

**Strategic Commissioning and Investment
222 Upper Street
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Report of: Executive Member for Health and Social Care

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 18 April 2024

Ward(s): All

Subject: Islington's Adult Carers Strategy 2024 - 2030

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This is the first Islington Adult Carers Strategy in over 10 years.
- 1.2. The development of the Strategy and its implementation is a key deliverable for Adult Social Care in Islington's 2030 plan, driving a healthier Islington. Importantly this strategy is not just a Council strategy but a partnership strategy, endorsed and governed by the Islington Borough Partnership. Islington Borough Partnership includes the London Borough of Islington, North Central London Integrated Care Board, North London Mental Health Partnership, Whittington Health, University College London Hospitals, Islington GP Federation, Healthwatch Islington and representatives of the Islington Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 1.3. The strategy is the result of extensive collaboration across the partnership, at a time when partners are facing significant challenges and shows a strong commitment to working together to improve carer outcomes. It is a joint pledge from all interested parties in the borough to make Islington a more carer friendly borough.
- 1.4. Unpaid carers support family members or friends who have a physical disability or mental health needs, who cannot manage at home without help. A carer is someone of any age who provides care to someone who has a physical disability, a sensory impairment, a learning difficulty, mental health support needs, problems with drug or alcohol misuse, a long term or chronic illness, is an older person who is physically or mentally frail or any combination of these. The type of care they provide may range from personal care such as going to the toilet, washing and

feeding, to visiting, shopping and housework, mental health support and 24-hour care. Even if a carer receives Carer's Allowance for their caring role, they are still considered an unpaid carer.

- 1.5. Carers not only have a significant impact on the lives of the people they care for, they also make a major contribution to society. They are often supporting people to remain living at home preventing, reducing or delaying the need for statutory services. The value of unpaid care is equivalent to a second NHS in England and Wales, which in 2020/21 received an estimated £164 billion in funding (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023).
- 1.6. The strategy shows our commitments to unpaid carers in our local community including importantly employees in the borough who are unpaid carers.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To approve the strategy for publication, to launch during Carers' Week in June 2024.

3. Background

Strategic Vision

- 3.1. We want Islington to be a place where carers feel visible and acknowledged. It is important that carers are given the recognition they deserve for the crucial role they play in society. Investment in, and a focus on, carers is vitally important, ensuring carers have opportunities to enhance their strengths and wellbeing and can access the right support at the right time.

Approach

- 3.2. Adult Social Care has jointly led the development of the strategy with Age UK Islington, our strategic lead partner for unpaid carers.
- 3.3. Coproduction with carers has been at the heart of developing this strategy with 350 carers contributing through engagement activities and a carers reference group.
- 3.4. The strategy has also been developed in collaboration with key partners across the Council, health and voluntary and community sector.
- 3.5. We plan to launch the strategy during Carers Week in June 2024.

4. Priorities

- 4.1. The strategy, responding to what carers themselves have told us matters to them, focuses on 6 priorities:

- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Feeling supported
- Employment
- Respected as Experts
- Transition to Adulthood
- Communications and Access to information

4.2. Under each priority, partners have pledged several commitments.

4.3. Across all priorities and the accompanying commitments, partners recognise our responsibilities to:

- Identify – Take every opportunity to identify carers and inform them of where to access information, advice and support.
- Communicate – Use language that is non stigmatising and that could better identify someone who has a caring role.
- Understand – Understand the strengths and needs of carers and the impact caring can have on emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Promote – Promote the rights of carers; the support and opportunities available; and to recognise their expertise in the lives of the person they care for.
- Address inequalities – Islington is a vibrant and ethnically diverse borough. Carers will be equally diverse and the support should reflect this. We need to recognise and address the potential impact of caring on physical and emotional wellbeing, including carers with long term conditions. We also need to consider and address the digital exclusion some carers face.

5. Measuring Impact

5.1. We want to be the most carer friendly borough in England.

5.2. We will measure progress against each priority. We will use relevant questions from the biennial Survey of Adult Carers in England as a benchmark and will strive to be above London and England average. This captures insights from carers known to Adult Social Care only. Therefore, key partners will include the same set of questions in their annual survey of carers.

5.3. Performance indicators will include measures such as: overall satisfaction with services, quality of life, inclusion in discussions about the person carers care for, carers in employment who feel supported by their employer; and ease of access to information.

5.4. The Council is also developing its Wellbeing Index, a set of measures to monitor different factors that are important for a happy and healthy life and feeling connected in our community. The Index is still in development and will ensure a council wide approach to monitoring wellbeing outcomes for carers as part of measuring the strategy's impact. We will track improvements and identify areas for development across the borough partnership, to help us make further progress towards achieving our shared ambitions for and with carers.

6. Governance

6.1. An action plan will support the delivery of the strategy. This will be a live document that will be adapted over the life of the strategy.

- 6.2. The Council will have internal governance to hold all council departments to account in delivering their responsibilities as set out in the strategy and ensure we are delivering what is a key element of the Islington 2030 Delivery Plan.
- 6.3. There will also crucially be partnership governance. A Carers Partnership Board will drive and monitor progress of the strategy and a Steering Group of carers will hold partners to account. The Board's chair will rotate on an annual basis. The board will regularly report on progress to the Islington Borough Partnership where partners will challenge their organisations to ensure ongoing engagement and delivery.
- 6.4. The Carers Partnership Board will review the strategy in 2027/2028, sharing learning, and drawing on feedback from carers to drive further improvements.

7. Published format

- 7.1. The Adult Carers Strategy is a partnership strategy and is a pledge to Islington carers. Therefore, once the strategy is approved, it will be designed to support publication on not only the Council's website but also on partner websites. The format will also enable printed copies which will be available at the launch.

8. Implications

8.1. Financial Implications

- 8.1.1. The objective of this report is to gain approval for the proposed partnership strategy including council wide commitment, which aims to enhance the support for adult carers in Islington by working collaboratively with the council's strategic partners focussing on 6 priorities consisting of: Physical and emotional wellbeing, employment, feeling supported, transition to adulthood, respected as experts, and communications and access to information to create a more supportive environment for carers.
- 8.1.2. Islington Council has an established Carers Pooled budget arrangement with Islington Integrated Care Board (ICB) to deliver its Carers support service provision. The total gross budget allocated to the Carers pool amounts to £952,900 with the ICB contribution amounting to £95,000.
- 8.1.3. It is anticipated that the recommendations outlined in this document will not incur any extra financial burden on the Carers pool.
- 8.1.4. If any costs do arise, it is expected that they will be covered from existing budgets.

8.2. Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 The Care Act 2014 section 10 sets out the local authority's responsibilities to carers for adult members of the community.

Section 10 (1) (a) and (b), states that where it appears to a LA that a carer may have needs of care and support, now or in the future, the local authority must assess. The assessment is called a carer's assessment.

Where a carer refuses an assessment section 11 (5-7) applies. The LA is not required to carry out an assessment. However, a carer is entitled to request an assessment where previously they have refused.

Where a carer has refused a carers assessment *and* the LA is of the view that the carers needs have changed, the LA is required to carry out an assessment, but this is subject to any further refusal, (Section 11 (7)).

8.2.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 significantly strengthened the rights for parent carers and young carers up to the age of 18. They also recognised the need to improve young carers' transition to adulthood and work together to make sure the needs of the whole family are met and inappropriate or excessive caring by young carers is prevented or reduced. Young carers have a right to an assessment of their own needs under the Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015 which set out the criteria to be considered when an assessment is being undertaken.

8.3. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

8.3.1. The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

8.3.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment: Screening Tool was completed on 30 January 2024. The Equalities Impact Assessment is appended.

8.3.3. **Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

8.3.4. The presentation of these papers has minimal environmental implications acknowledging that the delivery of the Care Strategy itself will have a wide range of environmental implications that have not yet been considered

Appendices:

1. Islington Adult Carers Strategy
2. Equality Impact Assessment

Final report clearance:

Authorised by:

Cllr Nurullah Turan

Executive Member for Health and Social Care

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