



London Borough of Barnet

Carers and Young Carers Strategy

2023 - 2028

YOUR LIFE,
YOUR CARE,
YOUR CHOICE.

BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

Directorate	Communities, Adults and Health Family Services
Approvers	Adults and Safeguarding Committee, Health and Wellbeing Board, Children Education Safeguarding Committee
Approval Date	
Review Date	

For Consultation Only

Foreword

Foreword to be added prior to publication.

For Consultation Only

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1. Introduction

A Carer is a person over the age of five who provides unpaid care and support to a parent, partner, child, relative, friend, or neighbour who is unable to manage on their own because of a disability or impairment, poor health, frailty, or use of drugs or alcohol. This includes:

- Adult carers: an adult aged 18 and over who is caring for another adult such as a spouse, parent, partner, friend, neighbour, relative or adult child.
- Parent Carers: A parent or guardian who provides care to their child (of any age) to a degree greater than would be normally expected in a parenting role.
- Carers of multiple people: Those who care for more than one person, and include different generations
- Young Carers: A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work).
- Young Adult Carers: An adult aged between 18 and 25 who is caring for another adult or child.

The framework for how we intend to support carers of all ages in our borough is outlined in this strategy, which is a declaration of our commitment to carers and young carers in Barnet.

Supporting carers and young carers has been defined as a priority for the council and the NHS, and supporting unpaid carers is one of the objectives included in the council's manifesto. This strategy supports the Barnet Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan and Child and Family Early Help Strategy, and the Adult Social Care Reform priorities for unpaid carers. It has been developed with the direct involvement of over 300 Barnet Carers through the co-production and engagement work led by our commissioned provider, Barnet Carers Centre, and in partnership with colleagues across the Council, Health, and the voluntary sector.

This strategy will help the council to carry out its duties to support carers in their caring role. This includes helping to prevent young carers from carrying out inappropriate caring and ensuring that carers of all ages can achieve the outcomes that they desire. Enabling carers helps to support and promote the independence of people with care and support needs. This means considering the needs of carers at various times in their caring role, such as providing support early on, support to maintain care, and support at the end of a caring role or, when moving from Family Services to Adult Social Care. By working closely across the Council and with the wider community we aim to achieve the outcomes defined within this strategy.

The next step is to translate this strategy into action so that it makes a real and lasting difference to the lives of carers of all ages.

Scope of this strategy

This strategy will:

- set out to carers how we will support them in carrying out their caring role
- set out to young carers how we will support them and help to prevent them from carrying out caring activities that aren't appropriate for them as young people, sometimes called inappropriate caring
- set in motion a governance structure and action plan for all organisations to work together to support carers and young carers within Barnet

2. Context

The caring relationship can be rewarding but it can also be challenging with some carers experiencing stress, social isolation, financial hardship, ill health, and minimal time for themselves. Building resilience in carers relies on having informal and local support and knowing where to access help when needed.

The Care Act 2014 put into place a consolidated legal framework for carers and means that carers are recognised in law in the same way as those that they care for. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a 'whole family' approach to assessment and support. Local authorities must offer an assessment where it appears that a child is involved in providing care¹. This legislation is aligned with similar provision in the Care Act 2014² requiring local authorities to consider the needs of young carers if, during the assessment of an adult with care needs, or of an adult carer, it appears that a child is providing, or intends to provide, care. Both the Care Act and the Children and Families Act were designed to complement each other and promote a "whole family approach" and joined up working where needed, which avoids the need for multiple assessments. The legislation stresses the importance, of considering the outcomes that everyone may be seeking.

In Barnet, young carers assessments are undertaken via an Early Help Assessment. Assessments must consider whether the care being provided by a child is excessive or inappropriate; and how the child's caring responsibilities affects their wellbeing, education, and development. A local authority should consider how supporting the adult with needs for care and support can prevent the young carer from undertaking excessive or inappropriate care and support responsibilities.

This strategy builds on the previous Barnet Carers Strategy Action Plan 2015-20 and supports achieving the outcomes set within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2025, the Children and Young People's Plan 2023-2027 and the Child and Family Early Help Strategy 2023-2027. In addition to local documents, this strategy has been shaped by the Adult Social Care Reform White Paper, which identifies unpaid carers as a priority area, the National Carers Action Plan (2018-2020), NHS Long Term Plan (2019), and takes into account key legislation, as outlined above.

¹ Children Act 1989: section 17ZA 1(a) [inserted by section 96 Children and Families Act 2014]

² Care Act 2014: section 63(1).

Carers in Barnet

The 2021 Census advises that Barnet has 28,808 Carers, which makes up 7.9% of total Barnet population.³ This is a reduction from the 2011 census, which reported 32,256 Carers (9% of total population in 2011).

Further information around carer population is collected from our commissioner provider, Barnet Carers Centre, who report 3,703 Adults Carers, and 787 Young Carers known to them.

Although the Census provides useful information, it is widely acknowledged, both nationally and locally, that it is likely to underreport the number of carers, as many carers view their caring responsibilities as part of another role, such as that of a parent, partner, child, relative or friend. It is clear we need to identify and support carers earlier before there is a risk of carer breakdown, or carers are no longer able to care.

The Covid 19 pandemic has adversely impacted many carers and young carers in our communities. The Council recognizes the importance of working closely with its partners and the community and voluntary sector in responding to the needs of carers and young carers to ensure that we are appropriately supporting carers and young carers in our communities to maintain their health and wellbeing and achieve the outcomes that they desire.

Recognising the demographic changes in Barnet, we acknowledge the need to ensure that support and services are accessible to, and appropriate for, the diverse group of people who are carers. Some of the key demographic considerations that inform our action plan are as follows:

- We have an aging Carer population that presents with a myriad of physical health needs.
- The Covid 19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis has adversely impacted many carers and young carers in our communities, and there is a greater need around moderate to severe mental health challenges.
- Carers have long had concerns about their own mental health and the mental health of the people they care for. In a recent survey 46% of carers cited their mental health in their top 2 concerns for 2023. Almost 80% of those responding to the survey placed the mental health of the person they care for in their top 2 concerns for 2023.
- According to the latest census findings, proportionately more of Barnet's residents are now children and young people or older adults compared to 2011. The numbers of older adults in Barnet will continue to increase, putting increasing demand on adult social care and creating more caring roles.
- Barnet has the highest recorded prevalence of dementia across North Central London and as of 2020 has the largest population of all London boroughs.
- There has been a 9.3% decrease over the past 10 years of residents identifying as white although this group still represents over half of Barnet's population followed by those identifying as Asian representing 19.3% of Barnet's population. The ethnic group showing the highest level of growth over the last 10 years has been those who identify as Other Ethnic Groups now representing 9.8% of the population.
- Over a third of Barnet's population self-reported as Christian with those reporting as having no religion being the next most common consisting of 20.2% of Barnet's population. Overall, 14.5% of

³ [Unpaid care, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandcare/conditions/dementia/unpaid-care-in-england-and-wales)

Barnet's population self-reported as Jewish, however the Jewish population in Barnet represents 39% of London's Jewish population.

- The latest census finding has reported that Barnet has a growing number of migrants settling in the borough and staying for the longer term.

3. We listen

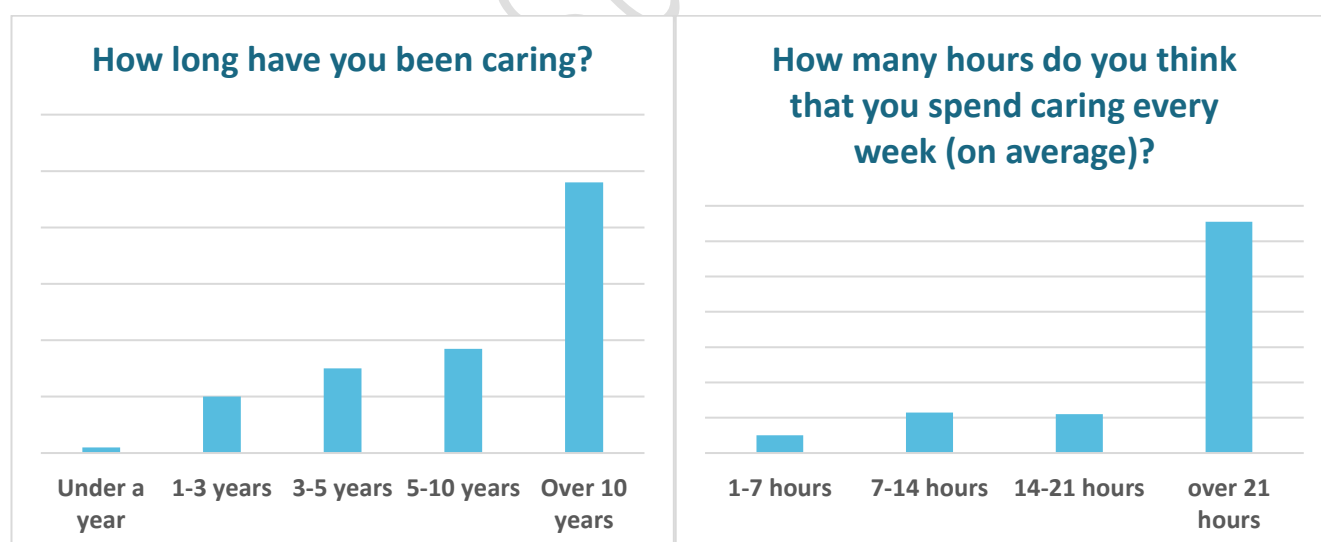
Barnet Council, and its key partners across health and social care, are committed to empowering carers to share their views and to work in partnership in the shaping and delivery of services.

This strategy, the priorities and the outcomes identified have been codesigned with young and adult carers across the borough. Over 300 carers have been engaged via a combination of focus groups and online surveys. Six focus group discussions were delivered by Barnet Carers Centre and took place in person and remotely. An online survey was sent to all Adult Carers known to the Barnet Carers Centre; and promoted via the council's engagement and consultation website, Engage Barnet.

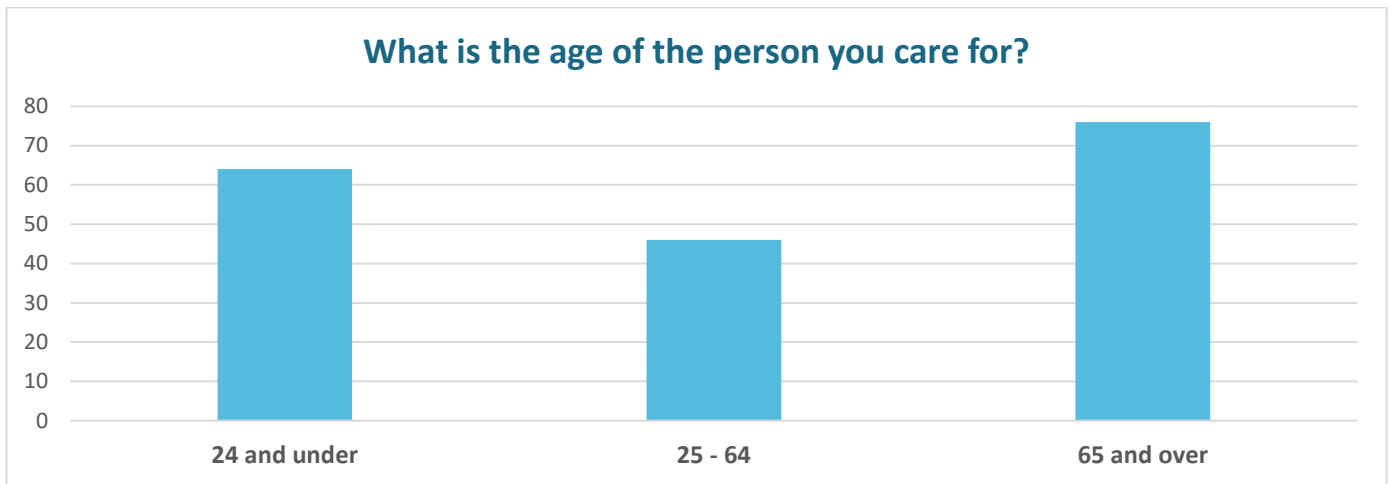
Furthermore, this strategy incorporates feedback collected from carers via the Survey of Adult Carers, conducted biannually by local authorities across the country, and makes important considerations of the hardships recorded as faced by carers during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Some key findings from the engagement activity and feedback collated are as follows:

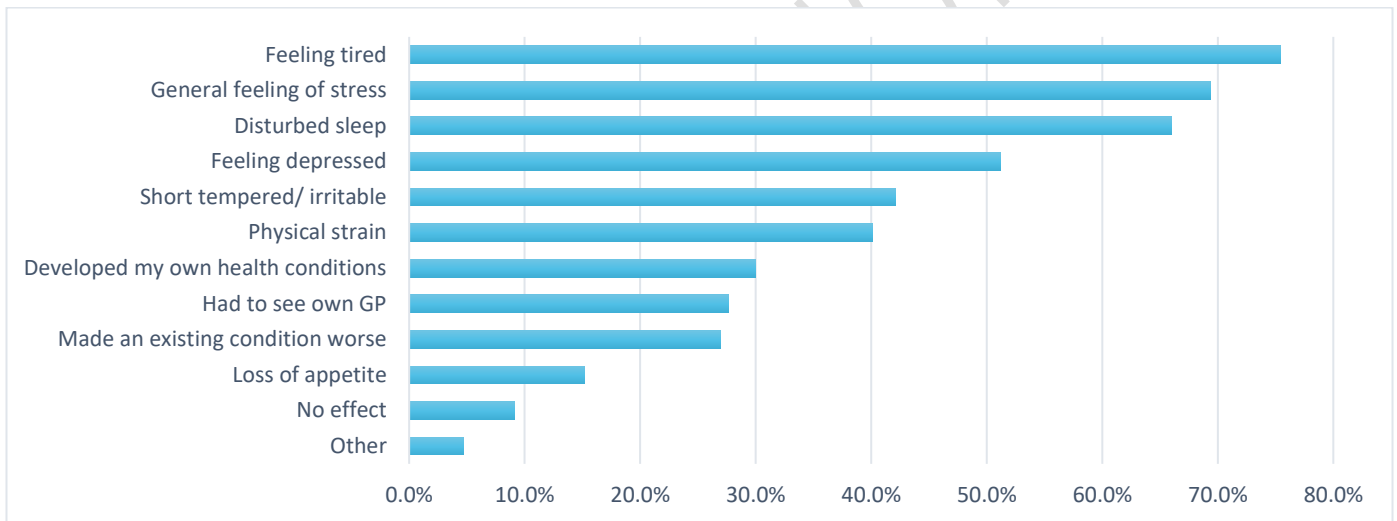
1. A majority of respondents to the survey specific to this strategy have been caring for over 10 years and spend over 21 hours on average in a week in their caring role (Carers Strategy Survey)



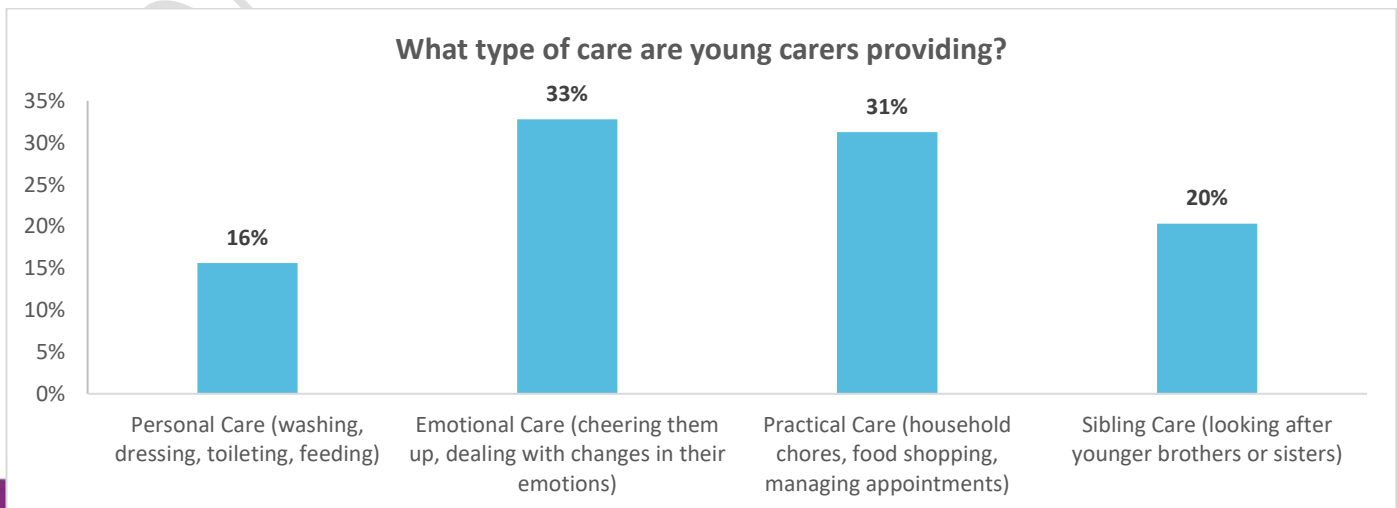
2. Parent carers have emerged as a prominent carers group through recent engagement and co-production discussions (Carers Strategy Survey and Focus Groups)



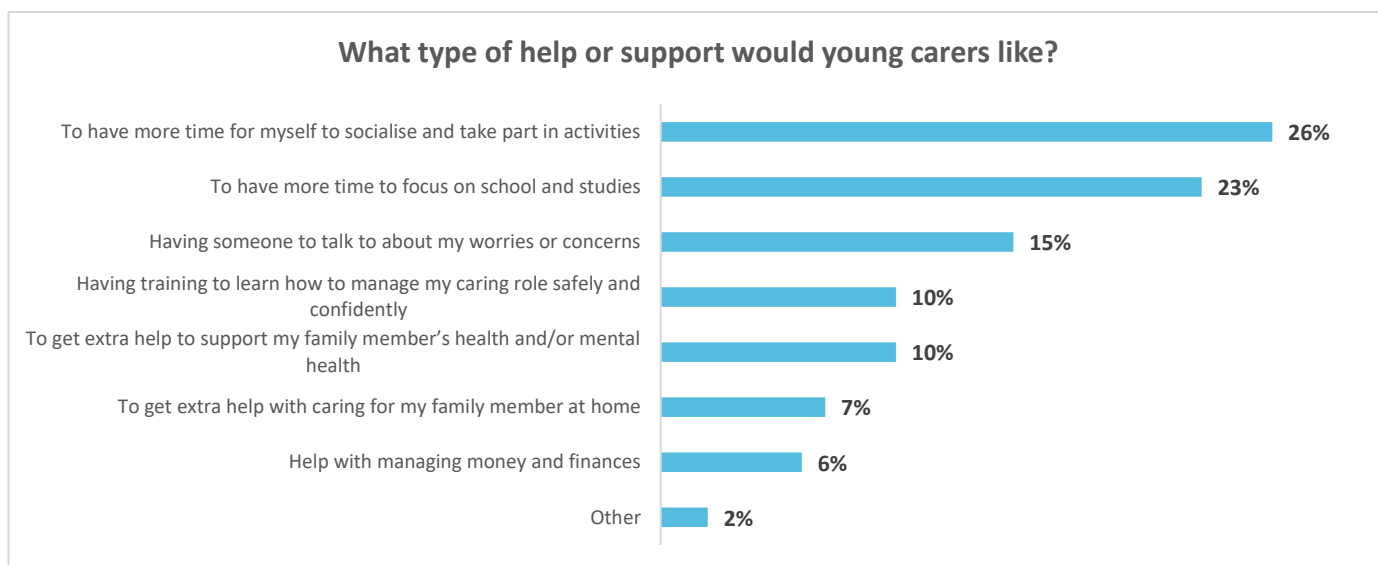
3. Over two thirds of carers reported that caring caused them general feelings of stress (Survey of Adult Carers, conducted biannually by local authorities)



4. Young carers are providing care for a wide range of things (Carers Strategy Young Carers Survey)



5. Young carers need support with a range of things including time to themselves and time to focus on school (Carers Strategy Young Carers Survey)



Engagement & Co-production



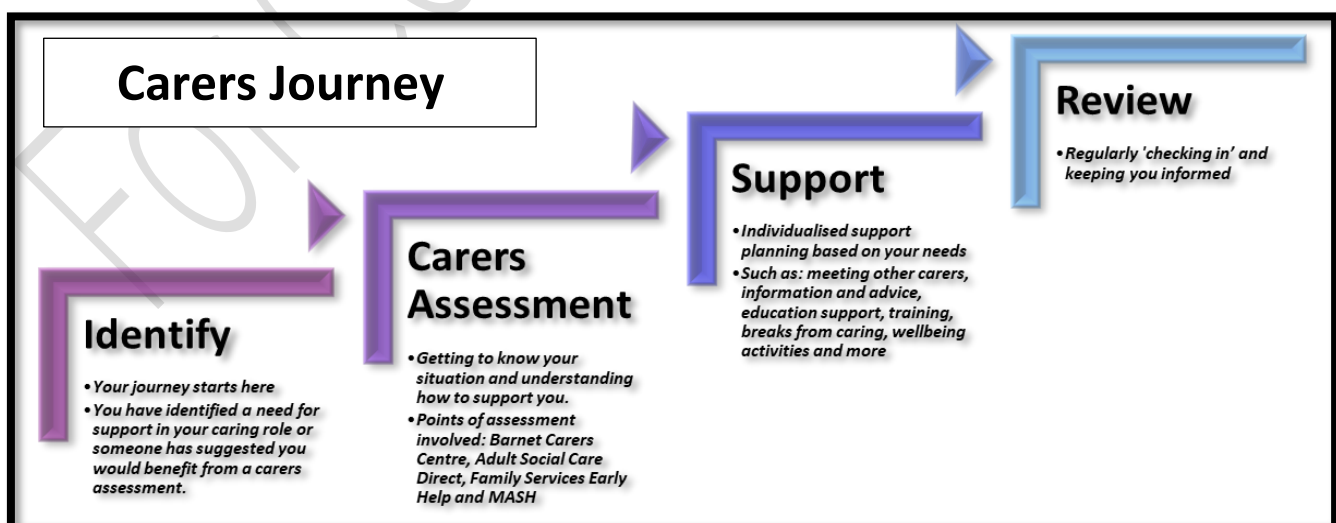
The engagement and co-production activity has been helpful in collecting a varied range of feedback and recommendations directly from carers. Some of the feedback refers to existing or planned services that may need to be reviewed in order to bring improvements, whereas some feedback highlights the importance of effective communication to address a lack of awareness around existing support offer, and some feedback is helpful in identifying gaps in our services that we intend to address through this strategy and its associated action plan.

During the engagement and co-production activity, carers advised us that:

- They feel there is a lack of awareness of the role Carers play in supporting the cared for person, by the Health and Social Care system and the wider community.
- They are only identified when they have reached crisis, which means it is too late for preventative support.

- They need more support with transport costs and entitlements such as free bus passes and access to discounted goods, products, and services to enable them to continue supporting themselves and the cared for person.
- They value activities that enable them to have regular breaks from their caring responsibilities to support balancing their caring roles with their own personal lives and interests
- They would benefit from training sessions about the disabilities / conditions of the cared for person and the various Health and Social Care pathways that can be used to access support.
- They have struggled during the pandemic - often not being informed when there is a change to the care and support of the cared for person (e.g., plan for the reopening of day opportunities).
- They need regular respite, and they do not know what respite is available and how to access it.
- There is an issue around “inconsistent care” with different paid carers turning up to carry out care, which can be distressing for the cared-for person.
- Young Carers often take on huge amounts of responsibility and need support to balance competing responsibilities and demands. Priorities for young people included pursuing their education and to have time dedicated to their mental health and wellbeing support as well as time for themselves and socialising.
- Timely, accessible, and appropriate support is required to enable sustained improvement in mental health and wellbeing. Many of the young carers we spoke to mentioned difficulties around accessing effective mental health and wellbeing support, specifically citing waiting times or accessibility.
- Young carers raised concerns around the demands of their education, and a sense that not all teaching staff were aware of how their caring responsibilities impact the abilities of young carers to participate and achieve in the same ways as their fellow pupils.
- Young Carers spoke of a need for increased understanding on the part of teaching and pastoral staff around their attainment and school performance relative to their caring responsibilities.
- Some young carers were concerned about finances and young carers were not always aware of the financial support available.

4. Existing Offer and Services



Family Services, Adult Social Care and Health are committed to working together to ensure that carers and young carers are identified, offered assessments and supported based on a whole family approach, whichever service they are identified through. This is in order to ensure that carers and young carers receive the support that they need in their caring role.

We actively promote carers using local resources and support networks in the community. For those needing more targeted support, we support them to access statutory support services where this is needed.

Carers Assessments are currently completed by a social care professional employed by the local authority, or by an appropriately trained professional working for Barnet Carers Centre. Associated care and support planning, where decisions are required around access to social care funding, are handed over to the local authority.

GPs are actively encouraged to identify carers when they access primary care services and record this on their care record. GPs are able to signpost to carer support and make onward referrals as needed, as well as making reasonable adjustments to ensure that carers are able to support their cared for in accessing the healthcare services that they need.

Support that is available to carers within the borough includes:

- Information and advice
- Respite vouchers (for use in residential or nursing homes)
- Training – including modules on practical support like safe Moving and Handling, supporting those living with dementia, or a mental health diagnosis.
- Service Provision to address the needs identified in the Assessment – delivered by a provider arranged by the local authority or funded via a Direct payment (these are cash payments, which can be used to purchase support, which you have been assessed as needing to support you in your caring role)
- Peer support and carer forums
- Counselling
- Working with key partners to provide whole family support where needed (e.g., health and Family Services)

Support offered through the commissioned lead provider, Barnet Carers Centre, includes: -

- Activities
- Information and advice
- Engagement with, and support within, schools
- Leisure pass scheme
- Wellbeing support
- Counselling
- Carer specific training
- Referrals to local agencies and services
- Mentoring
- Educational support to young carers

In addition to the above, other statutory and voluntary sector organisations working across the borough also offer support to carers both formally and informally.

5. Delivering Change

The implementation of this strategy will be planned in consideration of good practice principles, to ensure the associated action plan is accessible, co-produced, timely and tailored to deliver meaningful outcomes to carers of all ages.

To deliver the action plan we will work across the council and its partners from social care, health, education, housing, and the voluntary and community sector. We will also develop relationships across the wider community, including employment and business sectors as part of this approach, and will continue to put Carers at the heart of this process through their direct involvement in the Carers Strategy Implementation Board (the Board), which will be set up as a priority action arising from this strategy. The Board will be multi-disciplinary, multi-organisation and include representation from carers of all ages in Barnet.

Priorities

We have coproduced the following 4 priorities to guide our action planning:

1. Proactive identification of carers and young carers.
2. Individualised support so that carers and young carers can get the support they need and are entitled to.
3. Involving carers to shape future services and support offer.
4. Raising the profile of carers and young carers.

Outcomes

The outcomes we will achieve through this strategy include:

1. Carers and young carers are identified at the start of their caring journey, and this enables them to access the support they need.
2. Carers are supported to fulfil their education, training, and employment potential, and have their own time for positive and recreational activities.
3. Young Carers are prevented from having to undertake inappropriate caring and provided with the support they need to learn, develop, thrive, and enjoy a positive childhood.
4. Carers are fully aware of resources available to them to help them in their caring role.
5. Carers are supported to access, financial information, and advice and as a result feel financially secure and not financially disadvantaged due to their caring role.

6. Carers see an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing.
7. Young carers feel supported in schools to enable a positive school experience.
8. The way we work across the system is informed by insight from carers' lived experience and valuable contribution.
9. Carers can actively participate in the care and support planning of the person they care for and are able to advocate for themselves and their loved ones when needed.

Review

We have captured feedback from carers about changes to services that they feel are needed and included them directly in this strategy. We recognise that some of these changes may have already been made, or are planned, which indicates that we need to review communication, awareness, and accessibility. Whereas other changes reflect gaps in our local system that we will aim to address. This will all be taken into account in the development of the action plan to implement the strategy.

The dedicated action plan will be implemented to deliver on the priorities and outcomes outlined in this strategy over a two-year period. Oversight will be via a multi-disciplinary, multi-organisation, Carers Strategy Implementation Board. There will be workstreams established, as needed, that will report into the Board. Progress towards the Action Plan will be monitored by the Board and reported to the Barnet Borough Partnership Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board and other boards/committees as requested.

Through the two-year Action Plan, the Board will identify interventions and expect to evidence:

- An increase in the number of new carers who are identified at an early stage in their caring role, with a notable improvement in identifying under-represented groups.
- Carers report a positive experience of working in partnership with Health and Social Care for their benefit and the benefit of the cared for person.
- An increase in the number of Carers who report they are aware of and are able to access appropriate information, advice and guidance in relation to their caring role via the national and local Carers surveys.