

# Ealing Carers strategy 2024-29

## *Think Carer*

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# Foreword

*Caring for someone who would not cope without the extra support of a family member, friend or neighbour is taking place every day across our borough. This could be adults caring for adults, parents caring for children with additional needs and children and young people caring for an adult.*

*This strategy reaffirms our commitment to support those Carers to ensure they are recognised and supported in their caring role. The strategy acknowledges the vital role of Carers in supporting those with health and care support needs and in return we want to support them to ensure they have equal chances to thrive with good health and wellbeing.*

*Whilst caring for someone can be a rewarding experience it can also have its challenges. We know that some Carers are now providing more care hours than they were a few years ago and some are struggling to maintain their own health and wellbeing, manage their finances and struggling to find the support they need.*

*This strategy has been developed by listening to Carers and engaging all partners across health and social care. It builds on the work of the previous strategy and recognises there is more work to do to support Carers in the way they need.*

*Carers deserve our support and protection, particularly young Carers who often go unrecognised. Carers should be identified at every opportunity and young Carers should be protected from inappropriate levels of caring and supported to develop, grow and thrive.*

*We want to create a Carer-friendly borough where the role, contribution and challenges faced by Carers are widely recognised, understood and addressed. This strategy sets out our vision, principles and values to achieve this.*

*We want all organisations to develop a 'think Carer' approach, create Carer-friendly environments and address the inequalities faced by Carers. We recognise the importance of working in an integrated way, working closely with partners across health and social care, as well as more broadly with the voluntary, community and faith sector, education and local businesses. By working together as a whole system, we want to achieve the outcomes that matter most to Carers.*



Councillor Polly Knewstub  
Chair of Ealing Health and Wellbeing Board

# Introduction

## Who is a Carer?

A Carer is considered to be anyone who spends time looking after or helping a family member, friend, or neighbour who, because of their health and care needs, would find it difficult to cope without this help, regardless of age or whether they identify as a Carer.

- **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 this could include different generations.
- **Young Carers:** A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person.
- **Young Adult Carers:** An adult aged between 18 and 25 who is caring for another adult or child.

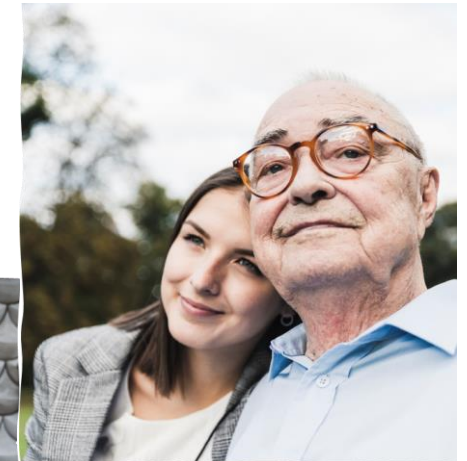
## Background

This strategy builds on the previous Carers Strategy 2018-23. It covers all Carers of all ages and has been developed jointly with health, social care, voluntary sector partners and Carers.

The previous strategy identified four priorities, and this strategy aims to continue making progress against these. It is based on assessment of current data, local and national policy, progress that has been made, evidence of what works, existing good practice and most importantly the feedback received from Carers and the organisations that support them.

## Current priorities

1. Identifying Carers of all ages at an early stage, recognising them as partners in care, ensuring they are aware of their rights to assessment and support, recognising their contribution and involving them in designing local care and in planning individual care packages.
2. Enabling Carers of all ages to have a family and community life alongside caring, personalising support for carers by improving choice and flexibility of support available and providing good quality information, advice and support.
3. Supporting Carers of all ages to stay healthy, mentally and physically, providing respite from caring and offering training to support carers in skills to care and increase carer confidence.
4. Supporting Carers of all ages to maximise their incomes and realise their potential in education, employment and leisure.



# Why we need a strategy?

**Caring affects us all:** It is likely that many of us will experience being a Carer at some stage in our lives. Caring can come about unexpectedly or can develop gradually over time. Whilst it can be a rewarding experience it can also be challenging and many Carers put their own lives on hold to provide care.

**Unpaid caring impacts health and wellbeing outcomes:** The support provided by Carers is often physically and emotionally demanding, with consequences for the Carers' own health and wellbeing. Evidence shows that Carers are twice as likely as non-carers to experience poor physical and mental health. This is compounded with Carers also more likely to experience social isolation, lack of information and financial stress. Unpaid caring could be considered a social determinant that impacts health outcomes and health inequalities.

**Carers make an important contribution:** The economic contribution of unpaid care is estimated to be up to £162 billion per year equivalent to the NHS budget for England and Wales. With increasing demand for social care, reductions in public sector funded provision and unstable private care markets, the role and contribution of Carers to health and social care is more critical than ever.

**To improve support to Carers:** The local and national policy context underpins the need to develop integrated ways in which Carers are supported and to recognise their role as partners in care. National policy requirements set out the need to identify and undertake Carers assessments within a 'whole family' approach and the need to do more to ensure that Carers are identified at every opportunity.

Ealing's Health and Wellbeing strategy sets out the overarching objective to see Ealing's communities thrive, with good health and wellbeing. It identifies the need for working in partnership with partners and our communities, to achieve sustainable system change to fight inequalities.



The strategy recognises the need to support all Carers but also to recognise that some Carers face multiple challenges, this includes older adult Carers and young Carers.

**Young Carers:** The negative impacts of unpaid caring on young Carers can have long-term consequences on their educational attainment and future life chances. The NHS Commitment to Carers programme identified that if you enter school with a health inequality that health inequality will never close.

Young Carers are more likely to report a long-term mental health condition as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation. They are also more likely to experience bullying and have lower educational attainment than their peers

There is a need to prevent young Carers from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities. Looking after young Carers and supporting them to reach their full potential should be a key priority.

# Carers in Ealing

Ealing has 24,309 Carers, representing 7% of the total population.

There are 1,937 young carers aged 0-24 with 353 aged under 16.

Most Carers in Ealing are female (58.7%). This pattern is consistent for London and England.

Half of unpaid carers (50.8%) aged 50 years or older.

The largest proportion of unpaid carers by ethnic group are; White (40.2%) followed by Asian/Asian British (32.4%).

27% of Carers are providing 50+ hours of care per week.

More than half (53.9%) of the unpaid Carer population are economically active and in employment.

The number of individuals aged 65+ providing unpaid care is projected to increase by 38% by 2040.

The number of males (65+) unable to manage at least one self-care activity is set to increase by 50% by 2040 and 42.5% for females.

Number of Carers accessing services is 1,529 (6.3%)

34.4% of Carers report being in very good health compared to 51.8% for the population not providing any unpaid care.

3,577 Carers recorded in primary care (14.7%)



# National and local policy

Health and Care Act 2022: duty on NHS to **promote involvement of patients and Carers**

Care Act 2014 - identify and provide information to Carers, undertake Carers **assessments**. Young carers must not be left with inappropriate levels of caring and assessments for young Carers in transition to adulthood.

Children Act 1989 - undertake **young Carers needs assessments and parent Carers assessments** and to provide preventative support.

Ealing Council plan - Strategic objectives - **Fighting inequality**  
Priorities: **Healthy lives; A fairer start; and decent living incomes**. Identified in the Council's corporate delivery plan.

NHS 10-year plan - strong emphasis on **support for patients and for Carers**

Care Act 2014 and Children Act 1989 - **NHS bodies to cooperate with local authorities**, including in relation to their responsibilities to Carers and young Carers

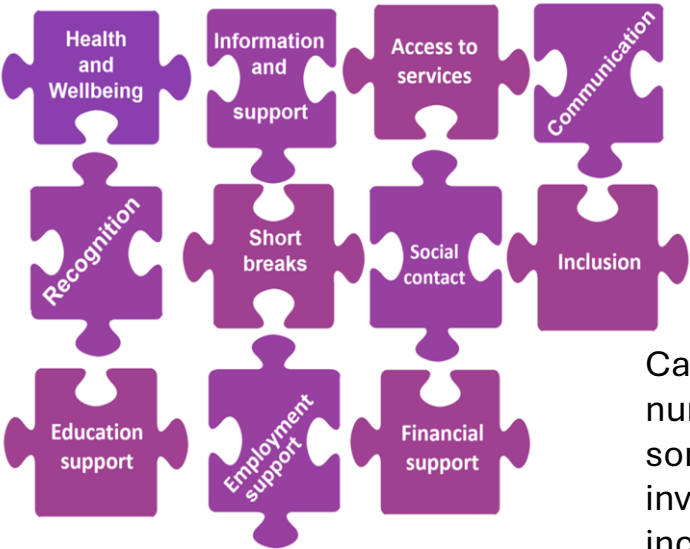
Ealing's Health and Wellbeing strategy 2023-28 focus on **inequality** reducing the unfair differences between groups so everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive.

Borough based partnership priorities: Population Health and Inequalities; **Children and Young People**; Older People and Frailty.

# Priorities identified by Carers

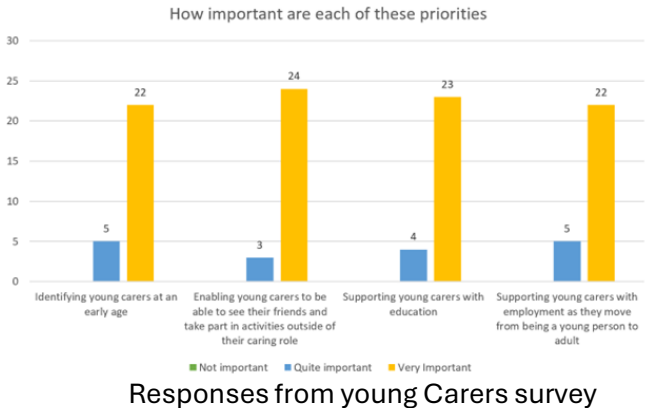
The development of this strategy has been informed by engaging and listening to Carers. Through consultation and engagement with young Carers, adult Carers and Parent Carers they have told us what is important to them and what their priorities are. Carers have told us about their experiences of what is working well and areas that can be improved. The challenges faced by Carers have not changed but for some the intensity of these has increased. The impact of the pandemic for example increased the burden of care, impacting the health and wellbeing of Carers and the census data shows that both older and younger Carers are providing more care hours than they were before.

Results from the 2023/24 survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) shows Ealing has seen some improvement against most measures. However, Ealing ranked near the lowest nationally for Carers perceptions of ‘being included and consulted in the cared for person’s care’. Ealing is also below the London and England averages for ‘overall satisfaction with services’ and ‘Carers who use services find it easy to find information about support’.



The results from the consultation survey showed that Carers felt that the priorities identified in the 2018-23 strategy were still important areas to be addressed.

| No. | Priority  | Strongly agree / agree |
|-----|---|------------------------|
| 1.  | Identifying Carers at an early stage when they take on a caring role    | 88%                    |
| 2.  | Helping Carers have a family and community life alongside caring        | 92%                    |
| 3.  | Supporting Carers to stay healthy, mentally and physically              | 94%                    |
| 4.  | Supporting Carers to maximise their incomes and realise their potential | 86%                    |



Carers were also asked to indicate their agreement with a number of ‘I’ statements. Their responses indicated that there is some awareness of assessments, and some felt they were involved in care planning. However, other areas scored low including Carers feeling that they have access to good quality advice and information; identification and recognition of their role; access to services; opportunities for short breaks; support to maintain health and well-being and training to help them in their caring role, as well as employment and education support.



# What works and current good practice

- Targeted support for depression, anxiety and stress when needed.
- Pro-active joined-up approaches to identify those at risk of experiencing poor outcomes.
- Psychosocial interventions can show positive outcomes e.g. mindfulness.
- Co-ordination and communication between services.
- Joined up care and referral pathways for Carers and the cared-for.
- Opportunities for contact with other Carers.
- Targeted support to help Carers care for their own health and reduce the risk of exacerbating existing poor health.
- High risk groups are more likely to benefit from a short break.
- Measures to prevent poor physical health that occurs as a consequence of caring e.g. injuries, back pain.
- Addressing Carers own long-term health, or disability as part of a support package.
- Advice and information to Carers on managing their own long-term conditions or disability.
- Health and safety training, pain management advice, aids and equipment.
- Short breaks to prevent Carer breakdown and sustain caring. To help reduce loneliness and isolation and help Carers stay connected to family, friends and things they enjoy.
- Whole family approaches to breaks to include a break with the cared-for, as a whole family, but not doing all the caring.
- Sport, leisure and socialising activities for young Carers

**West London Trust:** Triangle of care forum running since 2021. Carers Champions identified from all teams. Attend 'Carer Awareness' training on the importance of recording Carers and Carers assessments to more fully understand Carers and their needs.

**Carers Champions - Adult Social Care:** Carers Champions meet monthly to share information on how to support and signpost Carers to relevant services. The Champions regularly attend Carers coffee mornings to answer queries and offer support.

**London North-West University Health Care Trust:** Improving support for Carers in hospital: Support for carers has been identified as one of the five priorities in the Trust's patient experience and engagement strategy. A Carers steering group was established in 2023.

**RISE Carers' Forum:** RISE assessed the needs of Carers and set up a Carers forum that is regularly attended by professionals providing information on support available. RISE have also recently recruited a Carers support worker.

**Direct Payments:** The direct payments team regularly attend Carers group meetings to raise awareness of direct payments, Additional Carers one-off grants were made available to support with the cost of living.

**Carers emergency card and Carer Contingency plans:** Carers can apply for an emergency card to provide contact details of up to three people who can be contacted in an emergency. A project to develop Carer contingency plans took place in 2023 and a template is being piloted.

# What we want to achieve?

This strategy aims:

- To set clear intentions and practical actions that all organisations can take to continue building on the progress that has been made in supporting Carers.
- To ensure delivery of the strategy in line with the Health and Wellbeing strategy's overall aim to see Ealing's communities thrive, with good health and wellbeing.

The principles underpinning the strategy are to:

Develop a **'Think Carer'** approach to how we work with all residents.

**Create Carer friendly environments** where working practices are designed to proactively identify Carers, understand their needs and involve them as partners in care.

**Address inequalities:** Recognise and address the health inequalities faced by some Carers because of their caring role. Recognise and address the health and educational inequalities faced by young Carers.



## Vision

The vision for this strategy is that Ealing is a place where:

- ✓ Carers are recognised and valued.
- ✓ Carers are seen and heard.
- ✓ Carers are identified at every opportunity and supported in their caring role.
- ✓ Carers needs are understood.
- ✓ Carers are supported to keep themselves and the person they care for physically and mentally healthy.
- ✓ Carers and those they care for are included and have equal opportunities to thrive with good health and wellbeing.

# Action Plan and outcomes

The action plan builds on the recommendations of the Carers JSNA and actions that are already underway. The action plan recognises the good practice that is taking place across services including initiatives such as Carers Champions, the Triangle of Care approach, peer support groups for Carers of those with specific conditions such as dementia and Carers of those with drug and alcohol issues.

The process of developing the strategy has prompted the development of initiatives including:

- Development of the Carers co-production board.
- Carers passports in Ealing Hospital.
- Recruitment of specialist Carers support workers for Carers of those with mental health needs.
- Carers short breaks service.
- Online self-assessment tool and virtual Carers Centre.
- Working group to improve identification and recording young Carers.

## Delivery and monitoring

The action plan sets out actions to be delivered across all partners. The Carers strategy working group includes representatives across health, social care, voluntary sector and Carers. It will meet regularly to monitor delivery of the action plan and will report progress to the Carers Co-production board.

The JSNA identified the need to measure improvements in support by focusing on outcomes rather than processes. The following outcomes have been set for the strategy:

- ✓ I can access good quality advice and support.
- ✓ I am aware of my right to an assessment and support.
- ✓ I have support which is personalised to my needs.
- ✓ I can access opportunities to give me a short break from caring.
- ✓ I am supported to maintain my own health and well-being.
- ✓ I am aware of how to access financial support and benefits.
- ✓ I can access training to help me learn skills that help me care.
- ✓ I am involved in planning care for the person/s I care for.
- ✓ I can access support to help me access and maintain my education, employment and leisure interests.
- ✓ I have as much social contact as I would like.

# Priority 1: Identifying Carers of all ages at an early stage in their caring journey

The Carers JSNA identified the following recommendations:

1. Develop and maintain a robust understanding of Ealing's Carer population including young Carers and young adult Carers.
2. Prioritise the identification and recording of all Carers across the whole system.
3. Involve Carers in a meaningful way in care planning and the design of services.

Actions to address this priority include:

- Improve recording and data on Carers.
- Raise awareness of Carers and support services available.
- Implement Carers Champions across organisations.
- Undertake regular awareness campaigns.
- Implement 'No Wrong Doors' protocol.
- Promote understanding of the Carer's role in providing care. Encourage 'triangle of care' approach.
- Provide training to enable Carers to undertake their role as partners in care.
- Develop a Carers passport / card to help Carers identify themselves.
- Involve and support Carers when the person cared for is admitted and discharged from hospital.
- Co-produce a Carers charter.
- Create a Carer friendly borough.

*We should collaborate to enable Carers to be identified and supported via all organisations.*

*It would help so much if Carers were listened to when planning care for the person they care for.*



*"Implementation of a "Carers card" at Ealing Hospital helped me to be identified as a Carer, gave me 24/7 access to the hospital and be part of the care given there to my sibling hence resulting in a quicker discharge as I knew what the home set-up was, and I could share my experiences of what works and what does not especially with the ward doctors during their ward rounds."*



# Priority 2: Enabling Carers to have a family and community life alongside caring

The Carers JSNA identified the following recommendations:

1. Develop the local support offer with Carers and promote widely to support and inform Carers assessments.
2. Develop support services around Carers needs addressing the diverse needs of Ealing's population.
3. Adopt a whole family approach to identifying, assessing and addressing needs.

Actions to address this priority:

- Co-produce Carer support services based on Carers' needs.
- Develop and co-design the Carers short breaks service.
- Co-produce information and advice resources.
- Promote widely the availability of information, advice and support.
- Develop resources and support that addresses needs of Ealing's diverse community.
- Raise awareness of Carers assessments, contingency planning.
- Personalise care planning and promote direct payments.
- Implement a 'Think Carer, Think Family' approach.

*We need support tailored to individual situations and access to professional experts.*

*We should publicise information for Carers more. I have no idea of what is available for me as a Carer.*



*"The direct payment system has let me find appropriate Carers for my daughter and gives me flexible timings which work in our situation."*

# Priority 3: Supporting Carers to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing

The Carers JSNA identified the following recommendations:

1. Understand and mitigate the negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of Carers including addressing barriers experienced in accessing services.
2. Develop integrated approaches to reduce the burden on Carers when interacting with services.
3. Recognise caring as a social determinant of health and the health inequality experienced by Carers when planning services.
4. Recognise the social isolation and loneliness experienced by Carers and ensure their inclusion in the local community.

## Actions to address this priority

- Understand and address barriers experienced by Carers when accessing services.
- Develop Carers groups and forums to address issues.
- Raise awareness of issues faced by young Carers.
- Expand offer of wellbeing services.
- Increase opportunities for social contact, inclusion, peer support.
- Expand opportunities for young Carers to participate in sports, leisure and social activities.
- Promote and increase take up of health checks.
- Offer training, information and peer support to help Carers support the cared-for.

*We should focus on mental wellbeing and more opportunities to bring Carers together.*

*We need to increase the amount of respite care, it's not enough.*



## **Group Respite**

From **Wednesday 4th September**, Ealing Carers Partnership is offering a weekly group respite for carers and the person they care for at **Sycamore Lodge, Acton 10am - 1pm**. A Care Support worker from Harlington Care will be on hand to take over from care duties.

To register your interest please email [info@ealingcarerspartnership.org](mailto:info@ealingcarerspartnership.org)

*"I found out about the Short Breaks services available in Ealing and learnt a lot about the Wellbeing programmes, including peer support and social inclusion opportunities eg carers cafes, that are designed to enhance mental and physical health of the paid and unpaid carers. Also found about the Free Training & workshops for family carers available in the borough."*



# Priority 4: Supporting Carers of all ages to maximise their incomes and realise their potential

The Carers JSNA identified the following recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the economic contribution of Carers and the role of Carers in employment. Support Carers to balance employment and education with their caring role.
2. Recognise statutory duties to protect children and young people from inappropriate levels of caring, so they can learn, develop and thrive.
3. Develop Ealing as a Carer friendly borough including Carer friendly workplace where Carers needs are understood, accommodated and supported.

Actions to address this priority:

- Raise awareness of Carers with local employers and support them to develop Carer friendly policies and practices.
- Raise awareness of young Carers in schools, colleges, higher education, training providers.
- Provide staff training to enable them to provide appropriate support.
- Co-produce support with young Carers and ensure their voices are heard.
- Provide information and advice on financial support available.
- Provide information and support to help Carers maintain or access employment, education or training.

*I received a one-off payment once for the care I provide. I have been a Carer for roughly 15 years. A small amount of supporting funds would be really appreciated to help with travel and outings to ensure the person I care for leaves the house.*

*Carers need training to understand carers rights and entitlements.*



*“Short breaks helped me get back into employment, I built my self-confidence and was able to earn.”*

*“Contact Ealing helped me to apply for the benefits I was entitled to as a Carer. They took away some of the stress of filling out the long-complicated forms.”*