

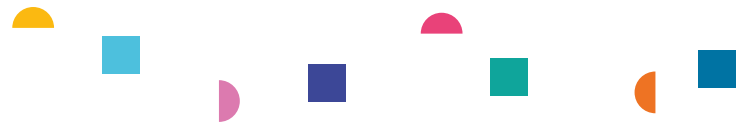


Lambeth Carers Strategy 2024–2029



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Foreword

Lambeth is home to over 18,000 unpaid carers, looking after friends and family members who wouldn't be able to get by without their support. This could be down to illness, disability, addiction or a mental health condition, and each carer's experience is different. Caring can be rewarding, but we must also recognise that caring can have a significant impact on carers' lives.

This strategy seeks to recognise carer's significant contribution and set the direction for how we want to work together with our communities and partners to support carers in Lambeth. We know that caring can affect individuals' health, wellbeing, finances, and relationships, but we also know that there is a lot we can do to respond to some of these challenges and effect meaningful change to the lives of unpaid carers.

This strategy has been developed in partnership with carers themselves, who have graciously given their time to tell us what's important to them and inform the priorities of this strategy. The strategy is also the product of close collaboration with Carers Hub Lambeth, partners across the Health and Care system, and other partners within the voluntary sector.

We'd like to thank all those who have contributed to the work of this strategy, in particular Lambeth carers, who have generously shared their lived experiences, and provided their time and expertise to shape the priorities which will inform our work over the next five years.

We are living through times of great uncertainty and pressure, but it is our ambition that, over the next five years, we will work alongside carers and partners

to deliver the ambitious priorities of this strategy to ensure that carers in Lambeth have access to the support and tools they need within a community who recognises their contribution.



Councillor Jim Dickson and Councillor Marcia Cameron, Cabinet Member for Healthier Communities (Job Share)



Carer foreword

I am honoured to write the foreword for Lambeth's Carers strategy.

In my capacity as a carer for over 25 years, to both my special needs daughter and 92-year-old mother, I've witnessed the dedication of carers in Lambeth. As a member of Carers Hub Lambeth and Carers4Carers, I can empathise with their struggles especially our young carers who play a pivotal role in the lives of family members including my own who are now young adult carers.

Being a carer can provoke a complex mix of emotions. It can be both rewarding and frustrating, and it can also be costly in terms of financial security, loneliness and isolation, as well as health and mental well-being. Each carer's experience is unique to their circumstances and the care and support they provide can vary.

However, carers share many similar experiences and challenges which impact the different aspects of our lives. It is sad to say many do not even recognise themselves as carers, making it vital to ensure they are identified and receive support. It is often an unsung role, and one that many will take on at some point in their lives.

Each year, unpaid carers save the government £162 billion, yet carers face increasing financial hardship and health challenges.

Lambeth aims for all families and carers to be recognised, valued, and included as equal partners in the care and support of our loved ones. And that's why this strategy, with consultation and support of carers and a team of agencies need to work together to deliver this strategy. The strategy builds on past effort to empower carers to have a quality life of our own.

All of us carers are an inspiration for our community.



Margaret,
Carer

1. Introduction

1.1 Our vision

Our vision continues to be as it always has been - for families and carers in Lambeth to feel recognised, valued and included as equal partners in the support and care for the person they care for. Equally we want families and carers to have full, enjoyable and confident lives in their own right alongside their caring role.

Being a carer can impact social, financial, mental, and physical wellbeing. Our vision is to recognise and support carers from the earliest opportunity, and to help them to live well whilst they provide care. We want to do this by committing to our seven priorities outlined in this strategy, to empower carers to access help and services so that being in a caring role doesn't lead to financial hardship, social isolation, or poorer health.

1.2 Our values

Through collaboration with carers and the people who support them, we have identified four values which will guide our work.

Value 1: Collaborative

Collaboration is at the heart of this strategy's delivery. We will nurture the relationships built with carers and stakeholders from health, social care and the voluntary sector to deliver the priorities of the strategy. We will work together to promote collaboration and coproduction borough-wide through the Carers Collaborative Strategy Group.

Value 2: Carers first

Carers' voices will be at the centre of our work. We will identify and build in regular, continuous opportunities to consult, engage and coproduce with carers. Lambeth partners will respect and recognise carers' experiences and respond in a holistic and personalised way.

Value 3: Inclusive and equitable

Tackling inequality is a priority for Lambeth. We know that carers are more likely to experience poor health outcomes, financial hardship and face barriers accessing support, with carers from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds at even greater risk. Partners will collaborate to address the inequalities carers face, and work to respond to the specific, diverse needs of all carers in the borough.

Value 4: Striving for progress

We will proactively work towards improving carers' lives in Lambeth. We will do this by ensuring progress is regularly reviewed, monitored and measured and that channels are established for continuous learning and improvement. Through the Carers Collaborative Strategy Group, we will ensure partners actively contribute towards strategy delivery and that we hold one another to account.

1.3 Who is a carer?

A Carer is someone who provides vital care and / or support to a family member, friend or someone in their community, free of charge. The care needs could be because of disability, impairment, ill health, frailty, or substance misuse. Carers can be any age and come from any background. Many carers manage their caring responsibilities around their paid employment or education. Without carers, the challenge and pressure on health and social care would be even greater than it is.

Not all carers are the same and experiences of caring can vary significantly. There are people who are happy to be defined as a carer, those who would not consider themselves a carer and people who do not want to be recognised as a carer. Carer experiences are dynamic and variable throughout the day, week, month and beyond.

This strategy considers all carers over the age of five.

Young Carer

A young carer is someone between the ages of 5 and 18 who provides care to someone who would otherwise not be able to manage without their help. Often young carers care for parents and other relatives.

Young Adult Carer

A young adult carer is someone between the ages of 16 and 25 who provides care to someone who would otherwise not be able to manage without their help.

Adult Carer

An adult carer is anyone over the age of 18 who looks someone who would otherwise not be able to manage without their help.

Parent Carer

Parent carers provide support to their children, including grown up children who could not manage without their help. The child or adult can be ill, disabled, have a mental health condition or issues with substance misuse.

Spousal Carer

A spousal carer is someone who cares for their spouse or long-time partner with tasks they wouldn't be able to manage without their help.

Former Carers

A former carer is someone who used to be a carer, but no longer provides care in the same way due to a number of factors such as the death of the person they cared for, inability to care due to own health or the person no longer wanting or needing care.

2. Carers in Lambeth

The most recent Census data tells us Lambeth is home to over 18,000 unpaid carers aged over 5, equating to 6% of our population. However, it is expected the real number is much higher. With Carers UK estimating the real figure around 46% higher than Census data suggests.

Census 2021 data for Lambeth reflects some key information about unpaid carers in Lambeth, such as:

- Of those providing care, 39% provide less than 9 hours per week, 23% provide over 50 hours a week, with an average of 12% providing either 10–19, 20–34 or 35–49 hours.
- The proportion of carers who are Black is 7% higher than the proportion of Black individuals in the borough. Asian groups are also overrepresented by 2%, whilst White groups are underrepresented by 10%.
- The largest proportion of carers are aged 50–64 (33.3%), followed by 35–49 at 27.7% and 25–34 at 16.8%.
- Carers are more likely than non-carers to have a long-term health condition.

It's important that we recognise demographic data when considering how we support carers, to make sure we are providing appropriate support for everyone.



3. Local Context

Our 2017 framework, “Working together with Families and Carers - A Framework for Action” set out plans to bring together carers with both statutory and non-statutory agencies to collaborate and support carers in our borough.

It led to the formation of the Carers Collaborative Strategy Group (CCSG), which consists of representatives from the health, social care and voluntary sector working with carers in Lambeth.

Now six years on, we are building on the success of the 2017 framework and refreshing our strategy to better address the issues that carers are facing in our borough today. Co-production with key partners has been instrumental in identifying the needs and considerations of unpaid carers in the Lambeth.

The new strategy has been developed in partnership with Carers Hub Lambeth and the CCSG and has been informed by close collaboration and consultation with unpaid

carers, the people who support them, health and care agencies, the local voluntary sector and the wider community.

Our borough plan, Lambeth 2030, is an ambitious and positive drive towards improving the lives of Lambeth’s residents. Carers are a part of that, and this strategy has been put together with carers, upholding our commitments in the borough plan to working together to transform the borough, listening to our communities and understanding their experiences.

Support for unpaid carers is a key part of realising our ambitions to become a borough of equity and justice; we can’t do this without ensuring carers are not disadvantaged by their caring role, and can have the same access to healthcare, education, and housing as anyone else. This strategy outlines our aims to provide cohesive support to unpaid carers to achieve this.

Alongside this, our priorities are aligned with Our Health, Our Lambeth, Lambeth





Together health and care plan 2023–28 and we will work within the Living Well Network Alliance and Children and Young People’s Alliance Programme to realise our ambitions to develop, refresh and embed engagement with those we support and their carers. This includes work to implement changes as part of the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) programme to improve the access, experience and outcomes of the people we support from our Black, LGBTQ+ and other minority communities through regular engagement.

Recognising many young, adult and parent carers are supporting individuals with Autism and Learning Disabilities, our

strategy is closely aligned with the Lambeth All Age Autism Strategy 2023–2026. We will seek opportunities to co-deliver on the priorities identified by carers throughout the implementation of each strategy.

This strategy for carers also connects with our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2028, which sets out Lambeth’s priorities to improve health and wellbeing in the borough. In doing so, it builds on collaboration between Lambeth Council, the NHS, the voluntary, community and faith sectors, and local people.

4. National context

Research by Carers UK highlights that the Covid-19 pandemic brought about a 29% increase in the number of carers in the UK. This strategy gives partners an opportunity during a difficult context, of cost-of-living crisis and systemic inequity, to refresh our commitments in supporting people providing care in Lambeth, underpinning this with strategic priorities that will help us to improve the lives of as many carers as possible.

The strategy has also been designed to contribute towards frameworks addressing carers' rights under government legislation. The Care Act 2014 put several additional rights in place for carers, including a focus on promoting wellbeing, putting duty on local councils to prevent, reducing and delaying support needs, conducting carers' assessments based on needs, meeting carers' eligible needs, and for the council to provide quality information and advice to carers.

This works in tandem with the Children and Families Act 2014 which gives young carers and young adult carers in England a right to a carer's assessment or transitions assessment and the right to have their needs met, aiming to reduce the burden on young carers. It also looks to improve the rights of parent carers, setting out the duty of a local authority to assess carers of disabled children under 18 if they have apparent needs, or request an assessment.

The NHS Long Term Plan also recognises the impacts of a caring role on individuals health and identifies areas that can be improved to support carers, such as carer-friendly GP practices and mental health support and prevention work for young carers.

This strategy aims to work in line with this government legislation and alongside plans set out by Government, NHS and our borough to deliver for unpaid carers in Lambeth.



5. Priorities

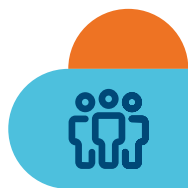
Through close collaboration with unpaid carers and other partners, we have developed seven priorities to deliver our shared vision for how we will support carers in Lambeth. These priorities build upon what has been achieved during the term of the 2017 framework and sets out a refreshed direction, informed through our consultation.



1. Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of carers



2. Integrated carers pathway and support offer



3. Equipped workforce



4. Visibility, recognition, identification and awareness of Carers



5. Empowering Carers



6. Carer equity



7. Helping to prevent carers from financial hardship

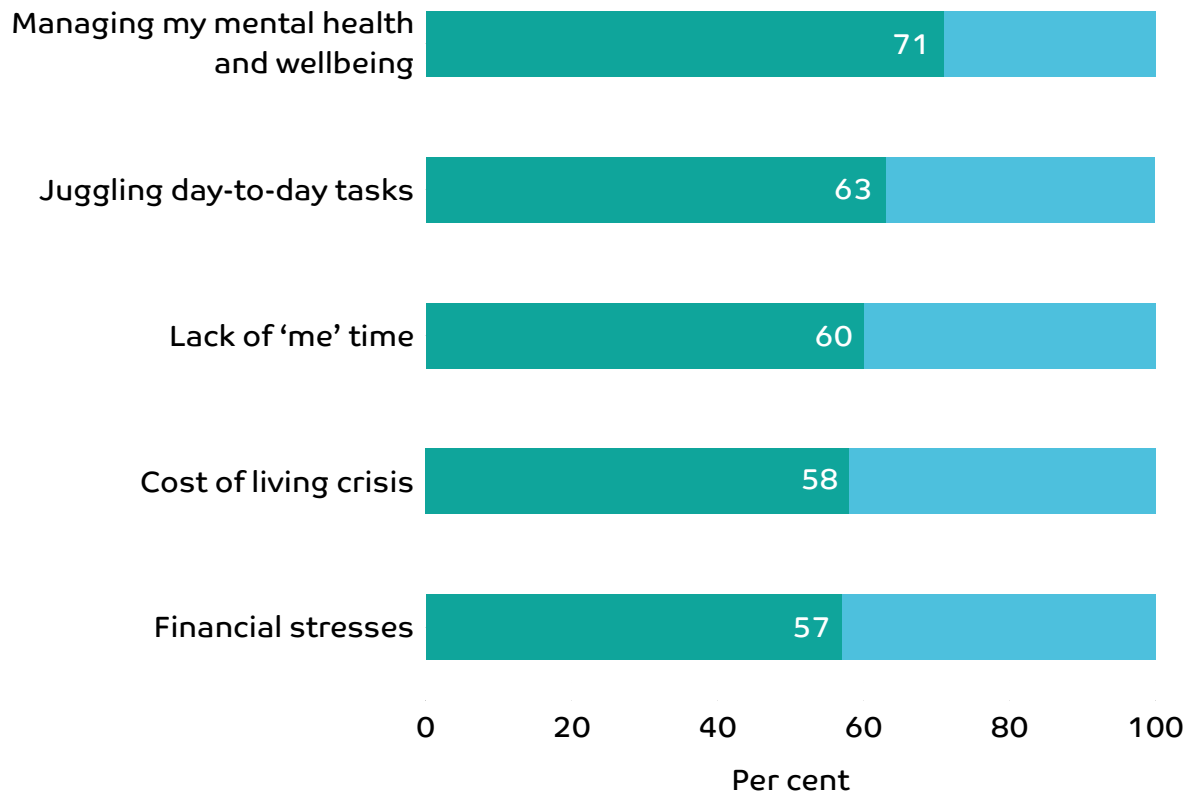
5.1 Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of carers

Carers told us that their caring role can have a negative impact on their overall wellbeing, especially when they aren't able to access a break from their caring role (respite).

The pressures of being a carer can affect individuals' wellbeing in several ways. Many people in a caring role may not have the time or capacity to look after their own mental and physical health due to their focus on providing for the person they are looking after. Additionally, a lack of time and space for oneself can lead to loneliness and isolation. Many young people who have caring responsibilities notice a long-term negative impact on their physical and mental health and well-being.

National research by the Carers Trust and the University of Nottingham found that almost a third of young people surveyed (29%) reported that their own physical health was 'just OK', whilst 38% reported having a mental health problem.

What are the main issues or challenges coming up for you as a carer?



Source: Lambeth Adults Carers Strategy Survey.
Respondents were able to select multiple answers.

Caring responsibilities for young carers can also negatively impact their experience in education. Action for Children have found that over a quarter of young carers aged 11–15 regularly miss school, leaving a lasting effect on their life chances.

We know carers in Lambeth are more likely than non-carers to have reduced physical mobility. Over half of Lambeth’s Primary Care Networks (PCNs) also reported a disproportionate number of carers having felt isolated from others in the past 12 months. This demonstrates the need to address both physical and mental needs of carers when providing support.

For adult carers and young carers (under the age of 16) and young adult carers (aged 16–21), specific support is offered by local partner Carers’ Hub Lambeth. As part of Lambeth’s emotional and wellbeing services, the Carers’ Hub has been commissioned to provide short breaks for all young carers and young adult carers. Short breaks offer children and young people opportunities to engage in positive

experiences and activities that help their personal and social development, such as afterschool clubs, weekend, or holiday activities.

To support carers to stay well while they are caring, it’s important that partners are working together to facilitate access to resources and facilities which reduce the obstacles for improving the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of carers. We will do this by working in partnership across the Lambeth Together partnership, working to the priorities set out across this strategy and our Lambeth Together health and care plan 2023–28.

What we will do:

- **Expand carers’ access to leisure activities.** We know that access to regular exercise is vital for overall health and wellbeing. We also know that carers’ access to such opportunities can be limited due to the financial pressures they face because of their caring role.

We will work with partners across the borough to develop opportunities to increase the accessibility of leisure opportunities, including launching reduced price memberships and pay-on-the-day entry to Active Lambeth sites for carers who have a Lambeth Carers Card.

- **Support carers to access health and wellbeing support.** Carers told us that they rarely prioritised their own health, and wanted clear ways to access support when they needed it. Partners will work together to raise the awareness and profile of carers across health and social care to achieve increased identification of carers and appropriate support at a local level. We will support practitioners to prioritise carer health and wellbeing during assessments and ensure support is identified and discussed.

Primary Care will work with partners and carers to develop ways to support carer health and wellbeing, including working with General Practices to improve the intervention and support offer for carers.

Carers will receive health and wellbeing interventions, including vaccinations, from the right workforce in their general practice Primary Care Network.

We will continue to commission training for carers to support carers to carry out their caring role safely and raise carer knowledge of their rights and entitlements.

- **Provide a carers assessment for all eligible carers.** Carers assessments are one of the first steps in increasing the sustainability of caring by providing holistic support to carers so they can continue their caring role with the correct resources in place. In 2022–2023, 1,165 carers assessments were completed by Adult Social Care (ASC) and 95%+ of identified carers were offered a carers assessment, over 50% of which were new carers. Lambeth ASC will ensure these standards are maintained and built upon to ensure we continue to recognise people in a caring role and identify their support needs through a statutory carer assessment. Childrens' Services will work with families and carers to

improve the assessment process, deliver a whole family approach, and ensure that all carers, including parent carers, young carers and siblings, are part of the standard assessment process.

- **Review our respite pathway.** Respite can be an essential part of the support offer for carers in Lambeth, to facilitate the time and space to step away from caring responsibilities and recuperate. We are committed to reviewing our respite pathway and speak to carers about their experience of accessing respite to ensure we are providing a clear, accessible route to respite for both planned and emergency breaks.
- **Promote mental health support available for carers.** The demands of caring can take a significant toll on carers' mental health. We will ensure that Lambeth's universal mental health offer and single point of access are well promoted to carers and the organisations who support them. We will work with partners delivering mental health support to ensure the profile of carers is regularly raised and opportunities for partnership



working to support carers are identified. We will also work with carers to identify gaps in provision and explore ways we can reduce the mental impact that caring can have. We will commit to improving our Children and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS), prioritising young carers for support, with a focus on raising awareness of young carer mental health in schools.

- **We will recognise the specific emotional health and wellbeing needs of young carers.** We will do this by recognising the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of young carers as a priority group in our recommissioning of services and support for children and young people, drawing on the experience and expertise of our young carers as well as that of the Lambeth Parent Carer Forum. We will ensure that Lambeth’s Local Transformation Plan proactively works with partners to identify and support carers in need of mental health support, including through a focus on raising awareness of the specific support needs of this group through our work with

schools, including through our Mental Health Support Teams (MHST). In line with the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Plan, we will design and deliver a multi-agency Single Point of Access (SPA) to mental health support, drawing together a range of services seeking to support children and young people and their families.

- **Provide respite support for parent carers by providing short breaks.** We are committed to providing short breaks to parent carers. To shape the future of our Short Breaks service, we will proactively engage with parent carers, ensuring that forums such as the Lambeth Parent Carer Forum, are represented throughout the process and influence the service delivered.

5.2 Integrated carers pathway and support offer

Coordinated, integrated support means that carers can easily identify the routes available to access support. It also means that services work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for carers and

ensure carers do not have to tell their story multiple times. It can be difficult, and takes time, for people to identify themselves as carers, so when they do, the most effective route to support is through a pathway that is accessible, clear and easy to use.

Having an integrated pathway and support offer across services will ensure that people in caring roles can access information about available services, financial assistance, respite options, and wellbeing support. Our aim is to reduce the burden on carers, allowing them to focus more on their responsibilities without the added stress of navigating complex systems.

What we will do:

- **Identify opportunities for integration and partnership working.** Under the direction of Lambeth Together, we are committed to sustained collaboration and closer integration between health and care services. Lambeth Together is a local partnership of the voluntary and community sector, the NHS, Lambeth council, and other partners, focused on improving health and wellbeing



and reducing inequalities for people in Lambeth through an integrated health and care system. Building upon the existing structures and systems in Lambeth, we will identify further opportunities for integrating services, working together across organisations and systems to respond to the needs of carers. One element of this will be examining the transitions pathway from Children's to Adult's services to improve outcomes for young people and parent carers.

- **Develop closer working links between social care and housing.** We will continue to develop the integration of Adult Social Care and Housing and proactively identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership working. With several key projects throughout 2023–2028, we will work together to ensure carers consulted and considered. Where appropriate, we will identify carers in our review of housing policy and procedures and take account of the specific challenges carers face.

- **Map carer service offer and support pathway across Lambeth.** It is vital to establish what support exists for carers across our statutory and non-statutory systems so that we can communicate this clearly with carers and those who support them. We will conduct an in-depth mapping exercise of carer services and the carer pathway across Lambeth to establish how this is working and how we can improve the experience of carers throughout the lifetime of the role.
- **Produce transparent and accessible information on support and care pathways.** There are many established services for carers in Lambeth, but both carers, practitioners and organisations told us that it wasn't always easy to identify what is on offer or navigate this pathway. We will ensure that simple, transparent information is available for carers and people who support them to demystify the systems in place and promote the services available in borough.

- **Involve and support carers during hospital discharge.** Aligning with the Health and Care Act 2022, we are committed to involving carers in discharge planning, identifying new carers and ensure carers have the information and resources they need following discharge. We are committed to piloting a Carers Hospital Discharge service at both King’s College Hospital and Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital, which will ensure carers are identified, provided 1–1 support, and equipped with information, advice and signposting following discharge.

5.3 Equipped workforce

Over 70% of carers surveyed highlighted ‘improved recognition of my needs across the council, NHS and community’ as a key priority for this strategy. We recognise that an equipped workforce is essential to being able to support carers. We are committed to supporting workers across statutory organisations, commissioned providers and the voluntary sector to have the knowledge,

skills and resources to confidently understand issues affecting carers offer person-centred, effective support.

When staff in schools, health and social care are equipped with the tools and knowledge to identify carers and recognise their needs, carers are more likely to feel better supported in their role and access targeted support. Carers are also more likely to be recognised early on in their caring role, contributing towards improved outcomes and a more sustainable caring journey.

What we will do:

- **Expand the Carers professionals’ Carers Collaborative Network to include professionals from across the system to share learning and embed good practice.** Building upon the success of our 2017 framework, we will use the established Professionals’ Network to bring together professionals from across systems to collaborate, share learning, insights and best practice. By coming together, we will be able to better respond to the needs of carers.

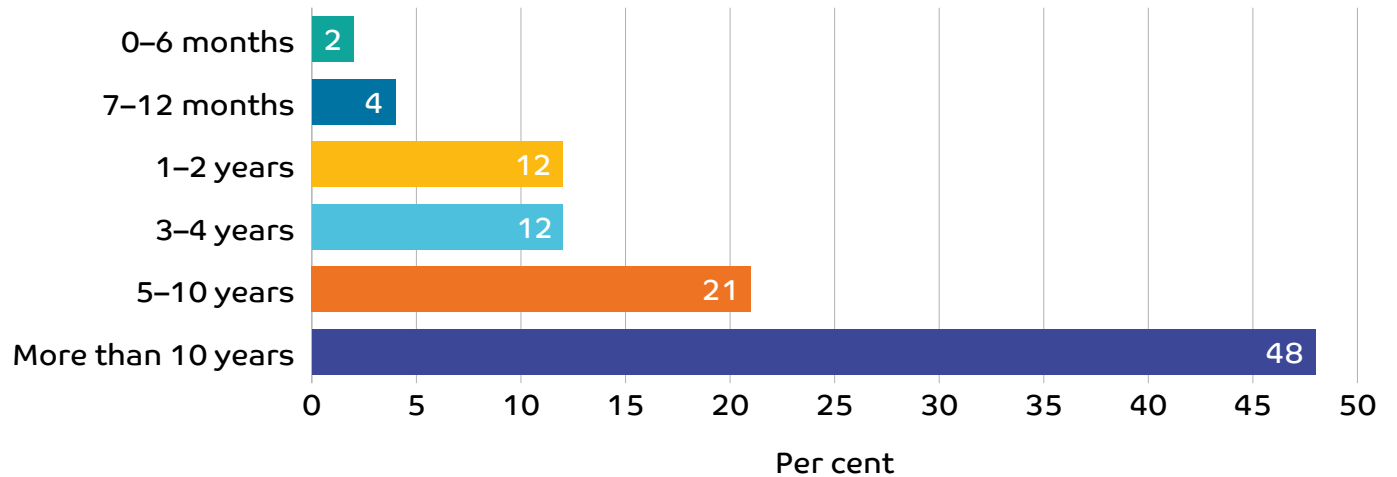
- **Expand the Carers Champion model.** The Carers Champion model has been pivotal in promoting awareness and support for adult carers. The initiative seeks to identify lead staff to promote the profile of carers, increase workforce knowledge and share best practice and learning. Following a successful roll-out across Adult Social Care, we are committed to continuing the success of the Carers Champion model by expanding the Carers Champion program to Children’s services practitioners and other partners. Providing resources, tools, and training to empower Carers Champions will increase their ability to effectively advocate for carers’ needs and promote the adoption of best practices across the borough.
- **Embed Carers awareness training for council staff.** A well-informed workforce is vital for providing quality care and support to carers. We will develop and implement a comprehensive Carers Awareness Training offer for targeted groups of staff members across the

council, and seek to share this training with other statutory partners. This training will seek to equip staff with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and address the unique challenges faced by carers.

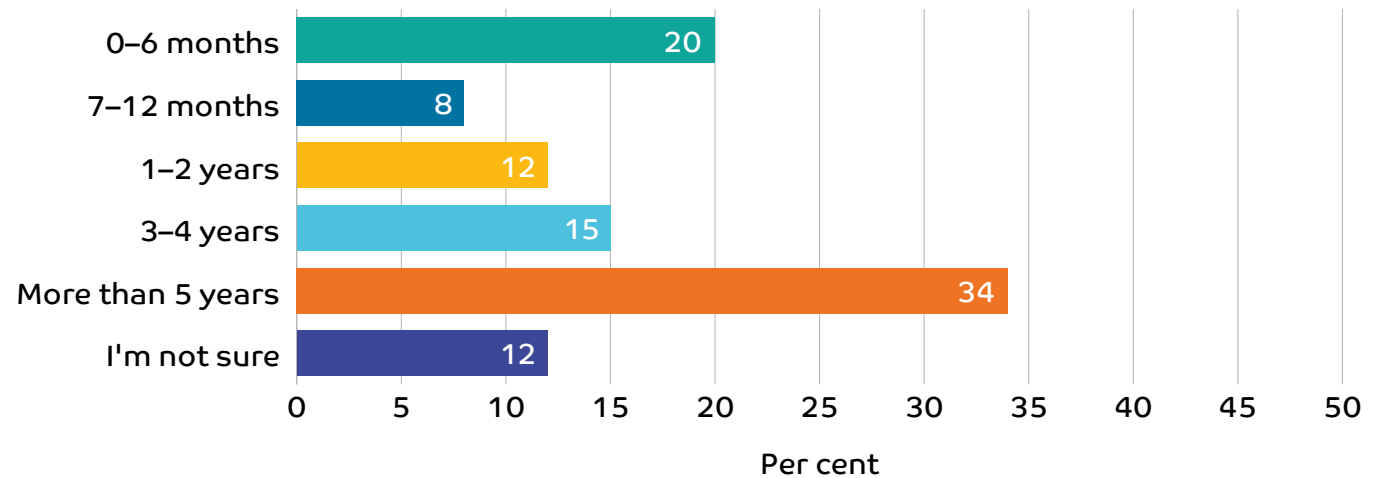
- **Promote a whole-family practice approach across the system.**

We recognise the impact of caring on families, and so we will promote a whole-family practice approach across Adults’ and Childrens’ services. This approach will be supported by a review of the transitions pathway to consider the needs of the entire family unit when assessing need and delivering support. Collaborating with community organisations, health and social care will ensure a coordinated approach to supporting the holistic well-being of carers and their families.

How long have you been a 'carer'?



How long had you been caring before you realised you were a 'carer'?



5.4 Visibility, recognition, identification and awareness of carers

One of the barriers to supporting carers is that they are often not identified. Identifying carers as early as possible means they can access the support they need to carry out their role. There can be several barriers to identifying carers, not least because many people do not recognise that they are carrying out a caring role. In their State of Caring Report 2022, Carers UK identified that 51% of carers take over a year to recognise their caring role, and 36% take over three years. In Lambeth, most carers surveyed told us they have been caring for 10 years or more, but it took 35% of carers over five years to realise they were a carer. It can be particularly challenging for carers who are looking after family members to realise they are providing care; this is especially true for parents caring for their own children and for carers looking after their spouse or partner. It is for these reasons we need to consider ways to recognise and identify carers; to ensure they receive the support they need.

The Children and Families Act (2014) requires local authorities to take reasonable steps to identify young carers in their area. Lambeth Council commissioned Carers' Hub to undertake the Young Carers Assessments in the borough. Carers' Hub has a dedicated young carers referral and assessment service, which identifies and supports young carers in the borough. Once identified, the service provides 1:1 targeted support around emotional wellbeing, finances, education, and other practical activities drawing on appropriate expertise and utilising evidence-based methods. There are over 900 registered young carers in the borough, but we know that there are likely many more who might benefit from support.

Due to the challenges in recognising the number of carers, the visibility of carers and their wellbeing can suffer. Our goal is to improve the ability to identify people in a caring role, raise the profile of carers so that carers are more likely to identify themselves, and recognise the contribution made by carers in borough.

What we will do:

- **Develop opportunities to recognise and reward Carers for their contribution.** Carers make a significant contribution to our community, and it is important that we find ways to recognise this contribution. Building upon the success of the Lambeth Carers Card, we will actively seek out opportunities to increase the number of discounts and offers provided to carers by engaging with local businesses and organisations. We will also develop opportunities to recognise carers for their contribution while raising the carer profile, including a Lambeth Carers Awards programme, recognising unpaid carers in the same way as we do other key partners within Lambeth's care sector workforce.
- **Review systems to ensure proactive identification of carers across systems and at grass roots level.** Proactive identification of carers is key, and it's important that partners are supported to identify carers across the system. Tying in with our integrated pathway



and equipped workforce, we will work together via the Carers Collaborative Network to equip partners with the tools they need to identify carers and link them in with information and support. We will establish a distinct workstream aimed at ensuring identification of carers is being achieved across the system, and we will raise awareness of carers via our established groups across the Lambeth Together partnership, including raising awareness of the support available, so that all partners, including those at grass-roots level feel empowered to identify carers.

Recognising that 7 in 10 carers start their caring journey in the NHS, we are committed to working towards the greater identification of carers within primary care and hospital settings. Practices will be provided with communication support, including a carers declaration to share, to let the wider patient and carer community know what we are doing to identify and

support carers. Key communications will be regularly distributed to carers, including resource packs containing key information about local community, preventive, and other local support services; the declaration can be included in these packs as a visual representation of a practice's offer of support to its carers.

- **Promote carers' needs and rights across systems and departments.** The Care Act 2014 provided a framework for recognising carers and their rights. We will continue to work to ensure that carers are supported, and their rights recognised. Building upon this, we will also seek to promote carers' needs and rights more broadly, and in doing so aim to raise the profile of carers so that departments across the local authority and the community recognise their role is supporting carers. By doing so, we aim to develop a greater understanding and recognition of carers' issues across systems and departments.

- **Recognition and awareness raising of specific needs across all Carer groups and at different stages of the caring journey.** No caring experience is the same and caring can be impacted by a number of factors, such as the needs of the person they are caring for, stage of life of the carer and the cared for person, and their socio-economic circumstances. We will work to ensure the varied experiences of carers are recognised, and that carers can access the right support at the right time throughout their caring journey. Aligning with the commitments set out in the Lambeth All Age Autism Strategy, we will collaborate to organise dedicated seminars and workshops for GPs to understand the unique needs of autistic individuals and their families.
- **Address the needs of older carers.** A significant proportion of carers in Lambeth are over the age of 50, although the true scale is thought to be much higher. This group is often hidden, with many spousal and familial carers not recognising themselves as a carer entitled to support. Older carers often provide many hours of care and support

while their own health suffers. This can lead to a significant impact on their physical and mental health, as well as their ability to manage financially. With the older population of Lambeth increasing, it is important to ensure our borough is a place that meets the needs of all of us as we age. Lambeth is committed to developing a local approach to becoming an age friendly borough, building on World Health Organisation’s (WHO) framework – creating social and built environments that promote healthy and active later lives for all residents, including carers.

5.5 Empowering carers

72% of carers surveyed told us that making sure carers know about their rights, what they are entitled to and the support available would make a difference to them. During our consultation, many carers told us they felt disempowered but didn’t know how to access support, or that they didn’t feel support would make enough of a difference to them. We will seek to address this by exploring ways to empower carers with the tools they need to manage their caring

role, and ensure carers are respected and involved as equal partners where there are decisions which affect them.

What we will do:

- **Create accessible and regular opportunities for Carers to share feedback and experience.** We will work to develop regular opportunities to engage with carers to seek feedback, problem solve and make decisions. We will regularly review these opportunities to ensure that they are accessible and personalised, and make changes when needed. Most importantly, we will act upon feedback where possible and be accountable. We are committed to continuing our established engagement opportunities, such as the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) service user and carer advisory group and will continue to include carers on our directorate committees. We will ensure carers are paid for their time spent improving and advising SLaM services through our involvement register. Our local practices and primary care networks will identify opportunities

to share how we are responding to the needs of carers with its patient participation group.

- **Involve carers in decision-making.** Carers can be impacted by decisions made across systems such as health, care and housing. We will raise the profile of carers across systems, advocate for their involvement in decision making and seek to empower carers to share their experience. We are committed to engaging and coproducing with carers for all relevant commissioning decisions, and will plan this into our decision making processes.
- **Champion peer support.** Carers are experts by experience, and peer support provides an important opportunity for carers to connect, share experiences, information and insights with others. It can also reduce feelings of isolation by building genuine relationships and support systems. There are several types of peer support, such as organic friendships, structured networks and

sessions facilitated by organisations. In Lambeth, we have an established peer support offer, with groups in place to support carers supporting people with Dementia, mental health conditions, learning disabilities and physical disabilities. In collaboration with Carers Hub Lambeth, we are also piloting a peer support group for carers supporting people with substance misuse issues. We are committed to continuing to commission peer support and exploring opportunities to expand and maximise this support by championing peer-led groups alongside facilitated sessions.

- **Raise carer awareness of eligibilities and rights.** Equipping carers with information about their entitlements and rights is key to empowerment. We are committed to the ongoing funding of carer advice, support and training. We will ensure transparent information is available on council websites, and that carers are signposted to information outlining their eligibilities, rights and the support available.



5.6 Carer equity

Lambeth is a hugely diverse borough, with the largest LGBTQ+ community in London, a large Caribbean and African community and growing Spanish, Portuguese and South American communities. As outlined in Lambeth 2030, Our Future, Our Lambeth, equity is the golden thread that ties together all that we do in Lambeth. We know carers experience health, financial and social inequalities at a higher rate than non-carers and that these inequalities are deepened where existing structural inequality exists. We are committed to becoming a fair and equitable borough, which seeks and delivers justice through all that we do - and this applies to our vision for carers.

Borough-level data shows Black Caribbean and Black African communities are more likely to be in a caring role, with this being especially true for Black Caribbean individuals. We know that certain cultures are less likely to identify as a carer, and that barriers to support can be faced by several different groups, such as those from the LGBTQ+ community or those who experience language barriers. Furthermore,

women are slightly more likely to become carers than men, and that this can be a contributory factor in experiencing financial, social and health inequality. It's vital that our commitments to supporting carers recognise these issues alongside the intersectional issues that specifically impact them.

What we will do:

- **Raise awareness, promote training opportunities and share best practice around equality, inclusion and diversity.** We will develop training opportunities around supporting the diverse needs of carers across the range of protected characteristics. We will use our established CCSG and Professionals Network to share work and best practice around anti-racism, culturally appropriate support and LGBTQ+ support for carers. We will expand our Carers Champion model to include LGBTQ+ and Black and Multi-Ethnic champions.
- **Address culturally appropriate support.** We will review our existing service offer and conduct asset mapping to examine potential gaps in provision and address these through our commissioning

processes. We will actively identify and engage with a diverse range of carers to ensure representation in service development and decision making. We will work collectively across the Living Well Network Alliance to improve experiences and recovery outcomes for black service users and carers through access to the right culturally appropriate care and support that meets people's needs.

- **Explore barriers to access.** We will explore and identify potential barriers to accessing support, such as cultural and language barriers, and seek to address these. We will identify disconnected groups and seek to raise awareness of caring and the local support offer.

Linked with the Empowering Carers priority, we will proactively work to connect with carers whose voices may be heard less often. We will do this by collaborating with a diverse range of carers, the organisations who support and advocate for them, and develop opportunities to engage, feedback and inform decision making.

5.7 Helping to prevent carers from financial hardship.

Caring can take a significant toll on finances for several reasons; caring can limit or remove access to employment, prevent the ability to save for the future, incur additional costs in the way of travel, equipment, utilities and, for those who are eligible, Carers Allowance is one of the lowest benefits of its kind at £76.75 per week, and can only be accessed by carers earning £139 or less a week.

Carers from all groups told us that the financial impact of caring posed a significant challenge, causing stress, worry and ill-health. Carers also raised challenges including the impact of caring on their careers, the ability to work full time, a lack of flexibility from employers and a lack of carer-friendly workplaces. Carers shared instances of not being able to afford food, and the exhausting nature of having to always budget carefully.

Recognising the current economic context, it's more important than ever for Lambeth to support carers to mitigate the negative financial impacts of caring.

What we will do:

- **Increase professional awareness of the financial implications of caring role and hidden poverty.** We will use our established Carers Champion model and Professionals Network to raise awareness of the financial challenges facing carers, collaborate with carers groups to share learning and best practice and ensure practitioners are trained to effectively support carers to mitigate the financial impact of caring.
- **Maximise carer finances.** In collaboration with Every Pound Counts and our commissioned Carers Advice service, partners will support carers to maximise their incomes to prevent financial hardship. Additionally, we are committed to ensuring Lambeth seeks only the minimal possible financial charges towards care costs, to support people in receipt of care, and minimise potential impact on carers.
- **Identify and support carers as a group at higher risk of economic hardship.** In 2023, Lambeth announced a £10m package of support for the most

vulnerable groups in the borough, of which carers were identified as one. We will continue to work together to highlight the impact of the increased cost of living on carers and provide ongoing support and provide ongoing support to mitigate this impact, including information and advice, benefits maximisation support and responding to urgent need.

- **Supporting parent carers with the financial impact of caring.** We will continue to invest in support for parent carers and are committed to supporting carers with additional costs of caring, such as transport costs. In consultation with parents and parents, we will also seek to improve access to available benefits, financial support and access to Ofsted registered childcare for children with SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities).
- **Expanded discount programme via Lambeth Carers Card.** We will actively seek out opportunities to increase the number of discounts and offers provided to carers by engaging with local businesses and organisations, including

access to leisure and food. We will develop a Young Carers Card to equally recognise and reward young carers.

- **Develop a Lambeth carers policy for Lambeth staff.** As a leading employer in Lambeth, the council values and celebrates our highly diverse workforce and community and recognises that equality and inclusion are key success factors of our organisation. We will lead the way in becoming an employer of choice for carers in Lambeth by developing a corporate carers policy. By doing so, we seek to raise the profile of carers, empower managers to support staff in a caring role, highlight

entitlements for caring staff to support staff to sustainably provide care for as long as they wish to do so. Additionally, we will engage local business to raise awareness of carers to encourage organisations to explore ways they can support working carers within their organisations.



6. How will we know how we're doing?

The priorities within this strategy, borne out of close collaboration with stakeholders, outline our plan for the next five years. We have developed a draft action plan utilising feedback received during the consultation period, pulling together the detailed aspirations shared by carers and other key stakeholders.

Utilising the Carers Collaborative Strategy group, we will co-produce the final action plan with carers alongside representatives from statutory services and the voluntary and community sector. We will agree together what success looks like, and how we will measure success. Progress will be monitored quarterly via the group and updates will be provided to Lambeth Together Care Partnership Board and other partners.

6.1 Draft action plan

The below action plan will be finalised with input from stakeholders in the Carers Collaborative Strategy Group. The below actions will be developed into workstreams, action owners identified and timescales specified where relevant.

Priority 1



Mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of carers

What's being delivered?

When

Expand carers' access to leisure activities	Live
Support carers to access health and wellbeing support	Ongoing
Provide a carers assessment for all eligible carers	Ongoing
Review our respite pathway	Spring 2024
Promote mental health support available for carers	Ongoing
Recognise the specific emotional health and wellbeing needs of young carers.	Ongoing

Priority 2



Integrated carers pathway and support offer

What's being delivered?

When

Identify opportunities for integration and partnership working	Ongoing
Develop closer working links between social care and housing	Ongoing
Map carer service offer and support pathway across Lambeth	Spring 2024
Produce transparent, accessible information on pathways to support	Summer 2024
Involve and support carers during hospital discharge	Spring 2024

Priority 3



Equipped workforce

What's being delivered?

When

Expand the carers professional network to include professionals from across the system to share learning and embed good practice	Spring 2024
Expand the Carers Champion model	Ongoing
Promote a whole-family practice approach	Ongoing
Embed Carers awareness training and support for staff	Spring 2024

Priority 4



Visibility, recognition, identification and awareness of Carers

What's being delivered?

When

Develop opportunities to recognise and reward Carers

Ongoing

Review systems to ensure proactive identification of carers across systems and at grass roots level

Ongoing

Promote Carers needs and rights across systems and departments

Ongoing

Recognise and raise awareness of different needs at all stages of caring journey

Ongoing

Address the needs of older carers

Ongoing

Priority 5



Empowering Carers

What's being delivered?

When

Create accessible and regular opportunities for Carers to share feedback and experience

Ongoing

Involve carers in decision-making

Ongoing

Champion peer support

Ongoing

Raise Carer awareness of eligibilities and rights

Ongoing

Priority 6



Carer equity

What's being delivered?

When

Raise awareness, promote training opportunities and share best practice around equality, inclusion and diversity.

Ongoing

Address culturally appropriate support

Ongoing

Explore barriers to access

Ongoing

Priority 7



Helping to prevent carers from financial hardship

What's being delivered?

When

Increase professional awareness of the financial implications of caring role

Ongoing

Identify and support carers as a group at higher risk of economic hardship

Ongoing

Maximise carer finances

Ongoing

Expand the Lambeth Carers Card discount program

Ongoing

Develop a Lambeth carers policy for Lambeth staff

Autumn 2024

Continue to invest in support for parent carers, including support to access all available benefits and financial support.

Ongoing

Improving access to Ofsted registered childcare for children with SEND

Ongoing



Working in partnership for a healthier borough

lambethtogether.net

