

Carers Action Plan

Executive Summary

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Our call to action

We believe carers should be valued and supported. Carers have extensive knowledge, and first-hand experience of, using and speaking with services. They are often aware of and advocate for their rights and the rights of the person they care for, navigating complex processes. They often are the connection between services and know the system inside out. We rely on carers. But we also need to support carers, who may be facing their own challenges. This Carers Action Plan is the start.

The Carers Action Plan has been developed with and alongside carers, local and community carer services, and health and social care partners. It aims to take a whole system approach to carers, recognising that carers are often the lynchpin between a network of services and sectors.

This action plan is also meant to be dynamic: it is reflective of an evolving body of work, and it's not a strategy that sits dusty shelf with no-one looking at it. It's a call to action, with co-produced priorities, actions, measures, and outcomes all directed at enabling the conditions for change and much needed support for carers.

Carers in Camden has the supporting information for the action plan. This section discusses the definition of an unpaid carer; shows some data on carers in Camden and sets out carers rights. The section outlines how, and with who, the action plan was developed; how the progress of the action plan will be measured and the plans for a carers partnership board.

How to connect with support, if you are an unpaid carer, can also be found at the end of this section.

Who is a carer?

Common definitions of unpaid carers speak of support for people who are disabled, have an illness or long-term condition, including mental health; learning disability and or substance misuse, neurodiversity, or support for people who need extra help as they grow older.

It can be difficult to identify as a carer. Carers could be supporting a family member, friend, or neighbour, someone they have built a relationship with, or who would struggle without help. Sometimes people can take on the role of a carer gradually as the person they care for needs more support with time. Carers could also be supporting more than one person or could be providing support whilst also receiving care and support. We want it to be recognised that what carers do is amazing, and we are proud of them!

There are some legal duties that underpin the way statutory services, such as Camden Council and the NHS, work with unpaid carers. The Care Act 2014 is the law that sets out how adult social care in England should be provided to improve people's independence and wellbeing. The Care Act recognises that supporting carers is as important as the people they care for. The Care Act defines a carer as, "an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult".

The Carers Action Plan is directed at focussing priorities and actions related to unpaid, or informal, carers. These are carers who are aged 18 years and over who provide care for people who are 16 years and over, and are not paid by health and social care services, or the person they are supporting, for their caring role.

What the analysis tells us

At the last census 14,605 people in Camden identified as a carer. We know that the number of carers known to health and social care is less than this, with only 1165 unpaid carers identified by Adult Social Care in 2023. We want more carers to recognise that they are carers, that they are not alone, and that there is support they are entitled to. After all, research by Carers UK finds that unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute £445 million per day to the economy which is around £162 billion per year. The value of unpaid care is equivalent to a second NHS in England and Wales!

Data suggests that of the people that call themselves a carer in Camden, over a third are working the equivalent of a full-time job supporting the person they care for, with 53% juggling caring responsibilities and managing a carer's own employment. We know that caring can be an emotionally, physically and financially demanding responsibility; with caring leading to burn-out, carers themselves sometimes needing carers, or relying on the person they care for to care for them too.

In Camden, we recognise that the caring role cannot be considered in isolation and is linked to other factors such as someone's identity and own health and social care needs. We are a borough where access to safe and secure housing, high levels of loneliness and inequality impact our resident wellbeing outcomes, and we have over a quarter of carers reporting that they are not in good health. This all means that we need to ensure that when a carer reaches out to a service the experience should be a good one, and that early identification and support is key.



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How the Carers Action Plan is set out

The Carers Action Plan is set out into two sections. The first section holds **the Action Plan** (see below). The second section holds a report on **Carers in Camden**, including background information and rationale for the Carers Action Plan. The latter section discusses the definition of an unpaid carer; shows data on carers in Camden and sets out carers' rights. The section outlines how, and with whom, the Carers Action Plan was developed; how the progress of the action plan will be measured and the plans for a Borough Carers Partnership Board.

The Action Plan includes themes that were identified by carers as important. These have been developed into five key principles underpinning support for carers, and priority areas for action. Direct quotations from carers are included throughout the Carers Action Plan. This Carers Action Plan will change as we move forwards together to deliver carers' priorities in Camden.

Part I of the action plan outlines the **principles of supporting carers**. These are fundamental and should underpin everything services do to support and relate to carers. It is thought that these will not change. The principles are:

- **Identifying as a carer is an essential step to accessing support.**
- **Caring is intrinsically connected to a relationship.**
- **A carer is an individual person with their own needs and context.**
- **Caring responsibilities require time and energy.**
- **Connected services are vital to carers.**

Part II of the action plan describes the **priority areas** carers have said should be our focus. As more information emerges, and work continues involving carers in the delivery of the action plan, Part II will be updated to reflect the views and experiences of as many carers as possible. The priorities are:

- **Communication**
- **Information and Advice**
- **Mental Health Support**
- **Carer Conversations (assessments)**
- **Emergency / Future Planning**
- **Health and Hospital Discharge**
- **Young Adult Carers (YAC) Support**
- **Carers Breaks**
- **Accessibility**
- **Financial and Legal Support**
- **Employment, Education and Training**

The **Action Tracker** in **Part III** will detail the steps to achieve each area for action. This will evolve as we work with carers, health, social care, and community organisations to find effective solutions. Once the possible ways forward have been mapped, timelines for delivery will be assigned to each of the actions. The tracker also has a section for progress that has been made against each priority.

Accountability and Outcomes

To ensure that responsibility for the Carers Action Plan is shared across organisations, a **Borough Partnership Carers Board** will be established by the end of 2024. The board will include carers, Councillors, and senior representatives from across the Camden Borough Partnership. The board will be connected to other decision-making groups, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that actions can be agreed and prioritised at the highest level.

Three new posts within Camden Adult Social Care, focussed on delivery and implementation of the action plan, and an existing multi-disciplinary and expert by experience working group will continue to be responsible for the daily delivery of the action plan priorities, monitoring progress of any workstreams (subgroups that have been created on specific actions) and maintaining oversight of plans. The working group will report to the board.

In terms of measuring success, a hybrid approach to the existing outcome frameworks across the Borough Partnership will be adopted, rather than creating a bespoke outcome framework for carers in Camden. In this way the impact of measures can have the widest reach. It is intended that a benchmarking exercise using the NICE baseline assessment for supporting adult carers (NG150) is revisited and used as a measure of progress, as well as the NICE quality standards (QS200) and the Good Life Camden framework to measure progress and ambitions to ensure carers are valued and supported. Progress against these will be reported at the Borough Partnership Carers Board.



Get in touch

The full Carers Action Plan reflects the voice of carers, their experiences and knowledge. This will all be led by unpaid carers. Reaching and supporting more carers is key to everything we continue to do.

If you would prefer to see an online version of this action plan. There is a website for the Carers Action Plan: <https://carersactionplan.camden.gov.uk>

How to connect with support, can be found here <https://camdencareschoices.camden.gov.uk/support-and-advice-for-carers/>

If you have any questions or feedback on the Carers Action Plan, please contact: CamdenCareChoices@camden.gov.uk





