

# A multi-agency strategy for carers in Camden 2007-2010

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# 1. Introduction

In Camden there are approximately 15,000 adult carers. These carers provide care and support to adults or children who have physical or learning disabilities, are frail, have mental ill-health or alcohol or drug dependency. The care that carers in Camden provide is estimated to be equivalent to at least £173.9 million a year. (CarersUK 2005)

Providing care can have a substantial impact on a carer's current and future quality of life. Carers are twice as likely to suffer physical or mental ill-health as a peer with no caring responsibilities. The negative impact of caring on health and economic well-being is well documented both during the period that people are providing care and after caring responsibilities have ceased.

Future demographic changes will more than likely lead to an increase in the number of carers in Camden. It is predicted that by 2037 the number of carers nationally will have risen from the current 5.7 million to 9 million. One in three of us can expect to become a carer at some point in our lives; carers are more and more becoming part of the wider community.

In Camden around 37% of the caring population changes every year, either because carers begin or cease to provide care or support for someone. (CarersUK 2006) New carers need access to information and a range of services to support them in the caring role. At the same time, carers who cease to care may need training opportunities to help them think about returning to employment or assistance to help them adjust to a life beyond caring. By supporting carers we can prevent some of the health problems brought on by the caring role, we can enable carers to balance work, education and training with the caring role and promote carers' economic well-being now and in the future.

This strategy aims to meet the need for information, support and opportunities for carers regardless of the stage they are at in their caring life and also ensure that carers are seen as individuals in their own right with a right to active healthy lives and opportunities to a life beyond caring.

In 2003 we worked with carers and partner organisations to develop the first Carers Strategy for Camden. The strategy was our statement of how we intended to support carers in Camden. (Outcomes and improvements related to the *Camden carers strategy 2004–06* can be found in Appendix 1). During the latter half of 2006 we consulted with Camden carers again to review the strategy and to develop further the priorities for the future. The results of the consultation and of a postal Camden carers survey 2006/07 are included in this *Camden Carers Strategy 2007-10*. We have also consulted with Young Carers and agencies involved in the support of young people to produce a separate *Young Carers Strategy 2007/10*.

National policy guidance recommends multi-agency support for carers with collaborative partnerships between the local authority, primary care trust and voluntary Sector. It also recommends partnership working with the local

private sector. For the purpose of this strategy 'partner organisations' include the local authority, primary care trust and local voluntary sector

## **2. Aims and objectives**

The *Camden carers strategy 2004 –06* made a clear commitment to support carers to enable them to continue to care and have a life of their own beyond caring. The Carers Strategy 2007–10 builds on the work already done and expands the key aims and objectives. These are to:

- build a strategy that responds to local needs analysis and to key issues identified by carers both locally and nationally
- implement carers' legislation and relevant national policy and the forthcoming national carers strategy
- focus on prevention and early interventions to maintain carers' independence, health and access to life opportunities
- work with partners in health, the local authority and the third sector to ensure services and opportunities for carers are developed within a collaborative framework
- direct the use of the carers' grant and other resources available to support carers
- ensure that services are accessible to carers from all communities regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation.

## **3. Definition of a carer in Camden**

A carer is the name given to a parent, relative, partner, friend or neighbour who looks after or feels responsible for looking after someone else who needs help with ordinary living. Being a carer disrupts what most of us expect from ordinary life.

A carer may be providing practical or personal care, or may make sure that the person they support does not come to any harm. Carers support people in many different situations, such as those with long-term illness, those with emotional and mental distress, older people who are frail, people with learning difficulties, children with a wide range of special needs, adults and children with physical or sensory impairments, people dependent on alcohol or drugs and people who are suffering as a result of their experiences in war or famine, torture or abuse.

A carer may live with or near to the person they are helping. A carer may, however, live some distance away but still provide care that causes disruption to their life. A carer may share the responsibility of care with others, or they may be the sole carer.

## **4 Demographics**

### **4.1 Profile of carers In Camden**

The 2001 census collected data about the number of carers and their caring responsibility, health and employment. From the data currently available from the census, we can start to piece together a more detailed picture of carers in Camden:

- 8% of Camden's population have recorded themselves as carers, but in some wards such as Highgate and Regent's Park 10% of the population are carers
- of the Camden population over 60 years of age, 11.5% are carers, often living with the person they care for
- There are 15,526 carers recorded in Camden
- 2,600 carers provide care for more than 50 hours a week: an additional 1,800 carers are providing more than 20 hours' care per week
- 20% of carers in Camden are over 60 (3,100 carers). Of these carers, nearly a third report that they are in poor health
- carers who provide high levels of care are more than twice as likely to be suffering ill-health as someone of the same age with no caring responsibilities. Those carers at particular risk of ill-health are those living in the same household as the person they care for
- 630 carers (4%) are 18 years of age and under with more than 50% of these between 5 and 16 years of age
- 6.3% of all 16 and 17 year-olds in Camden provide some care
- approximately 14 per cent of carers are parents providing care for a disabled child or young adult. In Camden this is equivalent to 2,100 carers. Many of these carers will be caring for a child with more severe or profound disabilities
- 60% of carers in Camden are economically active. Many of these carers are combining full-time work with caring responsibilities
- based on the number of carers in Camden and the average weekly hours they care, CarersUK calculated that the replacement cost of carers in Camden to health and social care would be £173.9 million per year. (CarersUK 2004).

## **Demographic trends and impact of carers in Camden**

### **Mental health of older people**

Information on the prevalence of dementia indicates that there are approximately 1,400 older people with dementia in Camden. The Mental Health Needs Index indicates that Camden has one of the highest needs for mental health services in London, and suggests that over 3,000 older people will experience depression or anxiety.

### **Learning disabilities**

People with learning disabilities are generally living longer and there is expected to be an increase in the number of people with learning disabilities who are aged over 50 years. Many are cared for by ageing parents. In addition there are more children surviving into adulthood with severe and complex needs and they require high levels of support from both services and family.

### **Increasing proportion of carers from minority ethnic communities**

The percentage of older people from minority ethnic communities in Camden is expected to increase; we can expect a corresponding increase in carers from minority ethnic communities. Some of the most vulnerable carers in terms of health inequalities nationally are carers from the Bangladeshi community. This is Camden's largest minority ethnic community and someone from a Bangladeshi community is 2.5 times more likely to become a carer than their white counterpart (ONS 2003).

### **Number of older adults supported to live at home.**

More older people are choosing to be supported at home rather than living in care homes or hospitals; this is likely to have an impact on the numbers of carers who will provide increasing levels of care for longer periods. Many older people are supported by someone who lives within the home. Carers who live with the 'cared for' person are more likely to provide more than 50 hours of care per week and are consequently more likely to have their own health problems.

### **Increase in number of women in the workforce**

70% of women work, 55% in full time employment. Approximately 15 % of working women are carers. Many women will have to balance caring for children and older relatives with employment. Carers with multiple responsibilities are particularly vulnerable to mental distress and associated health problems.

## **5. Legislation and national guidance**

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 came into force in April 2005. It requires that carers be informed of their right to a carers assessment; that work, education, training and leisure be considered when a carer is assessed; and gives local authorities some limited power to enlist the help of health housing, education and other departments in providing support to carers.

In 2006 the Department of Health published the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'. This sets out the government's vision for integrated health and social care provision. Within the paper the government announced a 'New Deal for Carers'. This pledges a new national information service for carers, an expert carers' training programme, emergency respite services and a complete review of the National Carers Strategy 1999. Other provisions within the White Paper that will benefit carers include NHS life checks, improved end of life care, support for people with long term needs and their carers, and information prescriptions to help signpost people to further information about their health conditions.

From April 2007 the Work and Families Act 2006 introduced new rights for working carers. This includes the right to request flexible working conditions. These might include working reduced hours or working the same hours but in a different pattern. Flexible working may be the difference between giving up work and continuing in employment. Employers must give consideration to any requests for flexible working and give good reason if the request is refused.

The Childcare Act 2006 will require local authorities to take reasonable steps to secure enough childcare in their area in order that parents of disabled children can take up or remain in work or enter vocational training. Councils are also required to provide information to parents about the availability of these services.

### **The State of Social Care Report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection, 2006**

In assessing which councils are implementing a strategic approach to meeting the needs of carers, the Commission looked for evidence of:

- a multi-agency carers' strategy in place
- an identified social service carer lead
- a corporate approach within the council, displaying a shared ownership of the carers' agenda.

A revised National Carers Strategy is being developed and is likely to be published in 2008. The action plan for Camden carers strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the local strategy reflects the direction of the National Carers Strategy.

## **6. Delivering the strategy**

The Camden carers strategy is a multi-agency document that states the direction of travel for all partner agencies and organisations. It is intended that all agencies adopt the broad aims and objectives of the strategy. However each agency has differing responsibilities to carers and may produce its own action plan that sets out how it will deliver specific aims and objectives. The carers strategy and commissioning group meets every two

months and has the responsibility for agreeing the annual action plans for each year, overseeing the implementation of the strategy and monitoring progress throughout the year. We anticipate that partner agencies will report back to this group every four months with updates on their progress.

## **7. Finances**

Since 1999, Camden Council has received a specific carers' grant that has been used to increase both carers services and breaks from caring. The carers grant for 2007/08 is £1.275 million. The current allocation of the carers grant will cease in March 2008. Notification on the future of the carers grant is expected as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in autumn 2007. Although there is a suggestion that carers' services will be mainstream-funded in the future there is no indication that the overall allocation will cease or reduce. In fact the carers' grant has increased during 2007/08 to accommodate the development of emergency support for carers. This strategy assumes that the allocation of resources will broadly be maintained during the three-year period of the strategy.

## **8. Areas for development**

### **8.1. Identification, recognition and respect**

#### **Objectives**

All partner agencies in Camden should be able to identify carers and signpost them to appropriate and accessible information, advice or support and assessment.

All partner agencies should recognise and respect the role of carers as partners in care

Carers will be able to identify themselves as 'carers' so that they can access appropriate support and advice

All 'regular and substantial' carers in contact with social care services will be informed of their right to their own assessment and the assessment will consider the impact of caring on all aspects of their life.

#### **What carers say**

- In a 2007 national survey of carers, recognition by professionals was carers' number one priority for change. (CarersUK 2007)
- Many carers do not think of themselves as carers and see themselves as family, friends or neighbours. These carers are often late to identify their

caring role and as a result lack support, access to advice services and financial support.

- The term 'carer' is often used to identify paid 'care workers' and this can cause confusion for carers.
- Carers in Camden ask that they be treated with respect by all agencies regardless of whether these are statutory, voluntary or private agencies.
- Carers want to be acknowledged and treated as 'partners in care' by all agencies.
- In a 2006 survey of carers in Camden , almost half of the carers responding considered a carers' assessment to be the most important support to carers.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- Approximately 90 social care, mental health staff have received carer awareness and assessment training since September 2005.
- We commissioned Camden Carers Centre to:
  - work with the primary care trust to develop a protocol for the identification and recording of carers in GP practices. They also provided the practices with carers information packs to support appropriate signposting
  - provide family and carer support in local hospitals. They identified and supported more than 300 carers in 2006/07 with accessing respite, benefits, training and counselling. These workers are also assisting in carer awareness training for staff in the hospitals
  - develop links with Asian, African and Caribbean organisations to support identification of carers. Links have been made with Bangladeshi, Indian, Somali, Eritrean and Ethiopian carers. Work is also under way with organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers
- We also commissioned carer support services for mental health and learning disability and substance misuse carers to assist in identification, signposting and participation.
- Three older people's resource centres are funded to identify and provide information and support to carers of older people; this includes a service specifically for the Bangladeshi community.
- almost 1000 carers were offered a carer's assessment by social care workers in 2006/07. Only 42 carers refused the offer of an assessment.
- Camden's performance on outcomes for carers following assessment falls into the 'good' banding.

### **Key actions for 2007-10**

- Identify carer's champions in the council and primary care trust.
- Work with partners to establish carer leads who will champion carer issues within their service.
- Continue the programme of carers' awareness training for statutory services staff.

- Develop carers' awareness programmes for the voluntary sector and commissioned services such as home care workers to support recognition of carers.
- Continue to improve identification of carers across all agencies in Camden Council, Camden PCT and the voluntary sector
- Work with the PCT to ensure that systems for identification and recording of carers are in place in every GP practice and are updated regularly
- Continue to identify 'hidden' carers such as BME carers, carers aged 18–35 years, gay and lesbian carers, carers of people with HIV, refugee and asylum-seeking carers.
- Ensure that carers are able to identify themselves as carers
- Adopt a standard approach to the use of the terms 'carer' and 'care worker'.
- Improve performance on carers' assessments so that more carers take up the offer of assessment and assessments achieve the right outcome for individual carers.
- Investigate the role of the third sector and commissioned services in contributing to carers' assessments to prevent duplication in information gathering.

## **8.2 Information**

### **Objectives**

All staff in partner organisations will know how to access information about carers and how to signpost carers to appropriate services

Carers will be able to access information easily from a variety of sources and in different formats.

Carers will be kept up to date with current and relevant information

### **What carers say**

- Carers need information throughout the period they are caring, however there are key periods when information on support services is essential. , For example, it is crucial for carers to receive information that will support them in their caring role right from the onset of caring.
- Many carers stress that they need to access information when they want it, in appropriate format and language.
- Carers in Camden, especially carers from black and minority ethnic communities, have emphasised the value of receiving information by telephone or in person from carer support workers.

In the Camden carers survey, 40% of respondents identified the importance of information being provided by GPs , hospitals and health professionals.

## **Strengths and achievements**

- We have commissioned a Carers information register from Camden Carers Centre so that any carer who lives, works or cares for someone in Camden may register to receive regular information. The information register will also allow us to collate anonymous data on carers in Camden to support needs analysis and service planning
- Carers are able to access advice and support directly from a number of carers support workers in Camden such as Camden Carers Centre, Making Space for mental health carers, KIDS for carers of disabled children, CASA for family and carers affected by substance misuse
- In conjunction with the voluntary sector we have distributed more than 5,000 carers' information packs to carers since 2004.
- We have four family and carer support workers in local hospitals to assist in the provision of information to carers.
- We have produced information and leaflets on carers and working, carers and training and carer assessments.
- There is an extensive range of information on [camden.gov.uk](http://camden.gov.uk) for carers
- We have funded the development of a website for PRT Camden Carers Centre
- With Islington Council, we have produced a revised Mental Health Carers Directory that will be available for carers in Camden and Islington in Autumn 2007.
- Information is available in various languages and leaflets have been translated on request.
- Kingsgate Resource Centre is developing an information space for carers within the centre.

## **Key actions for 2007-10**

- Continue to develop and implement the carers' information strategy with emphasis on:
  - early identification of carers to ensure early access to information
  - providing information at key periods in 'caring life' and at times of change
  - ensuring information is accessible and up to date
  - making Information accessible to all communities
  - providing carers with information that supports skills for caring
  - ensuring that professionals have sufficient information to signpost carers to appropriate support and services
  - providing information from a wide range of outlets throughout Camden
- Continue to expand the carers' information register held at Camden Carers Centre.

## **8.3 Health and well-being**

## **Objectives**

To support carers to maintain their health and well-being through a range of preventive and direct services.

To identify the most vulnerable groups of carers and ensure they are able to access services.

### **What carers say**

- Carers in Camden are more than twice as likely to be permanently sick and disabled if they are providing substantial care as those who are not carers. (ONS 2003)
- Distress levels associated with caring can continue for up to four years after caring has ceased. (Hirst 2004)
- Recognition of carers' own health problems by health and social care professionals is essential in maintaining the health, safety and well being of the carer.
- In the Camden Carers Survey 2006:
  - 47% of carers said it was a priority to get more support and information from health professionals in both acute and community settings.
  - 37% wanted greater access to therapies such as massage, reiki and counselling.
  - 35% considered health awareness workshops for carers as some of the most important services for carer .
- Carers in Camden highlighted the difficulty of physically accessing health services e.g. poor access for people using wheelchairs or appointments not being on time and carers being unable to wait because of caring responsibilities.
- Carers also mentioned a lack of consistency among health professionals in terms of recognising the role of carers and the impact caring has on the health of carer.
- Carers felt that there would be substantial benefits in the introduction of health checks for carers.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- We currently provide complementary therapies and counselling for approximately 160 carers per year.
- Monthly health awareness workshops on back care, healthy eating, relaxation techniques, coping with stress are available via Camden Carers Centre and approximately 200 carers have attended the workshops in the year from September 2006.
- The Carers Primary Care Project has been working with GP practices in Camden for the last four years to improve recognition of carers and their own health problems. Funding for this project ended in July 2007.

- We have run a number of 'Looking after myself' courses for carers with an emphasis on supporting good health and well-being.
- The carers' grant has funded approximately 15,000 breaks for 1300 carers in 2006/07.
- Voluntary sector organisations provide a number of carer support groups so that carers can meet up and share their experiences.
- Carers have used the flexible breaks scheme and direct payments to purchase annual health club membership, complementary therapies and swimming lessons.
- Carers on low income are able to take advantage of concessions in Camden's leisure centres.

### **Key actions for 2007-10**

- Ensure that carers are recognised as a risk group in terms of health.
- Ensure that the most vulnerable carers are assessed and receive appropriate services to prevent negative impact on their health.
- Improve access to health services by identifying how carers may be supported with access to buildings, appointments and shorter waiting times.
- The funding for the Carers' Primary Care Project will end in July 2007. We will work with the voluntary sector to maintain awareness levels within primary care services.
- Pilot the introduction of annual health checks for carers.
- Improve carers' health and well-being by continuing to invest in preventive services and training in health awareness and self care.
- Provide information at key times in the caring situation for example at the start of caring, end of caring, at discharge from hospital.
- Work with leisure and culture services to identify ways of promoting services to carers and making them easily accessible.

## **8.4 Time away from caring**

### **Objectives**

To ensure that carers have a life beyond caring by having time to socialise, spend time with other family members, take part in local activities and have equal opportunities to develop their own potential

### **What carers say**

- In the Camden carers survey 2006, 63% of carers considered a break from caring to be the most important form of support to carers
- Carers emphasised the need for early assessments and the need to access breaks before the caring situation reaches a crisis point.
- Camden carers mentioned the value of involving the wider community in support of carers; for example, a travel agent in Camden signposting carers to the Camden Carers Centre to access the flexible breaks service.
- There is sometimes difficulty in encouraging the cared-for person to take up services to give the carer a break.
- There is a need for flexible home-based respite but carers are still finding it difficult to access evening, weekend and night breaks from caring.
- In addition to complete breaks from caring, parent carers often need breaks from caring that allow them to spend time with other children in the family.
- Working carers stressed that they need services outside their working week to ensure that they were able to take a break from caring. Services provided to the cared-for person whilst the carer was at work should not be considered to be services that give the carer a break from caring.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- There is a wide range of services available to ensure that carers can take a break from caring. These include home-based respite services and residential provision in both adults' and children's services.
- The carers grant has provided over 15,000 additional breaks for more than 1,300 carers in 2006/07; the number of breaks and carers taking breaks has increased year on year.
- Around 30% of carers' grant-funded breaks have been for carers from minority ethnic communities.
- The flexible breaks service run via PRT Camden Carers Centre provided breaks to 120 carers in 2006/07, the majority of these carers were from minority ethnic communities.
- In response to requests from carers and carer organisations in Camden, we have reviewed our continuing care policy to ensure that carers receive or continue to receive the respite that they require.

### **Key actions 2007-10**

- Additional funding will be available to children's services between 2008 and 2011 to support parent carers of disabled children with breaks from caring.
- Increase the number of carer assessments to ensure access to breaks from caring and prevent carers from reaching a crisis.
- Provide information to carers on accessing breaks from caring.
- Promote the role of telecare and the Carers emergency card scheme in supporting breaks from caring.
- Ensure flexibility of services that meet carers needs.
- Review how breaks from caring are accessed by different communities and develop services to meet the needs of communities as appropriate.
- Investigate the role of Leisure and cultural services in supporting carers to take breaks that have positive impact on physical and mental health.
- Offer greater choice and more control of the type of breaks received by use of direct payments, individual budgets and flexible breaks services.

## **8.5 Economic wellbeing**

### **Objectives**

To enable carers to maximise their income through access to employment and training or via benefits advice.

To keep carers informed about a range of issues related to housing.

### **What carers say**

- Caring can have a significant long term impact on carers' income now and in the future
- Carers of working age should be able to make informed choices about whether to stay in employment or return to employment. If they chose to remain employed or return to work carers should be supported with this decision.
- CarersUK (2007) found that:
  - 72% of carers are worse off now than when they started caring.
  - a third of the carers said they were in debt and 53% felt that financial worries are affecting their health.
  - nearly half of carers who are not working said they would like to work but caring responsibilities prevents them from doing so.
  - carers often have to pay charges for leisure facilities, etc because the person they care for can not travel or use facilities alone.
- Housing issues are a major concern for Camden carers with tenancies, repairs and adaptations being highlighted as particular concerns.
- Carers are often willing to move temporarily into the home of the 'cared for' person but have anxieties about losing their own home.
- Delays in repairing faulty lifts and access gates can effectively lead to the carer and cared for-person becoming housebound.
- Carers have identified a number of issues related to housing transfers; they do not feel their role is given priority, the speed of the process does

not take into account the restrictions that caring has on carers such as not being able to attend viewings at short notice.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- Adult social care do not charge carers for their own 'carer services'. These are services delivered to the carer rather than the person they care for.
- We have run several 10-day 'Access to Work' courses for carers.
- Although in Camden there are specific courses to support carers back into employment there is a need to ensure that carers are able to take advantage of generic services to support Camden residents back into employment, training and volunteering.
- Camden commissions services that provide benefit and debt advice for carers.
- The carers assessment takes into account carers' employment responsibilities and carers are supported with services to enable them to continue to work.
- In the review of housing policy, although the need to be present in a property for 12 months before becoming a joint tenant was increased from one to five years, this has remained at one year for carers.
- A carers' liaison group will focus on housing issues for carers in October 2007.

### **Key actions 2007-10**

- Ensure that carers are able to access financial advice from an early stage in caring so that they are able to claim relevant benefits or make informed decisions about their working life.
- Link carers and former carers with generic access to work programmes in Camden to allow them to take advantage of opportunities for education, volunteering or employment
- Promote lifelong learning opportunities for carers
- Influence local employment policies to ensure that carers are aware of their right to request flexible working and that employers are aware of the financial benefits to their business of supporting carers
- Work with London boroughs to adopt a pan-London scheme to support carers working in local authorities
- Ensure that housing information on transfers, repair services, grants and loans for improvements is available to carers
- Work with housing to ensure that carers are informed about transfers and viewings at the earliest opportunity and flexibility is built into the system.

## **8.6 Participation**

### **Priorities**

Routinely involve carers in making decisions about service development and commissioning, and in monitoring and evaluating services

## **What carers say**

- Carers want to be involved in making decisions about services for both themselves and the person they care for.
- Carers are willing to be involved in training of statutory employees as they feel this gives them the opportunity to help develop good practice.
- Often carers would like to participate in consultation, events and service development but their caring responsibilities prevent them from doing so.

## **Strengths and achievements**

- Following review of the Camden Council's liaison groups , and at the request of carers , the first carers liaison group ran in February 2007 and will operate twice a year.
- A mental health Carers4change group meets four times a year and has the opportunity to comment on services and developments.
- Carers are active members of the mental health carers partnership group and learning disability partnership board.
- Camden carers forum and liaison group links into the carers strategy and commissioning group via third sector partners.
- Young carers are members of the young person's panel.
- Learning disability carers have been supported by Centre 404 to be engaged in service reviews.
- Learning disability carers were involved in Planning for the Future research that led to the development of an accessing housing DVD.
- Carers are members of an implementation and monitoring group for the mental health carers support service.
- We are developing a carer and service user involvement model for commissioning of services to support older people with mental health concerns including dementia.
- 200 carers responded to a carer survey in Camden in 2006

## **Key actions 2007–10**

- Develop a more consistent approach to carer involvement in commissioning, service delivery and monitoring/evaluation of services.
- Continue to support the carers liaison group and carers forum.
- Encourage and support more carers to be involved in design and delivery of services.
- Work with children's services to ensure that parents of disabled children are able to participate in the development of services for carers.
- Ensure engagement of hard to reach carers so that all carers have an opportunity to be involved, not just those who are able to attend meetings.
- Involve carers in developing good practice for example through staff training.
- Ensure that new participation forums such as LINKs have representation from carers.

- Reimburse carers for their skills and expertise in line with the new reward and recognition policy and as a consequence remove some of the barriers to carer involvement.

## **8.7 Accessible services**

### **Priorities**

Ensure that services are accessible to carers from all communities regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation.

Develop measurable outcomes for carers so that we can ensure that carers are receiving the services they require.

### **What carers say**

- Relevant information needs to be accessible for all carers regardless of age or culture.
- People who care and are in lesbian or gay relationships often face barriers to accessing services because their relationship may not be recognised.
- Carers who are not family members are often excluded from information or services because their role is not recognised.
- Carers of some groups such as people with substance misuse or mental health issues, or HIV, may be unwilling to use services because of the stigma associated with some conditions.
- Some cultures do not recognise the concept of being a 'carer'.
- There may be many barriers to a carer accessing services such as language and culture.
- Carers aged between 18 and 35 years are not active users of carer support services.
- Although male carers make up 42% of the caring population, a much smaller percentage use voluntary sector carer support services and are therefore less likely to receive regular information.
- The Camden carers survey got responses from a higher proportion of BME carers than are present in the local population, however out of almost 200 respondents there was only one carer below the age of 35 years.
- Some carers do not live in or near Camden and have difficulty accessing services.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- Developed direct access services for carers who are hard to reach, such as Crossroads services for the Bangladeshi community and carers of older people with dementia or functional mental health issues, and services to support Bangladeshi parents and sibling carers of disabled children.

- Worked in conjunction with voluntary sector carers' organisations to identify hard to reach carers from Asian, African and Caribbean communities, substance misuse carers, and Greek and Chinese carers.
- The PRT Camden Carers Centre has been working with refugee and asylum seekers and has also held health awareness days for Chinese carers, learning disability carers and male carers.
- Prioritised the flexible breaks service for hard to reach carers such as working carers, BME carers, mental health carers and carers aged 18-35.
- Provided information on request in relevant languages.
- We have developed a pan-London carers' assessment protocol so that we can ask other local authorities to assess a carer on our behalf. This protocol is soon to be adopted nationally.
- Camden Carers Centre offers support to carers who live and work in Camden even if the person they care for lives outside Camden. The majority of carers' centres nationally offer the same arrangements for local carers and out of borough carers are referred to appropriate support closer to their home.

### **Key actions 2007–10**

- Ensure that services are accessible for hard to reach carers such as BME carers, working carers, younger carers aged 18-35, gay and lesbian carers, carers of people with HIV and older carers.
- Improve signposting and information to support access to services for all carers.
- Give carers more choice and flexibility in the way they receive their services so that breaks from caring are appropriate to age and culture.
- Work with voluntary sector organisations to develop outcome measures to ensure that all carers are receiving the support or services they require.
- Crossroads Young Carer Project will work in conjunction with PRT Camden Carers Centre to ensure that younger adult carers are aware of their rights and the availability of services to support them.

### **Emergency support and changing needs**

#### **Objectives**

To increase recognition among partner organisations that changes in the caring situation cause anxiety and stress for many carers and are times when a carer is in most need of advice or support. Changes to the carer's own life such as increasing age changing jobs or ceasing to care are equally stressful periods.

To assist carers in planning for emergency situations.

To offer short-term home-based respite to regular and substantial carers in times of emergencies

### **What carers say**

- If appropriate services were given at an earlier stage, many crises could be prevented.
- Transition from children's to adults' services is a particularly stressful time for all the family and is not always an easy process to manage.
- When caring begins or ends suddenly it leads to a period of great disruption in carers' lives. Distress levels are particularly high around the start of a caring relationship. (Carersuk 2004)
- Older carers worry about what will happen to the cared for person if the carer is taken ill or becomes unable to care.
- 58% of carers in Camden felt that support for carers in an emergency was a priority, however around 10% had required emergency support in the past.
- Although carers support the idea of a carers emergency card service, there has been limited take-up of the service.
- 96% of carers survey by CarersUK said they were worried how they would cope with unexpected events.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- Specific transitional support is available to family and carers of disabled children as they prepare for transition to adult services.
- Planning for an emergency has been incorporated into the carers' assessment form so that all carers in contact with social care services will have a written plan of who to contact in an emergency.
- A carers emergency card scheme has been in operation in Camden since June 2006.
- PRT Camden Carers Centre and Crossroads Young Carers Project will work together to ensure transition of Young carers to adult carer support services.
- Learning disabilities services have been working with older carers to assist them in planning for the future.
- Carers support workers in the Royal Free and UCH support carers during the hospitalisation and discharge of the person they care for.
- A family support worker at the Royal Free also works with families of someone who has suffered a stroke.

### **Key actions 2007–10**

- Ensure that carers get regular carers' assessment reviews that are timed dependent on their individual needs.
- Review and develop short term emergency support for carers so that it is operational by April 2008 in line with government policy.
- Further develop the carers' emergency card scheme and expand it to cover parent carers of disabled children.

- Encourage the voluntary sector to promote emergency planning for carers.
- Provide information to carers on what to do and who to contact in an emergency.
- Develop a range of information for carers relating to key periods of change such as end of caring, transition and the start of caring.

## **Training**

### **Objectives**

To ensure carers have access to training that supports them in their caring role so that they are able to make informed choices about their caring situation.

Ensure carers have access to training that provides opportunities to learn skills for a life beyond caring.

### **What carers say**

- It's good to just do something different that takes you out of the normal routine.
- Sometimes talking to other people on workshops makes you see things from a different angle and can give you a new perspective on life.
- It gives carers a chance to find ways to make positive changes in ways that they might not have thought possible.

### **Strengths and achievements**

- In conjunction with voluntary sector partners, we are already running a comprehensive series of workshops related to health awareness, access to employment and planning for the future.
- Training courses have been held for mental health carers across Camden and Islington.
- Looking after yourself courses for carers of someone with long term conditions is a joint initiative between Camden Council and Camden PCT. Thirty-four carers have benefited from these courses.
- Health awareness workshops were seen as being an important by 35% of respondents to the Camden carers survey.
- Carers have co-facilitated or taken part in carer awareness training for social care and health employees.

### **Key actions 2007–10**

- Develop an expert carers' programme to include a range of courses such as looking after yourself, planning for the future, health awareness, relaxation and coping with depression.

- Consult with carers to expand the range of workshops available to meet the needs of carers.
- Offer training at appropriate times such as at the onset of caring and at the end of caring.
- Use the skills of carers in training programmes.
- Develop role of adult education in supporting carers with lifelong learning opportunities.
- Promote local training opportunities, including Access to Work programmes to carers, to increase the range of opportunities for carers.

# Appendix 1

## Relevant legislation

In addition to the national strategy for carers, the government has sought to support and increase the recognition of carers within a variety of legislation and guidance.

**The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000** gave further rights to carers to ensure that they are able to get an assessment of need. It allows local authorities to assess a carer even when the person they support refuses a community care assessment. It gives the local authority the opportunity to provide services directly to carers and emphasises the role that the local authority has in promoting and encouraging carers' assessments and support.

**The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004** in force from April 2005 emphasises that carers should be notified of their right to a carers assessment, have their wishes to remain in or return to work and education taken into account when decisions are made about the support given to the person they care for. It also places emphasis on joint working between statutory services such as Camden adult social care and Camden Primary Care Trust.

The **carers' special grant** has been allocated to each local authority to increase the number and frequency of breaks and services available to carers. Additional funds to develop emergency support for carers will be available during 2007/08. Allocation of the Carers Grant to Local Authorities has been agreed to 31 March 2008. Further announcement on the future of the Carers Grant is expected in Autumn 2007.

In 2006 the Department of Health published the White Paper '**Our Health, Our Care, Our Say**'. This sets out the governments vision for integrated health and social care provision. Within the paper the government announced a 'New Deal for Carers'. This pledges a new national information service for carers, expert carers training programme, emergency respite services and a complete review of the National Carers Strategy 1999.

From April 2007 the **Work and Families Act 2006** introduced new rights for working carers. This includes the right to request flexible working conditions. These might include working reduced hours or working the same hours but in a different pattern. Flexible working may be the difference between giving up work and continuing in employment. Employers must give consideration to any requests for flexible working and give good reason if the request is refused.

**The National Service Framework for Older People** sets eight national standards to improve the quality of care and support for older people. It stresses that carers should be involved in the planning and delivery of services for older people. Standard eight emphasises the need to improve the quality of life of older people, including older carers.

**The National Service Framework for Mental Health** was published and includes standard six, which aims to 'ensure health and Social Services assess the needs of carers who provide care and support to people with mental illness.' Local authorities take the lead in ensuring that carers' needs are assessed, that carers get easy-to-understand information about what is available to help them, and that they get a written carer's plan which is reviewed at least annually.

**Valuing People with Learning Disabilities** emphasised the Government objective to increase help and support to carers by all agencies in order that they may fulfil their family and caring roles effectively. In addition, Valuing People identifies three groups of carers who face additional pressures: older carers (aged 70 and over), carers from minority ethnic communities and carers whose son or daughter is going through the transition from school to adult life.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Eligibility criteria for services provided by Camden social services**

#### **Carers' assessments under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000**

Carers will be eligible for an assessment of their ability to provide care and continue to provide care if:

- i. the person for whom they care is over 18 and is eligible for, or has had, a Community Care Needs Assessment within the framework of Camden's Community Care Eligibility Criteria approved by the Social Services Committee in November 1997 and is someone for whom Camden would be responsible for providing or arranging community care services  
**and**
- ii. the carer is aged 16 and over and provides or intends to provide a 'regular and substantial' amount of support or care  
**and**
- iii. the carer is not providing personal assistance for payment in cash or in kind  
**and**
- iv. the carer is not a volunteer working on behalf of a voluntary organisation

The right to request a carer assessment and receive services in their own right following that assessment exists even if the person for whom they care has not had or has refused an assessment for, or the provision of, community care services but who would be eligible for community care services.

#### **Eligibility for carers services provided by Camden social services**

Following the completion of the Carers Assessment, a decision will be taken by Social Services on whether to provide services in response to any assessed needs.

Carers will be eligible for their own services or support when:

- i. To continue the caring role without such provision would cause significant risk to the physical or emotional health, safety and well being of the carer

**or**

- ii. The ability of the carer to sustain their caring role is or may be at significant risk of breaking down because continuing to care without support would pose a threat, for example, to the carer's employment situation, their social support systems and relationships, their ability to met their own domestic commitments and any other major aspect of their own life demands which might pose a significant risk to their ability to continue caring

**and**

- iii. The provision of services for the carer would maintain the caring relationship and sustain the caring role which, if not sustained, would have to be undertaken by the Council

**and**

- iv. The carer's needs for support cannot be met in any other way except by services being provided or arranged by the Council

Once eligibility for services is established the specific support required by the carer will be identified and a decision taken as to whether this should be met through social services or through other services.