

Council meeting: 19 January 2021

Liberal Democrat Group motion: Cllr Jess Brayne

Stand up for Carers - Increasing Carer's Allowance

The pandemic has highlighted the invaluable role of Barnet's carers, both those employed in the care sector and unpaid people who care for family members. Carers in Barnet have been at the forefront of the coronavirus pandemic response and continue to do a selfless and remarkable job in very difficult circumstances.

Situations provoking care interventions can happen with little warning. Often those giving care have to reduce their working hours or give up work to juggle competing demands. The pressures on young carers can negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in education, having a lasting effect on their life chances. Many carers in Barnet are unaware of their entitlement to financial support, a carers assessment or break, and the support services available.

Council notes that:

1. There are approximately 6.5 million volunteers in the UK who look after a family member or friend who is elderly or has a disability, or a mental or physical illness.
2. Many people who provide care do not recognise themselves as a 'carer'. The latest government figures show that 4,784 unpaid carers in Barnet are entitled to receive Carer's Allowance, although only 3,695 currently do.
3. At just £67.25 a week; Carer's Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind.
4. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government increased the Universal Credit standard allowance and the Working Tax Credit basic element by £20 a week above the planned uprating in April 2020, but it has not increased Carer's Allowance.

Council resolves to:

1. Call on the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, urging them to increase Carer's Allowance by £1,000 a year, from its current rate of £67.25 a week to £87.25, in line with the £20 a week uplift in Universal Credit, including those who do not receive the Allowance due to overlapping benefits and with equivalent increase in Carer Premium and Carer Addition.

Under Full Council Procedure Rule 17.17: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting, I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.