

Adult Carers Strategy 2024 - 2030

Foreword

Cllr Turan

I am immensely proud that so many partners across the borough have come together, with you, carers, at the heart, to develop Islington's Adult Carers Strategy 2024-2030. The care you provide for family members, friends and neighbours makes such a significant difference to the lives of the individuals you support, you contribute so much to the lives of others, and I see first-hand the resilience and strength of so many carers in our borough. However, I'm also aware of how caring for others can affect your own wellbeing and how it can potentially make inequalities worse. I hope this strategy demonstrates how much the Islington Borough Partnership (which includes the Council, Integrated Care Board, Health Providers, voluntary and community partners) already does and how rich the offer is for carers, but despite this, there is more we can do. As a borough, it is important we come together to consider what we can do in our individual organisations and how we can work better together to improve the lives of carers, better recognise the contribution you make and make it easier for you in your caring roles. As carers, you come into contact with so many organisations and services. This strategy, coproduced with carers, recognises this. It shows the commitment across so many partners, from the Council and health partners to voluntary and community sector partners. I have high aspirations for what this partnership strategy can achieve, with and for carers.

Janet Burgess

As Islington Council's Carers' Champion, but also having been a carer myself, I am passionate about ensuring that carers are heard, are respected as experts and feel supported in their caring roles. I am delighted that carers have co-produced this strategy and that I was also personally actively involved in its development. You have told us what matters to you as carers, resulting in the six priority areas that the strategy will focus on over the coming months and years. No single organisation can deliver the best outcomes for carers on its own; the strength of this approach comes from the involvement of so many partners, with carers at the forefront. I'm looking forward to seeing how we can help more carers feel like Islington is a carer friendly borough.

Jackie – An Islington carer

"As an unpaid carer, I know how important it is for carers to get the support they need as caring can be very emotionally demanding. I was previously a carer for a friend who had suffered several strokes. He has sadly passed away, but I continue to be a carer for my daughter. I have been greatly supported by Islington Carers Hub but know that there is more that organisations can do to support carers. And that is why this strategy is so important. I am really delighted that this strategy has been developed with us, with carers. The monthly carers reference group meetings have covered many topics that are important to carers, and I am pleased the strategy

responds to these important topics. I hope this strategy will lead to more support for us in our caring roles. I look forward to seeing the new carers strategy for Islington in action”.

Executive Summary

The London Borough of Islington, with all partners in the Islington Borough Partnership want Islington to be a carer friendly borough for you, our residents with caring responsibility. Whether you are an adult supporting a friend or loved one, a parent looking after a child who has additional needs, or a young person who spends a lot of time looking after members of your family, we are committed to ensuring your own needs are looked after. Islington should be a place where you feel visible and acknowledged, have opportunities to enhance your strengths and wellbeing, and can access the right support at the right time.

The Islington Borough Partnership is committed to the aspirations in this strategy. For the Council, the development of this strategy and its implementation, is a key deliverable of Adult Social Care in Islington’s 2030 plan, driving a Healthier Islington. 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 and Sector. Members will continue to oversee delivery of the strategy, will ensure their organisations take responsibility for playing their part in delivering the strategy’s ambitions. Carers have been at the heart of this strategy as it has developed. Since 2021 over 350 carers have shared their experiences and told us about what matters to you.

A range of partners across the Council, NHS and Voluntary and Community Sector have listened to what matters to you, and have jointly developed the ambitions, priorities and commitments within the strategy.

Carers can access information and support from a broad range of organisations, including the [Islington Carers Hub](#), Islington Council, North London Mental Health Partnership, Whittington Health, General Practice and Islington voluntary and community sector organisations.

Despite the rich offer, we know there is more we can do together to improve the lives of carers in Islington. The strategy identifies 6 priorities, and the outcomes carers told us are important and our commitments to achieve these ambitions, a summary is below:

1. Feeling supported

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I understand the value of identifying as a carer and feel there are less obstacles in accessing support.
- I feel empowered with increased confidence and good self-esteem.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Increase the identification of carers and ensure support is more accessible.
- Promote the financial advice and support offered to carers to enable you to understand your financial entitlements and reduce financial pressures where possible.

- Review housing policies and procedures to identify opportunities to recognise and support your specific housing needs.
- Increase the volume and quality of personalised carer assessments to ensure you have timely access to the right support for you.
- We will establish a better offer for breaks and respite, making sure it is fair and based on each person's needs.

2. Physical and emotional wellbeing

Outcomes for carers for 2030:

- I have good health, mental and emotional wellbeing.
- I feel valued and respected for the vital role I play in society.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Enhance the emotional wellbeing offer that meets the diverse needs of carers.
- Ensure activities and support, including peer support, are delivered at flexible times, using both online and face to face approaches.
- Deliver a borough wide drive to improve physical activity and healthy nutrition for carers, including the promotion of discounted memberships for carers.
- Improve the ways we recognise and show appreciation for the contributions you make, including through a reward card for discounts in local shops.
- Ensure reviews (whether, for example, an ASC carers review or an NHS health check, or a carers hub wellbeing check) cover the impact of caring on physical and emotional health and that carers receive timely support to maximise their health and wellbeing.
- Pilot and share learning from peer support coaching opportunities for carers of people experiencing mental health issues.

3. Respected as Experts

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I feel valued and respected by professionals and have the expertise to undertake my caring role.
- I have an active role in the influencing of health and social care services, in the best interests of the person I care for.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Islington Council, North London Mental Health Partnership and Whittington Health will publish their commitment to Carers.
- Learn from other areas that successfully use the Hospital Discharge Toolkit for carers, with ambitions to adopt in Islington.
- Develop and deliver, with you, a training programme on a range of topics, including health conditions, medication management, and navigating the NHS.
- Develop and deliver, with you, carer awareness training for professionals.
- Home care providers will be expected to recognise your expertise as an unpaid carer and work in partnership with you to support the person you care for if they draw on home care.

- Learn from Carer Champions and Carer Leads in GP practices to share learning across the wider GP network and with other partners.

4. Employment

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I feel supported by my employer in relation to managing my caring responsibilities.
- I have improved access to educational and employment opportunities that I can participate in alongside my caring role.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Promote Islington's Adult Community Learning programme to carers, providing access to courses that can help develop interests and skills and help them stay or enter the workforce.
- Review materials for Islington employers regarding supporting employees with caring responsibilities and ensure they are accessible to employers and staff.
- Members of the borough partnership to share good practice on the support in place for staff who have caring responsibilities, including Carers' Staff Forums and Carers Champions/Leads.
- Create a best practice sharing network for all employers in the borough to encourage effective employment support.

5. Transition to Adulthood

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I, as a young carer turning 18, feel informed and supported as I move into adulthood.
- I, as carer of a young person with care needs turning 18, feel informed and supported during the transition period to adult services.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Improve the transitions pathway between child and adult services to better help young carers and carers of children moving to adult services.
- Improve the help for young carers by including support for transitions as a requirement of the service, when the Young Carers service is reprocured in 2024.
- Ensure that care experienced young people with caring responsibilities are supported and encouraged to take advantage of the adult carers' offer.

6. Communications and Access to information

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I have good access to information and advice to ensure I get the right support at the right time for me.
- I know my rights and entitlements, and what is available for me and those I care for.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Continue to invest in a digital offer for carers to access information, advice, and peer support.
- Develop an online information resource for carers and professionals to make it easier for them to find everything they need.
- Borough wide promotion of the right to a statutory Carers assessment and the benefits gained from this.
- Ensure GP practices have a good understanding of carer needs and challenges and the support available for carers in the borough and can signpost to appropriate carers for specific support.
- Establish a greater understanding of Islington carers who are not using traditional services, what your needs are and how to better meet your needs.
- Include carers as a distinct cohort in Adult Social Care's Inequalities work.
- Ensure Islington's Digital Exclusion to Inclusion working group has a particular focus on carers.
- Ensure Islington voluntary and community organisations have a good understanding of your needs and challenges and are able to signpost you to appropriate carer specific support.

We will measure progress against each priority.

Islington is committed to working in partnership to implement this strategy. The Carers Partnership Board will continue to deliver the strategy's commitments via an action plan setting out the actions partners will take and identifying any further opportunities to improve the lives of carers.

A Carers Steering Group will ensure carers drive and monitor progress of the strategy's commitments and will review the action plan. New members will be continually welcomed to join this group.

The Carers Partnership Board will regularly report on progress to the Islington Borough Partnership, members holding each other to account for delivering against the commitments set out in this strategy.

1. Our Shared Ambition for Carers

This strategy is supported by the Islington Borough Partnership, which includes senior representation from key public sector organisations in Islington, such as local NHS Trusts, GP practices as well as other representatives of Primary Care in the borough, Islington Council, Healthwatch Islington, and Age UK Islington.

We want Islington to be a carer friendly borough for you, our residents with caring responsibility.

If you are supporting a family member or friend who has a physical disability or mental health needs, who cannot manage at home without help, then you could be classed as an unpaid carer. 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 you 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 you receive Carer's Allowance for your caring role, you are still classed as an unpaid carer.

We are committed to ensuring your own needs are met. Islington should be a place where you feel visible and acknowledged.

It is important that carers are given the recognition you deserve for the crucial role you play in society whether you identify as a carer or not. It is important you have opportunities to enhance your strengths and wellbeing and can access the right support at the right time.

The NHS and the Council have a statutory responsibility to support carers through the Care Act 2014 and the Health and Social Care Act 2022.

The Care Act 2014 places a legal duty on local authorities to provide appropriate support that will maintain a carer's well-being. All carers (regardless of income) are entitled to an assessment of their needs. The assessment will consider what a carer wants to achieve in their own day-to-day life while also assessing whether the carer feels able or is willing to carry on caring, whether they work or want to work, and whether they want to study or do more socially.

The NHS Long Term Plan promises to maintain our focus on identifying and supporting carers and makes further pledges to ensure there is more support within the health system to support carers with emergencies, to provide extra support to young carers through better access to preventive health and social prescribing and timely referral to local support services, and to reduce health inequalities experienced by carers from excluded and marginalised communities.

The Health and Social Care Act 2022 further reinforced these pledges through the requirement on Integrated Care Systems to involve carers in decisions to change or develop a service and to ensure they are involved in the cared for person's treatment, diagnosis, and care. Carers also have important new rights at hospital discharge. NHS hospital trusts in England must ensure that unpaid carers are involved as soon as feasible when plans are made for a patient's discharge.

The Carer's Leave Act, coming into force in April 2024, will introduce a new and flexible entitlement of five of days unpaid leave per year for employees who have a dependant with a long-term care need.

This strategy shares similarities with the Council's Challenging Inequalities and Early Intervention and Prevention strategies. A greater focus on and understanding of carers and the challenges you and others face will support services to become more accessible, inclusive and address issues and barriers faced by our community. Ensuring the right support is available at the beginning and throughout someone's caring journey will build resilience in communities, prevent problems from occurring or reoccurring, and thereby improve quality of life. By examining the way in which we work together and provide support, we can, as a partnership, take advantage of meaningful and impactful opportunities to tackle inequalities throughout Islington.

This strategy reflects and links with the Camden and Islington Strategy for Young Carers 2015-2025.

Other local strategies that will support our ambitions for carers:

- Adult Social Care's vision for Islington
- Camden and Islington Strategy for Young Carers 2015-2025
- Islington Active Together Strategy 2022-2030
- Camden and Islington Parks for Health strategy 2022-2030
- Dementia Strategy 2024 – 2030 (in development) which will include a focus on carers of people with dementia
- North Central London Population Health and Integrated Care Strategy 2023
- Imagine Islington, Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023 – 2030
- Challenging Inequality Strategy – Our plan to create a fairer, more equal Islington
- Fairer Together – A strategy for early intervention and prevention in Islington.

2. Partnership approach

The voice of carers at the heart.

Carers have been at the heart of this strategy as it has developed. Since 2021, over 350 carers have shared their experiences and told us about what matters to them.

Carers shaped the development of a revised Islington Carers Hub offer, sharing their ideas and experiences. A programme of engagement activities was designed to ensure we reached a diverse range of carers across the borough. Activities included discussions at carer groups in the community, open Zoom sessions, the distribution of an online survey, and more structured focus groups. Health Watch Islington and Diverse Communities Health Voices have ensured the experiences of carers from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic groups and carers for whom English is not their first language were included. A focus group was created with interested carers who had engaged in the programme. We used the focus group to test the development of the service specification. The specification is outcome focused, and the focus group signed off all the outcomes and the other key focuses for the service. The focus group also co-produced the tender question, and one carer joined the procurement panel to help evaluate the tender responses.

In addition, there has been a wide range of engagement activities to help shape the strategy. These have included:

- 173 responses to a survey sent to 1075 Age UK Islington service users
- Phone interviews
- Coffee mornings and focus groups held at Community Centres – Jean Stokes, St Luke’s, Sotheby Mews, Brickworks
- Archway and District Carers' Support Group
- Age UK Islington Let’s Talk Peer Event
- Centre404 parent carer group
- Elfrida – On Your Marks event and Power and Control service user group
- Islington Pensioners’ Forum
- Carers Pathway Meeting
- Safeguarding Adults Board, Service User & Carer subgroup
- Gillespie Park Nature Walk

In addition to this extensive engagement with carers in a wide range of settings, a Carers Strategy Reference Group, facilitated by the Islington Carers Hub, has co-designed the strategy, meeting monthly to discuss the needs and wants of carers under each priority.

Carers Partnership Board

Progress towards a more carer friendly borough needs to be a shared objective that places carers at the heart, so a partnership approach has been taken to develop this strategy. A range of partners have jointly agreed and developed the ambitions, priorities, and commitments, responding to what carers have told us matters to them.

A multi-agency Carers Partnership Board, with representation from a wide range of partners, has identified the current offer for carers, 6 priorities, and the commitments that will enable us to achieve our ambitions for adult carers as well as young carers as they transition to adulthood:

Key partners

Council - Admission Avoidance and Hospital Discharge, Adult Social Care, Bright Start, Children’s and Families Services, Community Learning & Libraries, Councillor and Carers Champion, Council tenancies, Cultural Enrichment, Direct Payments, Disabled Children Service, Green Space and Leisure, Housing Needs, IMAX, SHINE, Islington Learning Disability Partnership, iWork, Organisational Development, Pupil Services, SEND Children’s Commissioning

Health – Carers Governor
University College London
Hospital, Integrated Care Board.
North London Mental Health
Partnership: Islington
Community Rehab Team,
Islington Intensive Teams,
Patient and Carer Experience
and Engagement, Services for
Ageing and Mental Health.
Whittington Health NHS Trust:
Adult Community Services, Self-
Management Team

Partners – Age UK
Islington, Alzheimer's
Society, Better Leisure,
Centre 404, DWP, Family
Action, Healthwatch
Islington, Islington Carers
Hub, Islington Mind,
Islington People’s Rights,
Mobilise, Smart Works,
Working for Carers

The strategy identifies 6 Priorities:

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

Islington Borough Partnership Board is committed to the aspirations in this strategy and will continue to oversee the delivery of the strategy. Members will ensure their organisations take responsibility for playing their part in delivering the strategy's ambitions.

3. Context – what is it like to be a carer?

Carers UK estimates that the total number of carers in the UK today is around 10.6 million, or 1 in 5 adults providing care. Carers support was valued at £530 million per day during the pandemic, exceeding the value of the NHS.

As carers, you provide life-changing support for the people you care for. Many of you have shared the pride and satisfaction you feel in your caring role, and the huge resilience and strengths you demonstrate. But we also know that caring can have a significant detrimental impact on your physical, mental, and financial health.

Some carers do not choose to be in a caring role but find that circumstances or expectations force them to fulfil this role.

Many people do not identify themselves as a carer for a wide variety of reasons. They may not realise they are caring; cultural issues and the feeling that the care they provide seems self-evident and necessary may all have an impact. Isolation, stigma, a sense of duty, and a lack of awareness of support for people with caring responsibilities may also be factors.

There are significant financial costs associated with caring, with carers often using their income or savings to pay for support services and care equipment. In response to the Carers UK 2022 online survey, 63% of carers noted they are extremely worried about managing monthly costs; 77% cited the cost of living as one of their main challenges; and 25% said they are cutting back on essentials such as food or heating.

While some caring roles are limited to several hours a day or week or for a temporary period, other caring roles become all-consuming, with carers having to relinquish paid employment or give up their own interests to be able to care for someone else. Many carers find their relationships impacted. For example, 29% of respondents to Carers UK's survey felt lonely often or always, 41% haven't taken a break from their caring role in the last year, and only 41% of respondents were identified as employed.

A high proportion of carers struggle with mental and physical health problems and experience low levels of wellbeing. 21% of respondents to Carers UK's survey noted their physical health was bad or very bad, and 30% noted their mental health was bad or very bad. Many carers may

not be getting the support they need, for example, 19% waited over a month for a GP appointment, and 34% were waiting for specialist treatment or assessment for over a year¹.

Islington Carer Population

Similar issues for carers nationally are reflected locally.

According to data from the 2021 Census, 15,000 residents in Islington provide unpaid care (7.2% of the population). 7,400 residents self-identify as providing 20+ hours of unpaid care per week, with 3,900 residents providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week.

The proportion and number of people providing unpaid care fell between 2011 and 2021, but unpaid carers tended to provide more hours of care in 2021. It is important to note that it is unlikely that the number of carers has reduced over the last 10 years; it is more likely that many carers have not identified themselves as carers in the census.

This is echoed in the recent publication by The Health Foundation which suggests one reason nationally only 8% of carers are currently making contact with local authority services for support: is low levels of carer identification. This suggests that few carers appreciate their status, eligibility, and even the impact caring has on them. The publication also cites carers' perception that the typical support available is not attractive or impactful to them as another reason for low up take². In Islington, according to the most recent carers survey, 43.9% of carers surveyed had used information and advice services to help with their caring role in the last 12 months³. It is worth noting that there is more that can be done to ensure service meets the diverse needs of Islington carers.

More information can be found in the [Adult Carers in Islington - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2022](#).

4. Current support – what is already available for carers in Islington?

The borough already has a broad range of services and support available for carers, delivered by a wide variety of organisations, as outlined below. Further details can be found on the [Islington Carers Hub website](#), [the Council website](#), and the [online directory](#).

Islington Carers Hub

Islington Carers Hub provides advice, information, and support to all carers aged 18 or over who live or work in Islington or care for someone living in Islington. The Carers Hub also offers carer assessments and reviews for carers of people not known to Adult Social Care or for carers of people who have been discharged from Islington mental health services for over a year. They do this either directly or through their work with other organisations. The Hub acts as

¹ State of Caring 2022, A snapshot of unpaid care in the UK, <https://www.carersuk.org/policy-and-research/state-of-caring-survey>

² The Health Foundation, Understanding unpaid carers and their access to support, April 2023, [Understanding unpaid carers and their access to support - The Health Foundation](#)

³ Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) 2021-22, [Microsoft Power BI](#)

a one stop shop for carers in the borough and offers up to two years of support for people once their caring role has ended. Islington Carers Hub provides strategic leadership on Carers' issues across the local health, social care, private, and voluntary sectors.

A digital offer provided by Mobilise, enables carers to access information and connect with others for peer support online, including connecting with carers who live beyond Islington but share similar experiences, strengths, ideas and challenges.

The Hub promote Direct Payments which enable carers, who have been assessed as needing care and support, to choose and arrange the care or support themselves.

[Islington Carers Hub services](#)

- Information pack about the kinds of help for carers in Islington
- Advice and Information sessions at a range of venues
- Support groups for carers to meet and share ideas
- Programme of activities, social connection and training opportunities
- Counselling, delivered in partnership with Islington Mind
- Help with getting the Carers Emergency Card
- Flexible Breaks Fund
- A quarterly newsletter called Carers News
- Events and activities like Carers Rights Day
- Carers Assessments
- Promotion of the right to a statutory Carers Assessment and the benefits gained from this
- Support with benefit claims to maximise income
- Information on carers rights, including rights as employees
- Carers Providers Forum to share updates and good practice

The Council

The Council delivers a range of direct support for carers and invests in support and services for carers, delivered primarily through the Islington Carers Hub. The Council promotes information to carers through the Council webpages and the online directory, bringing together information on the different types of support available for carers.

Adult Social Care offers carer assessments and reviews. Residents are entitled to an adult social care carer's assessment if they are over 18 and provide unpaid care to someone over 18 living in Islington. The person they care for doesn't need to be getting support from social services. The assessment shows if there's extra support that can make caring easier, for example, respite, carer groups, benefits advice, and a carer emergency card. The Council promotes Direct Payments as a way of giving choice and control to carers to choose and arrange any care and support they need, themselves. An assessment and review should happen at least once a year, or when there are any major changes to circumstances.

We work with carers to ensure there is a contingency plan in place in the case of emergencies and also to plan respite. We will, when needed, provide short term respite to someone when there is a crisis in their home arrangements, for example, if the carer is admitted to the hospital.

Adult Social Care professionals have access to continued professional development opportunities to improve awareness of Carers Assessments including training that is co-designed and delivered in partnership with the Islington Carers Hub.

Housing offers targeted information to support the carers of Council tenants who need to move into residential care.

iWork offers an information and guidance service to all residents seeking employment and will seek to identify the best possible local partner from within the Islington Working Partnership, for any residents seeking ongoing support. Residents are invited to register with the Islington Working Portal and the Islington Working Bulletin, to ensure they don't miss any one off offers or good local jobs.

Adult Community Learning works in partnership with the voluntary and community sectors to provide a network of neighbourhood learning centres across the borough. The service offers a range of free courses for eligible carers who would like to improve their skills and life chances.

Bright Start Islington provides support for carers with children under 5 in finding registered childcare and early education providers in Islington and help paying for childcare.

Children's Services jointly commissions with Camden Council a carer support service for children and young people who have a caring responsibility for a family member. Further details below in voluntary and community care section.

The Council provides a range of support to employees who are carers. This includes:

- Promotion of part-time roles and flexible working to make employment opportunities more accessible to carers. The Council's Special Leave Policy exceeds the minimum requirements in the Carer's Leave Act coming into force in April 2024.
- A Carers Staff Forum to receive and share advice, information and experiences. It gives colleagues who are (or used to be) carers the opportunity to have an impact on council policies and practices and to seek advice on their rights as carers.

NHS

Primary Care

General Practice (GPs) come into contact with all Islington residents and, through the primary care services they provide, come into contact with carers and provide support to address physical and mental health needs.

GP practices have information about the Islington Carers Hub to signpost patients to support, should they inform their GP practice they are a carer.

GP practices promote access to vaccinations for carers, including the COVID vaccine and flu vaccine.

Social prescribers based within General Practice support a wide range of residents, and where someone shares they are a carer, they are supported to access the Carers Hub.

Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, part of the North London Mental Health Partnership (NLMHP)

NLMHP has 6 Service User and Carer Governors who are elected by Service User and Carer members of the Trust. Governors provide a voice for members/local people and help ensure that the Trust Board is accountable to local people.

There is a Patient and Carer Experience and Engagement Team that supports and develops effective service user and carer engagement and understands and learns from their experiences.

Carers can join the Trust Involvement Register, which shares opportunities for carers to be involved in contributing to service design. An example is the Carer's Partnership Group, which brings together carer representatives, Carers Leads and local partners, including the Islington Carers Hub, to share good practice, opportunities, and challenges in supporting carers well and as equal partners. Carers can also receive regular information about support offers for them and updates about the work of the NLMHP.

The Trust is collaborating with local third sector organisations, including Islington Carers Hub, to pilot a Carer Peer Support Coach role with our inpatient hospital wards and local community services for older people.

The Recovery College provides co-produced recovery-focused courses that can help carers think about their own health and wellbeing, as well as gain an understanding of some health conditions.

Services for ageing and mental health support carers of people living with Dementia. This includes:

- Ongoing reviews – a step-up / step-down approach between nurses and navigators; a proactive model of support to the person with dementia and their carer.
- 'Living Well With Dementia': one session support and signposting group with carers hub.
- Cognitive Stimulation Therapy: group or individual sessions at home with carer.

Hospital settings offer carer support groups, dedicated carer information boards, and have carer champions on each ward. There is a co-produced Carer/Visitor experience survey to collect feedback from carers.

All services collect feedback from carers via the Friends and Family Survey, and some community setting services also offer carer support groups and one-to-one support. Examples include the Islington Recovery and Rehabilitation Service Carers Forum, the Veterans Service Carers and Family Support, and Early Intervention Service.

Better Lives Family Service supports carers affected by someone's alcohol or drug use.

There is a staff network for people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and caring responsibilities, which offers a safe space for peer support for employees of the Trust who are also carers.

Whittington Health NHS Trust

Whittington Health has a Carers Charter, which offers four simple but necessary components to improving the experience of carers. These centre on:

1. Providing a relaxed visiting policy so you can be with your loved one when they need it most.
2. Keeping you informed of what we are doing or planning to do.
3. Looking after you and checking in with you.
4. Carers Card

Training on long-term conditions is provided for both patients with long-term conditions and their carers; around 208 carers attend annually. Dementia care plans — ‘What matters to me’ include support for carers.

Further information can be found at [Carers \(whittington.nhs.uk\)](https://whittington.nhs.uk/carers).

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UCLH) recognises and values the vital role that carers play in the health and wellbeing of the people they care for. They aim to encourage the active involvement and respectful treatment of carers and are committed to ensuring that carers are supported throughout their time at UCLH.

UCLH aims to:

- Help to identify and support carers.
- Recognise the positive contribution that carers can make to a patient's stay in the hospital, improving the patient experience, promoting wellbeing, and supporting the discharge process.
- Enable a relaxed visiting policy to allow carers to be with their loved ones when it matters most.
- Provide designated support in high volume areas such as care of the elderly and our learning disability community.

Voluntary and community sector organisations

Many voluntary and community organisations in Islington have specialist services for carers or that can support carers. For example.

- Centre 404 Parent Carer and Family Carers Group offers person-centred support to people with learning disabilities and autism, and their families.
- Islington Mind Mother to Mother carers support project offers support to mothers whose children have mental health problems.

Islington & Camden Young Carers service, delivered by Family Action, works with young carers, their families, and professionals, offering whole family support, advice, guidance, and resources. Young Carers service and Islington Carers Hub work together to support transitions.

5. Priorities

Despite the rich offer, we know there is more we can do together to improve the lives of carers in Islington.

This strategy focuses on 6 priority areas, as outlined below:

7. Feeling supported

“I am worried about my ability to care for my wife, I had Bell’s Palsy recently and was worried that I would not be able to provide 24-hour care if I were to become unwell. I am concerned about what the future holds for me and my wife”.

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I understand the value of identifying as a carer and feel there are less obstacles to accessing support.
- I feel empowered with increased confidence and good self-esteem.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Increase the identification of carers across the health, social care, and voluntary, and community sectors, and ensure support is more accessible for all carers living in Islington. Islington Council, key voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, and NHS providers in the borough will use terms such as ‘looking after’ or ‘helping another person’ to help people better recognise their caring roles. There will be a shift in language and thinking away from the idea of ‘service provision’ and towards supporting you to live the life you want. Learnings from this approach will be shared with other organisations in the borough partnership.
- Promote the financial advice and support offered to carers to enable you to maximise your income, ensuring you have access to your financial entitlements and reducing financial pressures where possible.
- Review housing policies and procedures to identify opportunities to recognise and support your specific housing needs.
- Increase the volume and quality of personalised carers assessments and reviews to ensure you have timely access to the right support for you.
- Continue to offer carers who need it, respite from the caring role, including a flexible break offer. We will establish a clearer offer for respite and breaks, ensuring the offer is equitable and based on individual needs.

8. Physical and emotional wellbeing

“I have been involved in carers groups in Islington for last 7 years. To hear experience of others and realise what is happening to you is not a unique experience is reassuring”.

“It would be nice if someone acknowledges the amount of work and time given to the people we care for”.

Outcomes for carers for 2030:

- I have good health, mental and emotional wellbeing.
- I feel valued and respected for the vital role I play in society.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Enhance the emotional wellbeing offer that meets the diverse needs of carers.
- Ensure activities and support, including peer support, are delivered at flexible times, using a hybrid approach of both online and face-to-face, to fit around your caring responsibilities and other commitments.
- Deliver a borough wide drive to improve physical activity and healthy nutrition for carers, including the development and promotion of discounted memberships for carers.
- Improve the ways we recognise and show appreciation for the contributions you make, including through a reward card for discounts in local shops.
- Ensure reviews (whether, for example, an ASC (Adult Social Care) carers review, an NHS health check, or a carers hub wellbeing check) ensure the impact of caring on physical and emotional health is understood, and carers receive timely support to maximise health and wellbeing.
- Pilot and share learning from peer support coaching opportunities for carers of people experiencing mental health issues.

9. Respected as Experts

“I am a carer for my neighbour, but don’t feel respected as an advocate by health and social care professionals as I am not their next of kin”.

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I feel valued and respected by professionals, and I have the expertise to undertake my caring role.
- I have an active role in influencing health and social care services, in the best interests of the person I care for.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Key partners, including Islington Council, the North London Mental Health Partnership, Whittington Health, and AUKI, will publish their commitments to carers and provide reassurance that your perspective is valued, and your expertise recognised.
- Learn from other areas that successfully use the Hospital Discharge Toolkit for carers, with ambitions to adopt in Islington.
- Co-develop and deliver, with you, a training programme for carers on a range of topics, including health conditions, medication management, and navigating the NHS.
- Co-develop and deliver carer awareness training for professionals, embedding this practice in continued professional development for all professionals working in Islington.
- Home care providers will be expected to recognise your expertise as an unpaid carer and work in partnership with you to support the person you care for if they draw on home care.

- Learn from Carers Champions and Carers Leads in GP Practices to share learning across the wider GP network and with other partners.

10. Employment

“My employer is flexible and understands that I sometimes need to take calls about my husband’s care when I am at work. This makes a huge difference to me and means I can do my job and care for my husband”.

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I feel supported by my employer in relation to managing my caring responsibilities.
- I have improved access to educational and employment opportunities that I can participate in alongside my caring role.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Promote Adult Community Learning programme to carers, providing access to courses that can help develop interests and skills and help them stay or enter the workforce.
- Review the materials designed for Islington employers, which provide guidance on supporting employees with caring responsibilities. We will make these easily accessible for both you and your employer.
- Members of the borough partnership to share good practice on the support in place for staff who have caring responsibilities, including Carers’ Staff Forums and Carers Champions/Leads.
- Create a best practice sharing network for all employers in the borough to encourage effective employment support.

11. Transition to Adulthood

“Most people are born with a blank sheet as their life starts building up, but the sheet starts wearing out. A young carer’s life is worn out and scuffed from the stress of looking out for who they are looking out for. The young carer may love the person they care for, but it does not lessen the strain put upon this life and mind”.

“Life as a young carer can consume you and your thoughts to the point that life is a blur around you; every day is just a set of motions, false emotions and you just can’t engage with anything other than the worry of caring”.

Outcomes for carers by 2030:

- I, as a young carer turning 18, feel informed and supported as I move into adulthood.
- I, as carer of a young person with care needs turning 18, feel informed and supported during the transition period to adult services.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Improve the transitions pathway between child and adult services to better help young carers and carers of people transitioning to adult services. This will include a comprehensive information offer to help you develop an understanding of Transitions and what to expect, and clear responsibilities for services involved in the Transitions period.

- Enhance the young carer support offer to include support with Transitions, when the Young Carers service is reprocurd in 2024.
- Ensure that care experienced young people with caring duties are supported and encouraged to take advantage of the adult carers' offer.

12. Communications and Access to information

“We are currently managing but aware a time will come when Mum needs more support. Unsure how this would integrate with care provided by the family. A leaflet for family carers would be useful. Mum is resistant to having more support and knowing what is on offer would help”.

Our ambition for 2030:

- I have good access to information and advice to ensure I get the right support at the right time for me.
- I know my rights and entitlements, and what is available for me and those I care for.

Our commitments to achieve this:

- Continue to invest in the digital offer for carers to access information, advice, and peer support.
- Develop an online information resource for carers and professionals to make it easier for them to find everything they need.
- Borough wide promotion of the right to a statutory Carers Assessment and the benefits gained from this. As minimum, this will be prominent on Islington Directory, Islington Carers Hub and partners websites.
- Ensure GP Practices have a good understanding of carer needs and challenges and the support available for carers in the borough and can signpost to appropriate carers specific support.
- Establish a greater understanding of Islington carers who are not using traditional services, what your needs are and how to better meet your needs.
- Include carers as a distinct cohort in Adult Social Care's Inequalities work.
- Ensure Islington's Digital Exclusion to Inclusion working group has a particular focus on carers.
- Ensure Islington voluntary and community organisations have a good understanding of your needs and challenges and are able to signpost you to appropriate carer specific support.

6. Measuring impact

We want to be able to measure progress against each priority. The Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) has been developed to learn more about whether services received by carers are helping them in their caring role and their life outside of caring. The survey is carried out every 2 years and is distributed to carers known to the Council. In 2021/22 the SACE was distributed to 831 carers, and 208 carers responded, giving an overall response rate of 27%.

We have benchmarked ourselves against the 2021/22 Survey. Our ambition is for Islington to score above the London and England average. It is worth noting that this will only provide

insights into carers that are known to Islington Council. Therefore, in addition, key partner organisations who have responsibilities towards carers will include the same set of questions in their annual survey of carers. This will enable us to track improvements and identify areas for development across the borough partnership, helping us make further progress towards achieving our shared ambitions for and with carers.

Priority area	Ambitions for carers by 2030	Measures we will use to assess impact of the strategy	Benchmark (from the 2021/2022 Survey for Adult Carers) – Islington responses
Feeling supported	I understand the value of identifying as a carer and will feel there are less obstacles in accessing support. I feel empowered with increased confidence and good self-esteem.	Satisfaction with services Feel support respects their background, identity, culture and beliefs culturally sensitive Support based on needs and wishes as a carer	31% carers reporting an overall satisfaction with social services was which is similar to London and England averages (32% and 36% respectively). Islington ranks 18th across 32 London boroughs.
Physical and emotional wellbeing	I have good health, mental and emotional wellbeing. I feel valued and respected for the vital role you play in society.	Quality of Life Social contact	Carers quality of life score ⁴ - 7.1 (out of 12) Islington ranks 13 th across 32 London boroughs 29% of carers reported they had as much social contact as they would like. Islington is similar to London and England averages (28%). Islington ranks 9 th across 32 London boroughs
Respected as Experts	I feel valued and respected by professionals and have the expertise to undertake their caring role. I have an active role in the influencing of health and social care services, in the best interests of the person you care for.	Included in discussions about the person carers care for. Carers' views listened to and acted on.	60% felt included in discussions about the person they care for which is similar to London and England (61% and 65% respectively). Islington ranks 16 th across 32 London boroughs.
Employment	I feel supported by my employer in relation to managing my caring responsibilities if in employment. I have improved access to educational and employment opportunities that I can participant in alongside my caring role.	In paid employment and feel supported. Self-employed and able to balance work and caring responsibilities	12.8% of carers are in paid employment and feel supported by their employer which is quite similar to London and England averages (13.8% and 11.7% respectively). 7.1% of carers are in paid employment and do not feel supported by their employer which is similar to London and England averages (5.2% and 4% respectively). 4.1% of carers are self-employed and feeling able to balance work and caring responsibilities which is similar to London and England

⁴ Quality of life is a score made up of answers from around 6 questions.

			averages (3.3% and 2.9% respectively). 32.1% of carers are not in paid employment for other reasons (e.g. Retired) which is lower than London and England (42.9% and 54.7% respectively).
Transition to Adulthood	I, as a young carer turning 18, feel informed and supported as I move into adulthood. I, as carer of a young person with care needs turning 18, feel informed and supported during the transition period to adult services.		A measure will be developed to capture carers' and carers of young people's experience of transition to adult services.
Communications and Access to information	I have good access to information and advice to ensure I get the right support at the right time for me. I know my rights and entitlements, and what is available for me and those I care for.	Ease of access to information Access to the internet and email. What carers use to find information and advice about support, services or benefits.	56% found it easy to access information about support which is similar to London and England (52% and 58% respectively). Islington ranks 11th across 32 London boroughs.

7. Making it happen – leadership and governance

Islington is committed to continue a coproduced approach to implementing this strategy. A Carers Partnership Board will be established to deliver the strategy's commitments via an implementation plan setting out the actions partners will take and identifying any further opportunities to improve the lives of carers.

A Carers Steering Group will ensure carers drive and monitor the progress of the strategy's commitments and will review the action plan. New members will be continually welcomed to join this group.

An action plan, aligned to the priorities, commitments, and outcomes of this strategy, with clear actions, lead roles responsible for each action, and target dates. The Carers Partnership Board will regularly report on the progress of the implementation plan to the Islington Borough Partnership. The Carers Partnership Board will review the strategy in 2027/2028, sharing learning, and drawing on feedback from carers to drive further improvements.