

 Brent	Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 5 July 2022
	Report from Strategic Director Community Wellbeing
Carers Services in Brent	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Andrew Davies Head of Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management – Adult Social Care Andrew.Davies@brent.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Community and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested a report on carers services in Brent. The report sets out information on the council's responsibilities to carers, demographic information on carers in the borough and carers supported by Adult Social Care. The report also includes information on the carers strategy and carers forum and plans for procuring carers services in 2022/23.
- 1.2 Members are asked to review and comment on the proposed work to improve support for Carers in the Borough and:
- Support the development and implementation of the revised Carers Strategy 2021 – 2024
 - Support the development of the Adult Carers Forum
 - Support the planned Procurement Activity for 2022

2. Carers in Brent

- 2.1 The term "carer" is defined in the Care Act 2014. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to support local carers. For the purpose of this paper, we recognise carers in a far broader sense. Too narrow a definition risks people not getting the recognition and support they need. A carer is anyone who provides any care or support to an individual

such as a relative, partner, friend or neighbor who needs assistance in their day to day life and cannot manage without your help. Carers do this without payment, and they are not under a contractual obligation to provide care.

2.2 Many people who are caring for someone do not necessarily see themselves as carers. Carers can be:

- mothers and fathers
- sons and daughters
- young people
- husbands, wives and partners
- friends and neighbors

2.3 The Brent Carers Action plan built upon the definition of a carer as "...anyone who spends time looking after or helping a friend, family member or neighbour who, because of their health and care needs, would find it difficult to cope without this help regardless of age or whether they identify as a carer" (Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 - Supporting carers today 2018).

- The 2011 census recorded 26,600 Carers in Brent providing 1-50 hours or more care per week (this is 11% more Carers compared to 2001)
- 9% of Brent residents provide some form of unpaid care.
- Most carers are of working age between 25-49 years.
- 14% of Brent Carers are aged over 65 years.
- 12% are Young Carers under 18 years old.
- The majority of carers are women (54%). However, there is a significant number of male carers, 46%.
- 22% of carers are caring for more than 50 hours per week.
- 10% Carers care between 20-49 hours per week
- The majority of ethnic groups provide similar amounts of care.
- Some ethnic groups, including Asian/Asian British, provide slightly more care than average, while other groups notably mixed white/multiple.
- Nationally it is estimated that Carers save the economy £119 billion every year. (Brent Carers Strategy 2017-2020)

2.4 The 2011 Census identified 166,363 Young Carers in England (a 20% increase in the 2001 census). In Brent, we estimate the number of young carers to be more than 3,243. There are likely to be Young Carers in every school or college in Brent, and the BBC estimates that 1 in 12 pupils are Young Carers

2.5 This is the most current data reported by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). Data from the 2021 census results are yet to be published.

2.6 Adult Social Care in Brent has 613 registered carers. Of this number, 248 are receiving a care package from the local authority to support with their caring needs. The most common care packages are respite services (usually either residential respite for the person they are caring for, or a sitting service where a paid carer visits the home to allow the un-paid carer some time off), and day opportunities for the person being cared for. The council carried out 128 carers assessments in 2021/22.

3. Developing the Carers Strategy

- 3.1 The Brent Adult Carers Strategy and action plan is currently being revised. This ambitious document originally co-produced with a broad range of partners and Brent Carers, sets out a blueprint for change. The Carers Strategic Delivery Board has been re-established to oversee delivery of the Carers Strategy and action plan. Local Carers sit on the Board alongside officers to jointly lead this work stream, develop strategic objectives and implementation of local plans.
- 3.2 The core responsibility of the Carers Strategic Delivery Board will be on achieving the implementation of the strategic action plan. As part of the work of the strategic board, it has been identified that Carers in Brent require a separate space to raise more individual issues and concerns, regarding access to information and services as well as delivery. The Carers Forum will provide an appropriate place where carers can raise any issues, and have assurance that any concerns raised will be listened to and addressed. As a direct response to this, it is proposed that the Brent Adult Carers Forum (as detailed above) is developed initially for 12 months and then reviewed.

4. Carers Support Services

4.1 Brent Gateway

- 4.2 Brent Gateway is a partnership organisation that supports carers in the Borough to increase support and signposting. They have facilitated better communication with carers and developed improved resources of services for carers to access in different formats. Brent Gateway proactively identifies carers who are accessing their services and build on equality and inclusion.
- 4.3 Brent residents needing support from Gateway benefit from the following:
- Young carer activities, trips, and events during term time and school holidays
 - Opportunities to come together and network
 - Advocacy support
 - Championing rights
 - Early Help Assessments (EHAs)
 - Carer-specific information and advice service
 - Carers' assessments
 - Carers' support groups
 - Training programmes.
- 4.4 Brent Gateway has expanded the range of engagement activities they offer to include coffee shop drop-ins that have proved popular with carers and information sessions related to health issues. Regular activities are held at Bridge Park, focusing on improving well-being through dance and movement, drama workshops, relaxation, and exercise. Brent Gateway has also held more informal drop-ins whereby carers can attend on an ad hoc basis to speak to a Carer Support Officer in person.
- 4.5 Brent ASC recognises the importance of choice in the services available to residents and proactively encourages service user feedback in the commissioning and procurement of services. Brent Gateway's contract expires in December 2022. The ASC Commissioning team has started the retendering process, which will involve and encourage stakeholders participation and engagement. Consultation and engagement work is underway via the Carers Board and will also include engagement via the Carers

Forum to gather as many views on services required going forward. This will ensure that as many user by experience voices are captured and both carer and service user feedback will inform any subsequent specification. The procurement process was initiated on the 28th January 2022 with a targeted completion date of the of October 2022 to prepare for the implementation of the new service by December 2022.

5.0 Brent Adult Carers Forum

- 5.1 As part of the relaunch of the Brent Carers Strategy as detailed above, a new Brent Carers Forum is proposed to work alongside the Carers Strategic Board. This will provide an opportunity for Brent carers to have a place to voice any concerns, inform practice and to support the work of the Carers Strategic Board. It is proposed that this forum will be developed in partnership with colleagues from across the Council, Health and the voluntary sector, and most importantly with the direct involvement of Brent Carers.
- 5.2 The Carers Forum will provide an opportunity to make a real difference to Brent Carers, not just to Carers who are already performing the role, but also to people in the borough who may be delivering care but not receiving the support that they need. Through both the Carers Forum and the Carers Strategic Board, we want to raise the profile, collective understanding and recognition of the invaluable work that Carers do. We want to make lives easier for Carers in Brent. We want to listen and respond to what Carers want, to enable them to continue delivering crucial support whilst they can and wish to do so. It is proposed that the Carers Forum will initially run for a period of 12 months while we 'monitor' the effectiveness of the group and understand any impact it is having on the carer and customer experience.
- 5.3 The role of the proposed forum is to:
- Provide a regular and open forum where any adult carer in Brent can raise system related issues and/or concerns, feel that these are being listened to, and acknowledged by officers.
 - Create a supportive and action focused space where solutions to ongoing operational concerns are identified and actioned.
 - Create a single forum for all adult carer related systems issues and provide assurance that they will be responded to and addressed
 - Help to ensure that other meetings (such as the Carers Strategic Delivery Board) can maintain their strategic focus
- 5.4 The group will meet quarterly between August 2022 and July 2023, and each meeting will last for 2 hours. The meeting will be a mix or virtual, face-to-face, and meeting details will be circulated to Carers during July 2022.
- 5.5 Carers will be encouraged to outline any issues they would like to be addressed via the a newly created Carers mail box and will be required to submit these at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting. This will allow officers time to review submissions and ensure a focused and productive meeting.
- 5.6 Actions and decisions reached during the meeting will be clearly captured and circulated to all attendees. The Actions and Decisions log will then be reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting to ensure a clear 'feedback loop' and transparency.

6.0 Brent Parent Carers Forum

6.1 The forum is an independent, parent-led organisation to bring together parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Brent. The forum works in partnership with Brent Council, health providers, schools and other organisations to provide information, advice and support to carers and young people with SEND

6.2 Carers have opportunities to socialise and interact with other carers. The forum promotes peer support, bringing together carers with shared experiences to support each other. The forum hosts regular coffee mornings and evening meetings where guest speakers are invited to raise awareness around local community offers for carers and their children. Carers can attend workshops and training events for parents on a wide range of SEND-related issues.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Report sign-off:

Claudia Brown

Operational Director Adult Social Care