


Islington's Strategy for Carers



2007-2010

**Foreword by Councillor John Gilbert,
Lead Member for Health and Social Care**

Listening to Islington and supporting and promoting stronger communities are two of the Council's priorities, and are central to our vision for building 'One Islington'. This strategy is at the heart of that vision, recognising as it does the role that carers play in the community and supporting them to continue caring. It acknowledges the need to work in partnership with our colleagues in the NHS, with the voluntary sector and the wider community, and above all with carers themselves.

Carers play a key role locally and nationally in supporting and maintaining strong local communities, and without them statutory social care and health services would be hard pressed to provide the necessary services. It is estimated that about one in ten people nationally are unpaid carers, of whom a million care for more than 50 hours a week. We estimate that there are up to 20,000 carers in Islington or looking after people who live in the Borough. I am pleased to be able to acknowledge the work they do in the community and to commend this strategy to the Council.

We have listened to what carers have told us in revising and developing our Carers strategy. The strategy reflects what they said to us and their priorities, and we will continue to listen to what they say to us in implementing it. Working with our partners in Islington Primary Care Trust, the Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust and with carers themselves, our aim is to ensure that carers can continue to care for their families, friends and neighbours, and to take account of their needs as members of the wider community.

Introduction by the Carers Strategy Group

This strategy has been developed by a steering group representing carers and all the main stakeholders in the Council, the local Health service and the voluntary sector. We have taken account of the new responsibilities imposed by new and revised legislation, as well as best practice across the country. In particular we have taken advice from the main carers' organisations locally and nationally, and have learned from what Beacon Councils for carers services have been doing. The steering group will continue to work together to agree detailed action plans for the implementation of the strategy, keeping in touch with best practice as it develops nationally.

It is estimated by Carers UK that carers across the country services that would cost local government and the NHS up to £57 billion worth of services, if provided by statutory services. Applying these assumptions locally, carers in Islington provide the equivalent of about £17 million worth of social and health care. The business case for supporting carers is clear, as are the duties and legal requirements established by the relevant legislation (see Appendix One).

Carers are of all ages and backgrounds, including older people and young carers. Their needs are different according to their caring responsibilities, age, ethnicity, gender, level of ability, faith and sexuality. At the heart of the Council's approach to carers is assessing their needs and providing services that take account of those needs and the needs of the person they care for. Carers have a right to an assessment of their needs – and this right has been extended by successive pieces of legislation. This assessment is undertaken by the Local Authority, and is the passport to a number of support services for carers (e.g. breaks from caring).

The most recent legislation added the requirement that we consider carers needs for housing, benefits, employment, training and leisure in deciding what services to offer. That is why all Departments of the Council have worked together on this strategy. We have and will continue to work with other London Boroughs, through the Greater London Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and London Councils, to seek consistent and collaborative approaches to carers.

There is evidence as well that carers' health can be affected by the responsibilities of caring. That is why we have worked with Islington PCT in developing the strategy. While the Council recognises that the PCT determines NHS priorities and implements health policies locally, the steering group will make recommendations about good practice in respect of carers and will seek to advise on the use of the Carers grant across both social and health care services.

Above all, we recognise that we must continue to consult with and listen to carers in shaping services that support them and meet their needs. We will do so at the level of the individual carer, for example in carrying out an assessment of their needs, and by working with organisations that represent carers of all ages and backgrounds. This will inform the annual action plans that we agree for making this strategy real and effective in supporting carers.

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Aims and objectives/Principles

To set out the strategy developed by Islington Council and its partners in response to listening to carers' needs and wants

To implement the National Carers Strategy and recent legislation on carers and other national policies and strategies

To support carers to make informed choices about the options available to them

To ensure that services include and are accessible to all carers

To guide the use of the carers' grant and other resources for carers

Through collaborative working with local partner organisations to provide coordinated, flexible and responsive services through collaborative working with local partner organisations

Summary of the Strategy

Islington Council is committed to promoting stronger communities and recognises the role that carers play in the community. Working in partnership with Islington Primary Care Trust, we acknowledge the vital role that carers have in looking after older people and vulnerable adults and children with disabilities in the community. We are also committed to listening to the people of Islington to develop better, more responsive services.

This strategy commits us to working in partnership to support carers to maintain their caring role where it benefits both them and the person they care for. We will listen to and work with carers and the organisations that represent and support them to meet carers' needs, including addressing their health, housing, leisure, work, training and welfare benefits in assessing their needs as carers.

We recognise that working in partnership with statutory and voluntary bodies is the most effective way of meeting the wide ranging needs of carers. We will work across the whole Council and with NHS bodies providing services in Islington to agree how these needs can be met. The PCT will advise on the health needs of carers, and Council departments will advise on housing, leisure, training, benefits and work. The Islington Children's Partnership will advise on young carers and the needs of carers of children with disabilities.

The Council will set challenging targets for its staff to assess the needs of carers and provide services as a result of the assessment, and will apply its performance management framework to achieve its targets. We will focus on the outcomes for carers and the people they look after in evaluating how effective our services are, and we will report annually to the Executive or as required on progress on supporting carers

Above all, we will continue to engage with carers at the individual level and with the organisations that represent them. We will ensure that all carers are offered the opportunity to have a separate assessment of their needs and that we tailor services to individual needs.

As the two largest employers in Islington, the Council and the PCT will work with their Human Resources advisors to develop flexible working policies for staff with caring responsibilities that will enable them to continue caring and working in their paid employment. Recognising that most of our staff live in other boroughs, we will work with other London Councils to promote a London wide approach to flexible working for carers. We will seek to extend this approach to other employers and organisations in Islington, working through the Islington Strategic Partnership.

With the PCT, we recognise the role that carers play in preventing admission to hospital or residential care as well as helping the service user to get appropriate treatment, and we will work to support them as part of our preventative strategy. We will include carers in the strategic assessment of needs of the community that will inform the strategic joint commissioning of health and social care services in Islington. As we review and renew our Local Area Agreement, we will make meeting the needs of carers a priority. We will consult with carers on the development of new services for them and the people they care for, we will involve carers in training our staff and the staff of independent providers of social care, and in monitoring services provided or commissioned by the Council and the PCT.

Background and Context

What is a carer?

There is no definition in law. This strategy takes a wide view:

A carer is someone, who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability.

A young carer is a child or young person who is under the age of 18 and is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would normally be taken by an adult.

Anyone can become a carer; carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be of any age.

Many carers do not consider themselves to be a carer; they are just looking after their mother, son, or best friend, just getting on with it and doing what anyone else would in the same situation.

Carers in Islington

- **It is estimated there could be between 14,000 and 20,000 informal carers in Islington (using figures from CarersUK)**
- **More than a third of these carers are likely to be unemployed**
- **15 per cent consider themselves to be in poor health due to caring**
- **Less than a quarter of these are known to Social Services or to the active carers organisations in the borough**
- **In 2006/7 over 2,000 carers did benefit from breaks and services funded by the carers grant in Islington**
- **Based on national figures from CarersUK, carers in Islington save health and social care services up to £17million a year**
- **There are a number of organizations which work with carers and provide support, advice and services in Islington. These include Islington Carers Forum, Centre 404, Alzheimer's Society, Casa, Mind, Manor Gardens Centre, Family Welfare Association, Age Concern etc**

This strategy focuses on those issues which carers in Islington have said are important to them. In 2006 in support of the Council's commitment to listening to local people, we asked carers about their priorities, their experience of services and what would make a difference. The strategy reflects the views of more than 330 adult carers who responded to a questionnaire, and of those who attended a number of specially-convened meetings. The quotations in this document come from some of the 150 carers who attended a conference for carers on the strategy and the future of services in Islington in May 2007

It builds on the previous carers' strategy (2003-06) and on projects/services which have worked well in Islington; it also embraces new legislation, ideas and examples of good practice from around the country.

This is the final version of the strategy, as agreed with carers and the organisations that represent them. It is being submitted to the Executive of Islington Council and the Board of the PCT in July 2007 for approval. Development and detailed implementation will also be consultative – through monthly stakeholder conferences in 2007/8.

The strategy takes into account a number of recent national developments, including government legislation and funding announcements. These include:

The Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004 (effective April 2005)

This requires the Council to cooperate with other authorities and to inform carers of their right to an assessment which takes account of their outside interests, including work, study and leisure.

'Our health, our care, our say' White Paper – January 2006

This set out a new direction for community services, including practical steps aimed at turning the vision of the 'Independence, Well-being and Choice' Green Paper into reality.

The idea of individuals having more choice and control over the health and social care services they receive was overwhelmingly supported in the national consultation which preceded the paper.

In the White Paper, there were some specific proposals for carers:

- establishing an information service/helpline for carers
- establishing short term, home-based respite support to carers in crisis or emergency in each area I allocating funding to train carers
- encouraging councils and PCTs to nominate leads for carers' services.

'New Deal for Carers - announced February 2007

This latest initiative gives the detail of four elements included in the White Paper

- £25m to be spent on providing short term home based respite cover for carers in crisis or emergency situations in every council
- £3m towards the establishment of a national helpline for carers
- £5m to support the development of an expert carers programme
- A wide ranging review of the 1999 National Strategy for Carers

The State of Social Care Report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection – December 2006

In assessing which councils are taking and implementing a genuinely strategic approach to meeting the needs of carers and protecting and promoting the rights of carers, the Commission looked for evidence of the following:

- A multi-agency carers' strategy in place
- An identified social services lead on carers
- A corporate approach within the council, displaying a shared ownership of the carers' agenda
- A strategy based on local profiling to map numbers and needs of carers, including carers in work, black and minority ethnic carers and young carers
- Proactive initiatives and good practice going beyond the basic legal requirement of taking carers' employment, education, training, and leisure needs into account in the carers' assessment
- Innovative carers' services and use of direct payments
- Carer engagement in commissioning, service development and evaluation and workforce training
- Outreach activity beyond traditional social service networks to ensure equal opportunity and equity

The Islington Strategy for Carers seeks to address all of the above key issues.

How this Strategy is organised

The themes:

There are eight key themes, based on the issues carers have told us are important to them.

Each theme makes up a chapter of the strategy and covers:

Key issues

What the theme is about and why it is important for carers

What carers have told us

Our 2006 survey and 2007 conference have informed this section. The quotes come from the conference in May 2007.

The section is supplemented by other local and national research, and a national survey of 3000 carers carried out by CarersUK in 2006/7.

Where we are now

This section reviews what has been put into place for carers since the last strategy. Alongside **Strengths and Achievements** are **Areas for Improvement**.

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

From what carers have told us and an analysis of where we are now, a number of priorities and specific objectives have been identified for the next three years. The intended outcomes for carers are also identified.

These objectives will be delivered by a variety of partners in a variety of ways and will be subject to development through the stakeholder events.

Immediate Steps/Plans for 2007/8

The key issues which will be developed in the first year of the strategy are listed in this section.

1. Information and Recognition

For carers, this means:

- **Helping carers to identify themselves as carers**
- **Keeping carers up to date with current information and carers legislation**
- **Helping carers make informed choices about their caring role**

Key issues

- All partners should be able to recognise and signpost a carer, whatever their age or background, to information and services
- All partners need to value and invest in their role as information providers
- All staff working for partner organisations should have a basic understanding of carers' issues
- All partners should agree to work together to make sure carers get the information and recognition they need
- When a carer's needs are assessed, all aspects of their life should be taken into account, not just their role as a carer

What carers have told us

- **Recognition of carers needs by statutory organisations and service providers is consistently stated by carers as being of great importance to them. In our survey 82% said so. This is echoed in consultations undertaken specifically with young carers**
- **Information and advice is key to all partners and is picked out by 74% of carers as being important to them in their caring role**
- **Carers still often feel invisible to service providers, that their own needs are not always recognised nor is the contribution that they make**
- **Many carers have identified the need for information, when they want it, in appropriate formats**

“Give us more information about what we can do and what help we can get”

“We have a wealth of skills and expertise which should be recognised and used by social services staff”

What other organisations have told us

- **This is a national issue: In December 2006, Carers UK carried out a country-wide survey in which ‘recognition from professionals’ came out as carers’ top priority.**
- **There are lots of ‘hidden’ carers who we need to identify and support, for example carers of people with drug and alcohol problems and older carers**

What our staff have told us

- **Social care staff in Islington have also said they would like more information about what is available locally for carers. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) reports this as a national issue.**

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
We have published a number of major documents specifically for carers: Leaflets for carers about the assessment process, including one specifically for mental health carers A carers’ directory of mental health services has been developed with professionals and carers across Camden and Islington Better Care magazine in 2005 was a carers focus edition and a spotlight on carers page is in all subsequent editions	The 2004 Carers’ Act requires that information now needs to include services and sources of support that enable carers to access education, training, leisure and employment as well as care and respite. This needs to be taken on board when updating existing literature and developing new resources There needs to be targeted information/publications which address the different types of caring Information also needs to be updated regularly as legislation, services etc. change

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
There is strong voluntary sector support for carers of all ages	More work needs to be done to raise the visibility of carers with other partner organisations, especially refugee carers, young carers and older carers
Carers Information pack/fact sheets are distributed to all carers having a needs assessment	Carer fact sheets limited in scope and need to be reviewed/updated to reflect new national and local developments
Common needs assessment forms have been introduced, and work undertaken with the teams to implement them	Assessment forms are just a tool and more work needs to be done to ensure all partners understand the reasons for assessment
An example of work across partners to reach carers includes 'Carers Corner' in Central Library	More outlets for carers information need to be explored
More needs assessments are being offered and completed than ever before; a combined carers assessment and Islington Carers Forum (ICF) referral form has been devised and independent assessments for carers of disabled children have been commissioned from Centre 404	Assessors need tan understanding not just of caring needs, but also of the wide range of available services Assessments should include carers who often miss out, such as those caring for substance misusers
Independent human rights workshops have been held to advise carers on their rights	Carers factsheets need to include information on human rights, equalities etc.
Carers week celebrated each year with a number of high profile, joint events	Carers' needs must be kept on the agenda throughout the year
A primary care development project (2003-6) run by ICF produced specific publicity materials for GP practices, protocols for the identification and recording of carers by GPs, as well as awareness raising with a wide range of allied health professionals	Although 75% of Islington's GP practices adopted the protocol by March 2006, continuity of work with GP practices is needed to ensure systems are kept in place and materials updated

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
The Older People's Health Outreach Project (ICF) has delivered awareness training to community care and hospital teams and developed laminated bedside cards to publicise local/national carers' services	This work needs to be extended across local hospitals and health care settings

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

Information

We will ...	So that ...
Identify visible and invisible carers in the borough and ensure current and new information is available in a variety of formats. Ensure information is comprehensive and available in more places e.g. leisure centres, libraries, housing offices, etc Ensure inclusion of information on how to make a complaint to different service providers	It is made easier for carers to access relevant information and it reaches 'hidden' carers Carers are better informed and carers can sustain their role. Carers have more confidence and knowledge on how to complain or challenge service
Work with partner organisations to make sure that the information provided to carers is accurate and signposts them to other services	Carers do not get conflicting information from different sources and can find out where to go for help quickly and easily
Ensure that assessors are aware of local /national sources of funding for carers' services and what services are available	Assessors can best help and advise carers and also identify any gaps in services
Ensure that other public bodies are also equipped with signposting information	Service providers are made aware of carers' information requirements.
Look at how information reaches minority and non-English speaking communities	Carers who may be hidden from services can get the help they need
Explore the feasibility of and options for a central point for information/feedback	Carers have a one main point of contact for information on carers issues

We will ...	So that ...
For young carers, provide fact sheets in young person friendly formats, available online and in places they go to, e.g. leisure centres, libraries,	Young carers and young adult carers are able to find out more about what help and support is available
Ensure information reaches 'hidden carers' and those who feel stigmatised, e.g. those caring for someone with a drug or alcohol problem through press articles, work with schools etc	Awareness of these groups being carers is raised among professionals, the general public, including children, and carers themselves

Recognition

We will ...	So that ...
Carry out more needs assessments and reviews and setting up schemes to 'pilot' assessments in voluntary sector organisations	Carers issues are not marginalised and responsibility for identifying them is shared between partners
Produce comprehensive guidance on carers for all front line staff (i.e. in contact with the public) in all partner organisations	All staff in partner organisations have a basic understanding of carers' issues and how to deal with or sign-post them
Work with other partners, e.g. housing providers, including extra care sheltered housing, leisure, voluntary & community sector etc. to establish carers leads	Carers needs are championed within a wider range of services and organisations
Look into feasibility of carers' self needs assessment online in certain circumstances	Carers can identify their own needs and their knowledge and contribution can be articulated
Set up further training and guidance for assessors on dealing with carers' issues	Carers can expect to receive up-to-date, accurate information and an assessment from a worker who is well informed about issues affecting carers and the support that can be tailored to the individual needs of carers

We will ...	So that ...
Develop a consultation mechanism to find out carers views of the needs assessment process	Quality, usefulness and outcomes of assessments from the carers point of view are known
Launch a Carers Review Form	Carers can expect that their needs are reviewed on a regular basis and that they have opportunity to discuss how they can best be supported in their caring role.
Raise the profile of young carers and young adult carers in Islington	Services and the public can recognise and respond to their situation
Raise the profile of the needs of older carers, through training, information days etc.	Assessors and others involved with this group of carers can respond appropriately and sensitively to their particular needs
Raise the profile of carers who are refugees through targeted work	Carers who may come from areas where social care support does not exist understand what support is available and are able to access it

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **Launch the new carers review form**
- **A central carers' website to be developed, to include links to specialist information and organisations which will support carers to gain more control over their lives**
- **The carers information pack to be reviewed, updated and expanded to embrace the Equal Opportunities legislation, where to go to for support on particular issues and mapping of carers groups**
- **Fact sheets for social workers and care co-ordinators to be produced that list local and national organisations offering services, information and support to carers**
- **All organisations providing information or services for carers to include how to complain about their service: where appropriate such information to be updated and carers consulted on its accessibility**

2. Time Off

For carers, this means:

- **Having a right to a life outside caring and good quality reliable flexible breaks services**
- **Carers being able to make the most of their own capacity and potential**

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act was brought in to ensure maximum independence and quality of life through development of skills and training

Key issues

- Carers should have the opportunity for regular breaks suited to their individual situation and the need to spend quality time for themselves on something other than caring
- Carers should have some free time each week to pursue leisure, social activities, life-long learning and work opportunities
- Carers should have the same access to universal services and citizen rights as everyone else
- Carers should be able to get involved in local activities and a life outside caring

What carers have told us

In our survey, 66% said taking a break was important to them.

And nearly a quarter (24%) spontaneously cited more respite to allow the carer to go out as one of the key things that would improve their life as a carer

This theme was reiterated at the conference, together with the value carers placed on breaks services available through carers' organisations in the borough

“Professionals need to recognise that carers need a life of their own, like going to the cinema once in a while”

“Services should be more flexible, like day care beyond 3 pm so we can do other things”

“We are asking for basic rights, not luxuries”

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
Complementary therapies, relaxation and other sessions to help carers to de-stress, rest (with respite arranged if required), e.g. through Care 4 Carers at Centre 404 and Relaxation Days at Islington Carers Forum	Need to coordinate and evaluate provision across the borough as a whole and also to identify activities specifically for male carers
A range of day and night sitting services is available, and short term stays for the person cared for, depending on the outcome of assessment Older people's respite has recently been reviewed, evaluating uptake and satisfaction levels	Information on the full range of respite provision needs to be more systematic and carers better informed on opportunities
A flexible breaks ('Treat Yourself') fund has provided breaks to 500+ carers, not necessarily needing to have a social services assessment.	Links with Leisure and Adult Education need to be further developed

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
It was reviewed and extended in 2006	
Carers' organisations support carers through fundraising from grant-giving charities etc for holidays and other breaks. Centre 404, for example helped to raise £250K for its families in 06/07	Information for carers, social workers and carers groups needs to include details of grant giving organisations and other help for carers to have a break
The Befriending Project at Manor Gardens provides a lifeline for many carers. In 2006/7, 37 carers benefited from this service.	Ensure continued support and funding for these successful projects and use them as models for work with a wider group of carers
Alzheimer's Society Islington Branch runs outings and other social events, gives holiday grants too – for its 247 members	
Projects like the young carers and young adult carers project run by FWA offer activities and outings which enable participants to enjoy the things all other young people can –currently 70 young people are supported this way	More work needs to be done to raise public etc awareness of these two groups of carers, and how they can be supported to participate in the sort of activities all young people enjoy
Informal support groups, e.g. Archway and Canonbury Carers' providing space and time for carers to share experiences and support each other.	More publicity to ensure more carers know about these support groups
Direct Payments to give carers from all caring backgrounds more choice and control about when to take a break from their caring role	Greater use of Direct Payments for more carers

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

Taking a break

We will ...	So that ...
Identify or develop groups to support access to external funding streams for the provision of additional short break services	There will be further opportunities for short term breaks for more carers more of the time
Set up a register of short break care facilities across all health and social care providers, to include availability, eligibility criteria and cost (where appropriate)	Carers and professionals will have up to date information on the location, availability, eligibility and costs of short break care
Encourage and support respite care providers to set up relatives' groups	Carers can have a collective say on such services

Leisure, education and training

We will ...	So that ...
Work in partnership with colleagues from leisure services (including Aquaterra) and Lifelong Learning	Training providers can tailor their courses appropriately to fit the needs of carers
Work with local providers to offer discounts/flexible services for carers	Carers are recognised by service providers
Evaluate the take up and effectiveness of complementary therapy provision, seeking advice from health professionals	Such therapies are offered equitably and carers derive benefit from them
Continue to listen to the views of carers as well as users about support services such as home care and involve them in new developments such as assistive technology	Services are responsive to carers as well as users' needs
Build on and learn from the young carers project and focus on education support	Young carers do not miss out on vital opportunities to enable them to continue in education

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8:

- **Implement and communicate the findings of the review of respite for older people**
- **Include the register of respite information in the new carer packs**
- **Set up relatives groups at respite care where appropriate**
- **Involve wider range of council departments and service providers in the carers multi-agency strategy group**

3. Carers own health and emotional needs

Providing care for someone can be demanding and lonely; as a result carers can often become isolated and suffer emotional distress

Those providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled.

Key issues:

- Promoting good physical and mental health of carers
- Enabling carers to care in a way that does not damage their own health
- Providing emotional support and helping carers to deal with stress
- Making available different forms of counselling and informal support for carers
- Making available support for those carers looking after people with mental health and/or drug and alcohol problems and for older carers of people with learning disabilities
- Recognising that there may also be differing emotional needs when a caring responsibility ends

What carers have told us

- **Carers own health often takes a back seat behind the person they care for, yet 75% of carers in our survey said maintenance of their own physical well-being was an important aspect of their lives. A further 63% thought the same about emotional support**
- **Young carers too report that having someone to listen to them and give emotional support is very important**
- **Maintenance of their own good health was one of the top three priorities identified by carers in the survey by CarersUK**
- **15% of carers consider themselves to be in poor health – due to caring**

“It is STRESS that affects our lives, not our NEGLECT of our own health. To say this highlights a lack of understanding of what it is like to be a carer”

“Our health deteriorates because of the burden of caring”

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
A three-year primary care development project which successfully raised awareness with GPs, improved information in practices etc and included publicising the availability of flu vaccines for carers because of their caring role	This programme has ended and the momentum still needs to be maintained to keep awareness levels high within general practice
Carers health workshops – two of these have been run in the past year and have been both well attended and well received by carers	These work with carers themselves, it is important to involve professionals too
Development of families, partners and friends support services (run by CASA) for people affected by substance misuse	Raising the profile of the specific needs of carers affected by drug and alcohol use with a wider range of agencies
<p>Islington Alzheimer’s Society provides a range of essential emotional, social and practical support for carers, counselling groups etc</p> <p>A therapeutic support group for carers run by MIND helps carers of people with mental health needs</p> <p>A befriending service set up at Manor Gardens supports carers of older people with mental health difficulties</p> <p>Young carers projects provide ongoing one to one support and peer support through groups for 70 young carers and young adult carers</p>	Supporting and monitoring quality of support groups in the borough needs to be expanded to identify any gaps in provision

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

Carers' health

We will ...	So that ...
Continue to work to ensure easily accessible healthcare from health staff including GPs who fully understand carers' issues	Carers have their own health needs addressed promptly (otherwise there may be two people needing services)
Develop and encourage direct carer involvement in training courses for health and social care professionals	Professionals have a better understanding of carers' health and social care needs
Encourage closer links between health bodies and joint carer initiatives to promote a coordinated approach to carers health needs	Carers health needs are addressed and they receive seamless services
Offer training to carers who may be dealing with specific disabilities or medical conditions. Social services and PCT to consider opening in house training courses to carers, where appropriate	Carers are up to date with information on issues they may need to deal with
Support projects which reach out to carers in hospitals and other health care settings	People who are new to caring can be supported appropriately
Launch the new Carers Review Form to health as well as social care staff and ensure health needs assessment is included	Carers can expect that their health as well as social care needs are reviewed on a regular basis
Consider an annual event focusing on carers health which will have input from key health care professionals	Carers health issues are highlighted with and by professionals to ensure carers own health is maintained
Involve carers in health promotion initiatives e.g. the development of health promotion strategies	Carers' unique contributions are recognised, including the stresses on carers themselves from caring

We will ...	So that ...
Inform and alert carers to the range of physical activities being developed by the Council and its partners to support health improvement and maintenance. This ranges from promoting walking and access to sports to 'green therapy'	Carers benefit from a range of opportunities to maintain and improve their health

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

Emotional support

We will ...	So that ...
Increase the number of carers taking up services and the range of support services available to them	More carers in Islington are helped
Increase the number of carers offered an annual review of their needs as carers	The changing nature of carers needs are recognised and support is tailored to meet carers' needs.
Publicise support services that are run by local organisations, such as Islington Alzheimer's Society's courses on understanding dementia and stress management	Carers who are isolated and unknown to statutory services can get help
Support and publicise advocacy services for carers	Carers receive assessment and services
Encourage the development of self help groups, including encouragement for individual carers to set up groups if they want to	Carers groups are run by carers for carers Groups for those carers not being specifically maintained e.g. male carers, former carers are supported
Ensure that all support groups are mapped, to address any geographical, theme or client group gaps in provision	Groups are accessible to all carers, especially new or isolated carers

We will ...	So that ...
Where new groups are set up, develop targeted publicity	
Set up a project to investigate how carers might be affected by domestic abuse in order that meaningful cross-agency support can be provided; include relevant professional groups across health and social care	Professionals are more aware of how domestic violence may affect carers and the people they care for

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **Launch a new carer's review/re-assessment tool June 2007**
- **Plan an event for carers on health issues**
- **Offer health checks for carers at all key carer events**
- **Set up new support group for former carers**
- **Explore possibility of setting up a 'men's group' for male carers**

4. Training and support to care

Carers need information to support them in their caring role (understanding of conditions, health and safety, benefits advice, etc) so they can make informed choices and sustain and manage their caring role.

To avoid social exclusion, carers need access to skills and training opportunities to allow them to benefit from leisure and return to work

Key issues:

- **Training for carers on all aspects of their role, from risk, lifting and handling to getting the best from services and new legislation affecting carers**
- **Flexibility in how such training or support is delivered**
- **Having a choice of services, Direct Payments, etc**
- **Delivery of support and training in a variety of ways**
- **Advocacy, especially one-to-one advocacy**

What carers have told us

- **In our survey more than half (52%) of those who responded said they regarded training, employment and leisure as important**
- **Advocacy to enable carers to access services is a concern which has been raised at many consultation meetings with carer and user groups in the past couple of years**
- **The need for training and advocacy were two themes running consistently through the workshops held at the carers' conference**
- **Carers having access to public transport on the same basis as the person they care for was spontaneously mentioned as something which would make a big difference to carers' lives**

- **Carers Direct Payments have helped a number of carers; telephone interviews in August 2006 of 12 recipients revealed that there was still room for further support and flexibility in the services available**

“More support from professionals e.g. GPs about mental health issues is needed, so we know what to do, especially when they are aggressive and feel frustrated”

“We want to help ourselves”

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
A carers' Expert Patient Programme, 'Looking after Me' to help carers with health problems to manage their own health needs as well as their caring role has run twice, benefitting 17 carers	Need to run further courses and help more carers to take part and provide support for them to do so
A range of training courses have been put on for carers	
Informal training from nursing staff on long term conditions	Consider how this could be formalised and extended
Direct Payments has helped carers (25 in 2006/7) with a range of services, from housework to travel costs	More carers benefiting from the scheme, and a wider range of options available
The 'Carers' View' project is training carers to monitor services and giving them marketable skills at the same time	Extend the project into the full range of services and enable more carers to participate
CASA delivered a successful workshop on 'dealing with conflict' for carers of people with drug & alcohol misuse problems	Carers in other client groups are also helped to deal with these issues
Training courses held for mental health carers across Camden and Islington	Continued work with the mental health trust and Camden carer organisations

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
Local carers organisations provide a range of advocacy services, including one-to-one and peer support	Carer advocacy needs to be publicised and supported as part of the Council's overall approach to advocacy

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

We will ...	So that ...
Continue to offer direct payments for carers wherever possible	Carers have flexibility to use services as best suits them
Work with the recently announced national Expert Carers Programme to ensure this complements or augments the Looking after Me courses being planned in Islington	Carers have more confidence and skills to manage their role
Pilot the 'in control' scheme whereby service users have their own individual budgets	Carers of people with learning disabilities have more say in their care
Involve carers in the development and use of assistive technologies	Carers of older people in particular those prone to falls and those suffering cognitive impairment will have additional backup and peace of mind
Investigate access to freedom passes with TfL for carers in specific circumstances	Carers have more transport options
Develop a training strategy for carers, identifying any gaps or duplication	Carers receive appropriate training to help them in their role, such as lifting and handling, safety in the home
Involve carers in Implementing the Mental Capacity Act 2005	Carers are aware of the Act's implications for them and the people that they care for. Carers have input into the sort of training/awareness raising they would like us to provide

We will ...	So that ...
Involve carers in policies and procedures which deal with abuse of vulnerable adults, perhaps through specific awareness training	Carers are aware of the issues and can put the carers' perspective, perhaps even act as advocates in these circumstances
Develop Links with local training organisations	To increase the range of training opportunities for carers
Provide meeting places in libraries for courses and advisory sessions	Carers are provided with local information and resources at all courses

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **'Saying no' assertiveness workshop for carers**
- **Mental Capacity Act implementation awareness raising events/training for carers**
- **Start work on training strategy for carers**
- **Consider carers' advocacy services as part of the next phase of the Council's advocacy project**

5. Financial security

For carers, this means being in a position to maximise their income and life changes through access to work and/or benefits advice

Good quality housing and being able to stay in their own home is an aspect of this.

Key issues

- Up-to-date benefits information and advice so carers (including young carers) can access their full entitlements and make informed decisions about work
- Recognising the financial impact of certain aspects of caring and at certain life stages; transition from children's to adult services, for example, or when stopping caring and starting work
- Giving support to carers' aspirations to stay in work or return to work if they choose to and, where necessary, learning new skills to help this happen, through training, further education, volunteering etc
- Back to work assistance for carers including financial help to update their qualification and retraining
- Encouraging local employers to allow more flexible working
- Ensuring that carers understand any housing implications and options when taking on a caring role

What carers have told us

- **As stated in the previous section, employment is a key issue for carers in Islington. It has been identified as a concern for refugee carers in the mapping research on refugees undertaken in 2005, as well as for young carers who want to enter the job market for the first time**

- According to a survey carried out by CarersUK, paid work is important for a variety of reasons including financial independence and covering the cost of caring
- But people may give up work because of the stress of juggling work and providing high levels of care, unsuitability or inflexibility of care services and inflexibility of workplace hours
- The CarersUK survey also found that carers income in retirement was a major concern (fourth on the priority list for carers)
- Housing issues do not as figure highly on the national carers' agenda as they do in Islington, where more than 50% of households live in social housing. More than half (55%) of people responding to our survey thought they were important. Many of these issues are to do with tenancies – whether they are living in someone else's home while they care for them, or are caring in their home – and also repairs

“ I agree with positive discrimination for carers who want and are able to work – all things depend on services for the child”

“As a carer I am finding it very difficult to return to work , even part time without adequate day care hours”

“We need to know more about what benefits there are for carers, whether they work or not, or if they want to go back to work”

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
Back to work courses have run in the borough for a number of years, and with neighbouring Camden in 2007	Numbers participating are still relatively low; may need wider publicity/ alternative modes of delivery
Services for carers remain free and respite charges have been rationalised	Carers need to be made aware of charges for services and specifically consulted on any changes
Benefits advice given by both Adult Social Services and carers organisations: for example ICF's annual review survey for 06/07, 81% of respondents said they had received benefits advice	This work needs to be continued, and prioritised
The Flexible Breaks fund enables carers to take holidays etc which they would not be otherwise able to afford	Funds are limited and the scheme has been heavily oversubscribed at times, reducing the amount of support carers can get from the fund
Many local organisations have hardship funds, e.g. Alzheimer's Society, or can advise carers on how to access them	Organisations need to network the people and funders who may be able to help to reduce the workload on individual organisations and their staff
Local carers' organisations have taken on carers as volunteers as a route into paid work (Centre 4040 have helped 50 carers this way)	Need to encourage more partners to make more use of volunteers
Carers' needs assessments take into account a carers need to work	Assessors need more information about how best to help carers on this front
Carers receive housing 'points' to enable them to get into local authority housing schemes	Being able to remain in public housing is a big concern for carers when their caring responsibility ends, whoever holds the tenancy
A 2006 meeting of Making it Happen for Carers (ICF) responded to housing concerns by inviting a speaker from Homes for Islington	A wider ranging forum may be needed to discuss carers' housing issues

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

Financial support

We will ...	So that
Implement the community care charging review and communicate the changes widely	Carers understand and can plan appropriately with the person cared for respite care charges
Involve carers in the income maximisation project	No. of carers receiving appropriate benefits are increased
Provide information on and address the financial impact of transition for families	Carers of disabled children are not disadvantaged when the children become adults

Helping carers to stay or get into work

We will ...	So that ...
Continue back to work courses, making links with local organisations such as Job Centre Plus and local employers/businesses as appropriate	Carers are helped to return to paid work of their choice
Provide information on local opportunities and flexible employers	
Review flexible working practices and bring in a human resources policy for carers within Islington Council	Carers are helped to remain in work and the Council benefits from the employment of more people who are carers
Work with neighbouring boroughs and London Councils to have a pan-London scheme	It will not matter which London borough a carer works in they will still be able to get flexible working
Promote carers needs and carer-friendly policies with partners in Islington, using LBI as a model	Employers are better informed and are considerate of carers needs

We will ...	So that ...
Publicise and support volunteering opportunities and encourage partners to use carers as volunteers	Carers can ease themselves into the world of work and gain valuable skills
Support ex-carers to make the transition from caring to focusing on their own needs	Former carers are able to participate more fully in the community, including support then to access work, training and volunteering opportunities
Address employment concerns of young carers (under 18) and young adult carers (over 18)	Young carers get maximum opportunity to gain access to good jobs and training like other young people
Through the training strategy for carers, develop carers' transferable skills	Carers skills are recognised by carers themselves and by potential employers

Housing

We will ...	So that ...
Develop a range of protocols between adults services and housing	Housing and social services staff have an informed and consistent approach to helping carers on housing issues
Raise the profile of supported housing and supported services among carers and identify opportunities for these to work with local carers organisations	Carers are, where appropriate, able to gain access to housing-related support for the person they care for
Extend the Council's database of properties which have been adapted, and work with housing association partners to ensure all new housing developments offer adapted properties	Suitable properties can be identified more quickly
Work with housing to raise awareness of the housing needs of young carers as well as adults	Young adult carers receive a service that is supportive and recognises their specific needs
Work with housing to address the issue of succession to tenancies and make carers aware of what their options are	Older carers and others' housing is secured after the death or demise of the person they care for

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **Set up an employment working group with London Councils, neighbouring boroughs, the PCT etc**
- **Implement and publicise flexible working scheme for carers employed by Islington Council**
- **Carers information pack to include information on support for carers to get into or stay in work and benefits available to carers**
- **Hold a dedicated carers' employment event and look into whether a similar event on housing issues is required**
- **Produce a fact sheet on housing and housing support for carers**
- **Develop clear protocols for how housing partners (Homes For Islington and other social housing landlords in Islington) respond to carers**

6. Having a voice about services/Quality Services

For carers this means:

- **Having a voice in relation to their own immediate situation**
- **Their views being routinely sought by services and influencing the way those services are provided**
- **Carers having a role in setting standards.**

Key issues

- The knowledge, experience and views of carers of all ages are sought and used at individual level to inform service decisions that affect their individual circumstances and those of the people they care for
- At the collective level, carers' knowledge, experience and views are used to inform service design and planning and the impact of decisions is evaluated, particularly for those carers least able to speak out for themselves
- The removal of barriers to carers' involvement and consultation in a way that is accessible to carers.
- Ensuring there is a wide range of ways carers' experiences can be heard and can influence the way services are planned, provided and developed (from 'comment cards' at one end to membership of planning groups and training staff at the other)
- Active participation in the community through employment or voluntary opportunities and ability to maintain involvement in local activities

What carers have told us

- Carers are keen to be involved in decisions about services, both in terms of delivery of care to the person they care for, but also in planning services for users and carers. 58% saw this as a priority in our survey.
- However some group of carers, e.g. refugee carers, do not feel that they are consulted with (from the 2005 mapping)
- They want to be involved in strategy as well as day to day issues: More than 200 who took part in our survey gave their contact details saying they would like to be involved in the development of the strategy
- The carers who took part in the conference on the strategy in May 2007 identified a number of issues for further consultation events
- Views expressed at the conference echo the CarersUK survey's finding that 'better services for the cared for' is of critical importance to carers

"Carers have a rich wealth of experience, knowledge and skills. How will you use this for in training your staff?"

"We may be carers but we are also children - and adults don't listen to us"

"Listen to us!"

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
A range of involvement opportunities have been set up , e.g. Carers Reference Group (hosted by Centre 404), Making it Happen for Carers (Islington Carers Forum), Forum for drug and alcohol carers and Carers 4 Change for carers of people with mental health needs	Need to map out what these groups do, who they are for and how carers can make use of them

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
There is widespread carer representation on strategy groups, key local strategic groups e.g. LD Partnership, Social Services Forum and Carers Partnership Group (Mental Health)	Empower through training etc more carers to get involved – in more groups across different service areas
Carers View – a pilot project for independent monitoring of services by carers - has involved carers visiting organisations as part of the procurement/tendering process	Widen and develop this project to cover the full range of services
Carers and/or their representatives involved in key review groups e.g. direct payments review, transition issues	Explore alternative ways of involving carers to avoid over commitment or reliance on a few individual carers
Questionnaire evaluations of services e.g. ICF annual review and recipients of the 'flexible breaks fund' telephone survey of carers receiving direct payments	More systematic evaluation of services for carers and use of this information in developing future services and projects
Respite services for people with learning disabilities hold monthly carers meetings	Need to ensure this happens in all settings
The young carers project regularly seeks feedback from the young people using evaluation, review and steering groups in order to provide a responsive service	More opportunities need to be developed so that young carers can have their say on strategic as well as operational issues
Centre 404 holds regular surgeries for carers to talk to councillors; this is also being set up at ICF	Carers who cannot get out are able to talk to decision makers on issues that affect them
150 carers from a wide range of caring backgrounds in total participated in the conference – our first - on the strategy in May 2007. Of 24 evaluations returned to date, 18 found it very useful, 6 quite useful, and a number of suggestions for future events were put forward	Such events need to be held on a regular basis and carers kept up to date on what has happened as a result Need to look at the issues raised in the conference evaluation and suggestions for future consultations

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

Involvement in decision making and setting standards

We will ...	So that ...
Ensure that carers are always involved in decisions which lead to service provision and the monitoring of any services provided	Carers know they are being taken seriously, included in processes, and valued as partners in care
Involve carers in developing good practice, e.g. information on quality standards and training of staff	The carer's perspective is included and highlighted, as well as that of the service user
Investigate the feasibility of a carers review post to follow up with carers of people with complex needs	The most vulnerable carers' needs continue to be met and met appropriately

Opportunities for participation

We will ...	So that ...
Ensure that where there are gaps in services, developing local resources through carers participation will be a priority	Carers know they can make a difference
Continue to support and develop carers forums	There is a range of comfortable, relevant places for carers to have their say
Try to reach those groups that are traditionally excluded from consultation, including LGBT carers etc	All carers have the opportunity to be involved, not just those who can and wish to attend regular meetings
Involve carers in planning user services – in developing information, service design, management, delivery, monitoring and continuous improvement using consultation mechanisms which suit carers needs	Carers have an effective voice through, for example, e-consultation, by telephone, in the evening for working carers, etc
Ensure new local forums e.g. LINKs which will replace the patient and public involvement forum have representation and input from local carers	Carers' voices are not lost in new structures and those structures are flexible enough to accommodate the participation needs of carers
Ensure carers are kept informed of the results of their involvement with services and given reasons if recommendations cannot be implemented	Carers views are listened to and considered
Reimburse carers who regularly offer their skills and expertise for their time	Carers time is valued and rewarded
Work with the full range of respite care providers in Islington to set up regular relatives' groups	Carers are actively involved in respite services and can collectively air their views
Develop Carers View to include training and presentation skills for carers to train other carers	Carers are equipped with the skills to get involved

We will ...	So that ...
Work with the young carers project to develop ways of accessing the views of young carers and bring these views to services and the wider community	Young carers who may be hidden from services are targeted through appropriate media; in turn their views are heard and taken on board by services
Hold regular events to consult specifically with carers, providing the necessary back up and support	Carers have the opportunity to come together to discuss key issues which affect them

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **Contribute to and facilitate/encourage carers to participate in the 2007 consultation on the national carers strategy**
- **Map and publicise the different opportunities for involvement**
- **Implement Adult Social Services policy on reward and recognition, and encourage other Council partners and PCT to sign up**
- **Put on training and awareness raising for staff to ensure greater involvement of carers in social care assessments**
- **Develop a simple carer-specific feedback form and publicity for carers to comment on all services**
- **Hold a dedicated evening event for working carers**

7. Equality of access

This is about meeting the needs of carers from different backgrounds and ages.

But it is also recognising the needs of carers at different stages in their lives, from young carers under the age of 18 caring for a sibling, parent or other relative, to older carers who may have caring needs themselves

Key issues

- Different groups of carers and types of caring responsibilities have different impacts on carers lives at different times
- Young carers and young adult carers are often 'hidden'; partner organisations and services for carers may inadvertently exclude them or be age- or gender-inappropriate
- Cultural traditions means that carers from some minority communities may also be hidden and unwilling to access services; they may also be unable due to language and other barriers
- Many carers are elderly, caring for another elderly person, or an adult child with learning disabilities
- Carers of some groups e.g. those caring for people with mental health or drug and alcohol problems and those who may be suffering from domestic abuse may feel stigmatised by society and not come forward for help
- There needs to be equity of access to services to ensure that all carers have an opportunity to benefit from dedicated carers services

What carers have told us

- **Less than 20% of the respondents to the survey came from minority ethnic groups, although 38% thought responding to carers from different backgrounds was important.**
- **The vast majority of carers were between 30 and 60, but 25% were elderly (more than 60), bringing a different set of problems.**
- **The older carers' project at Centre 404 and ICF work with older people have identified a number of issues, in particular carers own health needs and what happens when they are no longer able or around to care**
- **Only one young carer responded (the survey was targeted at adults) but work with the young carers group has shown that young carers have a variety of needs which stem not only from their caring role, but also relating to them as a child/young person which also need to be addressed**
- **Young adult carers tell us they want information and support in the areas of housing, work and education as well as participation in age-appropriate respite activities**

“People need to be educated about drugs and alcohol and dual diagnosis and the effect it has on families and friends. Islington is one of the few local authorities which provides any support”

“I need the space and time to be with people my own age”

“I’m in it [caring] for life, I need to know I am not alone”

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
There are many different groups for carers of different ages and backgrounds in the borough	These need to be fully mapped and publicised widely, in appropriate formats and places, and carers helped to attend them (with transport, respite etc)
Examples include a support group for families affected by substance misuse	More needs to be done to raise the profile of these carers needs
There is a dedicated young carers project in the borough with 70 young carers participating and, since 2006, an innovative young adult carers project supporting young carers as they move into adult life	The young carers project and young carers issues need to be represented at the strategic level
There is a range of local support services that raise awareness and assist BME communities with both practical and emotional support	Need to recognise carers who may not feel comfortable in conventional carers groups e.g. lesbian and gay carers, even male carers
Culturally specific services to carers e.g. Turkish group at Centre 404	Need to reach out to faith communities too, where there are high levels of caring
Provision of interpreters, translation etc of consultation materials, meetings etc	As well as ensuring availability of language services, different forms of communication should be explored

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

We will ...	So that ...
Involve carers in Implementing the Mental Capacity Act 2005	Carers' roles are taken into account and raise carers own awareness of the issues
Ensure carers needs are addressed in delivering the Council's and partners' obligations under the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes	There is fair access to assessment and services –across the Council

We will ...	So that ...
Develop a programme to include hidden carers	Services are accessible to and made aware of those carers who cannot or do not come forward for help due to cultural and other barriers
Explore opportunities for working with community safety professionals, domestic violence services etc for drug and alcohol carers and other vulnerable groups	Carers' vulnerability is recognised by those who work in the criminal justice system
Support fledgling carers targeting Bengali and Turkish parents and work with local outreach workers within community associations	Carers from these communities can come together and receive support from both mainstream services and community groups
Raise the profile of refugee carers within the carers community and with local partner organisations and services	Refugee carers are recognised and supported
Keep older carers needs highlighted, especially with services for older people	Older carers are recognised as older people too, with specific additional needs because of their age and caring role
Provide support to the Islington young adult carers group to raise its profile and ensure its sustainability	The needs of young adult carers are met appropriately
Ensure that young carers are recognised and their issues given a place within the wider carers agenda	Young carers are included and their views taken into account when making decisions about services
Start work on a separate Young Carers Strategy in Islington	The particular needs of children and young people who are also carers are highlighted and addressed
Develop an access policy with key carers organisations in the borough	Carers from all communities, ages and backgrounds etc have equal access to carers' services

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **Programme of training, workshops and information for refugee carers**
- **Promote the issues affecting older carers in the review of the Older People's Strategy for Islington**
- **Overview of all current activities/ services for BME carers (including refugees) to address gaps, streamline provision and to develop support to meet emerging needs and maximise resources by removing duplication**
- **Consult with young carers about a young carers strategy**
- **Carry out an equality impact assessment for this strategy to ensure carers from all backgrounds and ages are included**

8. Dealing with changing needs and emergencies

For carers this mean being supported through the difficult periods many carers experience during their caring role, particularly as it increases or diminishes

Key issues

- Transition between children's and adult services, between the ages of 14 to 25, is a big milestone and current service structures do not always make it easy for carers
- A life after caring is also important. Support for carers should not stop when their caring role ends, they may need even more practical and emotional support, especially if bereaved
- Services should be appropriate to the carers own age and life stage as well as that of the service user
- Support in time of crisis is essential, but also where possible to prevent such crises arising in the first place

What carers have told us

- **Dealing with emergencies was an issue rated as important by 61% of those who completed our survey.**
- **A clear message from meetings with carers was the need for services to step in before the situation becomes critical**
- **More than a third (37%) thought transition to adult services for disabled children was a big issue, not just those who identified themselves as caring for a disabled child (27%).**

- **A recent report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) on transition asked young people and their families about the process and found that carers need to be involved more and need the right support at the right time**
- **An evaluation of the Carers Strategy in England found that carers who have recently been bereaved report a dearth of information relating to their circumstances or support needs**
- **CarersUK’s Back Me Up campaign found that 96% of carers said they were worried how they would cope with unexpected events**

“What will happen in future? When I am older who will look after my parents?”

“Without my local group, I don’t think I would have made it through the difficult times”

Where we are now

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
A multi agency steering group which includes carer representation looking into transition issues in Islington has been put in place	Better transition planning for young people with complex needs
A range of local support services that raise awareness and assist BME communities with both practical and emotional support have been developed	Need to recognise carers for whom existing services may not be suitable, e.g. carers from refugee families, gay and lesbian carers, male carers
There are some culturally specific services to users and carers	Extend these to a wider range of groups
There are dedicated support services for young carers and young adult carers	More recognition of the needs of young people who are carers which allow them to be children (without responsibility)

Strengths and achievements	Areas for improvement
There are some key projects to support older carers e.g. Centre 404's group for older carers of people with learning disabilities, and the establishment by ICF of support group for older carers and carers of older people in collaboration with Age Concern	More work required on the implications of carers' ageing, particularly for learning disability services
Various support options in times of crisis	Specific services need to be in place in such eventualities

Our key priorities and objectives for 2007-10

We will ...	So that ...
Use new government funding to make crisis services available that can respond rapidly and flexibly to meet carers' needs and those for whom they are caring	There is easily accessible and immediately responsive support for carers when they most need it
Investigate extending the 'carer's card' schemes across all client groups and to more carers in Islington	More carers have peace of mind about what happens in case of accident or emergency
Support and develop older carers work, including outreach work by ICF within the community to older people's groups and faith organisations and centre 404 's work to identify and support older carers of people with learning disabilities	Older carers who may be isolated and housebound have their needs recognised and addressed. Older carers do not have to worry about what happens to the person they care for after their death
Improve the process of transition from Children's to Adults Services, including implement CSCI recommendations on transition	There is better transition planning, resulting in less stress for carers
Offer dedicated support across the transition age range, from both adults and children's services and include other relevant services e.g. Connexions	Services are able to monitor what happens to young people when they leave school, college etc and afterwards

We will ...	So that ...
Look into the emotional and practical (e.g. housing) issues affecting former carers and set up a support group as required	Carers continue to be supported when their caring role is over, if support is needed
Work with carers and professionals to identify trigger points for those carers whose caring situation fluctuates, e.g. mental health/dual diagnosis carers	Carers are kept informed of changes and support available, e.g., tribunals, home leave etc

Immediate steps: Plans for 2007/8

- **Development of the person-centred planning transition project to offer support to carers and a consistent approach throughout the transition years (aged 14-25)**
- **In collaboration with the transition project and parent carers, develop accessible information on transition issues (advice, support, services available etc)**
- **For former carers, the new information packs to include a former carers' fact sheet, the setting up of a support group and consultation with these carers on the issues and their specific needs**
- **Build on best practice models and local needs to develop an Islington emergency cover scheme when government funding becomes available from October 2007**

Accountability of Services

Delivery of the above eight carers' priorities will be evaluated by all partners to the strategy through the mechanism of the Islington Carers Strategy Group

The Carers Strategy group is a multi-disciplinary partnership group which meets every two months to oversee the Carers Strategy in Islington. Since the group first came together in 2001, there has been new legislation, many developments at the national and local level and changes of personnel.

Core members of the strategy group have included representatives from:

Adult & Children's Social Services

PCT

Carers Forum (ICF)

Centre 404

Alzheimer's Society

CASA

Manor Gardens Centre

The group discusses matters such as use of the Carers' Grant, matters raised within constituent organisations by carers and professionals, and feedback from national conferences on carer's issues.

To implement the new strategy, an extended group is being developed with representatives from a range of:

Council departments including Housing, Refugee and Integration Service, Human Resources, Leisure and Libraries.

Partner statutory organisations like the Mental Health & Social Care Trust

A wider range of providers, including Family Welfare Association, Age Concern, MIND that are partners in delivering services for carers

On specific issues, other partners such as the Police, Job Centre Plus, local training providers, housing associations, community language and faith groups, and other Council departments, such as Community Safety, Greenspace etc. when required, for example at stakeholder events on the eight themes.

The carers lead officer will present an annual report on progress to members and the PCT Board on behalf of the strategy group during the lifetime of the strategy. An annual event to feed back to and hear the views of carers themselves is also proposed.

Leadership

As a council with Adult Social Services responsibility, Islington Council will lead an effective and accountable multi-agency carers' strategy and ensure accountability of services to local communities through:

- strengthening links with other Council depts and partner organisations.
- the commitment of directors
- initiatives and targets set through stakeholder meetings to develop the strategy
- regular consultation across the spectrum of issues and service with carers

Commissioning and use of resources

Adult Social Services, in partnership with the PCT and other statutory services, will commission and deliver services to clear standards of both quality and cost, by the most effective, economic and efficient means available and so demonstrate to carers that their decisions are based on value for money. To do this there will be:

- Effective use of robust management information about carers, their needs and the outcomes they seek from services
- Open and effective channels for carers to express their views and to receive responses in particular points
- Transparent use of the carers Grant

Carers grant 2007/8

The Council currently receives £1.241m from central government for services to carers. The grant is not guaranteed beyond 2007/8.

In 2007/8 it will be used to fund:

- Various forms of respite care
- Direct payments for carers
- Flexible breaks fund
- Local support projects for different care groups
- Befriending services
- Complementary therapies
- Mental health services
- The young carers project
- Administration (including the carers lead officer post) and consultation

Appendices

Appendix I: Legislation and national initiatives

**Appendix II: Carers' questionnaire
(September 2006)**

**Appendix III Carers' conference programme
(May 2007)**

Appendix I: Legislation and national initiatives

There are laws to protect carers and the people they care for. These laws state what councils must do when working with Carers and vulnerable people. The main pieces of legislation are set out below.

The Children Act (1989)

This law states that the child's safety and well being are the most important things and stresses the importance of helping families who are in need. Children in need are those who may not have the opportunities to achieve or develop fully without help from carers or support services.

The NHS and Community Care Act (1990)

Councils must involve families and carers when making plans for helping vulnerable people in the community.

The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act (1986)

When assessing a disabled person's needs, consideration must be given to whether a Carer is able to continue to care for that person.

The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act (1995).

Carers have the right to their own needs being assessed by local authorities.

The Carers and Disabled Children Act (2000)

All Carers, including parent carers are entitled to an assessment of their need. Councils can offer assessments of need to all carers even when the person they look after chooses not to have their own needs assessed. Direct payments can be offered to those eligible for community care services.

The Carers Equal Opportunities Act (2004).

Local Authorities have a duty to inform Carers of their right to an assessment. Carers' employment and life-long learning needs as well as social and leisure opportunities must be taken into account in the assessment process. The Act recognises that carers' services are not just a social care responsibility and gives Councils the power to enlist other agencies e.g. housing, education, health, in providing support to carers.

The Act requires that there is a multi agency protocol in place, which ensures there are carers' leads in place in other statutory services. The role of the Carer lead is to improve partnership working on carer issues and to encourage the development of Carer friendly policies

Other relevant pieces of legislation include:

Human Rights Act 1998

Fair Access to Care Services 2003

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Work and Families Act 2006



DO YOU CARE FOR SOMEONE IN ISLINGTON?

Please take a few minutes to tell us how we can improve the lives of carers in Islington.

We are putting together a strategy which will set out our priorities and targets for carers' services for the next three years (2007-2010) and what we need to do to achieve them.

We need to hear from carers – from YOU – what these priorities should be.

1. Our last carers' strategy covered a number of areas of importance to carers. These are listed below. Did we get them right?

Please tick the boxes to tell us which of these are important to you.

Recognising carers' needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers' own health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information and advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Having a voice about services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking a break	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial security	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional support	<input type="checkbox"/>		

In addition to these areas, we intend to expand on the following themes in our new strategy. Please tick those which are important to you.

Transition to adult services for disabled children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coping with life after bereavement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment, training & leisure opportunities for carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with emergencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responding to carers from different backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything else that you think should be included? Please tell us here.

2. Here are some of the services that have been set up or supported in Islington over the past three years. Please tell us whether you have used them.

	Yes, I have heard of this service and I have used it	I have heard of this service but I have NOT used it	No, I have not heard of this service
Flexible breaks (Treat yourself breaks fund)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct Payments for Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local carers group – please state name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making it Happen for Carers meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers groups/activities run by Centre 404	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers Health & Relaxation Days (Carers Forum)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care 4 Carers (Centre 404 - complementary therapies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back to work courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young carers project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families Partners & Friends (CASA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers' Workshops e.g. Understanding Dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other carers' service –please tell us what:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Please tell us about your experience of these services, or why you have not used them</p>	
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3. Please tell us up to three things which would help to improve life for you as a carer in Islington:

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

And just a few questions about you, to help us to analyse your comments, respond to your needs and to develop the strategy

4. Have you had a carer's assessment?

A carer's assessment means Social Services will look at your situation and see if you are entitled to any services that could make caring easier for you	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please tick one of the boxes to below to tell us the type of caring responsibility you have:

Carer of an older person with a long term physical or mental illness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer of and adult with a learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer of a child with a learning or physical disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer of an adult with a physical disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer of an adult with a mental health problem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer of an adult who has problems with drugs or alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carer of someone who does not fit into any of the above groups (Please tell us the nature of your care):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you a young person under the age of 16 who gives care or support to someone at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Your age	<input type="text"/>	Your gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your ethnic background	<input type="text"/>					

Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential and anonymous.
But if you would like more information or would like to be involved in the development of the strategy, please give us your contact details below.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Contact details	<input type="text"/>

You can contact Rosemary on 020 7527 8153, Jackie on 020 7527 8154 or your carers group organiser in confidence to obtain further copies of the survey if you know of someone who is a carer but who may not have received it.

We will be following up the issues you raise in this questionnaire and talking to as many local carers' groups as possible, so look out for details in the coming weeks.

Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided or by post

**To: Planning & Partnerships Team, Adult Social Services
338-346 Goswell Road, London WC1V 7LQ**

You can fax it to us on 020 7527 1108

By: 20 October 2006

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING US
TO HELP CARERS IN ISLINGTON**

Appendix III

PROGRAMME FOR CARERS CONFERENCE

THE RESOURCE CENTRE, HOLLOWAY ROAD
THURSDAY 3 MAY 2007

10 am	Registration And Coffee Information stalls and complementary therapy sessions available all day (book on arrival)
10.30	Listening To Carers: How The Day Will Work Derek Sleigh, Islington Council (Chair for the day)
10.35	Welcome: Celebrating Carers: Councillor John Gilbert, Islington Council
10.45	'My Caring Role': A day in the life of a carer Five carers with very different caring experiences tell us how it is for them.
11.30	Tea break
11.45	Responding To Carers: The National Perspective: Steve Lee, Manager of Carers London
12.15	Responding To Carers: The Local Picture Gwen Ovshinsky, Islington Council
12.45	Lunch. Live guitar and cello music. Health checks by District Nurses
1.45	Choice of four workshops: Presentation, the issues and your views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mental Capacity Act • Older carers • Caring for people with drug and alcohol problems • Caring for a disabled child
2.30	Choice of four workshops: Presentation, the issues and your views <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers in employment and entitlement to benefits • Caring for someone with a mental health problem • Young carers and young adult carers • Carers of young people in transition to adult services
3.15	Tea break
3.30	Question Time Panel: John Gilbert, Steve Lee, Rosemary Lamport (Adult Social Services) Paulo Mata (Islington Carers Forum) Steve Lee
4pm	

YOUR SPEAKERS

Derek Sleigh is Assistant Director, Performance and Quality, Adult Social Services, Islington Council

John Gilbert is Lead Member for Health and Social Care, Islington Council

Celia Scipio is an older carer of an adult with a learning disability

Grace Mick is a young adult with a caring responsibility

Leela Khan is a carer of someone with Alzheimer's

Toulay is a Turkish-speaking parent of a disabled child

Grace Medonica is a carer of a person with a drug dependency

Steve Lee is Manager of Carers London, the arm of Carers UK, which focuses on carers issues in the Capital. Carers London promotes the carers agenda and carer involvement across London through links with carer activists and groups, with elected politicians and with carer support professionals. They also offer strategic advice and advocacy for carers seeking to enforce their rights and facilitate support networks for professionals to enable them to support carers better.

Gwen Ovshinsky is Director of Adult Social Services. Islington Council

Rosemary Lamport is Partnerships Manager, Islington Adult Social Services, Islington Council

Paulo Mata is Manager, Islington Carers Forum

YOUR WORKSHOPS

Session 1:

The Mental Capacity Act 2005
Led by: Kate Charles and Tracey Smith, Adult Social Services
This workshop will provide an over view of the new Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its implications for carers.
Venue: Seminar Room 2

Older Carers
Led by: Bob Dowd and Isobella Zanre, Centre 404, with Rosemary Lamport, Adult Social Services
This workshop will be an informal discussion covering the issues affecting older carers of people with learning disabilities in particular and how these can be included in the carers' strategy
Venue: Seminar Room 3

Caring for people with drug and alcohol problems
Led by: Lali Gostich, CASA and Paulo Mata, Islington Carers Forum, Sasha Donaldson, Carer
This workshop will cover issues for those caring from people with drug and alcohol problems, how services meet them. It will include a carer's personal experience, and also time for questions and discussion
Venue: Conference Hall

Caring for a disabled child
Led by: Lauren Roberts and Anna Lundy, Centre 404, with Tanya Parr, Children's Services
This workshop will be a discussion group, and gathering information on issues affecting parent carers and how these can be taken forward as part of the carers strategy
Venue: Conference Hall

Session 2:

Carers in employment and entitlement to benefits
Led by: Derek Sleigh and Hardeep Bhachu, Adult Social Services
This workshop will look at how carers can be supported into paid work, leading into a practical discussion of the effect of working on benefits for carers and benefits for carers generally. The second part will be an interactive session using materials (quizzes/exercises)
Venue: Seminar Room 3

Caring for someone with a mental health problem
Led by: Neeru Aggarwahl, Alzheimer's Society and Hilary Ayling, Islington Carers Forum, with Peter Cartlidge, Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust
This workshop will cover the difficulties, experiences, needs and support for those who are caring for someone with a mental health problem.
Venue: Seminar Room 2

Young carers and young adult carers
Led by: Sue Phillips, Cressida Evans and Gabriela Santa Cruz, with Tanya Parr, Children's Services
This workshop will take the form of two short presentations, one looking at the issues affecting young carers under 16 and one on young adult carers aged 16-25. This will be followed by group exercises on each of these groups of carers.
Venue: Conference Hall

Carers of young people in transition to adult services
Led by: Bob Dowd, Centre 404 and Doreen Anderson, Children's Services
This workshop will look at what the needs are of carers of young people (14-25) who are going through 'transition' to adult services and how these are being addressed in Islington. It will take the form of a discussion group, gathering information from carers for the strategy
Venue: Conference Hall

For more information about carers in Islington, please contact:

Website: www.islington.gov.uk/carers

Email: carers@islington.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7527 8154

Fax: 020 7527 8362