

CARERS STRATEGY 2018 - 2021 UPDATE

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Jane Palmer Councillor Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Health and Social Care Families, Education and Wellbeing
Officer Contact(s)	Kate Kelly-Talbot - Social Care & Health
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	This report provides Cabinet with an update on progress with implementing the 2018-2021 Carers' Strategy and specifically the 2020/21 Delivery Plan arising from it. It also seeks approval for the proposed priorities for 2021/22.
Putting our Residents First	<p>This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People</i></p> <p>It also supports the 2018-2021 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priority of developing integrated, high quality social care and health services within the community or at home.</p> <p>The Strategy also implements the Council's responsibilities for supporting Adult Carers introduced under the Care Act, 2014 and Young Carers e.g., Carers under the age of 18, introduced by the Children and Families Act, 2014.</p>
Financial Cost	The Strategy does not have any direct financial implications. There is a contract with Hillingdon Carers Partnership to deliver Universal Services and the costs for LBH will be contained within this contract. The Approved budget for 2021-22 is £658,700.
Relevant Select Committee	Families, Health & Wellbeing
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. **Notes progress against the Carers Strategy delivery plan activity for 2020-21 and the work that the Council and its partners does to support those with caring responsibilities in the Borough.**
2. **Notes the comments of the Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee.**
3. **Approves the proposed priorities for 2021/22.**

Reasons for recommendation

1. *2020/21 Delivery Plan update:* At its November 2015 meeting, Cabinet requested an annual review and update on the implementation of the Carers' Strategy and associated Delivery Plan. The majority of actions in the 2019/20 delivery plan became business as usual in 2020/21, thus signifying the success in Hillingdon of promoting the interests of Carers. However, the key deliverables for 2020/21 are summarised in paragraph 12. Key achievements of the Council and its partners within the context of Covid-19 are outlined within the body of the report.
2. *2021/22 Priorities:* The proposed priorities suggest the focus for how Council and partner resources will be used to meet the needs of Carers during 2021/22. The recommendation provides Cabinet with the opportunity to amend the priorities should it wish to do so.
3. Implementation of the Carers' Strategy helps the Council to meet its duties under section 4 of the Care Act 2014 to provide information and support to Adult Carers and their families and section 96 of the Children and Families Act, 2014 in respect of Young Carers.

Alternative options considered / risk management

- 4 *2020/21 Delivery Plan update:* No alternative options were considered as Cabinet has requested an annual update report.
5. *2021/22 Priorities:* Cabinet could reject the proposed priorities and/or instruct officers and ask partners to consider others.

Select Committee comments

6. At its meeting on 3 June 2021, Families, Health & Wellbeing Select Committee Members welcomed the report and supporting illustrative case studies, and the priorities for 2021/22 were noted. Although the pandemic has presented significant challenges for carers and the Hillingdon Carers Partnership alike, it was evident that many of the points raised were already being addressed and there had been a vast improvement in partnership working. Members were particularly pleased with progress in developing mental health support provision for carers, the need for which has grown considerably over the last year.

From a presentational perspective, Members felt that selective use of graphics and the inclusion of some wider performance data would be helpful for context, and information regarding specific support for young carers, in future reporting. It would also assist with member understanding of successes, but also the extent of current challenges and opportunities for improvement.

Committee Members commended the Hillingdon Carers Partnership for their joint work in what has been an extraordinarily challenging year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Strategic Context

7. According to the 2011 census, there are over 25,000 Carers in Hillingdon who provide unpaid support. Their contribution to the health and wellbeing of those they care for is significant. The census also showed that 18% of unpaid carers were aged 65 and over. Projections by the Projecting Older People Population Information Service (POPPI) developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC) and Oxford Brookes University suggest that this number is likely to increase by 13% to 6,438 by 2025. Additional census information showed that approximately 10% of Carers were aged under 25, which emphasises the continuing importance of supporting Carers of all ages. Updated data about the profile of Carers in the borough from the 2021 census undertaken on the 27th March 2021 is expected in the spring of 2022 and this will support a refresh of the Carers' Strategy.

8. As previously reported to Cabinet, Carers say that supporting someone to live an independent life at home, in the community they know, can be very rewarding. However, this can come at a considerable personal cost to Carers because of the impact that the caring role can have on their own physical and mental health, their employment status and consequently their financial position and also their own independence. All of these factors are very interrelated and the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020/21 has put many additional pressures onto people already in a caring role. It has also resulted in people having to undertake such a role, often unexpectedly.

9. Cabinet agreed at its May 2020 meeting that the delivery of the Carers' Strategy should move to a business-as-usual position following the successful implementation of the actions from previous delivery plans. However, the pandemic has necessitated support for Carers being delivered in different ways, e.g., online rather than face-to-face. Different approaches and responses have also been required by emerging need, such as the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of Carers arising from isolation and loneliness; particular difficulties faced by young and young adult Carers with having to spend more time with the people they are caring for as well as other members of their family; and the challenges posed by discussions about death, dying and bereavement linked to people contracting Covid-19.

10. This report outlines the achievements of the Council and its partners within this context and suggests priorities for 2021/22 as Hillingdon and the rest of the country emerges from Covid restrictions and adapts to live with the pandemic legacy.

11. References in this report to the '*review period*' mean the period between 1st April 2020 and the 31st March 2021 unless otherwise stated.

2020-21 Delivery Plan Achievements

12. Despite the agreed focus on maintaining the momentum of business-as-usual activities, there were a series of specific actions identified that the Carers' Strategy Group would work on during 2020/21. These actions are shown below with a progress update:

- The recruitment of Carer representatives to attend the Strategy Group: *Action paused* – The progress of the pandemic has prevented the Carers Strategy Group from meeting during 2020/21. Once the pandemic restrictions have been lifted a task for 2021/22 will be to review with Carers and partners the role, functions and membership of the Carers Strategy Group.
- Development of a guide for people who suddenly become Carers: *In progress* – Consultation on an initial draft will take place in Q1 and a final version for distribution via the Hillingdon Carers Partnership will be available in Q2.
- Ensuring that the identity of the Carers' lead in each GP Practice is clearly displayed: *Action paused* – An achievement of the 2019/20 delivery plan was the identification of Carer leads (please see below) in 43 of the Borough's 45 practices. In 2020/21 this increased to 44 practices, including all of those within the GP Confederation. However, due to the pandemic most consultations were being undertaken either by telephone or online, which impacted on the delivery of this action. With remote consultations likely to be an ongoing legacy of the pandemic, the Confederation will work with Carers Trust Hillingdon and identified Carer Leads in practices in 2021/22 to explore the most effective ways to identify and support Carers.

Carer Leads in GP Surgeries: The Role Explained

Key tasks include:

- Proactively identifying and supporting Carers, many of whom do not see themselves as Carers;
- Ensuring that a surgery Carer Register is maintained and updated regularly;
- Ensuring the practice provides active signposting to the Hillingdon Carers Partnership;
- Ensuring that standardised packs of information for Carers are available within the waiting room;
- Feeding into the Confederation and its partners, e.g., Hillingdon Carers Partnership and the CCG, any gaps in provision or requirements to help practices to support Carers further;
- Working with colleagues in the practice to provide enhanced access and flexibility of appointments for Carers;
- Considering how else the practice might facilitate improved carer-health – monthly Carer Health checks for example;
- Attending any training/information sessions that relate to the support of Carers within General Practice.

- Implementing the response to Carer feedback at the CCG's October 2019 AGM in respect of:
 - Supporting access to primary care by piloting a darsi/farsi speaking interpreter in the south of the Borough where there is greatest need: *Completed* – A person started on the 23rd November 2020 and was instrumental in supporting vaccination take up within this population group.
 - Co-design information for children with learning difficulties and/or autism and their families, including Easy to Read guidance on accessing the health service appropriately: *In progress* – Information is available through the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Advisory Service and will be reviewed during 2021/22. In addition, work to improve the information available on the Council's website for parents of children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) conditions will continue with input from the Hillingdon Parents' Forum.

13. This section of the report also highlights other key achievements of the Council and its partners during 2020/21, which have to be seen within the context of the pandemic.

Council Achievements

14. **Carer Engagement:** As previously stated, Covid-restrictions have prevented the Carers Strategy Group from meeting during 2020/21. The restrictions have also prevented the two borough-wide forums that ran bi-annually (March and October) from taking place. However, online Carers' Forum meetings took place in October 2020 and March 2021 that had a total of 63 Carer participants, which was comparable with attendance at the face-to-face meetings held in 2019/20. It is intended to hold further online Carers' Forum meetings in 2021/22.

15. **Carers Assessments:** During 2020/21 1,013 Carers' assessments were completed against a target of 986. 26% (266) of assessments were undertaken by Carers Trust Hillingdon and the remainder by Social Care staff. The assessments undertaken by the Carers Trust were 'triage' assessments.

16. The triage assessments undertaken by the Carers Trust help to identify whether Carers are likely to benefit from receiving a full assessment. Cabinet may wish to note that although a Carer's assessment is the route to directly funded support from the Council, the Hillingdon Carers' Partnership provides access to a range of support services for which an assessment is not required. This information can be obtained through this link <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support/hillingdon-carers-2>

17. **Respite and other Carer-related service provision:** During the review period 201 Carers were provided with respite or another carer service at a cost of £1,916k. This compares to 196 Carers being supported at a cost of £2,002k during 2019/20. This includes bed-based respite and home-based replacement care as well as voluntary sector provided services and those directly purchased via Direct Payments. In fact, the review period saw an increase in the number of Carers using Direct Payments to commission their own more personalised support from 73 in 2019/20 to 104 in 2020/21. Cabinet may wish to note that in 2020/21 the Council increased funding for the provision of universal services to support Carers to £659k in 2020/21 from £602k in 2019/20. This mainly relates to the Hillingdon Carers Partnership contract.

18. **Multi-caring responsibilities:** Adult Social Care has developed a mechanism for identifying and recording people who have multiple caring responsibilities, so that associated needs can be reflected in reviews. This was done at the instigation of the Council's Carers' Champion, Councillor Haggar. However, some refinement of the recording process is required to ensure that all Carers with multiple caring responsibilities are identified and this work will be completed during 2021/22. The aim is to address the distinction between the narrower definition of who is a Carer in the national short and long-term services (SALT) return that all local authorities are required to submit annually to NHS Digital and the broader definition used by the Council.

19. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** During the pandemic the Council has made PPE available free of charge to 57 Carers referred by the Hillingdon Carers Partnership or who have made direct enquiries. The equipment provided included aprons, masks, visors, gloves, hand sanitiser and hand wash. An online portal has been established to enable Carers to apply directly for PPE and two collection points have been established, one at the Great Barn in Ruislip and the other at the Carers' Centre in Uxbridge. Assistance with delivering equipment for Carers experiencing issues with getting to either collection point is available through the Hillingdon Carers' Partnership.

Hillingdon Carers Partnership Achievements

20. Carers Trust Hillingdon (formerly known as Hillingdon Carers) is the lead organisation for a consortium of third sector organisations that support Carers collectively known as the Hillingdon Carers Partnership (HCP). Carers Trust holds a contract with the Council for the provision of support services for Carers in the borough, which Cabinet decided to extend for two further years at its March 2021 meeting. The support services are delivered by all of the organisations within the partnership.

21. Delivery of the contract is reported on separately and actively supports the work of all health and care partners in Hillingdon. HCP also has strong links into the H4All third sector consortium, with Carers Trust Hillingdon being one of its constituent members. Some key HCP achievements in the past year are set out below.

22. **Supporting Carers on the Carers' Register:** The Carers Trust contacted every Carer on the register that is maintained by the Trust at the start of the pandemic to offer regular support calls during the lockdown, a practice that was repeated during subsequent lockdowns. This process resulted in an extensive data cleanse, which means the Trust has certainty that the 8,276 registered adult carers and 1,066 young and young adult carers on the register as at 31/03/21 are people undertaking a caring role.

23. **Responding to demand for emotional support:** As a result of Carers reporting feelings of isolation, loneliness, anxiety and fear, 3,359 people have accessed emotional support services provided by the Partnership in 2020/21, which compared to 984 in 2019/20. Support services included:

- *Weekly welfare calls:* The process of contacting people on the Carers' Register led to 1,644 Carers receiving weekly calls during the pandemic period.
- *Telephone and Zoom support sessions:* 164 sessions replaced the regular Carer Cafés held in 2019/20.

- *Counselling sessions:* 457 counselling sessions were delivered by Hillingdon Mind to 42 Carers, which represents a 45% increase in demand on 2019/20.
- *Dementia support:* Carers Trust and the Alzheimer's Society combined teams to provide 490 1:1 support/contact sessions to 350 Carers.
- *Talking Therapies referrals:* In close liaison with CNWL, HCP has made referrals to the latter's Talking Therapies Service.

24. The grant to Hillingdon Mind from the Council has been increased from £90k in 2020/21 to £120k for 2021/22 in response to the additional demand on their services that they have faced during the pandemic.

25. **Responding to challenging family situations:** Enforced 24/7 contact during lockdowns has placed considerable pressure on many family relationships. This has proved particularly problematic for young adult carers where family dynamics may include parental substance misuse, mental ill health and multiple caring relationships. HCP's response has been to increase resources to their Family Support Team and, in partnership with CNWL, to place a family support worker with the Community Mental Health Team at Mill House. This facilitates access to professional mental health support to address the needs the worker is unable and/or not qualified to meet.

26. **Breaks from caring:** Adult Carers were able to access 3,093 breaks during the review period, although the nature of the Covid restrictions meant that these were provided online and included, for example, chair exercises, dance classes, Spanish courses, singing sessions, IT skills and two new bereavement support groups that were established. 1,530 breaks were also provided for young/young adult Carers and these included boxercise, street dance and arts and craft activities.

27. **Improving income for Carers:** In 2020/21 HCP secured £1m in carer-related benefits to improve the incomes of 413 households in the Borough.

28. **Additional income:** As previously reported to Cabinet, the HCP model is popular with external funders and during 2020/21 an additional £200.5k was attracted to support Carers in Hillingdon. £37.4k of this was used to provide hardship grants to support 131 young Carers and their families. HCP was also able to supply 32 laptops to benefit 80 young people. This equipment was supplied in liaison with the relevant schools to ensure that devices were going to young people not able to access equipment or where only one device was available to households consisting of more than one young person.

CNWL Community Adult Mental Health Service Achievements

29. The involvement of Carers in any aspect of clinical care that the service user gives consent to was reported to Cabinet in the May 2020 update. Involvement included attendance at ward rounds, care programme approach (CPA) reviews, transfer meetings, assessments, outpatient appointments, crisis appointments etc. In response to the pandemic, CNWL has modified service delivery and increased support both at an individual, team, Borough and trust level where possible to maintain this involvement as far as possible taking into consideration infection prevention and control requirements. Some achievements over the review period in this context are shown below.

Care Programme Approach Explained

The Care Programme Approach (CPA) is a package of care for people with mental health needs. Everyone on a CPA has a Care Coordinator and a care plan, which sets out what support they will get and who will provide it.

30. **Pandemic impact review meetings:** Monthly meetings between CNWL, Hillingdon Mind and the Carers Trust have been established to consider the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of residents and Carers.

31. **Carers assessments:** Assessments have continued throughout the pandemic where appropriate and are recorded on clinical systems to ensure visibility of Carers and their needs to other professionals.

32. **Maintaining Carer contact:** Face to face appointments have continued where clinically appropriate or requested and this includes home visits. Visitors to wards have had to be stopped or restricted at various times during the year but support has been provided on an individual basis if people do not have smart phones, technological expertise or limited capacity due to their mental health condition. Extra iPads have been purchased to support people to remain in touch with family/friends. A specific “*keeping in touch group*” was also included in the occupational therapy group programme at the Riverside Centre for this purpose during the lockdowns. Carers have been able to continue to participate in relevant meetings e.g. discharge planning meetings via zoom technology or by phone.

33. **Check in and chat for Carers:** This CNWL wide service provides weekly telephone calls to Carers of people living with mental health conditions for an eight-week period. This service is provided by volunteers with supervision from clinical staff.

34. **Service user and Carer involvement meetings:** These were held every two months and had regular Carer attendance, including as co-chairs. The meetings were suspended during the first lockdown but were re-established virtually in the summer of 2020 and have continued thereafter.

35. **Access to IT and related skills:** CNWL has worked in partnership with Hillingdon Mind to assist Carers who lack the IT hardware and/or the requisite skills to use it in order to join virtual groups and meetings.

36. **Internal information dissemination:** Carers Trust Hillingdon newsletters go to the CNWL leads for patient and Carer involvement and are disseminated to local teams in Hillingdon. This helps to keep staff updated with the support available for Carers and how to access it.

37. **Recovery and Wellbeing College:** The CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College is a learning and development centre providing a range of educational courses, workshops and resources for people with mental health needs who are using CNWL services or who have been discharged in the past 12 months. It also supports their Carers and family members as well as staff from all areas of the Trust. The college has continued providing courses virtually throughout the pandemic and relevant information is sent to partners such as the Carers Trust and Hillingdon Mind, as well as directly to people living with mental health conditions and their Carers.

38. Triangle of care introduction: The triangle of care devised by Carers Trust UK in 2010 and describes how the relationship between a service user with mental health needs, their Carer and professionals can work most effectively to support the independence of both the service user and the Carer. This is being implemented in the Riverside Centre in Hillingdon and will be rolled out to community teams in 2021/22. The main implications are the identification of Carer champions in all teams and embedding Carer awareness training.

Triangle of Care Expanded

There are six standards to the Triangle of Care and these are:

1. Carers and the essential role they play are identified at first contact or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. Staff are 'carer aware' and trained in carer engagement strategies.
3. Policy and practice protocols re: confidentiality and sharing information, are in place.
4. Defined post(s) responsible for carers are in place, e.g. Carers' leads or champions.
5. A carer introduction to the service and staff is available, with a relevant range of information across the care pathway, e.g., an introductory letter from the team or ward explaining the nature of the service provided and who to contact.
6. A range of carer support services is available.

Carers' Strategy Delivery Priorities for 2021/22

39. The suggested priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Restoring face to face services, especially so that Carers can have '*time out*' away from where they provide care.
- Exploring with Carer Leads in GP practices and Carers Trust Hillingdon how to identify and support Carers who may be reluctant to attend practices.
- Delivering the guide for people who suddenly become Carers.
- Refine the process for recording and identifying Carers with multiple caring responsibilities within Social Care.
- Reviewing the role of the Carers' Strategy Group. This group previously had responsibility for overseeing the development and delivery of the Carers' Strategy, but, as mentioned in paragraph 13, Covid restrictions prevented it from meeting during 2020/21.

40. The Carers' Forum will be consulted on the priorities for 2021/22 and the delivery plan adapted accordingly.

Financial Implications

41. The report provides an update on progress with implementing the Carers' Strategy and therefore does not have any direct financial implications, as there is an existing contract with Carers Trust Hillingdon to deliver Universal Services.

42. This contract is funded from Adult Social Care budgets and the approved budget for 2021-22 is £658,700.

43. The Equifax rating for Carers Trust Hillingdon is B which indicates a below average risk of business failure and is acceptable in accordance with the Council's Supplier Risk Protocols.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

44. The Carers Strategy 2018-21 and associated delivery plan demonstrate to residents and Carers in Hillingdon the shared commitment to supporting Carers across the Council, the NWL CCG and its partners - and the shared accountability to improving services for Carers.

Consultation carried out or required

45. Carers Trust Hillingdon and Hillingdon Health and Care Partners have been consulted on the content of this report. As stated in paragraph 40, the Carers' Forum will be consulted on the priorities for 2021/22 and the delivery plan adapted accordingly.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

46. Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Legal

47. The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Carers' Strategy 2018-21](#)