



Brent Carers' Strategy 2024-2027

Foreword



Before providing the details of this carers' strategy, it is vital that we express our gratitude to Brent's 22,000 unpaid adult and young carers. We have the utmost respect for the work that you do to support those in need, and the borough could not be what it is today without your dedication.

This strategy document aims to raise the profile, recognition and understanding of the invaluable work that all types of carers do, whilst also recognising the struggles they face and how we can support them better.

We hope to make the lives of carers easier, through listening and responding to their needs, so that they can continue to deliver crucial support.

We recognise that we need to work more closely with communities and partners to reach carers we don't know about, so that we can support their wellbeing and help them to navigate the complexities of the health and care system. We endeavour to do this through the commitments explored in this strategy.

We would also like to thank those who have been involved in the development of this strategy, and once again extend our appreciation to Brent's carers who go above and beyond to help others. We believe that through the implementation of this strategy, we can achieve real and long-lasting change for carers.



Cllr Neil Nerva
Cabinet Member,
Chair:
Health and Wellbeing
Board



Dr Mohammad Haidar
Brent Medical Director and
ICP Clinical Lead,
Vice Chair:
Health and Wellbeing
Board

Reflections from our Carers Board members

We prioritised taking the time to meet and listen to our Carers of all ages. The stories we heard gave us a good foundation to form our commitments, and so it would only be right to include some of their stories in this strategy.

It was really important to us when developing this strategy that we heard from a wide variety of people who care for others in Brent, and we're pleased that carers have been involved in every step of the journey to develop this document. As a result, we believe this document really represents what carers have told us is important and will make a difference. We hope that this document is the start of a journey that gets us to a place where anyone who cares for others can feel seen, valued and supported.

Stephan, aged 14

“I’ve been caring for my mum for 8 years. My day-to-day role involves helping my mum with whatever she needs. In the morning, this could be making her breakfast or making her a hot water bottle. After my school day, I continue caring for her by helping her with her evening routine. I believe Brent Council could help carers by checking in with them more often – my family can’t always handle mum’s health problems, so it would be good if we could get more support. To all the young carers out there, I want you to know that there’s always someone you can talk to, someone to help you. You’re not on your own.”

“Being a carer has been extremely challenging for me as the person I care for, my father, is fiercely independent, challenging, strong willed and stubborn.

Brent Carers Centre have been extremely efficient, proactive, empathetic, understanding, and supportive. My support officer Jenice, from Brent Carers Centre, has supported me in various ways with my issues. Solutions were provided to ease my stress, as well as weekly counselling sessions to uplift and motivate me. Undoubtedly, the support has been my safe haven.

Moving forwards, I would like to see the council provide additional housing supports for those who are cared for. To use the example of my father, who likes his independence and so does not want to go into assisted living, it would be good if I could have some support and advice as to how to get the best possible outcome for him.”

**Aisha – Brent Carers
Centre Member**

Adult carer, Brent Carers Centre member

"My caring role is very demanding, since I am a carer to both my husband, who has mental health issues, chronic depression and dementia, and my son who is autistic, has a learning disability and a personality disorder.

It's hard since there are four adults living in two bed temporary accommodation, as well as a large problem with mould. I have to sleep on a mattress on the kitchen floor.

Brent's ASC coordinator has provided me with support and helped me to arrange my husband to go to day care 4 days a week. This has made a massive difference for me, since now I can have breaks and have time to attend my doctor's appointments. The council also arranged the delivery of a shower stool, which has made the showering process a lot easier for my husband.

Although the support from the council has been good, I still don't feel as though I have enough of a break, or time to myself. I hope these change moving forward."



Vision/ Executive summary

Throughout the development of this strategy, we have kept the values of the Brent Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) in mind; putting the resident at the heart of its development, working in partnership, and really listening to our community of people who care to understand what matters to them, and what will have the biggest impact for them, whilst also considering the sustainability of the health and care system. This strategy takes its roots in what carers have told us they want, rather than the vision of what has been set out by the Health and Care system.

The strategy has been crafted following **over 150 conversations** with dedicated individuals that care for others in Brent. The directions of these conversations were influenced by a group of carers responsible for co-producing this strategy, and so they were vital in giving us direction in terms of the type of questions we asked, the people we spoke to, providing analysis of the information we gathered and forming the commitments we endeavour to make.

Although some of the conversations were hard, they were necessary given that they highlighted the requirement for Health and Social Care services to do more to support and appreciate carers in Brent. Those conversations helped us to develop a shared vision. Collectively, we agreed that we want Brent to be a place for people who provide unpaid care are:

- **Seen and heard when accessing services**
- **Supported as individuals, with more opportunities to be themselves**
- **Valued for the care they provide**

This strategy will play a key role in ensuring that the ambitions set out in Brent's Health and Wellbeing strategy, Adult Social Care Vision and Borough plan are fulfilled.

Our six key commitments



Based on this vision, we have crafted **6 key commitments**, which we intend to implement in the next 3 years.

Brent's commitments are based around the following themes:

Access to information

Partnership working

Supporting wellbeing

Carer awareness

Reaching into communities

Supporting young carers at the start of their caring journey

People who care: An overview

A “carer” is defined as anyone of any age who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, and who cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

Most of us will provide care and support for a loved one at a given stage in our lives, but the length and intensity of that experience will vary greatly.

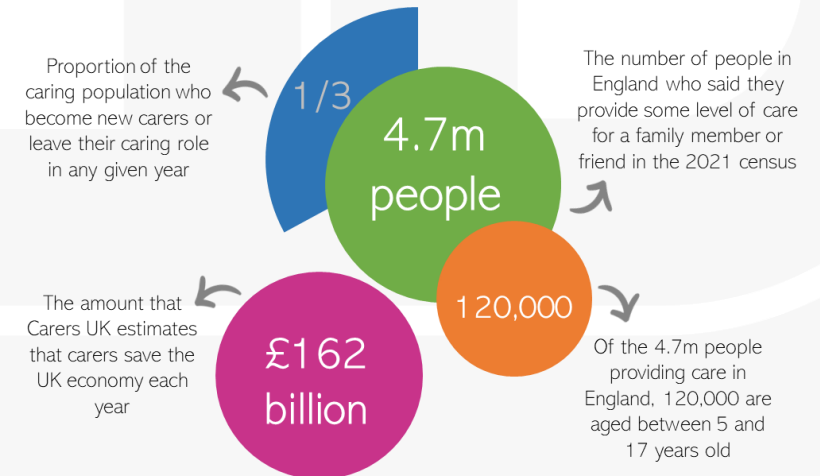
On average, it will take someone two years to recognise that they are a carer, and even after this period of time not everyone will identify with this label. Instead, they see the support they provide as a display of their love for the individual they care for, and as a core aspect of the relationship with their loved one.

For some, it is okay that they do not

identify as a carer as they may not need anything more than access to universal services and their existing support network. For others, however, the caring role can have a significant impact on their employment, finances, relationships and their own health and wellbeing. Therefore, it is crucial that we capture the needs of those who may not identify with the term “carer”, but still require that extra support. The role of education is key here, particularly for young carers you may not be aware of the support available to them or the role they are playing.

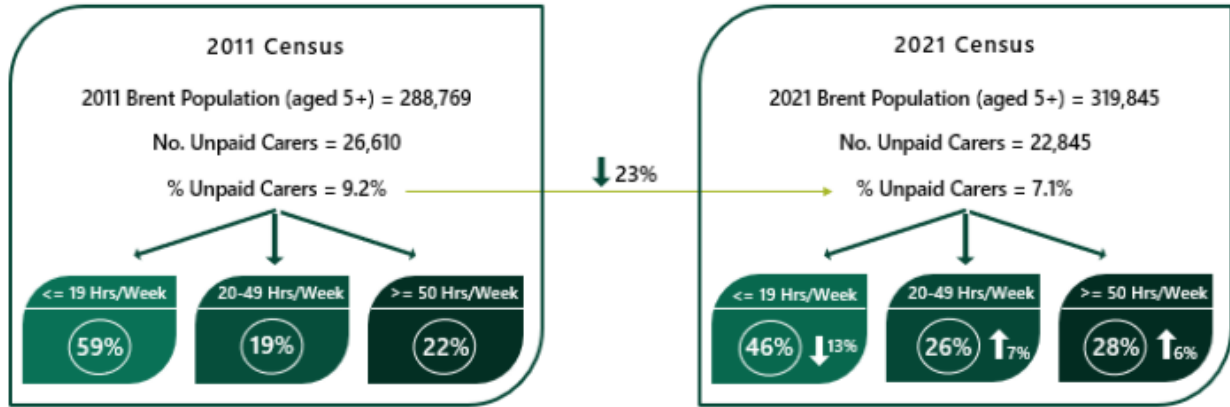
Carers are so deserving of this support given that they often take on large amounts of responsibility in order for their loved one to be able to maintain a degree of independence, whether that be due to a long or short-term illness. Carers are so important that if they were all to stop working, Carers UK estimates it

would cost England & Wales an extra £162 billion annually (that’s £444 million per day) to cover the costs, meaning the Health and Social Care system would simply collapse. This is just one of the numerous figures that demonstrate how vital carers are to keeping society afloat.



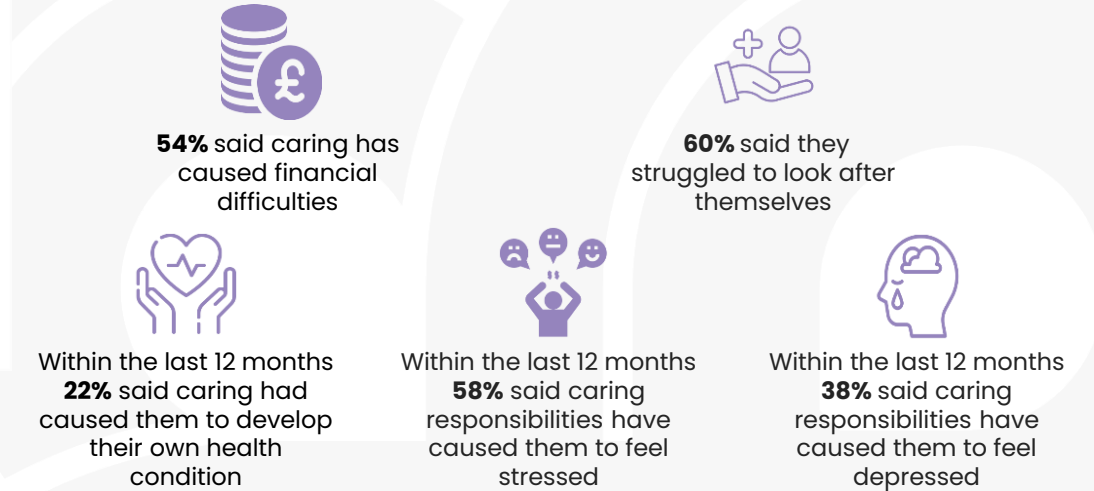
Adult Carers: the facts

Brent census data collected in the last decade also highlights some interesting statistics regarding carers:

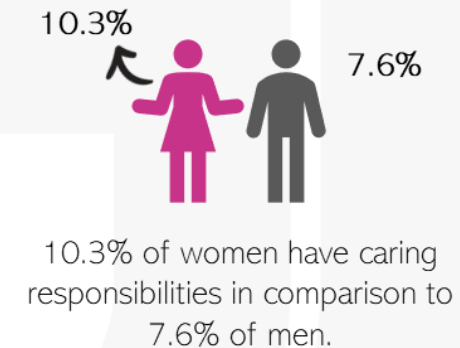


Although this data demonstrates a decrease in the number of unpaid carers between 2011 and 2021, it shows that those who are providing care are providing a greater level of care.

The council also carried out a Survey of Adult Carers in 2021, which further confirmed that impact that caring has:



Surveys such as this also reveal that the burden of care does not fall equally on the respective genders:



Adult Carers: the facts

The theme of inequality prevails with the following statistics:

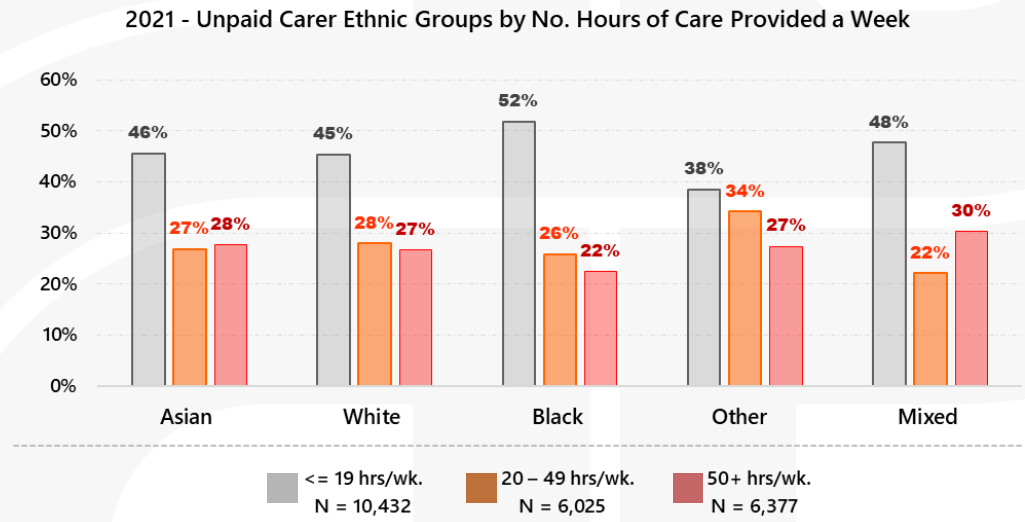
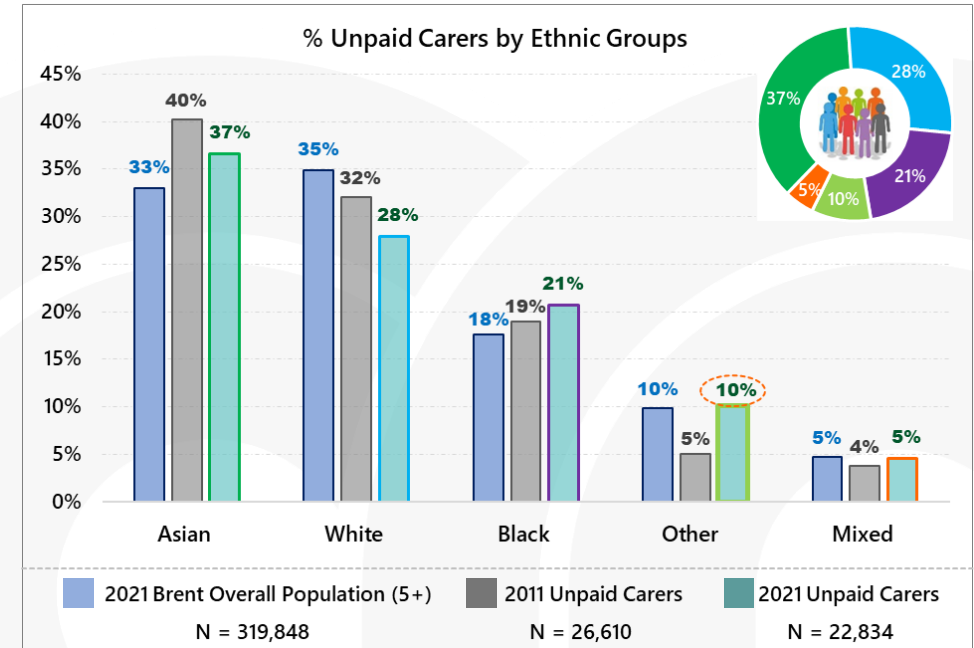
There is a higher proportion of people providing unpaid care in the most deprived communities (10.1%)...



...than there are in the least deprived (8.1%)

Moreover, given the nature of the role, people who care will undoubtedly face additional financial and health inequalities when compared with the rest of the population.

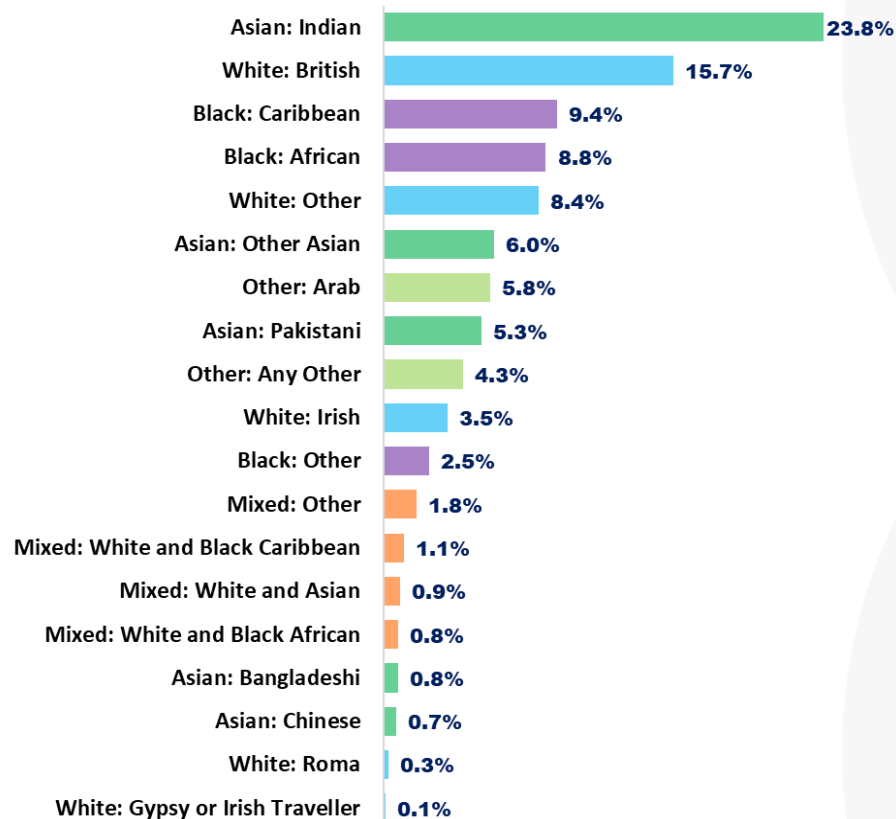
Brent carers are not equally distributed across the ethnic groups, with black carers being over-represented, and on the rise.



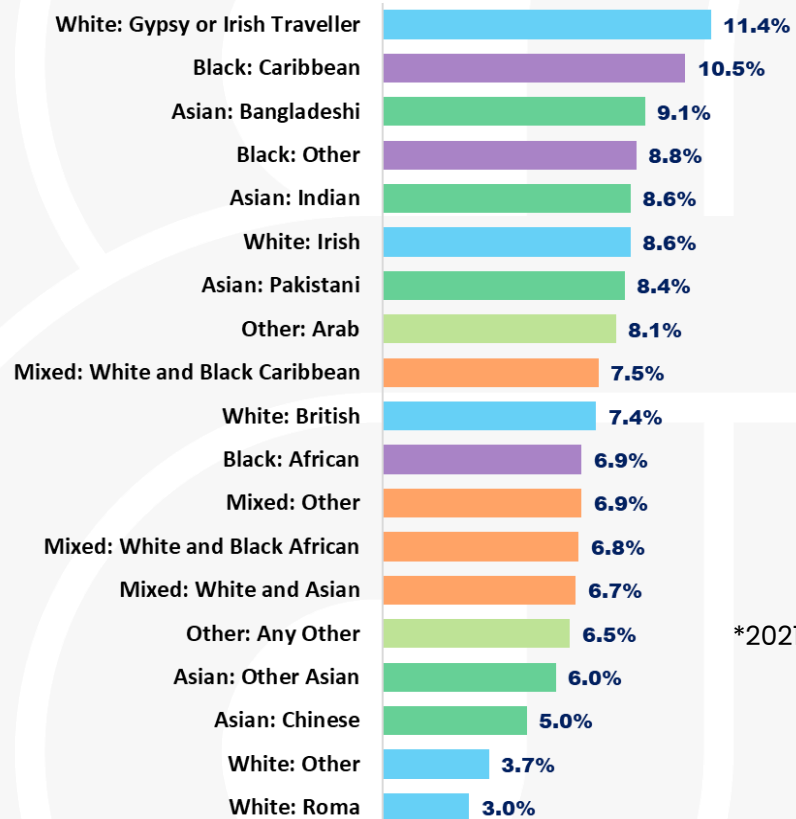
Adult Carers: the facts

- Indian residents, who are Brent’s largest ethnic group (19.6% of the general population) make up almost 1 out of 4 unpaid carers (24%)
- 11.4% of all Gypsy/Irish Travellers in Brent are unpaid carers
- The lowest proportions of ethnic subgroups, who are unpaid carers, are Roma (3.0%) and Other White (3.7%) and those groups also generally have low 65+ age compositions (2% and 5% respectively) in Brent.

Composition of Unpaid Carers by Ethnic Sub Groups*



Proportion of Brent's Ethnic Sub Groups who are unpaid carers*



*2021 Census data

Young Carers

Young Carers: the facts

We must also recognise the equally vital role that young carers play in Brent. There are 120,000 young carers across England without whom, the adult care system would undoubtedly crumble.

A young carer is someone who “cares for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support”

A young carer’s day to day responsibilities could include tasks such as:

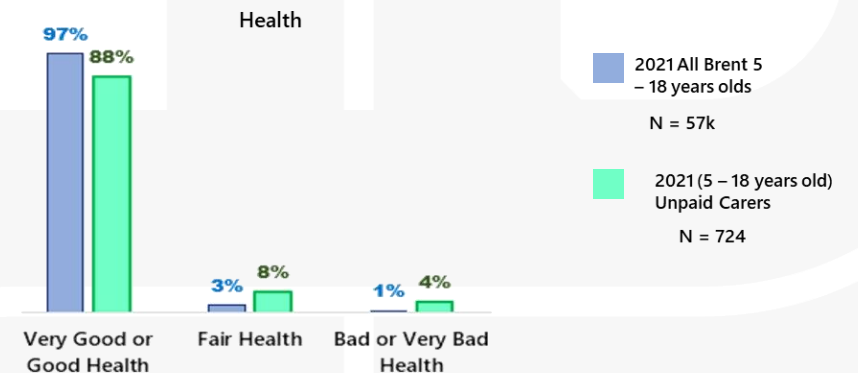
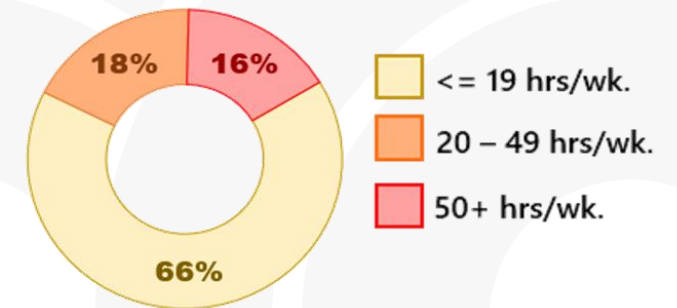
- Cooking, housework and shopping
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed
- Emotional support, such as talking to someone who is distressed
- Personal care, such as helping someone get dressed
- Helping to give medicine

According to the census young carers in Brent are even more likely to come from deprived backgrounds than adults. They are also 9% less likely to have very good or good health when compared with their peers.

Despite there likely being thousands of young carers in Brent, fewer than 100 carers were identified in the Schools census in 2023.

Although young carers typically take on fewer hours of caring per week than adult carers, statistics demonstrate that this role takes a toll on the health of young carers.

Hours of Care Provided each Week

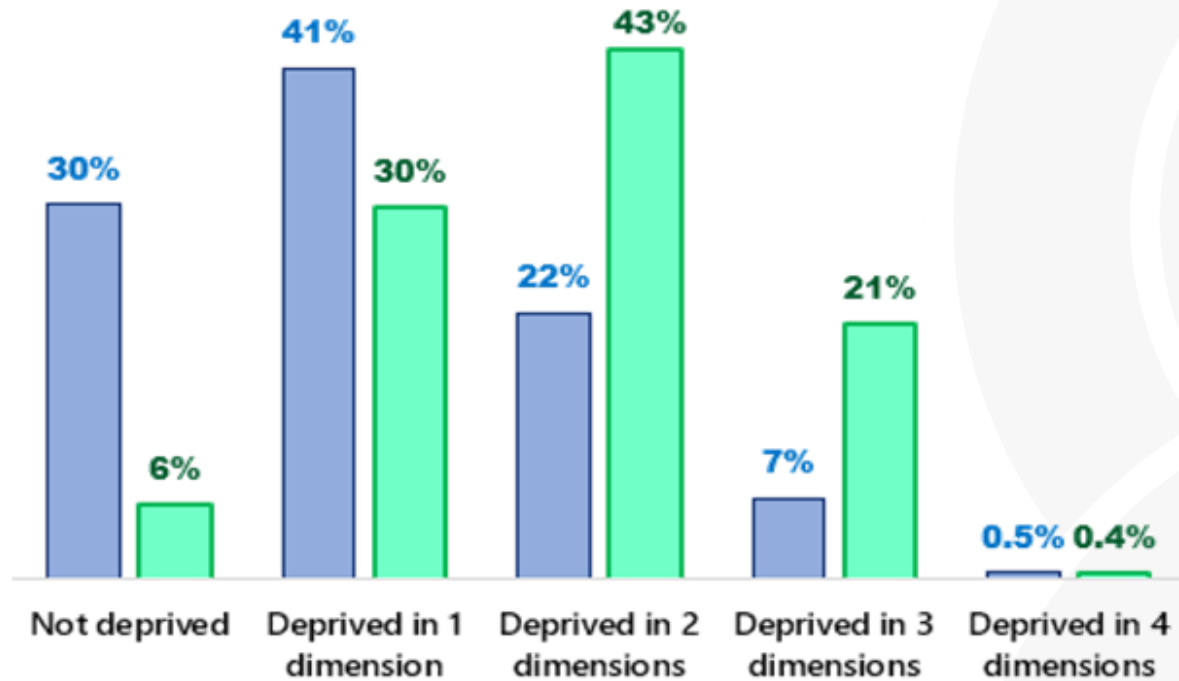


The gap between the population and carers who say they have good health is 9% for both adult and young carers.

Adults are more likely to say their health is fair or bad, but the gap between the general population and carers is much bigger for young people – 5% and 3% compared to only 1% for adults

2021 - % Young Carers by Household Deprivation

Young carers are also even more likely to come from deprived backgrounds, in comparison to their peers who are not carers. The dimensions represented in the bar chart cover four key areas of deprivation: Employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding.



■ 2021 All Brent 5 – 18 years olds
N = 57k

■ 2021 (5 – 18 years old) Unpaid Carers
N = 724

Our commitment to a “No wrong doors” approach in Brent:

'No wrong doors'

'No wrong doors' is an approach that Brent intends to commit to and implement in the coming years.

The principle underpinning this nationwide memorandum of understanding is that there should be "no wrong doors" for young carers and their families. Young carers should be identified, assessed and supported regardless of which service is accessed in the first place.

It is necessary given that there is evidence to suggest that the caring role has a negative impact of caring responsibilities on mental health, education and life opportunities for young carers

- 1 in 3 'always' or 'usually' struggle to balance caring with education
- Young carers are significantly more likely to report severe psychological distress, self-harm, and make attempts on their own life
- Young Adult Carers are 38% less likely to achieve a university degree, and significantly less likely to enter employment.



What has been achieved so far for carers in Brent?



What has been achieved so far?

Although we acknowledge that there is still a lot of progress to be made in terms of our identification of and support for carers, it is important to recognise and celebrate the numerous achievements that have been made in recent years with regards to carers.

In 2022-2023 we identified 454 new carers and were able to support them on a range of issues from providing them with carers needs assessments (218 were completed), advising them on things like finances and benefits, linking them in with other services, and providing them with respite opportunities. We also continue to provide a range of activities for carers including cinema trips, guided relaxation, coffee mornings, and days out at places like Kew Gardens.

Brent's Young Carers report 2022-23 identified the following key successes:

104 young carers were identified in this year

Young Carers contacts at sessions in Family Wellbeing Centre's have doubled

Young carers continued to receive support from a range of multi-agency professionals, particularly regarding issues such as social isolation

Processes have been implemented to ensure young carers identified in Child and Family Assessments are made aware of the Brent Gateway Support offer.

Moreover, as part of the ongoing contract arrangements, there is a regular programme of support and activities for young carers. Some favourites include movie nights, defensive driving courses and arts-based activities.

National policies and legislation underpinning this strategy

This strategy has been informed by and takes into consideration a number of strategic and legal factors. Some policies which outline Brent's legal requirements and vision to see all carers recognised include:

- **Care Act 2014** – Councils must identify and provide carers with information, undertake carers assessments and provide preventative support. If statutory carers eligibility is met, support must be provided.
- **Children Act 1989** – Councils must identify and provide information to young carers and parent carers, undertake needs assessments and parent carer assessments, as well as preventative support. (Note – the Care Act 2014 and Children Act 1989 include requirements for NHS bodies to cooperate with local authorities, in relation to their responsibilities to carers and young carers.)
- **Children and Families Act (2014)** – Gives young carers and parent carers in England a right to an assessment of their own needs.
- **Carers Act 1995** – States that the right to a carers assessment also applies to carers of disabled children.
- **Health and Care Act 2022** – Provides details of the requirements to consult carers and involve carers in hospital discharges.

We have also written this strategy with the principles of 'Think Local Act Personal' (TLAP) in mind – This is a national partnership of more than 50 organisations, all of which are committed to 'transforming health and care through personalisation and community-based support'

Based on the philosophy of TLAP, we have generated some statements which reflect what "we" as a council will do to support carers, as well as some "I" statements, which will reflect how carers should feel following the implementation of this strategy. These statements were coproduced with carers and can be found woven into our commitments laid out in this document.

Brent's local plans and policies:



Amongst other stakeholders, carers were consulted during the creation process of the Borough Plan (2023–2027). This document outlines Brent council's ambitions for Brent in the coming years. The 5 priorities are:



The Brent Health and Wellbeing strategy also directly references caring in its five priorities that will support efforts to reduce health inequalities and wider determinants of health inequalities:

1. Healthy Lives – I am able to make healthy choices and live in a healthy way, for myself and the people I care for.
2. Healthy Places – Near me there are safe, clean places where I, and people I care for, can go to relax, exercise for free, meet with like-minded people, and where we can grow our own food.
3. Staying Healthy – I, and the people I care for, understand how to keep ourselves physically and mentally healthy, managing our health conditions using self-care first. We have access to good medical care when we need it.
4. Understanding, Listening, and Improving – I, and those I care for, can have our say and contribute better to the way services are run; Brent Health and Wellbeing Board data are good quality and give a good picture of health inequalities.
5. Healthy Ways of Working – The health, care, and wellbeing force will be happy and strong; and the health and wellbeing system will recover quickly from the impacts of the pandemic.

What we do for people who care:

Our previous engagement work led to the provision of services which reflect the needs and wants of carers.

Brent Adult Social Care currently provides:

- Working with multiple stakeholders to identify carers, ensuring that as many are aware of the support that is available to them and that all of their details are up to date on the database.
- Brent Carers' Centre is commissioned to provide direct support to our carers, with their mission being to "ensure that unpaid carers are recognised, valued and supported to live rather than just exist" Their role involves carrying out carers' assessments, advocating for carers across a range of services, and offering wellbeing support such as leisure activities, support groups and (retail) discounts. Brent Carers' Centre also provides tailored support for end of life and loss of loved ones.
- Carers can access Carers' booklets which has been co-written with Primary care to provide the most up to date health information for carers.
- Brent Council will provide respite where an assessment identifies need for it.
- Brent Customer Access provides support for carers to access/ apply for benefits and understand the eligibility criteria.
- Recognition that, for those who are both council employees and carers, the role will place additional strain on these employees when they are 'working from home'. In order to mitigate this, employees are encouraged to take advantage of Brent's flexible working policy, including compressed hours or employment breaks.

What we do for people who care:

Our London partners, London Northwest Healthcare University Hospital (LNWUH), Central and Northwest London Community Healthcare Trust (CNWL), and Central London Community Healthcare Trust (CLCH) have also adapted their service and enhanced their offer to carers.

LNWUH currently provides:

- Discounted parking and canteen offers at hospital sites for those with a carers card
- 'Conversation cafes', where carers can chat with community partners and councillors and council staff about any barriers they may be facing
- Paid carers' leave for their employees who are carers & recognition that the role will place additional strain on these employees when they are 'working from home'
- Carers' voices are regularly heard in the steering group for patient involvement strategy for the LNWH

CNWL currently provides:

- CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College specifically mention carers in their info about who can attend
- Check in & Chat service for Carers of CNWL patients
- Resource Guides
- Implemented the six standards within the triangle of care in both inpatient and community services. The triangle of care is a therapeutic alliance between carers, service users and health professionals. It aims to promote safety and recovery and to sustain mental wellbeing by supporting carers.
- Host support groups for carers
- Implemented 'DIALOG+', a therapeutic model that measures and seeks to improve quality of life, and is based upon open dialog and so has helped to build family connection and improve communication and relationships between patients and their carers
- Developed consent/confidentiality training for their staff, to ensure carers are understood and treated with respect.
- Paid carers' leave for their employees who are carers & recognition that the role will place additional strain on these employees when they are 'working from home'

CLCH currently provides:

- An online collaborative resource free and available to all staff, patients and carers signposting to borough-specific support
- Direct signposting to carer assessments and registration
- Trust-wide awareness campaign emphasising the importance of identifying carers at the earliest opportunity
- Links to existing carers passport/emergency card schemes in each borough to reduce the number of times a carer must disclose
- Parents and Carers staff network – a platform for those with caring duties to have a voice on new policies (e.g., flexible working policy) and activities at the Trust
- Prioritised access to volunteering and work experience placements for young carers and outreach via our looked after children's teams and local careers hubs

What we do for people who care:

In addition to universal services, unpaid carers have the right to an assessment if the local authority or the carer themselves feels as though they need support.

The assessment focuses on aspects of wellbeing that are important to the individual carer. This could include factors such as maintaining a habitable home environment, engaging in work, training, education or volunteering, and developing and maintaining family or other relationships.

Unpaid carers are legally entitled to support services to aid them in their caring role. **This support is granted once the assessment identifies the carer's needs, and the following three eligibility criteria points are met:**

The carer's need for support arises because they are providing necessary

care to an adult.

1. As a result of their caring responsibilities, the carer's physical or mental health is, or is at risk of deteriorating, or the carer is unable to achieve any one of the outcomes listed in the Care Act.
2. As a result of being unable to achieve these outcomes, there is or there is likely to be, a significant impact on the carer's wellbeing.

If Brent has decided that the carer has eligible needs, they must consider what they can do to meet these specific needs.

Despite the existence of these support services from us and our partners, some issues and challenges have been flagged on the back of these developments:

- There remains a need to balance

safeguarding with the needs of carers.

- Persisting issues surrounding people not necessarily being aware of their role as a carer, meaning they reach crisis point before they have been reached by us or have accessed support.

To mitigate these issues, we could:

- Do more to increase the visibility and awareness of caring as an integral part of many people's lives – this would involve a campaign drive with images and soundbites, promoted widely across the borough e.g. in GPs, Brent council buildings.
- More training for professionals, in order to improve assessments, ensure checklists are being used etc.
- Making sure information is easy to find, so that carers do not have to fight to find it.

The experiences of people who care:

A consistent theme of the conversations we had was the pride that carers feel to be able to provide care for their loved ones and spoke of the strong bond it creates.

The carers we engaged with were also eager to make it clear that they feel tired, but by the same token are eager to avoid the health and social care system stepping in to take over.

Unfortunately, they feel they have to fight in order to have their voices heard, to have the right support in place for their loved ones, and to find the information they need. These relentless challenges add to the existing exhaustive nature of balancing the role of being a carer, whilst juggling all the other aspects and responsibilities of their life. This means that the first sacrifice they often make is self-care, which is worrisome given that this can lead to a deterioration in their physical and mental health.

In the 150+ conversations we had with carers, a recurring issue that presented itself was the problems they faced in obtaining the information they needed to care effectively for their loved ones. Similarly, they also struggled to seek the support they needed for themselves in their caring role.

Many also spoke candidly about the strain placed on them due to the responsibility of their caring role, which puts extra

pressure on their work and relationships. This led to calls for more frequent and different types of respite being made available to them.

They also spoke about the frustration felt when they are excluded from conversations and decisions surrounding their loved one's care, and the lack of recognition and acknowledgement they receive from some health and care professionals.

Their feedback has been summarised into four main themes:



Information is hard to find

"I got bounced around for months before finally finding the right support"



Carers don't feel listened to

"Key workers don't understand [his] needs. I am labelled as difficult and anxious."



There isn't enough support for carer's wellbeing

"No time to look after yourself. To do things others take for granted like a cup of coffee with friends."



Services are fragmented

"The services aren't joined up. You have to keep repeating your story."

Commitments:

Following this engagement work, we have identified 6 key commitments, which we believe will help to improve the lives of carers and young carers in Brent. The commitments reflect the voices of the numerous carers we spoke with, and therefore aptly illustrate what carers and young carers need and want. In the section below we explore the commitments in detail.

The commitments we have made as a place are:

Access to information

Partnership working

Supporting wellbeing

Carer awareness

Reaching into communities

Supporting young carers at the start of their caring journey

Commitment One: Access to information



Commitment One: Access to information



This commitment reflects an issue that we had to address given that in the 2021–22 survey of adult carers, 26% of respondents said that they found information very difficult to find. This figure is higher than the London average of 19%, and also higher than the figure from the 2018–19 Brent survey of 21%. Even when people can get advice, 14% of residents told us that the advice wasn't helpful, which is considerably higher than the London average of 7%.

Carers also told us about the inconsistency of advice and knowledge they were provided with depending on who they spoke with. They also voiced understandable frustration towards the process of being referred to multiple organisations and people before finally being able to obtain the right support. This exasperation led to them being strong advocates for the creation of a single, central resource that outlines the full range of support that is available.

To achieve this we will:

- Create a single carers resource, that brings together information from health, social care and Brent's communities in one place, which will be communicated in a variety of formats so that it is accessible to all.
- Promote how and where information can be accessed in a wide range of health settings, such as community buildings, libraries, and places of worship.
- Support the maintenance of carer hubs, including young carer hubs spread broadly across Brent.
- Hire a carers engagement officer within the Brent council's Adult Social Care team, who will be responsible for coordinating the resources available to carers and strengthen the community-based offer for them.

How will we know that we are fulfilling these commitments?

- Our Carers' hub and universal information, advice and guidance will be accessed by carers from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Every public building and community space will have a poster that promotes the carers resource.
- Carers will tell us that information is easier to find and more helpful.
- Carers can get information and advice about their health and how they can be as well as possible physically, mentally and emotionally.

“

We provide information and advice about health, social care and housing which is tailored to a person's situation without limiting their options and choices.

”

Think Local Act Personal 'we' statement

“

I can get information and advice about my health and how I can be as well as possible- physically, mentally and emotionally

”

Think Local Act Personal 'I' statement

Commitment Two: Partnership working



Commitment Two: Partnership working



This commitment focuses on the difficulties that carers face when trying to get a sense of all the different services that are available. Professionals across the health and care system also echoed this sentiment, telling us that there is a lot of support and resources available, but no-one seems to have a clear picture of what is available. Different organisations hold different pieces of the puzzle, and we will only be able to deliver holistic support if we bring all those pieces together.

Similarly, many expressed frustrations towards the lack of communication amongst the different parts of the system, saying that they often don't communicate with each other. The result of this is that those who care often have to repeat their story as they move from service to service. Therefore, we must learn to work in a multi-disciplinary way, so that information is shared appropriately. In turn, it should make the move between organisations more seamless for our carers, thus easing the burden on them.

This partnership working must also extend to carers. They voiced irritation towards the fact that we do not utilise the insight they have in terms of delivering care to their loved one, and in the delivery of services more broadly.

For that reason, we commit to improving partnership working across all of health and social care, and the voluntary sector. Services will also become less fragmented through the improvement of information sharing, whilst ensuring that carers are fully involved in shaping and enhancing services.

To achieve this we will:

- Create a Carers partnership forum, attended by all the organisations who support people who care. Therefore, this will bring together community organisations, health, and social care to share information, access training and opportunities, and work together in new ways to improve services.
- Explore the creation of a "consent passport". With the consent of the individual who is being cared for, this document would allow carers to be involved in conversations regarding their loved one's care, without having to repeatedly justify their right to do so.
- Host quarterly care forums, alongside Brent's health partners, to enable the voices of all carers to be heard.
- Build on the co-production of this strategy to put carers at the heart of service delivery, such as monitoring our new carers contract, and overseeing the delivery of this strategy.

Commitment Two: Partnership working

How will we know that we are fulfilling this commitment?

- Our Carers partnership forum will have appropriate and representative membership and meet at least four times a year.
- The four carers forums that will be held each year will be in partnership with health providers wherever possible
- Carers will have an equal footing on our strategy delivery group and contract monitoring group.

“

I can keep in touch and meet up with people who are important to me, including family, friends and people who share my interests, identity and culture

”

Think Local Act Personal 'I' statement

Commitment Three: Supporting Wellbeing



Commitment Three: Supporting Wellbeing

This commitment addresses one of the biggest strains of being a carer: the toll it takes on an individual's physical and mental health. The time commitment of providing care can make it difficult to balance this role with work and family commitments, making it near impossible to prioritise their own health appointments and care.

A staggering 60% of carers who responded to the 2021-22 survey of adult carers said that they struggle to look after themselves well enough. Moreover, 33% of respondents said that they didn't "do anything that they value or enjoy" with their time. Although some said they are able to draw strength and support from peer support, they equally voiced that it took them months or even years to find. They also stated the necessity for more accessible respite in more varied forms.

To achieve this we will:

1. Create a local offer for carers in Brent, that sets out all the different forms of support that is available to carers in one place, as well as details of how each one can be accessed.
2. Continually listen to the challenges that carers tell us they are facing and aim to develop services and resources that will make real, long-lasting differences to their lives.
3. Clarify the various elements of our respite offer. This will also include a review of the respite and short break requests, ensuring that this service responds to carers in a timely manner, whilst supporting their needs.
4. Use the new Carers' hub to deliver a range of support services and wellbeing therapies
5. Develop tailored support to help unpaid carers through transition periods in their caring role, such as the death of their loved one, or the transition to adulthood.
6. Carers, and organisations that support Carers are encouraged to participate in a range of training delivered by the Public Health Team. including the two day 'Mental Health First Aid' Training and the 1 hour Dementia Friends Information Session.
7. Work with Brent Health Matters to offer a 'one stop shop' for health in communities.
8. Develop an improved 'carers card', that enables registered carers to access a wider range of benefits and enhancements which would improve their wellbeing.
9. Utilise the council's position in the local economy/ community to bring in benefits for carers. This will include policies such as social value clauses on contracts and negotiating benefits from businesses.

How will we know that we are fulfilling this commitment?

- Feedback from carers and users of services and resources will reflect that we are making positive differences to their lives.
- Carers will feel supported at all stages of their caring journey, knowing where to go for advice or support.
- Carers will be provided with coordinated care and support. Everyone works well together, as well as with the carers directly.
- Our new Carers' hubs will be in place and will be accessed by carers that are representative of all of our communities.
- The new and improved carers card will enable access to a wider range of services and benefits.

Commitment Four: Carer awareness



Commitment Four: Carer awareness



Many carers in Brent feel as though their voices are not being heard when it comes to the care of their loved one. In fact, 15% of adult carers who took part in the adult carers survey in 2021 said that they never felt involved or consulted in discussions about the care and support of their loved one.

They spoke of being excluded from assessments and hospital discharges, of feeling that their input was invalid, and of not being given necessary information with regards to their caring role. Some also told us that they had been labelled as anxious by health professionals for asking questions or raising concerns to health and social care professionals. They also referred to the shame they had felt after losing their temper with some staff after continual “micro-hassles” when trying to get things done. Every conversation with people who care, and partner organisations alike, came back to the same thread: people who care want to be heard and understood.

Our aim is to work towards all public services and communities recognising the importance and value of carers, acknowledging the work that they do, whilst giving carers awareness of who they could talk to if needed.

Wherever possible, we want services and professionals to be empowered so that they can be flexible to meet the needs of individuals. To us, this would look like “bending the rules” to get the right outcome for the individual. This could be in the form of longer appointments, more flexible times, or going the extra mile to make accessing a service easier.

Therefore, we are committing to the creation of a culture in which carers are respected and recognised across the Health and Social Care system. We will celebrate and appreciate people who care, upholding their rights, and give make them feel seen and heard when accessing any services for themselves or their loved one.

Commitment Four: Carer awareness

To achieve this we will:

- Develop a carer awareness course, based upon the principles of our Making Every Contact Count (MECC) approach, that can be delivered to community groups, all front-line roles within the council and health and partner organisations.
- Improve our training offer for health and social care staff, which will set standards for adult and young carer assessments, implement the triangle of care, and make best use of tools such as the Carers Trust hospital discharge toolkit.

How will we know that we are fulfilling this commitment?

- Carer awareness training will be delivered to all front line council services, and available to NHS partner organisations and wide variety of community organisations.
- Carers will tell us they feel involved and consulted in conversations about care and support for their loved one.
- Carer awareness sessions are held throughout the year in Brent schools.

We see people as individuals with unique strengths, abilities, aspirations and requirements and value people's unique backgrounds and cultures

Think Local Act Personal 'we' statement

I have considerate support delivered by competent people

Think Local Act Personal 'I' statement

Commitment Five: Reaching into communities



Commitment Five: Reaching into communities



There are many people in Brent who we have not identified as being a carer. This means they may be missing out on vital universal support and information that could help them in their caring role.

Although not everyone will want, need or be eligible for support from social care services and/or other services, it is important that we do outreach work to make them aware of what they may be entitled to.

The census revealed that as of 2021, 22,800 people in Brent were providing care for others in Brent. Just 9,112 of these are known to their GP. 503 Adult Carers and 104 young carers were identified and supported by Brent's commissioned services, Brent Gateway Partnership, in 2022-23. Only 182 adult carers and 56 young carers had a statutory assessment in that year.

Statutory services cannot reach everyone, so we must ensure that we are promoting information in all our communities, and with all our partners. This means that it will reach all people who care, wherever they are, making them aware of the formal support available.

Nationally, 1/3 of carers start or stop caring in any given year, so it is vital that we reach into communities continuously.

Therefore, we will work with communities, health partners and commissioned providers to ensure we reach everyone who has a caring role.

Commitment Five: Reaching into communities

We will achieve this by:

- Changing the language, we use to make it more recognisable, encouraging people who care to seek information and advice at the earliest possible stage in their caring journey.
- Using our local offer to be clear about the benefits of being identified as a carer, to encourage people to come forward and utilise the services available to them.
- Developing a comprehensive communications campaign, that includes proactive provision of information in places carers will be able to access it, such as alongside certain benefits, or when collecting prescriptions for another person etc.
- Working with schools to improve identification of young carers and make sure they are linked in with services.
- Building better connections with community faith groups and raise awareness to disseminate information and identify carers.
- Improving access to local authority carers assessments.
- Building on the success of events such as the Health and Social Care Awards to develop more opportunities to celebrate carers and reduce stigma.
- Brent Council will build on our statutory duty to carers and will endeavour to routinely identify carers when they access services, assess impact on carers of any policy or service change, and monitor equality of access as we would for other groups who are known to experience inequalities.
- The Council and Health Partners will adopt a leadership role in setting a standard for recognising carers in the workplace; building a supportive staff network to raise their profile, and ensuring our policies reflect our commitment to flexibility and support for carers' wellbeing at work.

How will we know that we are fulfilling this commitment?

- Our Carers partnership forum will include a wide range of community and faith groups, who will disseminate information into their communities.
- The number of carers registered on health and social care systems increases year on year and is representative of all Brent communities.

Commitment Six: Supporting young carers at the start of their caring journey

Commitment Six: Supporting young carers at the start of their caring journey



The impact of providing care on young carers is significant. According to the census young carers in Brent are even more likely to come from deprived backgrounds than adults. They are also 9% less likely to have very good or good health when compared with their peers. Despite there likely being thousands of young carers in Brent, fewer than 100 carers were identified in the Schools census in 2023.

Therefore, we will work more closely with schools and GP surgeries to identify and support more young carers at the start of their caring journey.

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing engagement with the existing awareness programme to ensure that professionals across all agencies are confident to identify and refer young carers
- Target the programme particularly at teachers and healthcare professionals
- Establish communication channels and set up regular meetings so that information can be shared, and young carers identified quickly
- Developing a communications campaign and raising awareness amongst students at schools about the role of young carers and the support available to them

How will we know that we are fulfilling this commitment?

- We will see an increase in young carers undertaking a carers needs assessment
- We will repeat the Young Carers survey and see an increase in the number of young carers being identified by their teachers or GPs
- We will gather feedback from participants to understand the effectiveness of the awareness programme and associated training
- We will gain feedback from Young Carers to ensure their views continue to shape the support offer available to them

Our future pathway for people who care

Information

- Carers are given the practical information they need in order to carry out their caring role, such as information about the person they are caring for's condition, medication, and care plan, when to expect follow up, and who to contact if there is a problem
- Carers are told where they can find the universal carers resource, and they will be referred to universal services.

Note – some carers will not require an assessment and additional support. They are able to live well and independently in the community, utilising the rich array of universal services available to them in Brent.

Identification

- Carers are identified at the earliest possible stage of their role.
- Carers' details are consistently recorded on the identifier's system.
- Where necessary, we will share the individual's carer status with relevant services that they or the person they are caring for access.

Involvement

- Carers work in partnership with health and care workers. Their input and knowledge is valued and they are appropriately involved in discussions regarding the person they care for's care.

Support and review

- In addition to universal services, carers that meet the statutory criteria will have their own care and support plan, which will include respite if needed.
- All carers are offered an annual review.

Universal support services (can be accessed by anyone)

- Priority GP appointments
- Advice about benefits/ financial support
- Access to peer support and wellbeing activities
- Access to community respite
- Access to training and employment support

Assessment

- Carers are informed of their right to a statutory Carers Assessment, to assess their own needs.
- Assessments are carried out in a timely manner and at time convenient to the carer.

**How this
strategy
will be
monitored:**

How this strategy will be monitored

The Carers Partnership Forum will become an important part of the delivery mechanism for this strategy; bringing different parts of the health and care system together in a more comprehensive manner to deliver the collective improvements in the experience of unpaid carers.

We will also create a Carers Strategy monitoring group, with carers being directly involved in this, who will review our progress towards the goals set out in this document and hold us accountable for its delivery. This group will also play a key role in monitoring carers' services across the partnership. This will involve ensuring that the voices of carers and their lived experience in accessing services has a direct influence on contract monitoring and is used to continually improve services.

A Carers Engagement Officer will be recruited to support both of these initiatives, as well as delivering against the commitments of the strategy more broadly.

We will ensure that regular updates are provided at Carers forums, and will develop a short annual report, summarising our performance, achievements, challenges, and joint solutions, which will be given to the Health and Wellbeing Board, and made publicly available.

Glossary:

- “The 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC) approach encourages us all to have very brief conversations about health and wellbeing issues as part of the everyday contact we have with other people, and if appropriate, let them know where they can get further information or support.”
- “An Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) is a statutory committee jointly convened by Local Authorities and the NHS, comprised of a broad alliance of organisations and other representatives as equal partners concerned with improving the health, public health and social care services provided to their population.”
- “Adult social care covers a wide range of activities to help people who are older or living with disability or physical or mental illness live independently and stay well and safe.”
- A Carer’s assessment determines whether an individual is classed as a carer or not, and assesses what the council can do to support them if so.
- “The triangle of care is a partnership between professionals, the person being cared for, and their carers. It sets out how they should work together to support recovery, promote safety and maintain wellbeing.”
- CNWL – refers to the collection of services provided by the Central and North West London Trust, covering community, sexual health, mental health, health & justice and addiction services.
- London North West University Healthcare – Refers to the three North West London hospitals (Central Middlesex, Ealing and Northwick Park) that serve more than one million people. LNWH is also responsible for running sexual health services across Brent, Ealing, Harrow and Hillingdon. [ADD CLCH ROLE]