



Healthier Communities Select Committee

Report title: Ensuring Unpaid Carers are Visible, Value and Supported

Date: 17 September 2024

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All.

Contributors: Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, Executive Director for Corporate Resources, Director of Law & Corporate Governance

Outline and recommendations

This report asks Healthier Communities Select Committee to note Lewisham Council's update on Ensuring Carers are Visible, Valued and Supported, with a particular focus on:

- What Unpaid Carers want moving forward.
- How we are working with Unpaid Carers to offer services that meet their needs
- Why we have set up the Open Carers Forum and how it operates.
- Key drivers to grow and improve over the coming year

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Date	Engagement
January 2022	Working group established to develop the Carer Implementation Plan (2022 – 2024)
May – July 2022	Carer Implementation Plan consultation open
21 September 2022	Mayor and Cabinet: Permission to procure Maximising Wellbeing for Carer Service and request to extend related contracts by three months
21 June 2023	Mayor and Cabinet: Permission to award Maximising Wellbeing of Unpaid Carers contract
23 November 2023	Carer Rights Day at Glass Mill leisure centre
April – June 2024	Task and Finish group set up to develop Carer Forum Terms of Reference
25 June 2024	Carer Forum agreed Terms of Reference

1. Summary

- 1.1. Lewisham Council believes that Unpaid Carers should be visible, valued and supported and aims for support for Unpaid Carers to be the best it can be. An Unpaid Carer is a person of any age (including children, referred to as young carers) who provides unpaid support to a partner, relative, friend or neighbour who could not cope

without their help. This could be due to old age, frailty, disability, a serious health condition, mental ill health or substance misuse.

- 1.2. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows 19,957 people in Lewisham were looking after someone without being paid when the census was carried out in March 2021. Of these, 9,890 people were providing more than 20 hours of unpaid care a week in 2021 – including 5,133 people doing so for more than 50 hours a week.
- 1.3. The Maximising Wellbeing of Unpaid Carers service went live on the 01 August 2023 and is provided by Imago Community. The service operationalises the joint legislative framework of the Care Act (2014) and the Children and Families Act (2014), which clearly set out the expectation of commissioned services to improve people's wellbeing through a person-centred approach.
- 1.4. In addition, the legislative framework places the wellbeing outcomes of carers on an equal footing to the person they care for, taking a whole family approach to reviewing the support requirements of both the cared for and the Unpaid Carer. The service aims to comprehensively enable Unpaid Carers to have more opportunity to access information, advice and support as well as having fun and making friends. Imago Community staff support Unpaid Carers from across Lewisham from 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday at Glass Mill leisure centre. They are in the process of developing additional hubs across Lewisham. To date, 1,700 residents have registered with Imago Community and accessing the service.
- 1.5. In addition, we wanted to give Unpaid Carers the opportunity to share their views and connect directly with Lewisham Council. To this end, we have begun monthly open Forums for Unpaid Carers which have met three times with around fifty attendees in each meeting. A steering group of unpaid carers helps shape the agenda.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 This report asks Healthier Communities Select Committee to note Lewisham Council's update on Ensuring Carers are Visible, Valued and Supported, with a particular focus on:
 - What Unpaid Carers want moving forward.
 - How we are working with Unpaid Carers to offer services that meet their needs
 - Why we have set up the Open Carers Forum and how it operates.
 - Key drivers to grow and improve over the coming year.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the achievements of the Corporate Strategy objectives:
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Children and Young People
 - Open Lewisham

4. Background

- 4.1. The Maximising Wellbeing of Unpaid Carers service went live on the 01 August 2023. The new model operationalises the joint legislative framework of the Care Act (2014) and the Children and Families Act (2014), which clearly set out the expectation of commissioned services to improve people's wellbeing through a person-centred approach.
- 4.2. In addition, the legislative framework places the wellbeing outcomes of carers on an equal footing to the person they care for, taking a whole family approach to reviewing the support requirements of both the cared for and the Unpaid Carer. The service aims to enable Unpaid Carers to improve their wellbeing through better access to information, advice and support as well as opportunities to step outside their caring

role. This includes an expectation that Unpaid Carers will be fully involved and treated as an equal partner in the information, advice and support they receive, as well as the assessment, support planning and ongoing review if they are eligible for assessment and support.

- 4.3. An Open Carer Forum was set up so that Unpaid Carers can exercise their rights, express their views and influence how the support they need should be provided; to help improve the quality of support and services as well as to get news about issues that affect them. This is overseen by a steering group drawn from the Unpaid Carer community.

5. Key issues

- 5.1. See PowerPoint accompanying presentation.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. There are no direct financial implications.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. There are no direct legal implications.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1. The following table summarises the risks and mitigating actions for the recommendations included in this report

Risk	Mitigation
Number of Unpaid Carers known to the Council remains low	Increase awareness of Unpaid Carers through a range of initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understanding of the characteristics of Lewisham based Unpaid Carers acknowledging that they are a hugely diverse group¹ Targeted awareness raising events. Strong Unpaid Carer service offer
Unpaid Carer ceases to provide care due to lack of support resulting in physical and emotional fatigue	Unpaid Carers are represented on the Imago Community contract monitoring meetings.

9. Equalities implications²

- 9.1 Unpaid care and disability. Census 2021 data noted that more Unpaid Carers were disabled (27.5% in England) compared with non-carers (17.8% in England). Unpaid Carers providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week had the highest percentage of disabled people in England (15.6% limited a lot, 19.8% limited a little in their day-to-day activities).
- 9.2 Unpaid care and ethnic group. Census 2021 noted that the ethnicity of Unpaid Carers largely follows the ethnic-group distributions in the whole population.
- 9.3 Unpaid care and religion. Census 2021 data noted that a significant proportion of carers (59%) in England identify with a religion, including 49% who are Christian and 6% who are Muslim. Carers UK research found that nearly a third (30%) of carers who identified with a religion said that having a faith or religion helped improve their

¹ Kings Fund (2023). Caring in a complex world: perspectives from unpaid carers and the organisations that support them.

² Census 2021 data.

health and wellbeing. It is therefore important to engage with faith organisations and groups as they can play an important role in supporting Unpaid Carers.

- 9.4 Unpaid care and legal partnership status. The breakdown of marital status in unpaid carers is broadly similar to the breakdown of marital status in the population.
- 9.5 Unpaid care and sexual orientation. Overall, 3.9% of unpaid carers in England, identified with a “gay or lesbian”, “bisexual”, or “other sexual orientation” (LGB+) orientation, compared with 3.0% in non-carers in both countries. Unpaid carers who provide nine hours or less of unpaid care had the highest percentage of people who identified with an LGB+ orientation.

10. Climate change and environmental implications

- 10.1 All Unpaid Carer related activity is expected to comply with the Council’s Environmental and Climate Change requirements, to minimise the environmental impact of these activities.
- 10.2. All Unpaid Carer related activity is also be expected to support the Council’s commitment to making the borough carbon neutral by 2030.

11. Crime and disorder implications

- 11.1. There are no crime and disorder implications.

12. Health and wellbeing implications

- 12.1. Unpaid Carers are more likely to reside in low income households. Those who are providing more than 20 hours of unpaid care per week are more than 96% more likely to report poor mental health compared to their peers. Young adult carers’ education and future employment are also affected and there are stark inequalities in educational attainment. Young adult carers are 38% less likely than their peers to hold a university degree as their highest qualification. This rises to a staggering 86% for those who provide more than 35 hours of care per week³.

13. Background papers

Title of Document	Date	File Location	Contact Officer
Award of Contract for the Carer Information, Advice and Support Service	16/01/2019	https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=139&Mid=5214&Ver=4	Tristan Brice
Maximising Wellbeing of Carers:	21/09/2022	https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=139&Mid=7912&Ver=4	Tristan Brice
Permission to award Maximising Wellbeing of Unpaid Carers contract Part 1	21/06/2023	https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=139&Mid=8053&Ver=4	Tristan Brice

³ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology-health-care/news/2024/may/landmark-study-shows-effects-being-unpaid-carer#:~:text=Those%20who%20are%20providing%20more,health%20compared%20to%20their%20peers.>

14. Report author and contact

- 14.1 Tristan Brice - Tristan.Brice@lewisham.gov.uk, Associate Director, Community Support and Care, Lewisham Integrated Commissioning Team Appendices

