

Gateshead Carers Strategy 2014-17

**Recognised, Valued
and Supported**

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Foreword

Caring for our relatives and friends when they are in need is a challenge that many of us face in our lives. At any one time, one in 10 people in Britain is a carer; the majority of them are women. From the work we do with carers, we know that carers need services and support which are individual to their circumstances, that are flexible and that respond to changing needs.

Carers of all ages are a high priority in Gateshead. Within Gateshead Council and in conjunction with the Carers Partnership we have developed Carer's Standards to compliment the Adult Social Care Standards which give carers complete transparency on social care services. We have a vibrant Carer's Partnership made up of key organisations and co-chaired by a carer to make sure our transparency and overall commitment, continues through the work we do on the front line.

We hope this strategy is helpful in outlining our central plans for carers. How we plan to address the key areas that matter to carers and, by monitoring our progress via the carers' action plan that we deliver services and support carers in carrying out their role.

Gateshead Council endorses this strategy but its development and delivery will be carried out by the Carer's Partnership which has shown outstanding commitment to carers for many years. Without the Carers Partnership and the agencies that support its function we would be unable to meet the requirements of this strategy.

Finally, we would like to take this work forward in a meaningful way that recognises the wide and diverse voices of carers in Gateshead and use this strategy as a launch pad for continued excellence in carer support.

Councillor M. McNestry Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Councillor C. Donovan Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Councillor A. Douglas Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Executive Summary

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a framework for partners to work together to achieve the national vision for carers and enable people in Gateshead who have caring responsibilities now or in the future to have an ordinary life – a life outside of caring and an identity that is separate from that of the people they support.

We define a carer as:

“Someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. This could be caring for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or a substance misuse problem cannot cope without their support.” (Carers Trust)

A carer can be a:

- Parent
- Son or daughter
- Brother or sister
- Wife, husband or partner
- Friend or neighbour

The vision for carers in Gateshead is that all carers will be:

Recognised, valued and supported in their caring role.

This strategy aims to support carers to not be, or feel, disadvantaged because of their caring role and able to access the same opportunities as others. For example, regardless of their caring role people should still be able to remain in or return to employment; to have financial security; to continue or begin to access leisure; learning and educational opportunities; to have good health and to be able to maintain their social networks and be free from discrimination or harassment because of their caring role.

In the case of young carers, they should have the opportunity to enjoy their childhood and have

the same opportunities as their peers so they can thrive, develop and learn and they should not be providing inappropriate levels of care. To achieve the vision, we have developed 5 priorities each of which are supported by delivery plans that will be revised and updated on an annual basis.

The 5 priorities are:

- 1. Early identification and recognition of carers**
- 2. Realising and releasing carer potential**
- 3. Supporting carers to stay healthy**
- 4. A life outside of caring**
- 5. Financial wellbeing and support**

The strategy has been developed by the Gateshead Carers Partnership which includes carer support organisations and partners from across the Borough. It sets out areas for action that carers and partners have identified as being important to them and that would enable them to have an ordinary life. The strategy is aligned to Gateshead CCG and Adult Social Care Commissioning Intentions to ensure that carers are central to achieving the vision for Gateshead.

People who are paid to provide care are not covered by this strategy e.g. personal assistants or care support workers. Whilst it is important to retain the definition of a carer in order for people to be able to understand their rights and entitlements, family carers sometimes do not wish to be referred to as carers and it should be understood that the caring role is only one part of the family dynamic.

The strategy and the priorities identified throughout this document will be managed by the Carers Partnership and they will be responsible for the development of a robust Improvement and Development Action Plan (IDAP) which will drive the positive change for carers that this document sets out to achieve.

Introduction

Background

Gateshead wants to continue to support the National Carers Strategy at the local Gateshead level, in partnership with the CCG, Health Trusts and the Voluntary Sector Partners. Most importantly, we want to hear the voices of carers themselves regarding what experiences and priorities they have. We want to be transparent with carers in how we will aim to meet their needs. This strategy also puts us in a positive position to respond directly to the implementation of the Care Act and how we can shape services to benefit carers.

Strategic priorities

The vision for carers in Gateshead is that all carers will be:

Recognised, valued and supported in their caring role.

This strategy has been developed to ensure we promote the well being of carers and is structured around five key priorities, and will focus on identifying achievable outcomes for each of these which feed into achieving the overall vision. They are:

Our five key priorities for action are:

1. Early identification and recognition of carers
2. Realising and releasing carer potential
3. Supporting carers to stay healthy
4. A life outside of caring
5. Financial wellbeing and support

National Drivers

The Care Act 2014

For the first time, carers are recognised in law the same way as those they care for are recognised. The Act which received Royal Assent in May 2014 will reform the law relating to adult social care and support and will consolidate it into a single piece of legislation supported by regulations.

Some of the key changes for carers:

- Duty to promote wellbeing extended to include carers
- Duties for assessing needs for adults with care needs, carers, children with care needs and young carers at transition have been amended

to include stronger support and recognition of carers and the role that they play

- Carers must be involved in the assessment of a cared for person's needs and on the preparation of care and support plans; carers can prepare plans jointly with local authorities (or other organisations) (clause 25)
- Carers can request a copy of the care and support plan (clause 25)
- New entitlement to a Personal Budget and new right to request direct payments which can be paid to the carer or the adult needing care (clause 26 and 31).
- New single duty for Carers Assessments based on appearance of need, will now include consideration of day to day outcomes and financial assessments will only be carried out after a needs assessment (clause 10)
- New duty to meet carers needs for support (clause 20)

NHS Outcomes Framework

The NHS Outcomes Framework, sits alongside the Adult Social Care and Public Health outcomes frameworks and includes the NHS England's 'Commitment to Carers' (May 2014) and sits at the heart of the health and care system.

NHS England's 'Commitment to Carers' will mean the NHS will:

- "Recognise me as a carer" (this may not always be as 'carers' but simply as parents, children, partners, friends and members of our local communities);
- "Information is shared with me and other professionals";
- "Signpost information for me and help link professionals together";
- "Care is flexible and is available when it suits me and the person for whom I care";
- "Recognise that I may need help both in my caring role and in maintaining my own health and wellbeing";

- “Respect, involve and treat me as an expert in care”
- “Treat me with dignity and compassion”.

The Better Care Fund (BCF)

A single pooled budget to enable health and social care to work more closely together. This is based on a plan agreed between the NHS and Local Authorities to:

- Provide co-ordinated care for local people and address their needs as a whole
- Reduce the need for admissions to hospital and residential care / adopt preventative approaches
- Improve transfers of care between professionals/settings
- Provide care closer to people’s homes in a more joined up way
- Enhance patient and service user experience of care

This will help carers to be able to support the person they care for more efficiently particularly around transition between NHS and Local Authority services. Carers are integral to keeping cared for people out of hospital and BCF encompasses carers in the 5 priorities above.

Local Drivers

The Gateshead Carers Partnership drives carer issues forward through outstanding partnership working and an unswerving commitment to improve services for carers across Gateshead. The Key organisations that support the partnership are:

- Gateshead Carers Association
- Crossroads Care
- Alzheimer’s Society
- Gateshead Council
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- NTW Drug Services
- South of Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

The Gateshead Carers Strategy contributes to Vision 2030, the sustainable Community Strategy for Gateshead, which was produced by the Gateshead Strategic Partnership in 2007.

It aims to inspire, involve and share with people in Gateshead its vision of:

“Local people realising their full potential enjoying the best quality of life in a healthy, equal, safe, prosperous and sustainable Gateshead”

Adult Social Care and Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group Commissioning 2014

In response to the release of the updated Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework for 2014 Gateshead Council has developed its Adult Social Care Commissioning Intentions.

The Commissioning Intentions are derived from the Big Picture Challenges, Vision 2030 and the Vision for Adult Social Care, showing our objectives, how we meet them, our expected outcomes and our priorities. They also support the key priorities of the Health and

Wellbeing Strategy. Carers are at the heart of this work and they are recognised as valuable partners in care.

The CCG will continue to adopt the strategies described in the NHS Outcomes Framework to move towards the vision of better health for Gateshead. These five domains have set the programmes of work they will adopt over the next 5 years ensuring a focus on safe, quality services for all patients and their carers:

1. Preventing people from dying prematurely
2. Enhancing quality of life for people with long term conditions
3. Helping people to recover from episodes of ill health or following injury
4. Ensuring that people have a positive experience of care
5. Treating and caring for people in a safe environment and protecting them from avoidable harm

Other key local documents:

- Health and Wellbeing strategy
- Gateshead Carers Strategy 2010-14
- Gateshead Carers Association Carer Survey 2014

How has the strategy been developed?

The strategy has been developed by the Gateshead Carers Partnership. This partnership is made of carers, key staff in health, social care and the voluntary sector. It strives to give carers the strong strategic voice that will make a difference and makes sure that issues affecting carers are heard, acknowledged and most important of all, acted upon.

This is a live document that will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to make sure the strategy is current for example, the Care Act will become Law and into force through the lifespan of this strategy and therefore a review of the priorities may need to take place.

Consultation with carers took place from December 2013 to April 2014 involving a combination of questionnaire's, focus groups and consultation meetings with carers, using all partners who work with or on behalf of carers. Results and issues were analysed and incorporated into this strategy.

The strategy reflects the views of both carers and partners. The three year Delivery Plan (IDAP) within the overall framework of the strategy, will be developed fully with as wide a range of partners as possible. The strategy covers the period 2014-2017 and the IDAP will be reviewed annually by the Carers Partnership.

Priorities 2014-17

At an individual level, consultation with carers in Gateshead has identified a number of challenges and priorities for carers. These are identified under the 5 key priorities named below, along with outcomes and incorporating feedback from carers.

Priority one – Early Identification and Recognition of Carers

Carers often do not realise that they do not have to cope alone and that they have rights under the law and that there is practical and emotional help and support at hand (e.g. counselling, training and support groups) as well as financial help and assistance with replacement care if the carer perhaps needs a break e.g. train to go back to work or remain in work. This priority will help to prevent or delay carers developing needs for support and reducing the support they need

Key Outcomes

- Increase the number of newly recognised carers in Gateshead
- Form innovative partnerships with pharmacies, GP practices and other health related bodies to get support to carers at the earliest possible juncture

What carers have told us?

Information from the 2013/14 Carers Survey carried out by Gateshead Carers Association tells us that Carer numbers are increasing year on year however the increase locally (5.1%) has been dwarfed by the increase in demand for services (82% increase in 12 months) in carers accessing support from local carer groups.

The number of carers accessing carer assessments has stagnated and carers said that this was due to not feeling that there would be anything beneficial at the end of the process. Carers were not clear what the added value taking up a separate carers assessment would bring. Many were opting for joint assessments with the people that they care for.

What we will do

- We will work to ensure make sure that everyone with a caring role is identified as a carer
- Gateshead Council have developed Carer Standards which will help to make social care more transparent in telling carers what they are entitled to
- We will ensure that Adult Social Care Direct always ask if the person who contacts them is a carer and provide any relevant signposting information
- We will improve training for front line staff on carer assessments
- Identify the issues and challenges carers face in Gateshead
- Ensure carers are encouraged and supported to identify themselves
- Promote the carers agenda across the borough
- Improve the assessment process for carers, putting them at the centre of assessing their own needs and identifying how those can be met

Priority two - Realising and Releasing Carer Potential

Carers are a group of people that can get lost from our communities and the local economy. Carers are often skilled people who need to give up work in order to care for a loved one or neighbour and this impact can have a huge affect on carers themselves and local communities. Both adults and young carers are vulnerable from being restricted in their personal development which can result in a reduction in aspirations, educational attainment and future career goals and earning potential.

Understanding that carers have a number of skills and abilities and a right to a life of their own outside of caring means we need to do all we can to maximise the opportunities for carers in our

borough to work, train, attend school college or apprenticeships and support them to reach the potential they have.

Key Outcomes

- Make sure that carers are not restricted from achieving their aspirational goals as a result of caring. By making sure that all known carers can access information and advice services to help maintain a life and career outside of their caring responsibilities.

What carers have told us?

Carers want to continue where possible, with work and educational development. 20% have had to give up work because of their caring responsibilities and a large number (14%) of carers surveyed (GCA 2014) report claim that they were restricted in their career development because of their caring role.

What we will do?

- Continue to support colleges and schools to help support students to improve educational aspirations
- Work with children's services departments to make sure children transitioning into adult services are not left behind In terms of carer support and opportunities
- Develop clear networks with adult learning institutions to provide flexible learning options for carers
- Continue to work with the Department of Working Pensions to find innovative ways of helping carers back to work
- Continue to work with employers to raise awareness of the needs of staff who have a caring role

Priority three – Supporting Carers to Stay Healthy

Key outcomes

- Making sure that carers are supported from the earliest opportunity in order for them to remain healthy.
- Work in partnership with statutory, voluntary and preventative services that ensure greater social inclusion and quality of life for carers.

What carers have told us?

During recent consultation exercises with the CCG mental health group, carers said that they felt that the transition between services was still "sketchy" at best. Carers felt that getting information sharing arrangements in place so carers didn't have to continually tell their story was a key area for development. Carers have told us that caring for someone impacts heavily on their health and wellbeing with the vast majority of carers reporting 'tiredness' as a key factor. Alarming, over half of carers who were surveyed via the Carers Association survey were describing themselves as depressed.

What we will do?

- Work with GP's to make sure that carers have access to depression screening and other health benefits from being on the carer registry including health checks and healthy living schemes
- Work with carers to find ways to help alleviate stress and anxiety in their caring role
- Improve integration between services to support carers to access the right support at the right time (with a view to ensuring the integration of care and support provision with health provision and health-related provision)
- Make sure that we can provide quality co-ordinated mental health support for carers
- Explore opportunities to provide sport and leisure activities for carers to improve physical health

Priority Four – A Life Outside of Caring

Carers dedicate so much of their time to provide the person they are caring for with the best quality of life possible and this is often at the detriment of their own quality of life. The strategy and the carers partnership recognises that carers must have support to maintain and build a life outside of their caring role.

Key Outcomes

- Carers to have access to a wide range of activities, short breaks, groups and employment and training opportunities to continue to thrive in their own right.
- Support carers consultation and involvement in the design, delivery and review of services.

What carers have told us?

Carers have told us that taking a break from their caring role is vital to their ability to keep on caring. Carers are often isolated by their caring role and this often has a detrimental effect on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Having a short break to socialise with friends and other family can mean the difference between continuing to care for someone or, the caring role breaking down completely.

What we will do?

- Continue to find innovative break opportunities for carers
- Evaluate and evolve the current take a break scheme to offer more breaks designed by carers
- Find new ways of encouraging new carers to access breaks

Priority Five - Financial Wellbeing and Support

Carers are a particular vulnerable group in terms of their susceptibility to financial hardship. Carers are often forced to give up work or study to provide support for someone needing care. This strategy recognises that carers must be supported to access the correct financial support and guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Key Outcomes

- Making sure that carers in Gateshead understand what financial support is available to them and how to access it.

What carers have told us?

Carers have told us that they are finding it harder and harder to manage financially and see their financial position in 2014 as worse than in 2011. (GCA survey 2014)

What we will do

- Continue to improve the services available to provide carers with access to financial support and guidance
- Promote the work of voluntary organisations to maximise the income carers can access
- Work with Job Centre Plus to find better ways of working with carers to find suitable employment
- Continue to work with Employers so they recognise and understand the needs of carers and continue to provide support to working carer

Improvement and Development Action Plan (IDAP)

This strategy is supported by an Improvement and Development Action Plan (IDAP) which sets out the specific milestones and timescales necessary to deliver the priorities identified in this strategy.

For further information contact Adult Social Care Direct
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