked after.

“You’re left all on your own, you don’t know where to go for services unless you meet another carer. You go home and Google everything.”

“I don’t know where to find information. We don’t have a good website or anywhere that can help. I need something but I don’t know what it is and I don’t know what you’ve got.”

Accessible, up-to-date information is crucial for anyone trying to navigate health and social care. For carers, this is no exception. The City Corporation has a role to play in providing this information in a way that carers can access, understand and, in some cases, take action based on what is provided.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, we will:

- Ensure that City Corporation information around carers is consistent, relevant, accurate, accessible and regularly updated.
- Support carers to acquire, develop and maintain digital skills to be able to access information and support.
- Provide information about what to do in a crisis so that carers feel confident that, should something happen to them, the person that they care for will be safe and looked after.

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- Reviewing and updating City Corporation information around carers so that it is accessible and communicated through a variety of channels. Carers will be involved with this and will tell us to what extent they want to be involved.
- Ensuring carers are signposted to information on specific health conditions and relevant services.
- Ensuring that carers can access training and support to increase internet and digital confidence.

Key measures of success are:

- Positive feedback from carers on accessibility and relevance of information provided.
- Number of carers receiving crisis information.
- Number of referrals to digital training and support; number of carers who report that they are now more digitally confident.

6.5 Priority 5: Engaging with carers

Carers have told us that they want to be recognised as experts by experience and co-design community services for carers.

“Carers are the people coming with the expertise, they should listen to us.”

We recognise that we can strengthen engagement with carers and ensuring they have influence in the design and development of strategies and services to meet their needs. We want to build on the engagement involved in developing this strategy and previous services such as Carers Connections, and extend this approach to different areas. By co-designing services we want to better reflect and meet the diversity of need among carers.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, we will:

- Strengthen engagement and co-design with carers (as part of a wider programme looking at engagement and co-design across the Department for Community and Children’s Services).
- Extend our reach to engage with more carers in our community.
- Respect and value the expertise of carers.

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- Co-designing the recommissioned carers support service.
- Agreeing with carers where and what level of involvement they have in activities such as the design and delivery of carer information and training for professionals.
- Developing the reward and recognition process for different engagement levels and activities (part of wider departmental work).

Key measures of success are:

- Recommissioned Carers Support Service is co-designed with carers.
- Carers feel valued and heard in a range of engagement activities agreed with them.
- An agreed approach for reward and recognition across the Department of Community and Children's Services that reflects a range of engagement and co-design levels and opportunities.

7 Implementation and delivery

The strategy and associated action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. Officers within the Department for Community and Children's Services will work with carers to agree how they want to be involved in that process. We want to give all carers in the City of London who want to, the opportunity to engage so we will be looking at a range of activities to reach a diverse group of carers. We will also agree ways in which carers can share insight and thoughts on progress between the annual reviews so that it is not just a once-a-year opportunity.

Any legislative change will result in changes to the action plan and delivery of services if applicable within the annual review period. The strategy and action plan will also be reported on to Members, through the Community and Children's Services Committee.

This City Corporation Carers Strategy sits within the context of national legislation and regional and local drivers to improve support for carers. It also supports the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Department of Community and Children's Services Business Plan.

I care for my mum, she's 92-years-old and has mobility issues due to age-related frailty and a disability via a permanent tremor which precludes her from carrying anything, cooking, even making a cup of tea. I have cared for her for 12 years.

This can involve a lot of practical help on a daily basis, starting with commode emptying and showering in the morning to shopping for and making all meals and drinks each day. It means that I run both of our homes with all associated admin, housekeeping and practicalities. I'm mum's cook, chauffeur, hairdressers, personal shopper, tech adviser and life organiser. I take care of all health related matters, making judgement calls, attending appointments, following up, ensuring a seamless flow of medication, aids and adaptations and health supplements. I am entirely responsible for all outings from home, social, medical, holidays and entertainment. Since a bad fall necessitating a hip replacement five years ago, mum only has confidence to leave the flat with me. If I don't take her out, she's marooned at home. I am confidante, sounding board and 360 degree emotional and psychological support.

For me, being a carer means being extremely well organised. It means putting another person's needs before my own. It means accepting that my own health and wellbeing take a backseat. That my last holiday was in 2016. That my social life is in the main conducted by phone. That friends outside London haven't been seen for many years. That the number of hours available for work have had to reduce and my income has dropped to a point where I'm needing to move home and downsize as I can no longer afford my outgoings. Being a carer also means knowing I'm doing my very best for the person I love most in the world. It means seeing a sweet, smiling face every day. It means being humbled by knowing a loved one so intricately and intimately. It meant having daily company through lockdowns! It means a lot, lot, lot of love.

Endnotes

- ¹ Figure taken from Census 2021 available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/socialcare/articles/unpaidcarebyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021>
- ² Statistics taken from Office for National Statistics (2023) Provision of unpaid care. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS039/editions/2021/versions/3>
- ³ Information on the detail of the Care Act 2014 is available via: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>
- ⁴ Information on the detail of the Children and Families Act 2014 is available via: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>
- ⁵ Further information on the legal context can be found on the Carers Trust website at: <https://carers.org/carers-and-the-law/carers-and-the-law>
- ⁶ Further information on the Carer's Leave Act 2023 is available on the Carers UK website: <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/support-for-employers/the-carers-leave-act/>
- ⁷ Carers First (2023) Working Carers: The Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 receives Royal Assent. Available via: <https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/news-and-stories/working-carers-the-employment-relations-flexible-working-act-2023-receives-royal-assent/>
- ⁸ Further information on carers rights under the law is available via: <https://carers.org/carers-and-the-law/carers-and-the-law>
- ⁹ Information on the detail of the Children and Families Act 2014 is available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>
- ¹⁰ Department for Health and Social Care (2021) People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1061870/people-at-the-heart-of-care-asc-reform-accessible-with-correction-slip.pdf
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- ¹² NHS England (2019) The NHS Long Term Plan. Available at: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/>
- ¹³ Further information on the NHS London Carers Hospital and Discharge Toolkit is available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/carers-and-hospital-discharge/>
- ¹⁴ East London NHS Foundation Trust (2022) Carers, Friends and Families Strategy (2022-2026). Available at: <https://www.elft.nhs.uk/contact-us/contact-carers-leads>
- ¹⁵ ONS (2022) Household and resident characteristics, England and Wales: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/householdandresidentcharacteristicsenglandandwales/census2021>
- ¹⁶ Public Health England (2017) City of London Health Profile 2017. Available via: <https://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/documents/s86130/06%20-%20Appendix%20-%20City%20of%20London%20Health%20Profile%202017%203.pdf#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20in%20City%20of%20London%20at%20birth,from%2076.2%20in%202001-03%20to%2079.4%20in%202012-14>
- ¹⁷ Further detail on the definition of carer within the Care Act 2014 is available via: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/10/enacted>
- ¹⁸ NHS commissioning for carers information accessed on 18 September 2023. Available at the time at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/comm-carers/carers/>
- ¹⁹ Information on help at home from a paid carer. Available at the time at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/homecare/>
- ²⁰ Carers UK facts and figures accessed on 2 October 2023. Available at the time at: <https://www.carersuk.org/policy-and-research/key-facts-and-figures/>
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