

# CARERS PLAN

## Introduction

Carers hold families and communities together, enable those they care for to get the most out of life, and make an enormous contribution to community life in Bromley.

Our vision for unpaid carers in Bromley is that:

- carers will be respected as expert care givers and will be supported to have access to the advice and services they need to support them in their caring role
- carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well
- carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role
- children and young people will be protected from inappropriate caring and have the support they need to learn, develop and thrive, to enjoy positive childhoods

## Who is a Carer?

A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older.

Carers hold families and communities together, enable those they care for to get the most out of life, and make an enormous contribution to community life in Bromley.

Being a carer is not always easy – juggling care with work and family life, sometimes struggling financially and sometimes having poor health themselves.

Most carers in Bromley are aged over 50 and will most often be caring for an ageing and frail parent or partner.

Young carers and young adult carers will be young people aged up to 25 and will most often have a caring role for another member of their family which could be a brother, sister or parent.

## The impact of caring on carers

Looking after someone is a rewarding experience for many people. But it can also be at times tough and lonely. Being a carer can impact on people's lives in several ways:

- Caring comes with additional costs that can have an impact on carers' finances and some carers will suffer financial hardship.
- Many carers are unemployed
- Caring can have an impact on a carer's health and wellbeing
- Carers can find it difficult to juggle work, learning and leisure time with their role as a carer
- Young carers can be at risk of missing school and friendships and may have poor childhood outcomes

## **Help for carers**

The Council, Bromley NHS services and local voluntary and community organisations want to help all carers who live in Bromley, or who care for a Bromley resident, by giving expert information and guidance, supporting carers' rights and supporting carers in finding ways to manage at home, at work, or wherever they are.

This Carers Plan sets out the local help and support offer made to carers in Bromley and describes how over the next two years we are developing and improving our support to carers.

Our priorities to better help and support carers are:

- Priority 1: Identifying, recognising and involving carers
- Priority 2: Making clear routes to information, advice, guidance and support
- Priority 3: Supporting carers' physical health and wellbeing
- Priority 4: Supporting carers to have a life alongside their caring role
- Priority 5: Supporting young carers and young adult carers
- Priority 6: Support the development of a Carers' Charter so that more local agencies recognise and support carers

## **About Carers in Bromley**

The 2021 Census estimates that there are c.25,000 unpaid carers in Bromley. This is a drop in numbers from previous censuses with the most likely explanation for the change being that the census took place at the time of the Covid pandemic which caused a disruption to many previously established unpaid carer arrangements. It is also the case that many people who are carers do not recognise themselves in this role.

A useful source of information on carers is the national Survey of Adult Carers in England undertaken by NHS England. This survey looks at those adult carers who are registered with Local Authority adult social services. The results from the 2022 survey in Bromley tells us:

- 79% of carers are aged 55 and above - 69% are female and 31% male
- 49% have caring responsibilities for more than one person
- 16% have parental responsibility for someone aged 18 and below.
- 24% stated they had been caring for 20 years or more
- 19% of carers spend more than 100 hours per week in their caring role.
- Carers in Bromley are more likely to carry out practical help rather than personal care.
- 36% of carers were extremely or very happy with the support and services from social services for either the carer or the person cared for
- 71% of carers always or usually felt involved in discussions about support for the person they cared for
- 89% stated that their health had been affected by the caring responsibilities
- 9% stated their finances had been affected a lot.

In the early part of 2023 the Council undertook a series of consultation events with unpaid carers including surveys and public meetings. Over 100 Bromley carers shared their views on what was important to them and what this Carer's Plan needed to prioritise.

Those carers we spoke to were able to speak positively about many of the advice and support services available to them locally. Advice and support provided through Bromley Well and by Dementia Support Hubs, Friendship Cafes and the Young Carers App were singled out for praise. Carers recognised the support provided by Social Prescribers and social care staff.

These carers also advised on those supports that could be improved upon. These are some of the key messages from carers:

- Information, advice and guidance should be more consistent across the agencies that carers go to get their support
- GPs and other health workers are often seen as the first source of advice and could provide more information and advice and signpost carers to the best help from other agencies
- Care and health professionals could share more information with carers on the residents they are caring for
- Care and health workers undertaking assessment should learn more about the lived experience of being a carer
- Clearer information and advice is needed on what respite support is available
- Support to develop long-term and emergency plans would reduce anxiety about situations when carers may be unable to provide care.'

Young carers said:

- Help with education support should be more consistent across schools and college
- At secondary school teachers should know about their young carers' responsibilities and take this into account.

### **Access to Support for Carers**

The Council, health services and the voluntary sector in Bromley are committed to supporting carers. This includes connecting carers to local groups and activities within Bromley that support carers with:

- Advocacy
- Befriending
- Access to employment and training
- Access to welfare benefits and other financial support
- Volunteering opportunities
- Support in self-care
- Having breaks from caring

A key support service to carers in Bromley is the Bromley Well Carers Support Service that can provide a wide range of information, advice and support to all carers.

A range of services for carers can also be found on the Simply Connects website at [Simply Connect Bromley - connecting you to your local community services](#), including help and services that can directly meet the needs of the person being cared for. Further information may be found on the Council's website.

### **Social Care Support to Carers - Adult Services**

In certain circumstances additional support to carers is offered by the Council's social care services. To determine a person's eligibility for social care, the Council's Adults' Services Department uses a strengths-based approach that focuses on helping people to live as independently as possible within their community. This includes making the most of the support that a person may already have access to from family, friends and their community.

Supporting carers in this way allows them to be more in control of their own health and wellbeing, and helps them to develop their strengths and be more socially connected. This in turn can also help delay the development of further needs.

Additional support may be available to adult carers who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Care Act 2014, depending on the individual's strengths and needs. Information about how to access a carer's assessment and eligibility under the Care Act is also available on Council's website at [www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk).

## **Our priorities for Carers:**

### **Priority 1: Identifying, recognising and involving carers**

Voluntary and community organisations, GP practices, community nurses, social care workers and teachers are often the first point of contact for carers seeking help and advice. Of the estimated 25,000 unpaid carers in Bromley local GP practices are aware of c.9,000. A carers' register held by Bromley Well has details of c.4,000 carers.

Many residents will not see themselves as an unpaid carer. Instead they see themselves as a relative, friend or neighbour who is simply helping out. This means that many Bromley carers are not aware of the support that is available to them. We want to ensure that carers are supported to access information, advice, guidance and support as early as possible to make informed decisions. Where a carer needs extra help we want to ensure that they know how to access this support.

Carers play such a vital role in our local care and health services. We want to make sure that they have a say in the work of local care and health services and to be able to shape the development of their services and the care and support given to those they care for.

Our key aims for identifying, recognising and involving carers:

<b>Key aims</b>	<b>Actions</b>
We want all Bromley care and health agencies to have a clear and consistent offer of information, advice and support to carers	Led by Bromley Well we will develop a Carers Charter across local care and health partnership agencies. The Charter will set out the key principles and actions that agencies will commit to in supporting carers and to improve outcomes for carers
We want to better identify young carers	We will use the recent change made to the annual schools' census to better identify and record young carers
We want care and health workers to be able to consistently support residents with caring responsibilities, to identify themselves as carers so they can access the information, advice and support that is available.	We will work with key health, social care professionals and voluntary organisations to identify and develop suitable ways to identify and support carers
All care and health providers should signpost carers to appropriate information, advice and support.	Through the Carers Charter we will develop clear and consistent signposting for carers
When a personal assessment takes place, young carers in the household should be identified	Increased training, publicity and awareness of young carers with clear arrangements in place to ensure that young carers are identified and appropriate referrals are made
Better systems in place to ensure carers are offered appropriate advice proactively with a focus on early intervention and prevention	We will raise awareness of carers' rights, responsibilities and the ability to recognise and support carers and provide them with relevant information and advice.
We want carers with more than one caring role to be recognised and considered when planning support	Carers to be involved in planning individual care packages including families and young carer involvement.
We want to better understand the experience of carers, listen their views and involve them in developing care and health services and priorities	We will use the data captured through surveys and assessments to review and plan services. We will establish arrangements to involve carers to participate in the review and development of local care and health services We will co-opt a carer to sit on the Council's Adults Care and Health Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee
We want carers to have a better understanding of their rights and entitlements	Through the Carers Charters all agencies will use a range of methods to help carers know their rights and entitlements

## **Priority 2: Clear routes to information, advice, guidance and support**

If carers are to access the right information, advice, guidance and support at the right time it is vital that care and health workers and other people who come into contact with a carers are able to give advice and or signpost carers to where they can get the support they need. Similarly we need to provide clear and simple routes for carers to access the information and other support that they may need.

### **Information, Advice and Guidance**

The main source of information and advice to carers in Bromley is through the Bromley Well Information Advice and Guidance Service and their Carers Support Service. Any

resident who is a Carer can access Bromley Well services at [Carers - Bromley Well](#) to help support them with their caring role. This offer covers those who are mutual carers, young carers, mental health carers and adult carers.

Residents can also access Information Advice and Guidance via the LBB website [Support for carers – London Borough of Bromley](#) which detail a wide range of services that Carers can access.

Residents can access information advice and guidance on the SELICB website including how to get support, services available and resident participation in shaping services. [You searched for CARERS - South East London ICS \(selondonics.org\)](#)

### **Advocacy for Carers**

Advocacy services help residents to express their views to care and health service providers and support them to understand their rights. Advocacy for Bromley provide a range of advocacy services for Bromley Residents [Care Act Advocacy – Advocacy for Bromley](#) including Care 2014 Act advocacy and independent advocacy support.

The NHS website also provides support for residents on how to access advocacy service- [Someone to speak up for you \(advocate\) - Social care and support guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

### **Extra Support to Carers - Eligibility, Carers Assessments and Carers' Plans**

#### Eligibility for Council Support

Adult carers may be eligible for additional support from the Local Authority where their needs are caused by providing necessary care for an adult and as a result their health is at risk and or they are unable to achieved specified outcomes, and as a result there is or is likely to be significant impact on the carer's wellbeing.

Access to additional support from the Council is through a carers assessment.

#### **Social Care Assessments to Adult Users of Social Care**

Where an adult, child or young person receives a local Authority social care assessment for their care and support needs the social worker undertaking this assessment will seek to identify any unpaid carers that contribute to their care and support. The support provided by any significant carer will be included in the assessment and will be included as part of any subsequent care plan.

Where a child or young person is identified as being a carer as part of an adult social care assessment, the child's needs will be taken into account as part of the Adult assessment and a referral will be made to Bromley Well to complete the independent carers assessment. Where there is a concern that as a result of the caring tasks may result in risk to the child or that child meeting the criteria for child in need a referral will be made to Children's Social Care Services to request their support and or assessment of that child or young person.

For both adult and child carers the support needs of the carer may be included as part of the Care Assessment and Plan for the cared for through a Joint Assessment, where both parties agree.

All carers are entitled to have a Carer's Assessment and will be asked if they would like to have this at the time that the person they care for is being assessed.

### **Carers Assessments**

All unpaid carers have an entitlement to a Carer's Assessment that can identify what information, advice and support they might need to sustain their caring role and their own health and wellbeing, and how they might get it. Carer's Assessments focus on the needs of the carer, and not the person they look after, including:

Depending on the carer's needs and personal finances the Council will arrange additional support for any carer either through commissioned services, Direct Payments or by referring on to other carer support services.

### **Carers' Self-assessments**

The simplest way for a resident to have a carers assessment is through carrying out a self-assessment. Anyone who cares for someone in Bromley can make a Carer's Self-assessment through our portal by accessing <https://adultsportal.bromley.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home>.

Completing the assessment should take no longer than 15 minutes. This will be the simplest route to an assessment for most carers.

Referrals received via the portal will be screened within one working day and directed to the relevant service who will be in touch to discuss your self-assessment with you.

Bromley Well can assist carers in completing their self-assessment should they need help in doing so.

### **Financial Assessments for Carers**

The majority of support to carers within the community is free. Some commissioned services provided by the council to adult carers will be subject to a means tested financial assessment.

### **Bromley Council Support to Eligible Carers**

Where, following a Carers Assessment or as part of a service user care assessment, the Council determines a carer needs additional support the carer will be given a Support Plan setting out what this support will be and a Personal Budget to meet these needs. The support that may be offered to directly support carers can include:

- Support on contingency planning if a carer is unable to provide support for a period of time
- Help on setting up a lasting power of attorney to help manage someone's finances
- Access to sitting services, day care or other respite support that will provide support to the cared for person to allow the carers to do attend to other things or to take a break
- Help towards accessing leisure activities such as attending the gym or a club
- Help to access employment

## Direct Payments to Buy Support and Help

Direct payments give carers greater choice and control over the support they receive and how it is provided.

A Direct Payment is when the money is paid directly to the carer, this can be into a separate bank account, a prepaid card or through a managed account. This means carers can access the funds themselves, and make arrangements for their own support.

All carers eligible for Council funded support will be offered a Direct Payment

Services users receiving Council funded care to help them live at home can have their support made to them through a Direct Payment too. A service user can ask that their carer uses these funds to purchase care and support on their behalf.

More information on Direct Payments is available from <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/directpayments>

### Our key aims for giving carers clear routes to information, advice, guidance and support:

Key aims	Actions
We want more residents with caring responsibilities to be aware of the information, advice and guidance available to them	In addition to existing communications to residents we will run regular campaigns targeted at carers and those who work with carers
We want to provide care assessments to more residents to ensure that where they have caring responsibilities they are able to access the support they need	We will publicise the Council's online portal to enable more residents to undertake a carer's self-assessment.
We want to support more carers to make contingency plans to help them manage for times when they are unable to provide support to the person they care for	We will provide advice, help and support to carers in drawing up their contingency plans
We want eligible carers to take greater control over their support by giving them a Direct Payment	All carers will be made aware of their entitlement to a Direct Payment at the point of agreeing any Care Plan or Carers Plan

### Priority 3: Supporting carers' physical health and wellbeing

Carers can often put the needs of the person they care for before their own. This is why carers can be prone to poor physical and mental health. We believe it is important that carers are supported to maintain their own physical health and emotional wellbeing, to enable them to continue in their caring role.

Some carers will also need support in developing their skills as a carer in areas such as moving and handling, giving medicine and first aid.

#### Support to carers from Bromley Well

Through Bromley Well we can provide a range of supports to carers including:

- Training courses and workshops to build resilience and enhance caring skills



- Practical tools and techniques to manage daily life as a mental health carer
- Help navigating the support services available to carers and the people they care for
- Support with medical and professional appointments
- Help writing letters and sorting out bills
- One to one emotional support
- Help to think about and plan for the future
- Help with technology such as CareLink, a personal alarm system which helps you remain safely in your own home
- Help with internet shopping
- Information workshops on topics like mental wellbeing, keeping healthy in winter, welfare benefits, scams
- Sessions on skills like budgeting, travelling safely and first aid
- Healthy eating cookery sessions

### **Our key aims for supporting carers' physical health and wellbeing**

<b>Key aims</b>	<b>Actions</b>
We want NHS health providers and primary care teams to register carers and where needed refer them to appropriate support.	Through the Carers Charter we will increase an awareness of carers across local health services and offer practical advice and support
We want more carers to register themselves as such with their GP so they can access additional support such a priority for vaccines	Through publicity and at any assessment processes carers will be encouraged to register as a carer with their GP
We want carers to have appropriate training, advice or support, to meet their needs to enable them to continue in their caring role	Through Bromley Well and other services we will give support to carers in their caring skills
Carers would like more flexibility from NHS health providers and primary care teams when they need to book an appointment.	Through the Carers' Charter we will develop the health offer to carers
We want to improve the online information and support available to carers to help their wellbeing	The South East London Integrated Care Board will develop a digital tool to help carers access information and support

## **Priority 4: Supporting carers to have a life alongside their caring role**

Access to leisure, employment and education are a key part of having a life alongside caring. These opportunities enable carers to enjoy good physical health and emotional wellbeing and prevent social isolation.

### Taking time off from being a carer - Respite care and taking short breaks

Respite care means taking a break from caring, while the person you care for is looked after by someone else. It gives a carer some time out to look after themselves and to do other things. Respite care can range from a volunteer to sit with the person being cared for a few hours, or a short stay in a care home so a carer can go on holiday.

Options will include:

- Friends and family helping out on an occasional or regular basis
- Day care activities - where the person being cared for can attend a day centre or other venue and be looked after for a day or on a regular basis
- Sitting service - where a volunteer or paid care worker will visit the cared for persons home to look after them
- A short-stay in a care home where the cared for person will spend one or more days and nights to allow a carer a longer break
- Home care – where a paid care worker visits the cared for persons home. It might be regular, e.g. one day a week to give a carer a day off or for a short period, such as a week, so a carer can take a holiday

Depending on the circumstances of a carer and or the person being cared for the Council can make arrangements to pay for and or arrange respite care.

### Education, training and employment

Bromley Adult Education College (BAEC) delivers adult and community learning on behalf of the London Borough of Bromley and offers a range of courses for carers, from gentle exercise to cookery, arts and crafts, computing, clothes making and well-being techniques. Contact them for details of forthcoming courses..

Price: courses are free for eligible learners- [Simply Connect Bromley - Adult Education Courses for Carers and Older People in Bromley](#)

### Access to welfare benefits,

There are a number of benefits that those who require care, or provide care can access. Attendance Allowance helps with extra costs if you have a disability severe enough that you need someone to help look after you. [Attendance Allowance: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is extra money to help you with everyday life if you've an illness, disability or mental health condition. You can get it on top of Employment and Support Allowance or other benefits. Your income, savings, and whether you're working or not don't affect your eligibility Bromley Well provide support to maximise AA and PIP entitlements if required.

### **Carers and Loneliness**

In the national 2021/22 Survey of Adult Carers in England 17% of Bromley carers stated they feel socially isolated which reflects the quantity of relationships an individual has.

The Bromley Tackling Loneliness Strategy 2022-2026 recognises that loneliness can affect all people at all ages and stages of their lives. It aims to develop a culture in Bromley where loneliness is recognised as a subjective feeling of lack or loss of companionship and is acted on without stigma or shame.

The Strategy aims to prevent or reduce loneliness for all residents and to bring together partners in the statutory, independent, and voluntary sectors to deliver on the priorities of the strategy. Communities play an active role in connecting people and building resilience by creating opportunities to bring people together, taking

active steps to include the most isolated and vulnerable members of the community, as well as those from different backgrounds.

Some of the key actions are: to make it easier to access information about local community groups, activities and support services through a central database; enable staff and volunteers across Bromley to understand loneliness and have the right information and advice to help individuals; maximise the power of digital tools; encourage grassroots opportunities to strengthen local social relationships and community ties and work with our partners in libraries, sports and leisure amongst others to enhance existing support.

### **Our key aims for supporting carers to have a life alongside their caring role**

<b>Key aims</b>	<b>Actions</b>
We want to help carers access the support available to residents through the Bromley Tackling Loneliness Strategy	One of the focuses of the Tackling Loneliness Strategy Action Plan for 2023/24 will be supporting carers of all ages to engage with their communities.
We want to give a wider choice of respite options for those who care for adults with a learning disability	The Council's Learning Disabilities and Short Breaks Strategy is increasing the range of options available to carers
We want to increase day care activity respite opportunities for those who care for older people	We will work with voluntary, community and faith organisations to increase the availability of day activities

## **Priority 5: Supporting young carers and young adult carers**

We want to do more for young carers to ensure that outcomes for these young people are the same as their peers.

The Current offer for young carers in Bromley is:

### **Children and Family hub, children's services**

Through the Council's Children and Family Hub we undertake Children and Families assessment for referrals for children and young people who are young carers. The children and family's assessment will then assess and consider the young carers needs. Based on the outcome of the assessment, we will consider whether we refer onto our Early Intervention Service, identifying them a child in need, or if we have any child protection concerns. Regardless of the outcome of the assessment our social workers will always refer onto Bromley Well if the child or young person is not yet known to them, to ensure they had the access to additional help.

### **0-25 service**

The Council's 0-25 Service works with and supports children, young people and their families where there is a child with a severe or profound disability. A role of this service is considering other young family members and assessing their caring role and the impact on their everyday life of having a family member with a disability.

We offer a care package which not only supports the child or young person with a disability and their parents in their caring role, but will assess how any other young family members can have quality time with their parents, a break that is about them and the opportunity to spend time with friends.

In some circumstances the young carer might have a caring role for their parents. We will assess if there are safeguarding issues, assessing their ability to be a child, and not taking on inappropriate roles, that have a significant impact on their childhood.

A Specialist Information Officer offers advice on clubs and activities that might be appropriate for young carers

### **The Bromley Well Young Carers Service**

The Bromley Well Young Carers service provides support for young carers in Bromley aged 4 and onwards.

Support for young carers, includes:

- A Young Carers App - designed by young carers to meet their needs. A safe, secure, online space dedicated to young carers in Bromley where young carers can engage and support with their peers, track their wellbeing, get helpful information and book events and activities
- Opportunities to meet with other young carers, have fun, discuss any worries and try out new activities and to have some time away from caring responsibilities
- Emotional support to discuss your caring role and any worries or questions you may have about your cared for, or your caring responsibilities
- Counselling support by professionals
- Workshops to help develop practical life skills e.g. first aid, budgeting, cookery
- Workshops to help you think about emotional wellbeing and developing strategies for managing emotions
- Leisure and social activities including outings and special events (such as theatre, bowling, sporting events)
- A quarterly Young Carers Forum to share ideas and discuss ways to improve and develop the services
- Support for transition / changes in your life e.g., moving to secondary school, changes in caring roles, preparing for adulthood
- Engagement with schools to set up their own Young Carers support groups and advocacy for young carers

Bromley Well also have access to Carers Trust grants which can support young carers independence.

## Our key aims for supporting young carers and young adult carers

Key aims	Actions
We want to have a better understanding of young carers and their needs	The Council will undertake a forensic look at the data we hold on young carers to develop targeted services and appropriate care and support pathways
We want staff in the Council's Children, Education and Families Service to have a greater awareness of young carers and their needs	Stronger joint working and communication arrangements will be made between the Council's Children, Education and Families Services and Bromley Well

## Priority 6: Developing a Carers' Charter

We want to make further improvement to the support given to carers beyond the support and actions outlines in this Plan. In doing so we also want to involve more care and health services and other agencies in developing a clear offer of support to Bromley carers. To achieve this we will support the creation of a Carers' Charter.

Led by Bromley Well local organisations are being asked to develop and sign up to a charter that:

- Provides a statement of principles and definition of unpaid carers/caring role
- Set out a commitment to carers and expectations of what services Carers can expect
- Offers a common approach to how carers are engaged, supported and consulted

### Our key aims for developing a Carers' Charter

Key aims	Actions
We local agencies to work together to develop a comprehensive support offer to Bromley carers	Bromley Well will work with agencies across Bromley to develop a Carers' Charter.
We want to ensure that arrangements for carers are regularly updated and communicated	We will review this strategy once the Carers' Charter has been launched