

Waltham Forest Carers Strategy

2007 –2009

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Foreword from Cllr Liz Phillips

Welcome to the London Borough of Waltham Forest Carers Strategy 2007/2009.

Waltham Forest is pleased to present this strategy for Carers'. It is the result of consultations and discussions with partner groups, Social Services, Housing, Health Services and Voluntary Organizations working together to support Carers of all ages.

Waltham Forest acknowledge the contribution that Carers make in providing community care and the purpose of this document is to identify the appropriate services and support for Carers to enable them to maintain their own health and wellbeing. In developing this strategy we have included carers expressed views and invite carers to continue to play an active role in ensuring that we deliver better services for carers. The implementation of the Action Plan will lead to improved and effective support and service provision for carers.

The Carers Strategy will ensure that we are complying with the government's initiatives around the **New Deal for Carers**. The year ahead is exciting and holds many opportunities for carers to tell about new ideas they may have. Towards the latter part of the year, the government will be donating further monies to facilitate the implementation of 'Emergency Back Me Up' services. During the recent Carers Conference many of the carers expressed ideas about a range of services that would closely match their needs, in the event of a crisis. We encourage carers to take every opportunity to 'have your say and aim to transform their suggestions into reality.

2. Introduction

The Carers Strategy is a statement of how services will be designed and delivered to carers across Waltham forest over the next three years. Every year, there is a turnover of 2 million carers in the UK. New carers require access to information and a range of support services to aid them in their caring role. At the same time, many cease to be carers and find it difficult to find employment or training opportunities, particularly if they have been out of the labour market for an extended period of time. A key principle of this strategy therefore will be to plan for services that provide quality information and support that is equitable for all carers at all stages of their caring lives.

Carers should be recognised and valued for the enormous contribution they make and for the hard job that they do every day. We should be looking after carers and supporting them in accessing arrange of services and support. We should ensure that we look after the health and wellbeing of carers and enable them to take regular short breaks.

The strategy is aimed at carers of people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory impairment, mental health problems, older adults, Parent Carers and young carers and will achieve a number of goals.

- a) To respond to what carers across all user groups have identified as the key issues now and in the future.
- b) To enable carers to be fully informed with up to date, easily accessible and consistent information and to be valued and recognised for the job they do as well as being given time off for a break that is appropriate for both the carer and the person they care for.
- c) To comply with the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 that will enable carers to access education, skills development and lifelong learning opportunities as well as the overall principles of the National Strategy for Carers 1999.
- d) To respond to the White Paper, 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say', which will provide carers with better prevention services with earlier intervention, support to maintain mental health and emotional wellbeing and to give carers choice and diversity.

3. Background

There are many reasons why carers should need to be supported.

a) Demography and life expectancy

- As a nation, our life expectancy has improved and we can all expect to live longer. Our chances of becoming a carer are increasing all the time.
- We live in an ageing population that is demographically changing.
- Advances in medical and assistive technologies have increased our life chances.

b) Financial

- Carers are cost-effective.
- Carers make a vital contribution.
- Health and social care systems would break down without carers.

c) Enabling

- If we support carers appropriately, we can alleviate health problems brought about by the caring role.
- We can enable carers to balance work, education, training and social activities within their caring role.
- We can enable carers to thrive within their own communities and to better understand both the well-being and universal services that can help them.
- We can aid carers by raising the awareness of the practical and emotional support that is available.

d) Value

We can learn from carers and use their expertise, skills and knowledge in our service planning and development.

- We can consult with carers to give us added value and to inform our policies and procedures.
- Valuing carers as genuine partners can improve our services and will foster a better relationship between carers and care professionals.
- Carers must be recognised and their views and opinions encouraged.

4. Aims of the Strategy

This refreshed strategy aims to set a clear vision for the future, identify areas for development in relation to service provision and actions required to meet new objectives. This will provide the framework for delivering carers with high quality services and flexible outcomes to meet assessed need. The Local Authority in partnership with the voluntary, independent sector and health partners to move forward and obtain Carers Beacon Status by delivering services and support that meet the agreed local priorities identified and agreed with carers.

5. The Vision For Future Service Delivery

To achieve the vision of how services to carers are planned and delivered across Waltham Forest, and to comply with both local priorities and government legislation, we must recognise that carers have essential requirements in order for them to carry out their role of caring. The vision will be both challenging from a corporate perspective but will also create new opportunities for carers that have previously been denied. There needs to be a future for carers where: -

- a) Information, advice and support are provided for carers that are effective, flexible and inclusive.
- b) Improvement of short break services for carers of all vulnerable adults and children is standard.
- c) The needs of carers from Waltham Forest including wide and varied ethnic communities, and hard to reach groups is fully supported.
- d) There is a range of services appropriate to individual need, particularly preventative and well-being services.
- e) There are more flexible ways of identifying and meeting the needs of young carers in Waltham Forest.
- f) Carers can have more flexibility and choice in their care planning and arrangements through the expansion of schemes such as vouchers and direct payments.
- g) There is an improvement in the coordination, recruitment, retention, and supply of training opportunities. Training needs to be commissioned to assist carers in their caring roles, as well as to improve life skills. Carers should not be excluded from employment either whilst they are caring, or after they cease to be carers.
- h) There is access to health promotion services to reduce carer's stress, and methods to facilitate intervention to reduce the preventable effect of physical and mental ill health.

- i) There is improved performance in the quality and quantity of carer assessments by making the process clearer and easier to access.
- j) More carers can be involved to provide guidance and advice to the Waltham Forest Council and its partners in the planning and delivery of services through participation in a range of consultative mechanisms.

6. Re-Focusing The Approach

There are 6 million carers in the UK and everyday over 6,000 people take on a caring role. The ageing population within which we live means that our chances of becoming a carer has increased, so it is therefore essential to have a system of responsible long term care planning. This strategy builds on the work that has already been done since 1999 and the implementation of the Carers' Special Grant – a ring-fenced grant made available by the Department of Health in conjunction with their 'Caring for Carers' document and the modernising agenda. However, the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say now focuses on local authorities shifting towards preventative measures and robust support mechanisms early on rather than intervention at the crisis stage.

Three levels of intervention are recognised. All need to be sensitive to the needs of all carers.

- a) **Universal services** - services that are broadly speaking community based with emphasis on leisure, lifelong learning, employment and primary health care. This is crucial for carers and complies particularly with the new Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 and is the responsibility of all agencies.
- b) **Targeted services** - services that are aimed at the most vulnerable in our society and require specific support. Typical targeted services for carers include training to care, stress management, advocacy, and health promotion initiatives. Many of these services are provided from within the voluntary sector and community organisations.
- c) **Personalised services** - services that aid people who have been assessed and are at risk. These services are usually provided by the local authority and include home care support and access to regular short breaks.

Carers may require one or all of these services throughout the time that they are carrying out their caring role. The challenges of this strategy will only be overcome if there is the full involvement of carers at every level. Their wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise is invaluable and will positively inform future policy and practice. This strategy also recognises that partnership working between the local authority and the independent sector will be key to appropriately supporting carers in the future.

We are committed to working in collaboration with carers; and will continue to encourage them to influence decisions in shaping service delivery. We want to deliver the highest quality of services to carers and believe that listening to carers' views is a step forward in the right direction. We aim to integrate carers' contribution into improving your experience of service delivery. This strategy has been developed on the basis of information from the following sources:

- A review of national and local guidance.
- Mapping and assessment of existing services
- Workshops held for staff including clinicians and managers
- Workshops for carers, including carers
- Discussions with voluntary sector organisations.

Waltham Forest "aims to provide high quality services that promote independence, empower people and improve their lives". Waltham Forest not only provides services for people with a disability, it also supports and provides services for people providing care. The funding for these services is provided by Central Government, it is known as the Carers Grant.

The Carers Steering Group has the overarching responsibility for taking forward the agreed priorities of the Carers Strategy, this is a multi-agency group that has carer representation and constantly monitors progress and looks for new and innovative opportunities for delivering improved services to carers.

7. Achievements

In the three years since the strategy was agreed significant progress has been made in relation to partnership working. Waltham Forest Carers Association is recognised as the umbrella organisation representing carers and groups working with carers. The Carers Development worker was appointed and works closely with Waltham Forest Carers Association.

8. Facts about Carers

Who is a carer?

It is recognised that carers often find it difficult to identify them in this role; carers often see themselves as a husband, wife, partner, parent, son or daughter who as part of this relationship provide care to a family member.

The Carers (Recognition and Service) Act 1995, the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and the Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004 describe carers as eligible for an assessment if they already provide, or intend to provide a substantial level of care on a regular basis to someone who is eligible to receive community care services. The meaning of 'substantial and regular' is not defined in legislation, however the Carers and Disabled

Children Act 2000 proposes a framework through which 'substantial and regular' care can be determined. The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 Policy and Practice guidance can be viewed at www.carers.gov.uk. In Waltham Forest (FACS) Fair Access to Care Services framework is used to determine eligibility for support and services to both users and carers.

What do carers do?

Caring relationships are often complex and family members can provide different levels of care to a family member, or for each other in order to assist a person to live in the community.

Carers can provide practical and or emotional support to an adult suffering from a long- term health condition, disability, alcohol, substance misuse or mental illness. A parent carer is a parent or guardian who is likely to provide more support than other parents because their child has a disability or long term health condition. Carers can also be young people under the age of 18 who assume a caring role for a parent, grandparent or other family member.

Most health and community care in Britain is provided by these carers. The care they provide directly supports the work of Social Services and the NHS in taking care of vulnerable people. Carers UK have estimated that carers contribute £57 billion annually to the economy; this is equivalent to the NHS annual budget.

Paid Work and Caring

It is estimated that 3 million carers are in paid work. Male carers are more likely to be in paid work than female carers. Of the 3 million carers in paid work 60% are men. Ninety percent of men who combine paid work with caring, work full time.

9. Carers in Waltham Forest

Census information 2001 confirms that there are 18,378 carers in Waltham Forest (source census 2001, Office of National Statistics carers aged 16+). It is recognised that carers in Waltham Forest provide care to relatives, friends and neighbours who have a range of needs associated with physical and learning disabilities, ill health, mental illness, substance misuse, carers may also provide care to children and young people with a disability. Waltham Forest celebrates the diversity of its local community and carers are representative of this community.

A new question in Census 2001 asked the number of hours given in unpaid care to members of the family, neighbours and friends. 1 in 12 of the population (18,823 people) gives unpaid care. 35% of these give over 20 hours or more care per week, and of these over 4,000 give more than 50 hours of care per week (22% of all carers).

The population of Waltham Forest

Waltham Forest is an outer Northeast London borough with a total population of 224,471 (GLA 2005 projection). According to the GLA 2005 projection there are 24678, or 11.0% people aged 65 and over in the borough. 59% of those aged over 65 in the Waltham Forest Population are female. It is estimated that the older people population will remain stable to 2011. In contrast to the overall picture, the number of people over 64 from BME groups is expected to rise steadily between 2001 and 2011.

Public Information

Carers highlighted the need for improved information and a Carers Information pack has been produced in the format requested by carers. A carers website is now available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/care/caringforcarers.htm

In 2006/07 it was agreed that we run a Carers Campaign, the aim of this communication campaign is to raise carers awareness of their right to request an assessment, the campaign also seeks to highlight the important contribution that carers make to the local community and their need to access a range of council and healthcare services.

10. Issues affecting Carers of Specific User Groups

Carers of people with Learning Disabilities

This group has highlighted several issues. The major concern was when people with a learning disability go into hospital they need to have someone acting as an advocate. Carers of adult sons and daughters with a learning disability were concerned that activities they are undertaking at day centers are not suitable.

Carers of adult sons and daughters with a learning disability were concerned about the future and what will happen when they are no longer able to care.

Carers of people with Mental Health problems

Caring for someone with a mental health problem can be isolating and there is a need to have support from people who have similar experiences. Carers are concerned that public attitudes to mental health issues were negative. It is important to recognise within this client group that significant numbers of carers are friends rather than relatives and the needs of this group are often significantly different.

Young Carers strategy

It is acknowledged that young people are also carers and take on caring responsibilities for a parent, grandparent or sibling. Whilst young carers have some needs and experiences that are shared with other carers, they also

have some specific needs associated with their age, education, peer group pressures and family relationships. To recognise the needs of young carers a Young Carers Strategy is due to be launched in 07/08.

Parent Carers or Carers of disabled children

Many parent Carers highlighted the need to have a better and more streamlined transition from Children's to Adults services. Parent Carers acknowledge there are additional pressures on family members when one child has a disability. Children and Families Service is located within the Lifelong Directorate. It is responsible for providing statutory social work support to vulnerable children and their families through a range of services to safeguard their development and welfare. Children and Families Service is located within the Lifelong Directorate. It is responsible for providing statutory social work support to vulnerable children and their families through a range of services to safeguard their development and welfare.

Carers from Black and Ethnic Minorities

Carers from Black and Ethnic Minority communities may have additional needs that require support, which recognises their culture and language. Carers from these groups often feel isolated; they do not feel that Social Services are aware of their needs. Carers feel there is not fair access to service provision or enough information is made available in different languages.

Carers of people with Drug or Alcohol problems

Carers of people with a Drug or Alcohol problem often do not view themselves as Carers, as they do not regard themselves as a Carer they do not identify their own needs.

Carers of people with a Sensory Disability

People who have a sensory disability do not always need to rely on Carers; it is usually people with dual sensory loss, especially if it is a sudden loss, which require Carer's support. To ensure Carers can give informed practical and emotional support they need to be made aware of all technological aids. Disability Resource Centre has been developed by Waltham Forest as a resource centre for people with physical and sensory disabilities; it gives people access to a range of services within a single location.

11. Future Priorities & Actions

There are 6 strategic priorities with a series of commissioning intentions that will achieve the vision of the future for carers. Some will be achieved relatively

quickly, but others will evolve throughout the next few years and whilst there are timescales, these will need to be flexible. These priorities are based on feedback from carers, carers' support organisations and community-based projects through ongoing consultation. These priorities are building on the work that has already been done and will strengthen services. There are six main priorities within the strategy:

- Improved Information and Communication with carers.
- Improved identification and recognition of carers.
- Meaningful Consultation and involvement.
- Improving Health and Wellbeing of Carers.
- Financial Security for Carers.
- Time Out Services for Carers.

Priority 1 – Improved Information and communications with carers

From the outset carers must have access to information and support, appropriate to individual need. Many carers have identified the need to be able to access information when they want it, in appropriate format and in many cases by telephone or drop in centre. Information and advice is key to all agencies and is picked out by carers as being the most vital element to aid them in their caring role.

Actions (i): The Carers Association will continue to work in partnership with statutory organisations to provide a range of information and support. This will include information on short breaks, aids and adaptations, carers' rights, benefits, education, training and development and opportunities for lifelong learning and will be available either in person, by telephone or by online support. It will also include support for carers who care for someone terminally ill and/or those carers whose loved ones have gone into residential care.

Timescale – 2007

Action (ii): There will be an increase in the amount of Carers' Information packs that are produced which will be distributed from the Carers Association as well as a range of other appropriate information and guidance leaflets. These packs will be updated regularly so that carers have up to date, accurate information in a format that is user-friendly. **Timescale – 2007**

Action (iii): A carer support group directory will be further developed and distributed that will enable carers of both adults and children to talk with others and gain information and support. **Timescale – 2008**

Action (iv): Information and training sessions will be developed within the voluntary sector and community based organisations to update carers about services and to raise awareness amongst professionals. **Timescale - 2007-8**

Priority 2 – Improved Identification and recognition of carers

Carers will be offered a separate assessment of their needs in the language of their choice, which addresses issues that affect the whole family and that is carried out in the setting of their choice. Carers should always be involved in the decision making process about their lives which leads to more informed assessments and better monitoring of any services provided. Carers should, subject to the consent of the person being cared for be given a copy of the person's assessment and care plan.

Action (i) The take up of carers' assessments will be improved significantly. Social work teams will fully explain the assessment process and identify the Benefits and services carers can receive. Management information systems will be developed to assess progress. **Timescale - 2007-8**

Action (ii): Social workers will receive further training and guidance to ensure they provide appropriate, relevant and timely support to carers and to carry out assessments that are needs and carer led. **Timescale - 2007-8**

Action (iii): An annual review of carers' assessments will be undertaken by social work teams to ensure that carers' needs are still being met in the most appropriate way. This should be initiated by social work teams and should not be the responsibility of the carer. **Timescale – 2007**

Action (iv): Carers from some communities may have specific religious and/or cultural requirements that need to be considered. Often these carers suffer from higher levels of social economic disadvantages. There are several new communities in Waltham forest that have been established. New arrivals include the Portuguese and eastern European communities. These smaller groups will also require carer support. A range of local support services will be commissioned that will raise awareness and assist BME communities with both practical and emotional support. **Timescale – 2007-8**

Action (v): Waltham Forest will work in close partnerships with community based BME groups to aid in the understanding of the issues that affect carers so that services can be commissioned that are culturally appropriate. **Timescale - 2007-8**

Action (vi): All services will adhere to equal opportunities policies to ensure that all carers are properly supported. Services should proactively take due regard of sexuality, age, disability, religion, gender and cultural and ethnic background. Flexible working polices and equal opportunities policies will be further developed with our voluntary sector partners. **Timescale 2007-8**

Action (vii): Training sessions will be commissioned to aid carers in managing mental illness, moving and handling, first aid, person-centered planning, dementia care and challenging behavior. **Timescale - 2007-8**

Action (viii): Work will be carried out with employment services across the City to support carers in either returning to work or to support them whilst they are working. **Timescale - 2008**

Priority 3 - Meaningful Consultation and involvement

Many carers within Waltham Forest provide relatives or others with regular day-to-day personal care. The expertise and insights, which they gain through this, should be recognised within health and social care planning processes. We will ensure that carers are consulted and involved at a local level in the development and evaluation of those services, which are designed to meet their needs or the needs of those whom they care for. Particularly, we will try to reach those groups that traditionally are excluded from consultation including those carers who are lesbians or gay men and those carers looking after someone with a drug misuse and other mental health problems.

Action (i): Carers Forums will be further developed to reflect Waltham Forest diversity and will include Forums for carers who look after someone suffering from drug misuse and self harm and suicide. **Timescale – 2008**

Action (ii): The Strategic carers Forum will be re-instated to consider the wider issues of carers across all services. **Timescale – 2007**

Action (iii): Carers will be involved in every stage of planning for services and will be encouraged to fully participate through all stages of development. **Timescale – 2007-2008**

Action (iv): Assessments of young carers will be developed and social work teams from both adults and children's will need to work more closely together to ensure that young carers needs are taken into consideration with signposting to appropriate services where necessary. **Timescale - 2008**

Priority 4 - Improving the health and wellbeing of carers

Caring should not be detrimental to the health of carers. Services should be carer friendly in terms of access ensuring that they are designed flexibly so that carers can use them at those times which fit in with their caring role. Primary care professionals, in particular GPs, carer support workers and community nurses have a key position in being able to identify carers at an early stage and ensure they are signposted on to appropriate services.

Action (i): Health promotion and well being projects will need to be developed in partnership with PCT to ensure that carers' own health needs are taken into consideration. It is essential that carers receive regular checks so that their health is maintained. Systems will be developed so that all G.P surgeries receive regular carers information. **Timescale - 2007-8**

Action (ii): There will be closer links made with Health and in particular, Health employed Carer Support Workers. The newly established Adults and communities Directorate and the Primary Care Trusts will work jointly on carer Initiatives to ensure a co-coordinated approach to supporting carers. Primary Care Trusts will play a crucial role in this action **Timescale – 2008-2009**

Action (iii): Dementia support will increase for both older adults and adults of working age, particularly given that carers of someone with working age dementia have a high incidence of mental health problems themselves. **Timescale – 2007**

Priority 5- Financial Security for carers

Action (i): We will work more closely in partnership with Department of works and pensions to raise awareness of benefit entitlement to carers and organise surgeries so that carers get the right advice and maximise their benefits. **Timescale 2007-2008**

Action (ii): Direct payments will be further encouraged and offered to carers where it is appropriate to do so. Full guidance and support will be given by Disability Action to enable carers to organise their own care more easily. We will offer carers more opportunities to obtain one - off direct payments, such as holiday and equipment grants. The process will be reviewed so that carers are enabled to be more flexible and diverse in their care planning and to ensure there is equity across the board. There also needs to be a consistent approach in the assessment process. **Timescale 2007**

Priority 6 – Time Out Services for Carers

Carers should have the opportunity for regular breaks suited to their individual situation and the need to spend quality time for themselves on something other than caring. This could be a break using a day care service or sitting service for example. Crisis services should also be made available that there is a rapid response to meet carers' needs and those for whom they are caring.

Action (i): A voucher scheme will be commissioned to support carers who wish to organize their own breaks in a more flexible and diverse way. The scheme will enable carers to take a short break at a time that suits them and to book in advance and can give more choice and flexibility in the way that carers needs are met. A wider range of short breaks can then be offered. Social work teams will be encouraged to view short breaks in a much more holistic way and to discuss appropriate breaks with carers. **Timescale – 2007**

Action (ii): The carer's development worker will take an active role to support carers in accessing short breaks. This post will be centrally based and employed from within the voluntary sector. **Timescale – 2007**

Action (iii): A back-up" emergency respite service will be commissioned to give Carers peace of mind when there is a crisis and carers urgently need someone to look after the person they care for. **Timescale - 2007-8**

12. Implementation of the Strategy

The Carers Planning Group has the overarching responsibility for taking forward the agreed priorities of the Carers Strategy. All the key stakeholders in terms of carer support will be involved in monitoring the strategy from both the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors. There will be an annual review of Service Level Agreements to ensure that measurable outcomes are agreed and monitored. New ways of funding, changes in legislation and other challenges that we face may require the strategy to be modified.

The Carers Strategy Group, which has borough wide representation that includes Carers, voluntary organisations, Health and Adults and Communities Directorate will be the main arena where the strategy is evaluated and monitored. However, Carers will be encouraged to share their thoughts on the progress of the strategy at carers Forums, and steering groups across all user groups. It is essential that carers drive the strategy from the outset. We will also ensure that periodic satisfaction surveys will be carried out to inform the future of service development and delivery.