

Carers' strategy and action plan 2007 to 2010



Executive summary

Executive summary

1 Introduction

We, along with the City and Hackney Carers' Centre and its partners (health and voluntary organisations) and carers, are pleased to present this executive summary of the 2007 to 2010 Carers' strategy. It shows our commitment to carers and will help us to develop support and services for carers over the next three years. The local authority, health and voluntary organisations and carers have worked together to develop this strategy.

2 Who is a carer?

A carer is someone who gives help and support to someone who cannot manage in their own home because of a disability, an illness or their age. Carers do not get paid for caring for someone. They may be of any age and they may live with, or apart from, the person they care for. Carers UK is an organisation which works to promote the valuable

contribution that carers make to society. Carers UK also provide information and advice to carers about their rights and how to get support.

They describe carers as follows:

Carers look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability.

The care they provide is unpaid.

3 Changes in the law

Recent changes in the law have recognised that the demands of caring for someone can mean that carers do not have a life of their own. The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 deals with these needs in particular. Carers now have the right to have a carer's needs assessment, carried out by a care manager, which should consider their work and training needs, their leisure time and how they can have a life of their own. The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 and the Government's

‘Our Health, Our Care, Our Say’ and ‘New Deal for Carers’ documents give new guidance for community services. They help carers to provide long-term care and support carers and the people they care for, when they need it. They ask councils to work together with their partners to give carers more of a say in how services are planned and delivered.

4 Carers’ views

In 2005, we carried out a survey of carers’ lives and needs. We asked carers to fill in a questionnaire, and the City and Hackney Carers’ Centre held three public discussions. We received 217 filled-in questionnaires from carers. The results of this survey were written up in the ‘Carers count’ pamphlet, which we sent out in June 2006. We have used this information, and the results of a national survey carried out by Carers UK, to help us develop this carers’ strategy.

On 27 November 2006, we and the City and Hackney Carers’ Centre, organised a discussion for carers in Hackney. The aim of the discussion was to collect information about what carers wanted to see in the carers’ strategy. All carers had the chance to give their views about all areas of caring, from money matters, carers’ own health, and the range of information available to them, to time away from caring.

The discussion was a great success. Around 80 carers took part and the information carers gave us has played a large part in how we have developed this strategy.

5 Our vision and goals

Our vision is that we will provide very high standards of support and service to carers in all parts of the community. We are working to be one of the best-performing boroughs for carers’ services.

To achieve this, we will work to make sure that:

- carers and other people involved in care services to work together;
- carers have access to effective information and support services;
- carers know how to get the information and services they need;
- carers know that they can have a carer's needs assessment and how to arrange this;
- carers are given a choice about how often they provide care;
- we encourage carers to look after their own health and wellbeing; and
- we help carers to have a life of their own, by providing information, support and services they can rely on.

We have set out the targets we want to achieve for carers in the action plan, which is part of the main strategy document.

Carers are often the primary care resource, and professionals should work with carers to the benefit of the cared-for person.

Daphne Statham,
The Landmark Conference
for Carers, CSCI

6 Local services

The last few years, we have made good progress in providing information and services to carers. The City and Hackney Carers' Centre has given us a lot of help to identify and meet the needs of carers in Hackney.

This strategy will continue to make sure we and our partners use our resources effectively to meet the needs we have identified in this strategy. Good practice, good information and good training will help us to deliver the nine 'outcomes' set out in the action plan.

Our and our partners' current services include short breaks, personal care, day centres, day-sitting and night-sitting services (where a care worker keeps someone company) and residential respite care (where someone stays in a residential or nursing home to give their carer a break from caring). We are planning new services. The new services and benefits we will add during the first year will include the following:

- **A carers' helpline** to provide up-to-date information and support for carers across Hackney.
- **The carer's card**, which will also act as an identity card. Carers will be assessed before they get a carer's card. The card will give carers:
 - discounts in more than 50 shops in the borough;
 - up-to-date information on carers' rights and services for carers; and
 - priority access to some services – for instance, Hackney Homes now has a carers' charter

which gives carers priority for housing repairs.

- **Concessionary (reduced-price) swimming** – carers will be able to go swimming at leisure centres in Hackney at reduced prices.
- **Benefits advice and the income maximisation service** – as well as the benefits and debt advice that is available at the City and Hackney Carers' Centre, carers will be able to use our income maximisation service, which offers benefits advice and general advice about managing finances.
- **The carers' training strategy** will offer carers a wide range of learning and development courses.
- **A library service**, at libraries in Hackney, to allow carers to borrow extra items without having to pay reservation fees or charges for certain items.

- **Museums** will provide rooms where carers can meet.
- **We will encourage housing associations in Hackney** to follow the lead of Hackney Homes and the Mosaic Housing Trust, who have introduced carers' charters to respond to carers' needs for housing services such as giving them priority for housing repairs.

7 The strategy

The new carers' strategy shows:

- how we are currently performing;
- what our goals are;
- how we will achieve these goals; and
- how we will report on our progress to make sure we achieve our goals.

The strategy is supported by an 'information strategy' which will make sure that anyone who is interested in carers' issues gets the information they want. The strategy is also supported by a 'training strategy' which will provide training and support to carers.

The action plan includes plans to provide training to our partners and other care-service professionals.

8 Putting the strategy into practice

The carers' strategy has received support from all divisions within the Council, and the whole council will be responsible for making sure we meet carers' needs. Our partners and Team Hackney, who aim to improve the quality of life for everyone in Hackney, have accepted the strategy which means that carers will be recognised for their contribution to how we provide care services.

To make sure this strategy is put into practice successfully, we have set up the carers' partnership board to supervise and monitor how the strategy develops. Members of the carers' partnership board include carers, and care managers from our partner organisations, the Learning Trust, and the Primary Care Trust.

These care managers will make sure that all our partners continue to

develop the strategy and deliver excellent services to carers. They will also raise awareness about care work in their own areas of work.

The carers' partnership board will report to the Healthy Thriving Communities Board (the partnership board managed by Team Hackney), and will make sure that we and our partners deliver the action plan effectively.

9 Monitoring and reviewing the strategy

We will monitor and improve the strategy and the action plan continuously so that it can change to meet the needs of carers.

All members of the carers' partnership board will regularly provide reports about their particular service or organisation. There will be a carers' strategy manager and an administrator in our social

care department who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the strategy.

Carers will always be involved in monitoring and reviewing the strategy.

There will be a carers' survey and a carers' conference every year, where the carers' partnership board will present their report on how the action plan is developing. They will also discuss their and our priorities for the following year.

For a copy of the full strategy, phone Carole Sansom on 020 8356 5054.

Acknowledgements

The London Borough of Hackney would like to thank all of the individuals and partner agencies we consulted when developing this strategy.

We would also like to give special thanks to Carole Sansom, the Carers' Strategy Manager.

