

CABINET

21 February 2022

Title: Carers Charter 2022-25 and Action Plan	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Summary <p>This report presents the Carers Charter for 2022-2025 and associated Action Plan, which act as a framework for the delivery and development of services, working practices, identification and support of unpaid or informal carers in the borough, through a partnership approach.</p> <p>The Carers Charter comprises a series of "I" statements that have been co-produced with carers in the borough alongside key stakeholders from health, social care and the community and voluntary sector.</p> <p>The Carers Charter supports participation and engagement with residents and partners. The outcomes defined in the "I" statements of the Carers Charter and Action Plan will enable carers and their loved ones to thrive and live independent and healthy lives. This is accomplished through joint working across the partnership and bringing carers to the forefront of service delivery. Building on existing partnerships with health and the community and voluntary sector, the Charter will work towards developing effective pathways with partners to identify 'hidden carers'. Hidden carers are those who do not recognise themselves as a carer or are not known to services as providing an informal, unpaid, caring role.</p> <p>The Carers Charter (Appendix A) acts as a basis for the Action Plan (Appendix B) which identifies key deliverables and will be refreshed annually. The Carers Charter was discussed and endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its January meeting.</p>	
Recommendation(s) <p>The Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <p>(i) Approve the Carers Charter 2022-25 and Action Plan, as set out at Appendices A and B to the report; and</p>	

- (ii) Note that the Health and Wellbeing Board shall receive an annual update on the delivery and ongoing development of the Action Plan.

Reason(s)

The Carers Charter will deliver the Council's priority of enabling social responsibility by supporting residents to take responsibility for themselves and their loved ones and become more resilient. By accessing timely support and developing a carer friendly community, carers can be identified early and provided with the support they need to thrive alongside their caring role.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Care Act 2014 brought carers to the forefront of service delivery in health and social care, by putting them on an equal footing to the cared for. Informal carers make up a significant number of the population with an estimated 1 in 8 people providing unpaid or informal care.
- 1.2 There are a number of carers who provide care and support that are known to services, however, a large number of these are not known to services and are known as 'hidden carers'. It is worth noting that not all carers will require support but access to timely information and advice is valuable to supporting carers and preventing a crisis. Carers provide valuable one to one support to vulnerable residents who can include family and friends.
- 1.3 The Care Act 2014 put in statute for the first time the needs of carers and their right to be recognised for the work that they do. The Care Act and the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced measures to improve the rights of adult and young carers.
- 1.4 Barking and Dagenham's Carers Strategy, Let's Care for Carers 2015-2018 brought together the key elements of the Care Act, Children and Families Act and the National Carers Strategy 2008 to 2018 and provided an important framework in the design and delivery of carers services in the borough.
- 1.5 In 2016, the Government launched a carers' Call for Evidence consultation. The call for evidence showed that carers felt pride and satisfaction in their caring role, but also highlighted the many practical frustrations and difficulties they face, and the profound impact caring can have on their own health, employment and lives outside of caring.
- 1.6 The Carers Action Plan: Supporting Carers today¹ published in June 2018, builds on the National Carers Strategy and was developed following the Carers' Call for Evidence. This was put in place in anticipation of the Green Paper on Health and Social Care and the new National Carers Strategy when it is published. The action plan works to focus on the following five primary themes to improve the health and wellbeing of carers:

¹ [Carers Action Plan 2018 to 2020: Supporting carers today \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682227/cars-action-plan-2018-to-2020-supporting-carers-today.pdf)

- a) Services and systems that work for carers
- b) Employment and financial wellbeing
- c) Supporting young carers
- d) Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
- e) Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers.

1.7 The Health and Care Bill (2021)² outlines closer working together of Health and Social Care and other partners in delivering services and to support post COVID-19 pandemic recovery. The Bill introduces Integrated Care Systems whose aim is to integrate care across different organisations and settings, joining up hospital, community-based services and health and social care. It is hoped that the Integrated Care Systems will act as a vehicle in improving population health and health inequalities. This step change brings more collaboration and a focus on places and local populations as the driving forces for improvement. This provides an opportunity for carers to be involved in the delivery of NHS services through the wider public consultation.

COVID-19 Pandemic

1.8 The value of carers has been brought to the forefront during the pandemic lockdowns. Carers have picked up a lot of the pressure from health and social care when services were challenged the most, for example by reducing presentations at hospital for the cared for and taking up the pressure from social care when day centres were closed due to Government guidance. This was done alongside working from home and other caring responsibilities such as young children. With the continued challenges on their time, carers often put their own needs on hold whilst prioritising the needs of the cared for person. This can sometimes result in lost opportunities of early intervention for health and wellbeing.

1.9 A report released by CarersUK, Caring behind closed doors: six months on ³ (October 2020) reviewed the impact that the pandemic had on carers, the findings of which have been incorporated in the development of the charter. Some of the findings from the report are detailed below;

- 4 in 5 unpaid carers (81%) are currently providing more care than before lockdown.
- More than three quarters (78%) of carers reported that the needs of the person they care for have increased recently.
- Most carers (64%) have not been able to take any breaks at all in the last six months.
- More than half (58%) of carers have seen their physical health impacted by caring through the pandemic, while 64% said their mental health has worsened.
- Despite government intervention in the labour market, 11% reported reducing their hours and 9% had given up work because of caring.

1.10 The COVID-19 pandemic has put increased pressure on carers, with several facing financial instability due to increases in the numbers of hours that they provide care and juggling working from home and their caring responsibilities.

² [newbook.book \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2021/newbook)

³ [Caring_behind_closed_doors_Oct20.pdf \(carersuk.org\)](https://www.carersuk.org/what-we-do/reports-and-research/caring-behind-closed-doors)

Carers Support Service in Barking and Dagenham

1.11 Carers of Barking and Dagenham provide the local carers support service and is commissioned jointly by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and NHS North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (NEL CCG). The services are delivered to all carers and comprise of a service for adult carers and one for young carers.

1.12 Adult carer support service includes:

- Information, Advice and Guidance
- Peer support including groups for specific communities
- Signposting to other services including health, social care and voluntary sector services
- Training
- Income maximisation
- Access and maintaining employment, training and education opportunities
- Accessing Personal Protective Equipment
- Through the pandemic the service has adapted its delivery model to support carers especially during the lockdowns so that carers can access food medication and necessary supplies
- Attend strategic and partnership meetings to promote, influence and develop carers support

1.13 Young carer support service includes:

- Support services for young carers in the borough up to the age of 18
- Activities for young carers including training, sports, days out
- 1:1 support for individual carers where they need more support
- Signposting to various services including careers services, CAMHS, Drug and alcohol services, sexual health and other council and voluntary services the young carers may benefit from
- Homework club for the young carers
- The opportunity to share their experiences with other young carers
- Peer support to help other young carers within schools

Carers Strategy Group

1.14 The Carers Strategy Group works as a partnership to deliver outcomes from the Carers Strategy. The group is made up from representatives from Social Care, NEL CCG, Healthwatch, DWP JobCentre Plus, NELFT End of Life, Employment and Skills, Public Health, Carers of Barking and Dagenham, Community Solutions, Commissioning and LBBB Performance and Intelligence Team as well as a Carer representative. The Carers Strategy Group meets quarterly to monitor delivery of the strategy, raise awareness of the challenges faced by carers, discuss new initiatives that are being delivered and bringing carers to the forefront of service delivery.

2. Carers Charter and Action Plan

2.1 The Carers Charter was developed to build on the work delivered as part of the Carers Strategy as well as to include Young Carers and to reflect the carers needs in the evolving COVID-19 landscape. The Carers Charter and initial Action Plan once agreed provide a framework for the partnership to deliver support to carers.

Structure of the Charter

2.2 The Carers Charter is made up of four areas:

- Working together for Carers
- Carers Wellbeing and Employment
- Supporting Young Carers
- Carers in the wider community

2.3 A Carers Charter and Action Plan was put in place to provide an accessible document that outlined our commitments to carers and a supporting document that had deliverable actions that could be monitored and updated as work progresses.

2.4 Initial discussions were started with stakeholders, residents and carers prior to COVID but the majority of the work and development for the charter has been developed during 2021; and takes into account the challenges and life experiences of carers as well as changing working practices of partners in reflection of the pandemic and the impact this has had on carers.

Strategic Context

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

2.5 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment makes recommendations for several areas that impact on the lives of both young and adult carers. This can range from the impact of young people not realising their potential through education and employment due to their caring roles as well as the impact of being a carer on the mental health of carers of all ages. Financial resilience alongside health and wellbeing of the cared for contributes to the impact on the carer. Carers are often caring for individuals with complex needs which means that they do not address their own health and wellbeing needs as the cared for person is prioritised.

2.6 The needs identified in the JSNA all impact on carers as they support individuals with varying needs and different stages of the life course. Positive outcomes for the cared for including timely support, access to services including prevention services and providing a carer friendly community will contribute to supporting carers in their caring role. An example of this is accessing COVID-19 vaccinations and identifying carers locally. The Carers Charter and Action Plan will support bringing carers to the forefront of service delivery across the partnership.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2.7 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims are aligned with the Carers Charter and Action Plan. Carers and the cared for can have health and wellbeing support

needs, which when addressed early through intervention and prevention can decrease or slow down the need for further support from health and social care.

- 2.8 Becoming a carer can often happen overnight and have far reaching multifaceted impacts on the lives of the carer, especially when a person does not identify themselves as a carer or equally are not given the information to come to that conclusion, thereby, are unable to access the right support. Building resilience and improving health and wellbeing outcomes using trauma-informed intervention models will enable carers to practice self-care as well as enable carers of all ages to participate in opportunities such as employment, education, and training.

Better Care Fund

- 2.9 It is important that everyone works together to improve the lives of carers in Barking and Dagenham. The partnership between health and social care is of particular importance and as such, the local authority and NEL CCG have agreed that support to carers should be one of the key themes of the Better Care Fund (BCF). This includes the joint commissioning of the carers support service delivered by Carers of Barking and Dagenham.

- 2.10 In particular, the BCF plan sets out that we will:

- Improve the support available to carers, recognising their key role in helping people to remain in their own homes, which will in turn support planned reductions in rates of avoidable admissions to hospitals and care homes;
- Identify additional services required for carers and supporting commissioning activities to develop these services;
- Target carers at risk of breakdown and positively increasing the number of carers supporting people in their own homes for as long as possible;
- Meet the requirements of the Care Act;
- Improve the experience of carers and service users by ensuring that their needs and priorities are reflected in provision.

NHS Long Term Plan

- 2.11 The NHS Long Term Plan launched in January 2019 echoes the commitment to carers including better recognition and support of carers, especially from vulnerable communities, and improve outcomes. Carers being supported through emergencies and not having to manage on their own by understanding access to and signposting to out of hours options, contingency planning and specific support for young carers. There is also an increased focus on social prescribing in primary care and a co-ordinated, proactive approach to the delivery of the service to enable a more differentiated support offer.

Borough Partnership

- 2.12 To achieve partnership goals and tackle the health inequality challenges of boundaries, the Partnership Board is being proposed to lead on strategy development to develop place-based care that addresses whole population needs. Commissioning plans would include commissioning services in the preventative space and the integration of the social sector into models of care so that there is a ground up connection with communities. The Board will be supported by a

programme structure that supports delivery across separate pathways of care for children and adults. Delegated authority would be sought for responsibility for pooled health and care budgets that are managed under a Section 75 partnership arrangement.

3. Options Appraisal

3.1 Having a Carers Charter in place supports the collective vision as a partnership across the Council, Health, the Community and Voluntary Sector. Although partners continue to support carers, having a collective approach and increasing awareness of the support available enables timely, appropriate support and information to be provided to prevent a crisis and enable carers to maintain their caring role, by putting carers at the forefront of service delivery. Supporting carers in their caring role empowers residents, increases resilience and reduces or delays additional support and intervention being put in place, thereby reducing pressures on health and social care. Having a holistic approach to supporting carers across the partnership also reduces health and social-economic inequalities through early intervention and reducing opportunity losses in employment, training and development due to their caring role.

4. Co-production and Engagement

4.1 To engage as widely across the Borough as possible and provide genuine opportunities for carers to be involved in the development of the Carers Charter, consultation took place through virtual events, meetings and via the Council's consultation and engagement website, One Borough Voice.

4.2 The consultation process was designed to take place in stages. This best practice approach allowed us to maintain continuous dialogue with carers throughout the development process, ensuring their input led to a Carers Charter that was co-produced and truly reflective of their priorities and aspirations. The consultation on the Carers Charter has been identified as an exemplar piece of work, bringing carers along the journey and adapting the method and format of the consultation, so that all carers' voices can be heard. Carers of Barking and Dagenham, as the carers support service provider, alongside development of the consultation material, also supported the workshops and focus groups, facilitating representation from a cross range of carers. A small number of carers preferred to complete hard copies of the consultation questions which was supported by Carers of Barking and Dagenham and sent through to be uploaded.

4.3 The Carers Charter consultation took place between February 2021 and August 2021 through three separate stages.

- Stage 1: 48 Participants (One Borough Voice consultation)
- Stage 2: 21 Participants (virtual workshop via Zoom)
- Stage 3: 22 Participants (One Borough Voice consultation)

4.4 Aside from the initial focus groups and the workshops, there were 337 visits to the Carers Charter page on the One Borough Voice portal with 70 engaging in completing the consultation.

- 4.5 Questions for the initial stage were developed with carers focus groups, based on the local and national policy and their lived experience, and were put on the One Borough Voice portal for consultation. Alongside this, work was done with stakeholders in health, social care and the community and voluntary sector to identify areas that are important to carers and building on the positive work that has already been undertaken to support carers in their caring role. From the analytics of One Borough Voice there was a lot of interest in each stage of the consultation but not all visits resulted in a completed questionnaire.
- 4.6 In addition to the questions, carers were given an opportunity to include things that they would like to be included or considered as part of the development of the Carers Charter. This provided a platform for more discussion in the absence of face-to-face workshops and forums, where discussion points could be teased out further or carers could approach the facilitator for a separate discussion. Following on from feedback from carers, a workshop was put in place to discuss the Carers Charter further and to develop I statements with the carers.
- 4.7 The Carers Charter uses the principles of 'Think Local Act Personal' and includes the co-produced I statements with the carers that talk about the outcomes that carers identified and we will deliver as part of the Carers Strategy Group and the partnership. Triangulation of all the information, feedback and policy context was used to develop the Carers Charter, with a long list of I statements put out for consultation and subsequently shortlisted down to four in each area by the carers.
- 4.8 The Carers Charter informed the development of the Action Plan and how partners would support the delivery of this shown in Appendix B. The Action Plan will be monitored through the Carers Strategy Group and updated annually through consultation with carers and the Carers Strategy Group to make this a reflective document monitoring the achievements delivered in this space and joint future areas of work that need to be focused on. In essence these two documents will outline our vision and priorities in supporting carers in their caring role across the partnership.
- 4.9 Feedback received from Carers of Barking and Dagenham on the development of the Carers Charter is as follows:
- "The document is a well thought out and user-friendly piece of work that has clearly identified the issues that carers face. Carers of Barking and Dagenham have been heavily involved in the consultation process and carers have expressed how they appreciated having their views listened to. The commissioner has worked very hard to ensure that all voices were heard, and the charter is presented in a way that is easily read and understood. This has been a good example of joint working and we look forward to receiving the final document."*
- 4.10 Previously, young carers were not included in the Carers Strategy, the work to support Young Carers has however been incorporated in the work of the Carers Strategy Group. A young carer within legislation is defined as someone who is under the age of 18 with caring responsibilities. Young carers take on various responsibilities, including washing and dressing the person they are caring for which could be a parent or other family member, looking after younger siblings, undertaking domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping. Young

carers maybe supporting a family member with a disability, mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency.

- 4.11 Consultation with young carers took place via the young carers' subgroup and ambassadors' workshop, where they were asked to develop I statements they felt were significant to them. We worked with the provider Carers of Barking and Dagenham to consult with young carers in the borough. Young carers were given the option of taking part in the carers survey, which was advertised widely and on the One Borough Voice website, at each of the stages.
- 4.12 Alongside this work, the Carers Charter and Action Plan were developed with members of the Carers Strategy Group including NEL CCG, NELFT End of Life, Social Care, Carers of Barking and Dagenham. Alongside the focus groups, the Carers Strategy Group provided the themes of the initial consultation questions, development of the I statements and subsequent Action Plan. All our partners have been promoting the consultation process locally and supporting carers to have equity in developing the Carers Charter.
- 4.13 There is also a Tri-Borough Carers Network Group which includes Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge carers leads, carers commissioned services alongside NEL CCG lead and the BHR Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) clinical lead for Carers. The group meets quarterly to discuss ideas, innovation and joint working to better support carers in their caring role across the tri-borough footprint. This group along with representatives from Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (BHRUT) have also been involved in developing the Carers Charter and Action Plan.
- 4.14 The Community and Voluntary Sector are an important partner in delivering the Carers Charter and are often the first point of contact for carers including 'hidden carers' in the community. BD Collective, through the Re-imagining Adult Social Care Forum have also contributed to the development of the Carers Charter and Action Plan. In addition to this, consultation and development has also been undertaken with the Metropolitan Police and informed the Carers Charter and Action Plan.
- 4.15 As part of the consultation process the proposed Carers Charter and Action Plan have been considered and endorsed by the Corporate Strategy Group at its meeting on 18 November 2021. The report was subsequently considered and endorsed at the P & E Members Group Meeting on 21 December 2021. The report was then presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 12 January 2022 where it was endorsed. Both the Carers Charter and the Action Plan have been positively received and commended as an excellent piece of co-production that brought the carers along the journey of the development of the charter.
- 4.16 The Carers Charter and Action Plan promote a joined up and co-ordinated response across the partnership and allow services to provide a holistic support response. The Carers Action plan will be monitored through the Carers Strategy Group through measurable outcomes and a progress report will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on an annual basis.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Murad Khan (Finance Manager)

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report, which sets out the carers support framework and charter which has been endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2022.
- 5.2 The health and wellbeing of our carers is of paramount importance as stress or poor working conditions can lead to sickness, absence or resignation, this could lead to significant financial pressures in the future in the form of increased care costs.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild (Senior Governance Lawyer)

- 6.1 The Care Act 2014 contains provisions relating to adult care and support and health and is intended to give effect to the policies requiring primary legislation that were set out in the White Paper Caring for our future: reforming care and support, to implement the changes put forward by the Commission on the Funding of Care and Support, and to meet the recommendations of the Law Commission in its report on Adult Social Care to consolidate and modernise existing care and support law. Furthermore, it establishes a fund for the integration of care and support with health services, to be known as the Better Care Fund and made provision for additional safeguards around the general dissemination of health and care information. While the Care Act is adult focused the important role that young carers and their need for support is addressed by the Children and Families Act 2014 and it shall working in conjunction with the Care Act.
- 6.2 Local Authorities responsibilities are set out in the Care Act including care and support roles. There is an overriding principle that that local authorities must promote the well-being of the adult when carrying out their functions under the Act.
- 6.3 As set out in the body of this report the Council is under a duty to assess carers. It requires a local authority to carry out an assessment, known as a “carer’s assessment”, where it appears that a carer may have needs for support at that time, or in the future. The aim of the assessment is to determine whether a carer has support needs either currently or, possibly, in the future and what those needs may be.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – During the development of the Carers Charter consideration was given to the Equality Impact of the Charter and Action Plan. Following completion of the screening tool and discussions with the Corporate Strategy team it was concluded that the charter had a positive impact and a full EIA would not be required. The Action Plan will however be continuously monitored and the screening tool revisited cyclically or when a significant impact is observed in the delivery of the Action Plan. Corporate Strategy noted that developing culturally specific support is built into the Carers Charter.

The Carers Charter is in line with the Borough Manifesto including:

- A place where every resident has access to lifelong learning, employment and opportunity.
- A place which supports residents to achieve independent, healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.
- A place where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to succeed.

The Charter also supports the Corporate Plan through;

- Participation and engagement - through the development and delivery of the Carers Charter.
- Prevention, Independence and Resilience - through the delivery of improved outcomes for children, families and adults. Alongside supporting young people to achieve success in adulthood through education, training, apprenticeships and employment.
- Tackling inequalities - such as prioritising carers health alongside the cared for persons needs, is a key part of the Carers Charter.
- Inclusive Growth - supporting carers to access employment opportunities and utilise transferable skills as well as increased financial resilience.

In addition to this as detailed earlier in the report, the Carers Charter links in with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, NHS Long Term Plan and the Borough Partnership.

7.2 Safeguarding Adults and Children - The Carers Charter will facilitate improving outcomes for Children and Adult carers as well as the cared for. This is an all age charter that looks to improve outcomes in health, wellbeing and financial resilience through access to early intervention and prevention and reduce opportunity losses due to the caring role, especially young carers. The Charter also takes into consideration all relevant legislation including the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.

7.3 Health Issues – The Carers Charter has been developed in line with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and incorporates the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the NHS Long Term Plan. It is envisaged that the joint partnership response to the health of carers and the cared for will bring positive outcomes in health and work towards reducing some of the health inequalities faced by local residents, which includes carers and the cared for.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices:

Appendix A - Carers Charter 2022-25

Appendix B - Carers Charter Action Plan