



## Carers

### 1. Introduction

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. Those being cared for may be a relative, partner or friend, who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse issues.

Carers are the largest source of care and support in the UK, but taking on a caring role can be challenging. Without access to information, financial support and breaks away from caring, carers can suffer from poverty, isolation, frustration and ill health.

To care safely while maintaining their own physical and mental health and wellbeing, carers need information, support, respect and recognition from the professionals with whom they are in contact. The Government's [Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers strategy](#) (2010), identifies four main priorities to improve support given to carers:

- Supporting those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage;
- Enabling carers to fulfil their educational and employment potential;
- Personalised support for carers and the cared for enabling them to have a family and community life; and
- Supporting carers to remain mentally and physically well.

### 2. The Local Picture

In the 2001 Census, 9% of Hounslow residents reported that they provided unpaid care, slightly higher than the rate for London as a whole (8.5%).

A Department of Health survey of carers in 2010 included responses from around 400 carers in the Borough of Hounslow. Results from the survey showed ([Table 1](#)):

- The vast majority of carers (95%) did not have a personal budget managed by the Local Authority;
- Nearly two thirds (65%) of carers were female, with most aged 45-64 years (41%);
- The majority of carers (59%) cared for a person with a physical impairment or disability. A further 16% cared for someone with mental health problems and 11% cared for those with learning difficulties;
- Around half of all carers (49%) had had a joint assessment or review with the cared for person in the previous 12 months, while 44% had a separate assessment or review and 7% of carers had no assessment or review;
- Three out of four carers (77%) had received information or services following an assessment or review. The remaining 23% reported that they did not receive information following assessment or review; and
- Nearly two-fifths of carers (39%) cared for their spouse or partner, 31% for their parents and 18% for their child.



### 2.1 Services currently provided for Hounslow's Carers

The Carers' Assessment consists of questions about the care given and the impact it has on day-to-day life, to help determine what assistance is needed. Some carers are able to access support such as carers' vouchers and direct payments, which assist in paying someone to look after the person cared for or to help with household tasks. The aim is that by providing these services, the carer receives a break from their caring duties.

The Carers' Emergency Card helps carers to plan for alternative care arrangements in the event that they are temporarily unable to fulfil their caring responsibilities (for example, if the carer needed to go to hospital in an emergency, or any other urgent commitments).

All carers can be included on the Carers' Register to receive information about Carers' Information and Event Days, the Carers' Forum and training opportunities.

The Carers' Forum is held quarterly for carers who wish to influence changes and improvements in the services provided for carers within the London Borough of Hounslow.

## 3. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

The London Borough of Hounslow (LBH), with its local partners in health and social care, has built up a solid portfolio of information, support and services for carers. The Borough has a key role in facilitating services to carers and aims to formalise its commitment to carers as invaluable partners in the care process.

Hounslow strives to ensure that carers receive full recognition for the valuable contribution they make to the community and that all health and social care partners are able to recognise carers, acknowledge the role they play and signpost them appropriately.

The key aims of LBH's strategy for carers are to ensure that all carers in Hounslow are:

- Given a meaningful role in the community, ensuring carers are recognised for the invaluable role they play;
- Empowered to influence decisions made surrounding the way services are delivered both for them and, more importantly, the people they care for;
- Positively encouraged to live full and healthy lives, maintaining their independence and exercising control over the way they live their lives;
- Enabled to exercise choice about the way they provide care and to work in full partnership with both statutory and voluntary providers; and
- Provided with appropriate support to ensure equal opportunities in accessing employment, education and training to ensure their financial security and future wellbeing.

## 4. Priorities

The London Borough of Hounslow welcomes the priorities for carers outlined in *Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the carers strategy* and has the following priorities for the coming year:



- To identify carers within the community who are unknown to the Borough and enable them to access available advice, information and support;
- To support carers who are working or who may be considering a return to work;
- To raise the awareness of the different kinds of support that is available to carers within the Borough, including universal services such as leisure centres and libraries;
- To facilitate carers' access to preventative support services that will safeguard their physical and emotional health; and
- To commission services for carers that are able to demonstrate the difference that they have made to the lives of carers, as opposed to giving grants to organisations.

## 5. Summary of Need

The following table summarises the needs for Carers in the London Borough of Hounslow.

<b>SUMMARY OF NEED: CHECKLIST</b>	
Is need increasing over time?	<b>Yes</b>
Is need greater than the London average?	<b>N/A</b>
Is there qualitative intelligence indicating that need is substantially unmet?	<b>Yes</b>
Is there an external inspection or report suggesting need is unmet?	<b>No</b>
Are quality indicators worsening over time?	<b>N/A</b>
Are quality indicators worse than the London average?	<b>N/A</b>
Is there an intervention of proven effectiveness to address the need which is not currently delivered in Hounslow (or not delivered enough)?	<b>N/A</b>