



Carer Strategy for Tower Hamlets Action Plan for 2018-19

1. Increasing identification and recognition of carers

1.1 Identify more carers

"I want to speak to professionals that understand carers and can recognise the signs. Treat me with dignity and compassion and recognise me as a carer"

Current situation

- 49 adult carers were identified by social care staff last year¹, as were 406 young carers². We think there are over 19,000 carers in the borough³. Approximately 5,000 residents are in receipt of Carer Allowance⁴.
- There is evidence that male carers and carers who are of a Bangladeshi ethnic background are less likely to come forward for help⁵
- Feedback is that the main barriers to identifying carers are people not recognizing themselves as carers and staff having other priorities⁶.

Future plans

- ✓ We will run an awareness-raising campaign so more carers come forward for help. We will run this in 2018 and tell carers about the support available to them at the same time. We will make sure this campaign is targeted at all groups, including male carers and carers of a Bangladeshi ethnic background.
- ✓ We will commission a service that will raise the profile of carers as expert and equal partners of care and carry out outreach work to identify more carers
- ✓ We will give health and social care staff knowledge and tools so they are better at identifying carers

¹ Number of carer assessments carried out in 2016-17. However, staff have fed back that this figure is likely to be inaccurate due to issues with recording carer assessments.

² Young Carer Register as of January 2018

³ Based on 2011 Census data

⁴ 5,118 Tower Hamlets residents based on 2016-17 Quarter 3 data. Eligibility criteria involves caring for 35+ hours pw

⁵ According to the 2011 Census, 88.5% of carers are aged 16-64, 43% are Bengali, 33% are White British and 56% are women.

⁶ Staff and carer feedback was gathered via focus groups, surveys and in a variety of other ways between August 2017 and January 2018

1.2 Respect carers

“I want professionals to know I am a carer but it is not my duty, I do it because I can and want to. I want to be in control but I want professionals to support me before I reach crisis point”

Current situation

- 66% of carers in Tower Hamlets say they were treated with respect by the people who carried out their assessment, while 5% did not feel this way⁷.
- Carers continue to raise concerns about how some health and social care professionals interact and communicate with them. Carers sometimes have to chase responses from staff who do not get back to them.

Future plans

- ✓ We will give health and social care staff information so that they better understand the experiences of carers
- ✓ We will make sure that Council staff answer phone calls within an agreed number of rings and ring people back within an agreed number of hours⁸
- ✓ We will celebrate Carers Week in Tower Hamlets

1.3 Involve carers in decisions

“Recognise me as an expert and equal partner of care and my views and opinions should be valued and respected. I want to be invited to meetings and involved in discussions with health and social care staff”

Current situation

- 53% of carers in Tower Hamlets say they usually or always feel involved in discussion about the person they care for. 17% sometimes and 7% never feel involved⁹.
- Feedback is that carers are not always involved in discussion with health and social care staff when it comes to discharging the person they care for from hospital

Future plans

- ✓ We will give health and social care staff knowledge and tools so they are better equipped to involve carers in decisions¹⁰.

⁷ 2016-17 Carer Survey report. The survey was sent to 754 carers who had received support in the preceding 12 months in December 2016. 205 carers completed this.

⁸ This is part of the Council-wide customer service standards, which are being developed in 2018

⁹ 2016-17 Carer Survey report

¹⁰ The issue of carer involvement when someone is due to be discharged from hospital has been particularly highlighted, so we will start by focusing on that issue.

2. Realising and releasing the potential of carers

2.1 Make it easier for carers to work

“I want employers to be flexible and have dedicated policies for carers”

Current situation

- 46% of carers say they are not in work due to caring¹¹. Carers say flexibility in the workplace is really important.

Future plans

- ✓ We will look at how the Council, other public services and other employers in the borough can make it easier for their employees to be a carer¹²
- ✓ We will give staff at Tower Hamlets Job Centres information about carers so they have a better understanding of their needs and experiences

2.2 Help more young carers with their education

“Support me with my caring responsibilities so I can continue to work or study”

Current situation

- Young carers get significantly lower GCSE results compared to their peers¹³

Future plans

- ✓ We will work more closely with schools so that young carers get the right support

2.3 Develop carer’s skills

“I want an opportunity to turn my experience into accredited qualifications. After my caring role is over, I want support to start working or studying to fulfil my own potential”

Current situation

- Carers have welcomed the idea of training that can help them in their caring role, in the job market and in their lives overall.

¹¹ 2016-17 Carer Survey report

¹² This will be done initially by reviewing relevant HR policies

¹³ Whilst there is no detailed information in Tower Hamlets on the issue, there is national research that indicates this. For example: <https://professionals.carers.org/young-carers-and-their-education>

Future plans

- ✓ We will commission a Carer Academy where training for adult carers will be facilitated. The training will be related to their lives, skills and role as a carer. It will include training and/or accredited qualifications on budgeting, access to education, caring safely, employment, stress management and wellbeing.
- ✓ We will look into what training is needed and what training is available for young carers and parents of children with a disability
- ✓ We will look into the possibility of starting an Apprenticeship Schemes for former carers within the Council and health services

3. A life outside caring

3.1 Make life easier for carers

Current situation

- Technology ranging from online shopping apps to voice-activated technology has the potential to make daily tasks quicker and easier for carers
- 58% of carers say that caring has caused financial difficulties¹⁴
- Carers have raised concerns over their interactions with Job Centre staff and staff working in housing

Future plans

- ✓ We will help carers to get and use technology that can make their lives easier¹⁵
- ✓ We will produce new information for carers on money management and commission services to give carers financial advice
- ✓ We will find out if improvements can be made to the transport system when carers accompany the person they care for to appointments. This includes finding out if there is any available support to help carers with travel costs¹⁶

¹⁴ 2016-17 Carer Survey report

¹⁵ This links to the local authority's digital inclusion work and assistive technology in health and social care

¹⁶ Local authorities have statutory duties around transport for people with a disability, but not carers. London Councils discharges this responsibility on behalf of Tower Hamlets through the Freedom Pass scheme. It may be difficult to establish a concession or pass for carers on public transport at a borough-level, and it may be something that needs to be done at a London-wide level through London Councils or equivalent.

- ✓ We will provide staff in housing and the Job Centre with more information on carers so they have a better understanding of their needs and experiences

3.2 Be clearer on how carers can take a break from caring

“Support me so I don’t feel guilty or fearful when I want a break from caring”

Current situation

- For many carers, taking a break is very important and can enable people to continue caring
- 93 people received respite care funded by the Council last year¹⁷

Future plans

- ✓ We will produce new information setting out how carers can take a break and how much it costs¹⁸
- ✓ We will develop a “shared lives” service, so that adults with a learning disability can stay with a local volunteer to give their carer a break¹⁹
- ✓ We will look at the options young carers, adult carers and parent carers²⁰ have to take a break and make sure everyone has the options they need

3.3 Give carers information that is helpful and easy to find

“I want personalised advice, information or guidance, I am not a “one size fits all”

Current situation

- 50 per cent of carers say information and advice is easy to find, while 26 per cent say it is difficult. 64 per cent of carers say information and advice in the last year has been helpful, while 8 per cent say it was unhelpful²¹
- Carers and staff have said it would be useful to give carers information and advice on the health and social care system, on money and legal issues, on health and wellbeing, and on all the services that are available to them

¹⁷ 2016-17 figures

¹⁸ This links to the Charging Policy for adult social care, which was put into place in 2017. A Replacement Care policy will be produced along with information in leaflets and on websites

¹⁹ This is being developed by the Adults of Working Age team as part of the Learning Disability Accommodation Strategy

²⁰ Parents or carers of a child or young person with a disability

²¹ 2016-17 Carer Survey report

Future plans

- ✓ We will commission a new service for adult carers that will give carers person-centred, tailored information, advice and advocacy on the issues that are important to them. The service will carry out outreach work in order to reach more carers.
- ✓ We will publish new information for carers on the health and social care system, and we will tell carers about changes to health and social care services
- ✓ We will encourage carers to co-design health and social care services
- ✓ We will tell more carers about the national Carers Direct Helpline (telephone 0300 123 1053)

4. Improving the health and wellbeing of carers

4.1 Help carers to have regular health check-ups

“I want my GP to offer routine annual appointment, should I forget to check on myself”

Current situation

- Carers report having lower-than-average general health²²
- NHS Health Checks are offered every five years to everyone over the age of 40²³. These health checks are focused on physical health conditions. Schools have access to school nurses, although these are not based in every school.

Future plans

- ✓ We will work with GPs and school nurses to see what health checks can be put into place for carers.

4.2 Help protect and improve carer health and wellbeing

“I do not want to feel alone, help me support my own mental and physical health

Caring can be very rewarding and fulfilling it can also be emotionally and physically draining. I want training to know how to safely move the person I care for to prevent long term physical pain.”

²² In the 2011 Census, 83% of residents report having good health. This dropped to 70% for carers.

²³ Every five years if the person does not have any pre-existing medical conditions, such as diabetes

Current situation

- 33% of carers rate their quality of life as good. Most carers say they do not do enough of the things they value or enjoy (76%), do not have enough encouragement or support (68%), do not have enough social contact with others (65%) and are not looking after themselves well enough (56%)²⁴
- 86% of carers say that caring has affected their health or wellbeing, particularly when it comes to feeling tired, disturbed sleep and general stress²⁵.

Future plans

- ✓ We will offer carers a range of personalised support options aimed at protecting and improving their health and wellbeing, including through the provision of direct payments
- ✓ We will commission a Carer Academy so carers can attend training related to their lives, skills and role as a carer. This will include training and/or accredited qualifications on budgeting, access to education, caring safely, stress management and wellbeing.
- ✓ We will figure out how carers (including young carers) can get regular check-ups to look at their health and wellbeing
- ✓ We will provide space - online and through services - for carers to come together and share their experiences²⁶
- ✓ We will help carers who are interested to be “peer mentors” to other carers

4.3 Improve carer’s experience of health and social care

“I have the right to request a carers’ needs assessment to discuss the help I need to continue caring. I want to plan ahead and stay in control in emergencies”

Current situation

- Carers have raised concerns with how some staff in health and social care communicate with them
- Time is at a premium for carers, and they have suggested a number of changes that could be made at GP surgeries to make things quicker and easier
- Carers can find it frustrating if they have to continually repeat the same story to different staff, or if things take a long time due to conversations on data protection

²⁴ 2016-17 Carer Survey report

²⁵ 2016-17 Carer Survey report

²⁶ This is part of the service specification for carer services

- It can be difficult for all concerned if there is an emergency which means the carer can no longer provide care

Future plans

- ✓ We will provide health and social care staff with the knowledge and tools they need so that the communication issues carers have raised are addressed, and so that staff are doing more to help carers have a contingency plan in the event of an emergency
- ✓ We will clarify what the process of getting support is for young carers, adult carers and parents carers
- ✓ We will commission a service to provide a 'Carer Emergency Card' scheme for adult carers, which will set out who should be contacted in the event of an emergency. We will look at how to offer this to young carers and parent carers.
- ✓ We will commission a service to be the "front door" service for carers who may need support
- ✓ We will introduce digitally-held patient records, which patients can share with carers²⁷
- ✓ We will provide information and advice to carers on the support options available to them²⁸

5. Transitions: Providing Seamless Care between Children and Adults

5.1 Give parents of disabled children better information on adult social care

Current situation

- Some children with disabilities will not be eligible for support from adult social care when they reach adulthood, and there is a risk that support will suddenly end for these children when they get older.
- The type of support that adults can get is different to the type of support that children can get.

Future plans

- ✓ We will produce new information for parents of disabled children, setting out what they can expect from adult social care and what to do if their child is ineligible for support from adult services

²⁷ This is being planned through Tower Hamlets Together and is part of the Sustainability Transformation Plan

²⁸ This will be done through commissioning services to provide information advice, through the Community Catalogue and Single Point of Access being developed by Tower Hamlets Together, and by producing new information in leaflets and on websites for staff working with carers and with carers themselves

5.2 Help more young carers get into contact with adult social care as they become adult carers

Current situation

- The type of support that is available to young carers is different to the support available to adult carers. Young carers may not be aware of the different options available to them.

Future plans

- ✓ We will make sure that the support options available to young carers and the options available to adult carers is clear
- ✓ We will produce new information for young carers on how they can be supported when they approach adulthood

6. How will we know if the plan is working?

If the plan is working, we would expect to see a number of improvements for carers, which are listed below. They are listed under headings used in the Tower Hamlets Together Outcomes Framework, which sets out what we are seeking to achieve in health and social care overall:

I have a positive experience of the services I use

- An increase in carer satisfaction levels with health and social care services²⁹

I have a good level of happiness and wellbeing

- Improved health-related quality of life reported by carers³⁰
- An increased number of carer assessments³¹
- An proportional increased number of carer assessments carried out for men and carers of a Bangladeshi ethnic background³²

²⁹ Monitored via the bi-annual Carer Survey

³⁰ Monitored via the bi-annual Carer Survey. Health-related quality of life is defined as being comprised of six measures: occupation, control, personal care, safety, social participation and encouragement and support

³¹ Monitored via a Framework-I report

³² Monitored via a Framework-I report

I am able to access the services I need, to a safe and high quality

- An increase in good quality carer assessments³³
- An increased number of carers accessing information and advice³⁴
- An increase in the number of carers who say information and advice is easy to find³⁵

³³ Monitored through the results of the Senior Practitioner Checklist and the bi-annual Carer Survey

³⁴ Monitored via a Framework-I report

³⁵ Monitored via the bi-annual Carer Survey and Annual Residents Survey