



City of Westminster



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## Westminster Health & Wellbeing Board

## RBKC Health & Wellbeing Board

<b>Date:</b>	16 May 2024
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	Carers Strategy 2023-2028
<b>Report of:</b>	Gareth Wall, Bi-Borough Director of Integrated Commissioning
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-33 Fairer Westminster Strategy 2022-26 RBKC Council Plan Action Plan 2023-27
<b>Contribution to Health and Wellbeing Strategy ambitions:</b>	Ambitions 2, 3, 7, 8
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Carers Strategy has been developed through extensive co-design and engagement activity with key stakeholders. Working closely with carers and carers groups has enabled the strategy to be informed by a diverse range of voices and to reflect the needs and wishes of carers.
- 1.2 This process enabled carers to flag the key issues for them. While individual carers had their own specific experiences, there were areas of shared challenges. These included being valued and appreciated for the important role they play in society, being able to find the information and advice they wanted, having housing needs met, receiving the right care and support for both them and the cared for person, aid for the

financial challenges that may come with being a carer and helping with their health and wellbeing. These shared issues informed the six priority areas of the strategy.

- 1.3 The Strategy also aligns with and further builds activity in support of the national and local legislative and policy context. This includes the Care Act 2014, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) Council Plan 2023-2027, the Fairer Westminster Strategy 2022-2026, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2033, and the Learning Disability Plan 2023-2026.
- 1.4 The Government's ambitions are included within the six key priorities that carers self-identified. Each strategy priority area includes actions for stakeholders across the whole system including adult social care, public health, provider services and partner statutory services to further strengthen the offer to carers.

## **2. Key Matters for the Board**

- 2.1 This report updates the Board on the development of the Carers Strategy 2023-2028.

## **3. Main Report**

### *Developing the Strategy*

- 3.1 The Strategy was first and foremost developed in partnership with carers. Group sessions, facilitated through the Carers Network<sup>1</sup> and the Independent Carers Forum, enabled a range of carers' voices to be heard. These sessions highlighted common themes as well as specific considerations.
- 3.2 The Carers Network also created the opportunity for carers to provide feedback in writing or via one-to-one conversations. This served to enable carers whose responsibilities or preferences curtailed their ability to engage in group activity.
- 3.3 There was also significant outreach work with a range of providers and other statutory partners that have extensive experience of supporting and delivering services to carers. Those that engaged in the process included the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Central and North West London NHS Trust (CNWL) and its Carers Board Ambassadors, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, St Mary's Hospital, Open Age, Full of Life. Council services involved included Housing, Human Resources and Corporate Strategy.
- 3.4 The engagement activity with both carers and wider stakeholders was conducted throughout the Strategy's development, from initial planning work to the subsequent 'feedback loops' to review and refine the Strategy's content.

### *Support to Carers*

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<sup>1</sup> Carers Network - <https://www.carers-network.org.uk/> – Commissioned by RBKC and WCC to provide Carers Services on behalf of the Councils.

- 3.5 The Carers Personal Budget is intended to help carers have a break from their caring responsibilities. Some carers might invest in outings or classes, while other carers might invest in technology that enables them to engage and communicate with others. There are also services such as homecare, day centres and residential respite that, whilst deemed as services for the cared-for person, can also provide carers with a break from their caring duties.
- 3.6 Commissioned services provide a range of support for carers, including information and advice, fun and wellbeing activities, targeted befriending, and mental health support. There are also remote options and activities for those who struggle with leaving the home.
- 3.7 There are also universal services and provision from other statutory partners. For example, CNWL offers the universal Talking Therapies service<sup>2</sup> and a dedicated 'Carer Resource Pack'<sup>3</sup>.

### *Strategy Summary*

- 3.8 The Carers Strategy defines who is an adult carer, how the strategy has been developed and the ambition for adult carers in both RBKC and Westminster. There are also links to Children's Services and information for young carers.
- 3.9 The document provides a snapshot of current adult carers across both boroughs. It also includes practical advice on how carers can access help, case studies and quotes based on carers' experience, and an appendix that is dedicated to helpful information and resources for carers.
- 3.10 Through engagement and co-production, six priorities have been identified. Each has actions that will drive and deliver positive change for carers:

**Priority 1: Identify, recognise and appreciate carers** - We need to support people to identify as carers to enable them to access the help available if they wish to. Carers need to be recognised for their expertise and be involved in planning and decisions for the cared-for-person.

**Priority 2: Information and Advice** - Carers tell us one of the most important things for them is knowing where to get information, advice, and support. Sometimes this is not clear and can create anxiety. We aim to identify carers as early as possible and ensure they are signposted to the support they need.

**Priority 3: Care and Support** - Carers undertake invaluable work, and we are committed to providing support. Carers tell us the quality of services the cared-for-person receives is also important to the wellbeing of the carer. When they have concerns about service quality and reliability, it can make them anxious. We are

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/services/mental-health-services/kensington-and-chelsea-talking-therapies-service-community-living-well>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/information-carers/support-carers>

committed to providing good quality services.

**Priority 4: Finance** - Finance is an issue for many, and the increased cost-of-living has impacted on people's day-to-day lives. Caring can create additional financial pressures, particularly if it impacts on carers' employment and ability to continue working. As part of this work, we will help promote awareness of the Carer's Allowance, signpost carers to benefit checkers/ calculators or income maximisation services, and help improve awareness of travel subsidies.

**Priority 5: Housing** - Carers have shared concerns around housing needs, such as the suitability of housing, the level of service they receive from housing providers and private landlords, and tenancy rights, for example when they live with the person they care for, who is at the end of life.

**Priority 6: Health and Wellbeing** - When caring for someone else, a carer can neglect their own physical and mental health. This can cause a deterioration in the carer's health and wellbeing which may impact on their ability to look after the cared-for-person.

3.11 Engagement and co-design work with carers has laid strong foundations for delivering the strategy. By focusing on the priorities and actions identified, there is a real opportunity to progress carers' ambitions to: be identified earlier and recognised as 'experts by experience'; valued for the important role they play in society; informed about support available to them; supported to balance their caring responsibilities and to live happy and healthy lives.

3.12 There are challenges to this. The economic landscape across put pressure on health and social care resources. Staffing, funding, and the range and cost of high-quality services could impact on our collective ability to deliver the Strategy over the coming years. However, the Strategy, whilst ambitious, is rooted in deliverability. We are confident that, by working in partnership, we can achieve these changes and will make a positive difference.

3.13 Feedback from carers has included:

*"I am so very pleased to see this vital work done... It must get better for all our sakes."*

*"The strategy is very much welcomed & I wouldn't change any of it at this point. The challenge will be delivering it in practice. Once agreed, the emphasis must be on K&C and Westminster delivering the outcomes to ensure carers' experiences are improved in practice."*

*"... I am most impressed and grateful: the topics are spot on ... So relevant. And so helpful."*

3.14 Over the next five years, the Council will work with partners including the NHS, service providers and carers to address the priorities within this strategy. The local carers and residents' independent forums will play a key role in feeding back progress

and identifying further opportunities.

- 3.15 Progress against the strategy will be reported into the Place Based Partnership via the Health and Wellbeing Board, in line with its ten-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the background papers please contact:**

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