

CARERS TRUST

Hillingdon



RECOGNISED, SUPPORTED AND EMPOWERED

CARERS TRUST HILLINGDON
Strategy 2020-2025



**YOUNG CARERS
POND DIPPING AT
IVER ENVIRONMENT
CENTRE**

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PHOTOGRAPHS

We hope you enjoy the photographs in this document; they are all published with the kind permission of the carers pictured. We hope they showcase just some of the regular opportunities that carers can access when registered with the Hillingdon Carers Partnership.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A CARER?

A carer is unpaid and provides regular support to someone who wouldn't be able to manage their daily lives without that support. Care could be provided because they are ill, frail, disabled, living with a long-term condition, have a mental illness or because they abuse substances such as drugs and alcohol.

Carers are parents, siblings, sons, daughters, partners, spouses, friends and neighbours, and are from all social and cultural backgrounds. Providing support to someone else can have a significant impact on the life of the carer.

Children and young people can be carers and their caring role can necessitate them taking on personal care and a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age or development.

Most importantly many carers do not realise that they are carers.

FOREWORD

Over the past five years, we have anticipated and responded quickly and flexibly to the changing environment, most notably the changing trends in commissioning. For example, in anticipation of aggregated contracts, we started to build on our existing good relationships with other organisations that were providing carer support in Hillingdon in order to improve joint-working and get their agreement to work as part of a partnership. This preparation meant that, as a group of charities, we were poised and ready once the contracts were 'aggregated' i.e. combined into one larger contract. This has resulted in the formation of the Hillingdon Carers Partnership (HCP) and the development of significant new ways of working, which, we believe, greatly improves the way we support carers.

We will continue to try to anticipate how ever-changing local, regional and national political and social environments will affect our organisation and our aspirations. We will prepare as far as is possible for any perceived new 'threats', but also be ready to capitalise on potential new opportunities. Through our role in H4All we are already embedded in the changing face of health care and are using our seat on the local Integrated Care Partnership (Hillingdon Health and Care Partners) to highlight and progress the needs of carers. We will continue to fight for greater recognition of the role carers play and for better investment in their support.

Carers make an enormous contribution to our communities through the provision of essential care and support for relatives, friends and neighbours. Their effort in providing this care improves the quality of life of the people they care for and often goes unrecognised, even by carers themselves who may not see themselves as 'a carer'. Finding 'hidden' carers therefore continues to be a strategic priority.

For young carers our support will help them to have as normal a childhood and adolescence as possible and will minimise the impact of caring on their futures. We will give these young people the skills and strategies to better manage their home lives and allow them to be young and have fun in a supportive and social environment. As they approach young adulthood, we will continue to help them to make a smooth transition from school to whatever comes next. We will work with them to ensure that their aspirations remain high and their goals are realised, whether this is to attend university, get a job, find an apprenticeship or undertake further vocational training.

Finally, we could not produce this document without acknowledging the impact that the 2020 pandemic had – and continues to have – on the lives of carers. We know the situation affected everybody, but we have seen first-hand some of the devastating impacts that the lockdown had on unpaid carers in particular. As we publish this document, we are working hard to respond to carers' changing and emerging needs as the situation persists into 2021.

This strategy and our priorities have been informed by a 6-month consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff from across the HCP, trustees, the Carers Strategy group, partner organisations and, most importantly, our priorities have been set with carers – they are after all the experts on what is needed.

OUR VISION

“Carers Trust Hillingdon and Hillingdon Carers Partnership will be recognised as the gateway to a better life for all unpaid carers in Hillingdon.”

OUR MISSION STATEMENTS

1

We will strive to ensure that carers are: recognised and valued for the care and support that they provide; acknowledged as expert partners in care, and; respected as an integral and critical part of the health and social care workforce in Hillingdon.

2

Our support will be tailored to meet individual needs, enabling carers of whatever age or background to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring. We will create partnerships that ensure they can do that safe in the knowledge that the person they care for is well supported and looked after.

3

We will grow our range of services and extend their ‘reach’ geographically within the borough. In addition we will improve and strengthen our partnership working and increase our range of collaborative projects to help to make carers everybody’s business.



ENJOYING SOME
DOWNTIME AT THE
ANNUAL YOUNG
CARERS FESTIVAL,
SOUTHAMPTON

1 INTRODUCING CARERS TRUST HILLINGDON

Carers Trust Hillingdon was first established in 1996 and is a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. We have an emphasis on 'by carers for carers' and a large proportion of our trustees, staff and volunteers are either current or former carers. We are based in Uxbridge with a High Street Advice and Carers' Centre. The shop-fronted Advice Centre offers a comprehensive range of information, fact sheets and leaflets; carers can drop in or book an appointment with our skilled Advice team.

In 2017, we extended our premises. Behind the Advice Centre we now have a small Carers' Centre, which hosts a range of external groups and offers an annual calendar of activities. Opportunities on offer include: training, therapies, art groups, IT sessions, wellbeing activities, healthy lifestyle checks, employment support, counselling, talking therapies, 1:1 psychotherapeutic support and, in neighbouring buildings, Carer Cafes, exercise classes, peer support groups and multiple one-off events.

However we are also conscious that for many carers, getting to Uxbridge is not possible. We therefore offer Carer Cafes and other services across Hillingdon, and consistently strive to ensure that there is some form of support available in the heart of all Hillingdon neighbourhoods. For those that cannot get out, our Advice team offers a home-visiting service and, through our partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, we offer dementia support in the home too. Due to the very different needs of the diverse communities across the borough we have made extending our geographical 'reach' a new programme of work over the next five years.

Due to the global pandemic, we now offer many of our services online. Once things return to normal, we will ensure that carers tell us which services they would like to see continue online and will offer a mix of virtual and face-to-face services.

Our range of young carers' services is also growing. Children and young people caring in their formative years have access to four weekly Young Carer Clubs, for varying age groups and in different geographies. They can also access a full programme of trips and activities every school holiday, training and personal development opportunities, residential weekends, emotional support and talking therapies and a whole host of arts and creative activities through our longstanding partnership with Create Arts. We have extended our services to ensure that there is age-appropriate provision for young adult carers from 16-25 years and are providing an intensive Family Support Service for families that need that extra bit of help to deal with some of the social challenges they face.

We are a Network Partner of Carers Trust, a national carer support organisation with partners across the UK. We have well-developed and extensive partnerships with a range of local and national organisations to enhance our support offer for carers. As well as improved services through local collaborations, national partnerships enable us to draw down resources such as free carer holidays, hardship grants, free tax advice, funding for training and education, as well as improving the range of services available to Hillingdon's carers.

2 INTRODUCING THE HILLINGDON CARERS PARTNERSHIP

In late 2015, Hillingdon Council made changes to the way they commissioned carers' support services. Until that point they had contracts with multiple organisations to provide different elements of support to carers: in addition to the main Carers Trust Hillingdon contract, they were also funding multiple smaller, more specialist services. In 2015, council commissioners 'aggregated' all contracts (i.e. put all the money into a central pot) and asked the voluntary sector to form partnerships to bid for the Combined Carers Services contract.

Carers Trust Hillingdon, as the largest provider of carer support, led the development of the Hillingdon Carers Partnership (HCP). At that point, we already had a good track record in partnership working so we were able to capitalise on existing relationships to bring together a range of specialist partners more formally. Following a competitive process, the Combined Carers Services contract was awarded to HCP in late May 2016. Currently the contract constitutes around 75% of Carers Trust Hillingdon's total annual income. Whilst this is significant, we have worked hard to diversify our funding streams and this is down from 93% in 2014.

The Hillingdon Carers Partnership was given a three-month period to 'mobilise' the partners and to prepare for the joint delivery of a more cohesive programme of support, commencing on 1 September 2016. We used contract mobilisation time wisely and worked hard with our partners to develop systems and processes that broke down barriers and started to develop a service that simplified access to help and support for carers.

We arranged a single point of access, which meant that a newly-registering carer only had to tell their story once and then, with their permission to share their details, all services could 'wrap around' them. Historically, carers had to repeat their stories to different organisations if they needed more than one service. For example, a carer of someone with dementia might need help from Carers Trust Hillingdon to claim Attendance Allowance but also need replacement (respite) care from another organisation and specialist dementia support from a third. Through the new Partnership, the same carer now only has to register once and all relevant services are brought into play.

We also took 6 months to consult with carers and developed a range of ways for carers to tell us what would help them. Our partners talked to their service users, we led a range of focus groups, we sent out over 300 questionnaires and we hosted our first 'Big Listen' in October 2016. By Christmas 2016, we had spoken to over 500 carers and had a clear idea of what was needed and where their priorities lay.

As the Hillingdon Carers Partnership developed - and in response to carers' feedback - we were able to target resources to where they were most needed as well as filling gaps in services. As we now work so closely with our partners, our strategy wouldn't be complete without a section on their commitment to carers over the next five years.

3 INTRODUCING H4ALL

Carers Trust Hillingdon has long seen the sense in working closely with other charities and sharing resources wherever possible. In 2015, extensive discussions with four other of Hillingdon's largest charities came to fruition and the (then) Community Interest Company (CIC) was launched. First registered at Companies House in September 2015, H4All heralded a new chapter for our organisation.

The five partner charities - Carers Trust Hillingdon, Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent, Harlington Hospice, Disablement Association Hillingdon (DASH) and Hillingdon Mind - came together formally in order to provide better-coordinated services that promoted the health and wellbeing of all Hillingdon residents. We also set out with the mission to save money by sharing 'backroom' services and using our combined buying power to drive down our costs. Our joint venture enables us to minimise waste, push more resources to frontline services and, most importantly, to make carers everybody's business. By removing local competition between the charities we have been to focus on what matters - excellent services for residents.

H4All has gone from strength to strength. Our flagship Wellbeing Service for Hillingdon's over 65s living with one or more long-term condition(s) was piloted in late 2015/early 2016. With the support of Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) the partners were able to demonstrate significant savings to the local health and care economy, equating to a social return on investment of around £2.60 for every £1 invested, through more appropriate usage of primary and secondary care services. This subsequently saw new contracts awarded for other cohorts of the population and H4All has grown exponentially in the five years we have been operating.

The sovereign charities have also been able to realise other aspirations and have now merged three counselling services under one management and supervision structure, have a shared finance services and have secured investment to support and develop our relationships with Hillingdon's broad range of voluntary sector groups and organisations, through an extensive Health and Wellbeing Alliance. Perhaps our most significant achievement has been H4All securing a seat on the local Accountable Care Partnership Board, with equal voting rights with the GP Confederation and two large NHS Trusts. This has provided the opportunity to challenge the balance of power and ensure that the voluntary sector has equal importance in circles of care and support.

Whilst H4All's work is not carer-specific, our partnership has benefitted carers by making carers everybody's business. This has resulted in: an improved carer identification rate; more support available for the people they care for; better support for carers themselves; better engagement with GPs due to our closer working with health - we now have a designated Carer Champion in GP surgeries; additional support for carers living with long-term conditions, and; removal of duplication through better coordination of services.



2

OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMMES OF WORK



CARERS HELPING TO SET PRIORITIES AT THE AGM

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS 2020 - 2025

Following extensive consultation with our stakeholders, we have focused our activity for the next five years on the following objectives and supporting programmes of work:

OBJECTIVES

Improving carers' lives by:

- 1) Tackling carer loneliness and isolation across all ages
- 2) Supporting carers to minimise the financial impact of caring
- 3) Improving carers' physical and mental health across the life course
- 4) Developing carers' skills and resilience to help them to manage all elements of caring

PROGRAMMES OF WORK

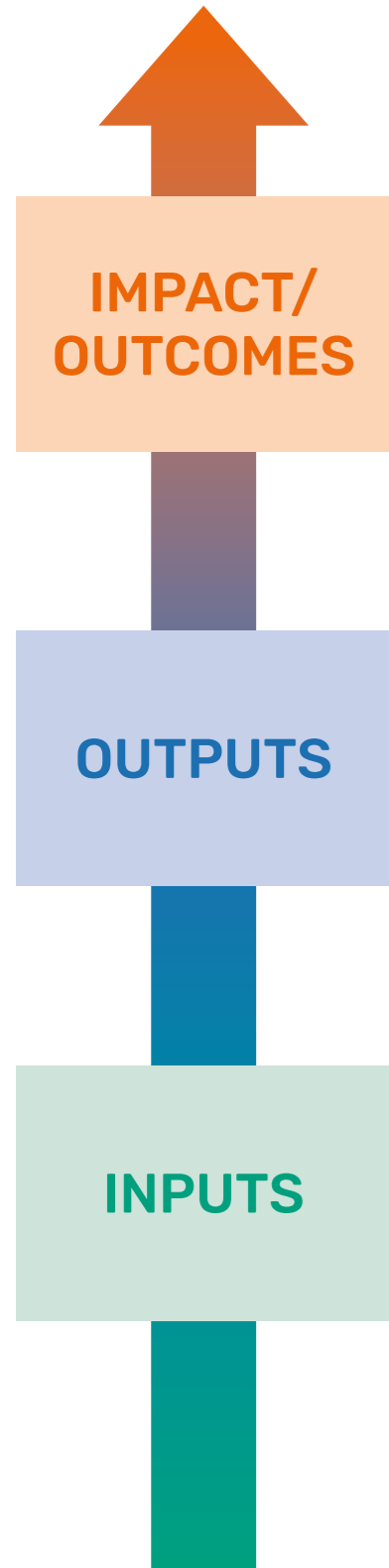
We will achieve our objectives by:

- 5) Finding more 'hidden' carers of all ages and raising the profile of caring with local services
- 6) Developing and delivering more and better support services
- 7) Extending the geographic 'reach' of our services across Hillingdon
- 8) Ensuring that the carer's 'voice' drives all our activity

OUR PLAN ON A PAGE

Theory of change

Hillingdon Carers and Hillingdon Carers Partnership will be recognised as the gateway to a better life for all unpaid carers in Hillingdon



1 TACKLING CARER LONELINESS AND ISOLATION ACROSS ALL AGES

Each day in the UK, over 6,000 people become carers. The transition to caring, and particularly to full-time caring, can cause loneliness and isolation. Research tells us that 83% carers have felt lonely or socially isolated as a result of their caring responsibilities and 57% of carers have lost touch with friends and family. (Carers UK)

Loneliness can be caused by a range of circumstances. In research published by the Campaign to End Loneliness, 55% carers cited not being able to get out of the house, 36% were not comfortable talking to friends about caring and 61% had no time - and 45% could no longer afford - to participate in social activities. Additionally, 43% were using the phone less to save money, making it difficult to stay connected, and, finally, 41% of the carers surveyed said that a lack of practical support was another obstacle to being able to see friends or make social gatherings.

Additionally, many young and young adult carers miss out on social opportunities because of their caring roles. They tell us that the social opportunities we provide through our regular Young Carer Clubs are a lifeline and that having friends who understand the challenges of caring is refreshing after their many negative experiences at school.

Where are we now?

Our current range of services provide carers with social contact with others who understand what they are going through. We have excellent evidence from our Carer Cafes and Young Carer Clubs that being amongst other carers is very welcome social contact and that carers genuinely value the peer support and shared learning that they can access. We also know that at our Cafes and Clubs new friendships form and new social networks start to develop over time.

From 2015-2020 we made great strides in increasing social groups and other opportunities for carers and have:

- Secured new investment for a range of extra-contractual services including: an extended Dementia Support service; an Arts, Culture and Training programme, (Caring Connections); the Healthier Carers Hillingdon programme; a new Family Support Service for young carers affected by parental substance misuse and mental ill health; a supported transition programme for young adult carers, NHANCE, and; we have developed a range of new peer-led and supported carer groups.
- Launched 17 new services for adult carers and 8 services for young carers/young adult carers all funded outside our Council contract – a total of 25 new services in five years.

What next?

By 2025, at least 90% carers responding to our annual survey will report feeling less lonely or isolated

We want all carers to have a social life outside caring and be able to have a break from caring close to home. Enabling carers to stay socially-connected necessitates a broad range of support. Therefore our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- We will collaborate with others to continue to develop new social programmes.
- We will continue to seek sponsorship of our Carer Cafes through the private sector so we can respond to carer requests for new groups in their neighbourhoods.
- We will recruit, train and support more volunteers to help the staff team in the delivery of our Cafes, social groups, young carer clubs, trips and other activities.
- We will improve access to emotional support beyond our current arrangements and develop a 'menu' of opportunities that includes one-to-one and group sessions.
- As well as working in partnership with others, we will take an asset-based community development approach to the expansion of our services to ensure their sustainability.

“Caring is incredibly isolating. I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to try to hold on to your own friends, your own life.”

“[At Young Carers Club] you make new friends and talk about things you can't normally with kids at school.”

“When he started [at Young Carers Club] he was very hesitant and was unable to make friends due to his lack of confidence. Since then it has increased his confidence. He is still shy but getting better and has a new close friend.”

“When we first met as a group we were all lacking confidence, barely coping, isolated and anxious. Looking around at us today we have bonded and are much more confident. I have new coping strategies and a great support network.”

“I have gone from lonely and feeling very down to a much better place. I now have regular contact with others who understand and have a good laugh twice a week.”

2 SUPPORTING CARERS TO MINIMISE THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF CARING

Caring can come at a great cost to carers. Families affected by illness and disability often face pressure on their finances from two directions: many are coping with lost income as disability and caring responsibilities limit their ability to earn, and; they are often concurrently trying to meet the extra costs of caring.

Nearly half a million people left work to care in the last two years, which is over 600 people per day, and many more had to greatly reduce their hours of work. This means that, alongside the personal costs of ill-health, for many families, disability and caring pushes them into debt and hardship.

As they cope with reduced household incomes, the additional costs of caring can also be considerable, for example:

- Higher electricity bills as disabled, ill or older people need to be kept warm;
- Incontinence can mean washing bedsheets several times a week or even every day, leading to higher basic household costs;
- Specialist equipment, foods and medicines;
- If families do not qualify for social care support, they may face bills of hundreds of pounds for replacement care if they need a break from caring, and;
- Significant travel and parking charges from frequent trips to hospital and GPs.

Therefore, help to minimise the financial impact of caring is core business.

Where are we now?

Our skilled and experienced Advice team offer information and advice to carers about their options, from carers considering giving up work or reducing their hours to all newly-registering carers who can have a full welfare benefits check. They can also offer basic debt advice, or, more usually, refer carers on to free debt advice. In 2017/18, the team secured £1.1 million in carer-related benefits for Hillingdon's carers, boosting their household incomes. The team speaks five community languages and will help with benefit claims, appeals and even representation at tribunal.

Additionally, they secure tax advice, Council Tax reductions, Blue Badge permits, taxi vouchers, and, through our extensive partnership working, we can also access hardship grants for essential household costs, free holidays and free legal advice clinics through a supportive local law firm. We distribute food bank vouchers to carers and frequently distribute food hampers and other groceries that are donated to us.

Our Family Support Service also works intensively with families where there are young carers living in challenging financial circumstances and we offer a home visiting service to all carers who cannot get to our Advice Centre or outreach advice sessions.

What next?

By 2025, we will have ensured continuing capacity for all new carers to receive benefits checks and financial advice

Welfare reform has placed the Advice team under enormous pressure and every penny of carer-related benefits they secure is harder won, with a growing number of appeals and re-applications each year. Therefore, our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- We will grow the capacity of the team by securing specialist volunteer support for basic form-filling.
- We currently access hardship grants via three different sources, have access to free legal advice and we work with a national charity who can secure free holidays for carers. We will continue to add to the list of financial support that we can access for carers through the creation of new national partnerships.
- In addition to our drop-in Advice Centre and home-visiting service, we currently provide a One Stop Advice Shop in the south of the borough for carers whom are unable to access our premises. We will grow this type of provision to improve carers' access to quality advice and information.
- We are distributing food bank vouchers, free food hampers and supermarket leftover food every week to families that are struggling. We will continue to identify new relationships that will benefit carers' financially.
- Our Family Support Service is funded to October 2020. We will use the evidence of the service's impact to secure new grant funding to ensure it continues to offer the valuable and holistic family support that improves the lives of some of our most disadvantaged children and young people.
- We will maintain our Advice Quality Standard (AQS) level 2 with casework to ensure we are giving a quality service. This was last awarded in December 2019 and is re-assessed every two years.

"I couldn't make head nor tail of the Attendance Allowance form but you made it so easy. I now have that extra bit of money to get the help I need with my wife."

"The Carer Advisor was so helpful and they have made such a difference to my life. I now have a bit more money coming in and I don't lie awake worrying half the night."

"Whilst my Carers Allowance is not a fortune, it has helped in so many small ways."

"The new washing machine was such a relief as I have to wash every day."

3 IMPROVING CARERS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

Whilst caring for many people is very rewarding, we know that, for some, caring can be emotionally and physically draining and that many carers experience poor health caused by the nature and extent of their caring responsibilities. Often it is difficult for carers to look after their own health, take regular exercise and find the time to visit their GPs or to keep other health appointments. Additionally, many carers are living with their own long-term health conditions.

In an extensive research programme, 82% carers said that they had suffered low level mental ill health as a result of caring, citing sleeplessness, anxiety and depression as the main issues. 83% also said that their physical health had been negatively impacted, with 39% having put off medical treatment due to their caring role. (In *Sickness and in Health*, 2013). These statistics make the mitigation of the negative health impacts of caring essential.

Where are we now?

We are working hard to raise the profile of carers with Hillingdon's 43 GP practices. We believe that, by increasing their awareness of the health needs of carers, we can support them to make small procedural changes that support carers' health and wellbeing, such as offering flexible or double appointments, the opportunity for drop-in health checks and to encourage onward referral for support.

In 2019, working in partnership with the local GP Confederation and Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group, we produced and published a guide to supporting carers for primary care staff. It advocates that all practices should have a Carer Champion and, by January 2020, we had 39 practice staff fulfilling this role, whom we bring together regularly for training, networking and the sharing of good practice.

We have a strong exercise programme offering carers a range of exercise sessions for all ages and abilities, from chair-based exercise and yoga to more dynamic cardio and dance sessions. Our young carers have access to a good range of sports facilities from five-a-side football to professionally-facilitated gym training. Additionally, we have established a partnership with a carer health organisation, Don't Tone Alone, which offers healthy lifestyle checks and personal training sessions. Our therapeutic care programme, pamper days and our range of arts and cultural activities provide carers with some light relief from the stresses of caring.

For those who need more intensive support, we offer programmes of talking therapies, wellbeing workshops, emotional support and a free counselling service. Following a recent successful bid, from April 2020, we will be offering significantly enhanced psychotherapeutic services for carers of someone with an acute mental health condition, an extended counselling service and a family support programme.

What next?

By 2025, we will have significantly improved support for carers in primary care, extended our health and wellbeing services and extended psychotherapeutic support for MH carers

Our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- By widening opportunities for carer health checks in GP surgeries and through our regular Health MOT days, we will provide flexible opportunities for carers to access face-to-face contact with health professionals.
- We will continue to promote and develop our already extensive carer Health and Wellbeing 'offer' and actively seek new resources to expand services that improve carer health and wellbeing.
- For carers living with long-term health conditions, we will ensure they are referred for support, health coaching and help in self-management from H4All's Wellbeing Service.
- In partnership with Hillingdon Mind, we will extend access to counselling, provide short-term, intensive crisis counselling, develop a range of psychotherapeutic services and provide a small family support service for carers of someone with an acute mental health condition.
- We will continue to work collaboratively and, with our partners, will explore new opportunities to improve carers' health and wellbeing as well as actively seeking new partnerships.
- We will improve carer recognition and support in primary care through the development of skilled and committed Carer Champions. Additionally, we will encourage the cross-fertilization of good practice from surgery to surgery.

"It sometimes feels as though you are staggering from crisis to crisis. When there is some let up, I find I can't sleep, I worry all the time and can't see any joy in life looking forward."

"Yoga is an excellent form of exercise to keep me well and to relax me. It is a good opportunity to meet other carers and there is a strong sense of community."

"Funnily enough, it was the nail cutting service that was transformative. My feet don't hurt and my mobility has improved. Who knew that was all I needed to get around better?"

4 DEVELOPING CARERS' SKILLS AND RESILIENCE TO MANAGE ALL ELEMENTS OF CARING

Many carers can find themselves in a caring role unexpectedly. They are often thrust into situations where they might have to provide personal care, administer drugs, support someone else with their mobility or even physically handle someone from bed to chair, manage a wheelchair, become adept with other aids and adaptations or feed their loved one. These are just some examples of the skills that they are expected to provide with no support or training, and which, many health disciplines train for years to learn.

Simultaneously, they are coming to terms with a significant life change, their shifting relationship with their spouse or other family members and, depending on the situation, can be experiencing significant distress themselves. Additionally, carers often have to give up work and forgo favourite hobbies and pastimes as caring takes precedence. Therefore Carers Trust Hillingdon is actively strengthening the range of training and support that makes a difference to how carers understand their caring roles, as well as providing strategies for managing stress and anxiety and to grow their resilience.

Where are we now?

We currently offer training to help carers better manage some of the challenges of caring, such as basic back care, managing wheelchairs and first aid. Additionally, our Health and Wellbeing services help carers to develop their own coping strategies and we provide many opportunities for carers to talk to other carers who have had similar experiences; indeed peer support is a highly-valued element of our programme.

In early 2019, we secured new funding to expand and develop both our training and arts and culture programme so that we could grow our menu of options. New additions to the programme in the last year have included IT surgeries (booking appointments, ordering medication and accessing advice online), Care Skills for Carers, use of aids and adaptations, understanding medication and understanding challenging behaviours.

Additionally, we have expanded our relaxation, complementary therapy and talking therapy programmes so that carers can find their own ways of dealing with the challenges of caring, as well as strategies for better managing the person they care for. Therapists target activity to improve resilience.

Finally, we have expanded the range of arts, culture and outdoor activity opportunities so that carers can re-explore past hobbies, try something new, have a free 'pamper' session or generally just access some time out from caring. 2019 additions to this programme have included rejuvenate your wardrobe workshops, calligraphy, cake decorating, watercolour painting, clay modelling, gardening activities and hanging basket workshops, as well as adding dance to our ever-popular exercise programme.

What next?

By 2025, we will have developed a comprehensive but flexible programme of training that responds to the needs of carers and supports the management of their caring roles

Our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- We will continue to respond to carer requests for training and grow our programme of workshops and training sessions on all aspects of caring.
- We will develop a mixed economy of one-off workshops, short courses and longer programmes so that carers can access training to a level that is appropriate for them, but that fits around their caring role.
- We will also grow the number of opportunities for carers to access arts, cultural and hobby groups and other activities to give them time-out from caring.
- We will continue to develop our range of health and wellbeing and therapeutic care services so that we can help carers to overcome the potentially negative impacts of caring.
- We will continue to develop new partnerships and collaborations so that carers' experience of support is of a more cohesive and joined up programme.

"It was useful to know how to protect my back as a carer and still be able to do the job without hurting myself in the process."

"You have made me understand more about my wife's dementia than all the other professionals that I have had contact with. Things you have said make sense and I now understand her behaviour better."

"I learnt how to be calm when I was stressed - I regularly use the very useful tips. Meditation has helped me to calm down from situations which were causing me stress. The sessions have taught me how to relax."

"I have found the sessions greatly beneficial, they have helped me to relax so I feel more able to cope."

"I did feel a lot more relaxed and well within myself. It helped me feel stronger in caring for my son. Many thanks to the people involved in therapeutic care."

5 FINDING 'HIDDEN' CARERS AND RAISING THE PROFILE OF CARING

It can take years before someone identifies them self as a carer and this can mean essential advice and support reaches them too late or doesn't reach them at all. It is estimated that nationally around two million carers cease caring and another two million begin caring each year, so there is by no means a static population of carers.

Additionally, for young people who find themselves in a caring role there is too often a stigma attached. Many young carers are deprived of the opportunities enjoyed by their peers and they are often bullied in school for being 'different'. This means that they are unlikely to identify themselves as young carers, even if specifically asked.

This presents us with a challenge: to be able to provide the advice, information and support that carers of any age might need, first we need to know who they are and efforts to engage with carers need to be constantly renewed and sustained. Therefore we have made finding carers who don't recognise themselves as carers - sometimes referred to as 'hidden' carers - one of our priority work programmes.

We will also raise the profile of caring with local primary and secondary schools, primary care and social services to encourage them to identify carers and seek their consent to refer them to the Hillingdon Carers Partnership for advice and support.

Where are we now?

2011 Census data tells us that there are 26,000 adult carers and an estimated 2,450 young carers supporting the local health economy in Hillingdon.

In 2015, when we launched our first five-year plan, we were supporting about 3,640 (14%) adult carers and (13%) young carers. We set ourselves a challenging target of identifying and supporting 40% of all carers by 2020.

We have made solid progress. From 2015-2020, we have:

- Identified, registered and supported 9,085 (34.9%) adult carers
- Supported a further 2,737 (10.5%) carers whom subsequently became inactive
- Identified, registered and supported 1,039 (42.4%) young carers

We have also grown our education and awareness raising activity and have provided carer awareness training to a broad range of staff groups over the past five years. These have included: GPs, GP reception staff, other practice staff, student nurses, social workers, mental health service team leaders, physiotherapy staff at Hillingdon Hospital, teachers and pastoral care staff in primary and secondary schools, school governors, members of the Local Strategic Partnership, frontline officers from the Metropolitan Police and various local philanthropic groups and societies.

What next?

By 2025, we will have identified and be supporting at least 50% adult carers and 50% young carers in Hillingdon

Our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- We want carers to spread the word and encourage newly-identified carers to ask for help and support. We will use Carer Forums and other carer engagement activity to encourage new approaches to 'peer identification'.
- We will continue to set ourselves an annual target for the number of new carers and young carers to be identified each year with an overall target of 13,000 adult carers and 1,225 young carers by 2025.
- We will strengthen and expand our education programme to raise awareness of carers, make carers everyone's business and to promote the benefits of referring carers for support.
- Using our strategic links, we will actively build in carer identification and referral requirements for frontline health, care and education professionals.
- We will refresh and rebrand our website and the range of information that we provide for carers to reflect our membership of the Carers Trust national Network of carer organisations.
- We will continue to promote the Hillingdon Carers Partnership by strengthening our outreach programme and exploring new ways to market and promote our services to carers.

"I wish I had known then what I know now. I didn't even think of myself as a carer, I'm just a mum of a child who has extra support needs."

"It took years for me to realise that I had become a carer for my wife. The help I got was amazing, I just wish I'd found it sooner."

"It was actually my GP who convinced me to contact Carers Trust Hillingdon. The help I got was life-changing."

"I learnt so much about being a carer and the staff couldn't have been more helpful."

"I noticed a new Carer Information Board at my GP recently - great idea!"

6 DELIVERING MORE AND BETTER SERVICES

Most care happens within families and often families do everything possible to minimise the need for formal care and support by finding what works for them – effectively personalised support in action. However, there is no such thing as a ‘traditional’ caring relationship and it is clear that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to supporting carers. We maintain a regular dialogue with carers to ensure that we are aware of any gaps in support and we consistently strive to extend the range and maintain and improve the quality of our services.

We have also seen significant benefits to working closely in partnership with others. Working as part of the Hillingdon Carers Partnership has improved carers’ experience of services – communication is better and finding support is simpler. Additionally, our partnerships extend far beyond Hillingdon, for example, our long-standing relationship with Create Arts has provided our young carers with fabulous opportunities over the past five years. We are firmly committed to extending our partnership working.

Where are we now?

Carers now only have to tell their story once. With their permission to share their information, all relevant services from across the Hillingdon Carers Partnership now ‘wrap around’ the carer to ensure they get the maximum benefit from the broad range of support that is available to them. A support package is tailored to individual need and is agreed with each carer following a Carers Assessment. At this point, onward referral to other sources of support is also made – with the relevant permission – to ensure that carers get all the support that is available to them.

Additionally, with the global pandemic, we were forced to think creatively about how we could continue to support carers without being able to provide group or face-to-face sessions. One of the positive outcomes from the subsequent lockdowns is that we now have an extensive range of services that are provided online and, for those that cannot access IT, over the telephone through telephone support groups and regular care-calls to check in with housebound and isolated families.

We are currently consulting with carers to ensure that we have a mixed programme as we start to come out of the 2020/2021 restrictions. For many housebound carers, extra support online has been helpful and there have been some great examples of unexpected benefits. For example, we moved our chair-based exercise and yoga classes online and numbers practically doubled overnight as carers actively involved their loved ones in the activities.

Many of these services will return to face-to-face provision; carers, after all, do need some time away from their caring situations to have a proper break. However, additionally, we will also maintain the successful and popular online provision as alternatives for carers that wish to access support in this way.

What next?

By 2025, we will have a strong mixed programme of face-to-face, online and telephone support services so that carers can access help in a way that best suits their individual needs.

- We will continue our ongoing conversations and regular consultation activities to ensure that we are responding to carers’ needs and are working to fill gaps in services.
- We will continue to bid for grants and other sources of funding for new services once we have enough evidence of need to satisfy funding bodies.
- We will assess the significant impacts that Covid has had on the lives of carers and develop a range of responses, such as caring at end of life training or improving access to counselling and psychotherapeutic support.
- We will actively develop our partnership working at a local, regional and national level to maximise the benefits to carers in Hillingdon.
- We will review all the new ways of working that were developed in response to the Covid crisis and maintain those that are valued and useful to carers.
- We will ensure that support is offered in a variety of formats so that no-one is excluded from accessing the help they need whatever their situation.

“I registered with Carers Trust Hillingdon in 2019 and was surprised that one simple call led to me getting a Carers Allowance, support from the Dementia Service and four hours free respite care for my mum. It was so easy!”

“I felt that I went round in circles on my own and ended up having so many assessments I lost track of who worked where and what had been suggested/promised. New arrangements change all that.”

“I couldn’t quite believe the range of opportunities for carers when I saw the newsletter. Thank you Carers Trust Hillingdon for valuing us carers - a welcome break and a friendly face are always guaranteed at the Carer Café.”

“I attended new Art Group at the Carers Centre for a course of six sessions. I’ve re-discovered my creativity and have made new friends. I was delighted when this continued online during the lockdown - something to look forward to!”

7 EXTENDING OUR GEOGRAPHICAL REACH INTO HILLINGDON'S DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Hillingdon is the fastest growing borough in Greater London. It is hugely diverse with high levels of population 'churn' and multiple newly-migrated communities, particularly in the south surrounding Heathrow Airport. The more affluent far north of the borough has high numbers of older people, often living in large houses that they are unable to maintain. We have seen a significant increase in 'mutual' caring situations, where both partners are older, frail or becoming frail, living with long-term conditions and frequently, with a diagnosis of dementia for one of them. These situations are extremely fragile and prone to break down very quickly.

Hillingdon has pockets of high deprivation, however carers can be negatively impacted by their caring roles regardless of the socio-economic status of their neighbourhood. Young carers in particular are often disadvantaged developmentally, emotionally and educationally due to their caring roles. Providing support to residents is therefore geographically-challenging as it is a long, thin borough, bisected by the M40/A40 corridor: residents rarely travel across the A40 to access services and service delivery has to happen in the heart of communities.

Research conducted by our national body, Carers Trust, in late 2020 showed that during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns 66% carers saw the amount of time they spent caring increase significantly in a 6-month period. They also found that only 12% carers felt that they received enough support from government.

The number of young carers in Hillingdon is estimated to be around 2,450. During the pandemic our Young Carers team has seen increase in demand for emotional support, worsening mental health in the young people we work with and high demand for Hardship grants for essentials.

Where are we now?

We have always been conscious that not everyone can access the Carers Centre in Uxbridge and have a long-standing outreach programme for both adult and young carers. Cafes and Clubs are provided as far north as Northwood Hills and as far south as Hayes and Harlington and many other services are offered at venues both north and south of the A40 corridor, for example, our popular therapeutic care programme can be accessed in Ruislip, Uxbridge and Harlington.

Support can also be accessed via home visits. The Dementia Support service, delivered by our partners from the Alzheimer's Society, also offers home visits for families living with dementia and Carer Assessment and welfare benefits checks can also be conducted in the home. Our Young Carers team assess a new young carer in the home environment as a matter of course. However, we know there is much more to do.

What next?

By 2025, we will have increased the geographical spread of our services so that support is available at the heart of all Hillingdon's diverse communities

Our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- We will continue to use an asset-based community development approach to extend the geographic reach of our services, using carer feedback to identify gaps and/or new need.
- We will extend our use of volunteers to make sure we can respond to the geographical demand for services and grow our capacity for support.
- We will invest in training for carers to run peer-led groups that, with ongoing central support, can become self-sustaining in the longer term.
- We will continue to deliver and grow our online and telephone support so that geographical challenges do not prevent carers and young carers accessing the help they need.
- We will work with others to share resources such as facilities, training and meeting rooms, as well as saving money through shared training and other activities.

"I really struggled to get to the Care Café in Uxbridge and said to the staff that a Café in Ruislip was needed. 6 months later, we had our own Carer Café just round the corner from my house! Such a blessing for me, I get so much from meeting other carers."

"I love that we had Pamper sessions online in the lockdown. I got together with carers from all over the borough and we had great demonstrations with the pamper products that had been delivered to us. I loved the chat afterwards with a hot drink and the chocolate they had put in our packs."

"The grant I got from Carers Trust Hillingdon to buy a laptop was great to keep up with schoolwork – and I didn't have to fight my brothers to get the shared one. I could also join in with all the other young carer stuff online. The virtual Escape room was my favourite."

8 ENSURING THAT THE CARER'S 'VOICE' DRIVES OUR ACTIVITY

A guiding principle in Carers Trust Hillingdon's ethos is that carers should play a major role in shaping and directing our work. Effective engagement and 'co-production' helps to ensure that we maximise the benefits to carers of every penny that we invest in services and prevents waste. We have made strong progress in ensuring that our priorities reflect carers' priorities and that our services respond to carers' needs.

We also recognise that carers should influence the statutory services that support them and the people they care for, which can present us with more of a challenge. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) states:

"Co-production is a key concept in the development of public services. It has the potential to make an important contribution to all of the big challenges that face social care services."

One of SCIE's recommendations for ensuring successful engagement is that co-production is supported by a strategy. Carers Trust Hillingdon is part of a multi-agency, borough-wide Carers Strategy group and will ensure we use our position to hold statutory organisations to account and to help to facilitate their commitment to listening to the carer's 'voice'.

Where are we now?

Carers Trust Hillingdon has a philosophy of 'by carers, for carers' and actively encourages those with 'lived experience' of caring in their recruitment of trustees, staff and volunteers. Over 50% of this collective 'workforce' are current or former carers.

Additionally, we have a well-developed and established range of opportunities for carers to feed back to us about our services, including two Carers Forums per year, an annual Carer Survey, two annual Young Carers Surveys (accommodating two different age groups) and an annual Parental Survey for parents to comment on the impact of the support the Young Carers team provides to their children. Feedback is also sought at every contact and activities and training sessions are evaluated independently of other arrangements.

We also host 'ad hoc' opportunities for carers to comment on what is needed. In order to mobilise for the Combined Carers Services contract and, more recently, when developing this new strategy, we hosted two events called The Big Listen 1 and 2. These events are popular and well-attended. They provide carers with the chance to influence the strategic direction of the organisation, as well as offering many interactive sessions that are designed to be engaging but that help the team to set future priorities. Additionally at these events, there are opportunities to share personal experiences with various council departments, the CCG and the GP Confederation, as well as Healthwatch and other voluntary sector providers.

What next?

By 2025, we will have responded to the diversity of the carer population by developing an extended programme of engagement opportunities, which offers carers a range of different methods to engage

Our Development Plans will be structured to support the delivery of the following activity:

- We will develop role descriptions for carers to be represented on the Hillingdon Carers Partnership Delivery group and support the London Borough of Hillingdon to develop roles for carers to sit on the multi-agency Carers Strategy group.
- We will review and improve the content of our range of annual surveys, which will continue to secure feedback from adult carers, young carers (5-9 years and 10 plus) and the parents of the children and young people accessing our services.
- Carers Trust Hillingdon, in partnership with the London Borough of Hillingdon's Customer Engagement team, will host two Carer Forums per year in March and October and our annual Carers' Fair to mark Carers Week every June. These provide carers with a regular opportunity to share their experiences of caring in Hillingdon.
- Carers Trust Hillingdon's Health and Wellbeing team will conduct service reviews at every contact with the carers they support, using tools that are appropriate to the service. For example: carer training will be assessed via a pre-and post- assessment of the impact of the training or therapeutic care services will be reviewed to assess the impact of the service on perceived health and wellbeing.

"I attended the Big Listen in October [2019]. It was good to hear plans for the next five years and to have a say in the priorities. One carer there suggested they add something about 'helping to reduce the financial impact of caring'; the next thing we knew, it was in the strategy!"

"You have made things easier by giving us access to other services. I had a long talk with the person from the GP Confederation, she was very helpful."

"I've always been very sceptical about 'consultation' but Carers Trust Hillingdon really seems to listen. They actually make changes based on what we say to them."



**CARERS GETTING
CREATIVE AT
COFFEE AND
CLAY CLASSES**

3

**OUR PARTNERS'
COMMITMENTS**

Harlington Hospice, and subsidiary company, Harlington Care, look forward to working with the Partnership to provide services that deliver against the priorities for the next five years.



Caring with Confidence

We will continue to offer this popular training programme for carers looking after a family member with a dementia diagnosis. The course is delivered over 6 weeks and offers information, advice, training, emotional support and practical advice on issues such as Powers of Attorney and welfare benefits. It is delivered in partnership with Carers Trust Hillingdon and the Alzheimer’s Society. We will also offer care for the family member with dementia during the workshops so that the carer can relax knowing that their loved one is safe and entertained.

There is a monthly support group for carers who have attended the course, which will continue to provide peer support and social contact when the course has finished.

Wellbeing Workshops

Our Wellbeing Workshops teach practices which carers have found to be beneficial in helping them to manage stress and anxiety and improve their physical, mental and emotional health both in the present and for the longer term. Strategies they learn are also used by carers with the people they are caring for to good effect.

Complementary Therapy

Carers will continue to be able to access free complementary therapies which help them to relax and improve their physical, mental and emotional health.

Carers’ Short Breaks Service

Harlington Care is committed to working as part of the Hillingdon Carers Partnership to give carers a much needed break by:

- Continuing to provide quality replacement (respite) care to people the carers are supporting to enable them to have personal time away from the caring role
- Responding to individual need and developing care that is person-centered
- Ensuring good communications with carers so that any changes in need or service are prompt and well-managed
- Maintaining our Care Quality Commission registration with a minimum standard of ‘good’ at our regular inspections
- Improving the care and feedback by the introduction of online care planning and improved activity recording system.



The Alzheimer’s Society commits to being an active partner, endorsing and supporting delivery against all objectives over the next five years:

- We will use our innovative ‘Dementia Connect’ service, which will make sure people get the right support, in the right way. Expert Dementia Advisers and trained volunteers will provide relevant information and advice by phone or face-to-face, helping carers and people with dementia take back control of their lives and be more independent for longer.
- New remote resources will enable us to increase our reach across the borough.
- Through our increased reach we will be able to better meet the diverse needs of Carers in Hillingdon and report any gaps in service provision.
- We will share good practice and celebrate success in dementia support across the Hillingdon Carers Partnership. The Alzheimer’s Society is uniting people against dementia and is united with partners in their commitment to the Partnership.



Hillingdon Mind will work with the wider Carers Trust Hillingdon’ Partnership team to:

- Provide early intervention and intensive support to carers of someone with a mental health condition to prevent a crisis occurring and to meet ongoing needs
- Ensure that families can access other forms of support to address wider family issues from a variety of sources
- Help families living with a mental health condition to navigate the health and care system to secure the right support for the person they care for
- Improve the emotional wellbeing of carers and support them to mitigate the impact of their caring situations on their personal wellbeing
- Improve awareness of the emotional and mental health needs of carers.

Through cross-organisational working we will ensure that the carers accessing Mind’s psychotherapeutic services will also be passed on to HCP partners for a Carers Assessment, a welfare benefits check and for access to the broad range of generic support offered to all carers.



**CHICKEN AND CHAT
WITH OUR YOUNG
ADULT CARERS**



4

MAKING IT HAPPEN

DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Delivery plans

Our strategy is very broad and covers a five-year period, which means that the external environment in which we operate is difficult to predict so far in advance. Therefore the detail of how we will move forward on our commitments are contained in a two-year Delivery Plan that sits under the strategy and gives more detail about annual targets and activity.

The Chief Executive reviews the Delivery Plan at least every 6 months and will pick up any issues with relevant managers as they arise. Remedial action is then agreed, which is detailed in the Delivery Plan and will be used to inform staff supervisions and workforce priorities.

Governance

The Delivery Plan is updated and reviewed by Carers Trust Hillingdon' Board of Trustees every 6 months. Additionally, the Board receives a rolling programme of updates from the staff at each Board meeting. This arrangement fosters strong working relationships between staff and trustees and also keeps them abreast of progress, challenges, pressure points and delivery. Workload is broken down by team and updates are delivered on a rotational basis by the Young Carers team, the Advice team, the Health and Wellbeing team and the Business Continuity team. There are also regular updates to Trustees from our partner services. Trustees also have an annual away day where they have the opportunity to review and comment on plans, as well as to challenge the Senior Management team on activity and progress.

How staff support delivery

Staff supervisions were restructured in 2018 to help staff members to understand how their individual and team work contribute to the delivery of the organisation's strategic objectives and to ensure that the strategy is a 'live', regularly-reviewed working document.

Each staff member has an Annual Personal Plan, which details their quarterly objectives and also considers which organisational objective their work impacts upon. This helps them to consider their role in terms of the goals of the organisation and to review how their activity has contributed to the achievement of annual targets detailed in the Delivery Plan.

MEASURING AND RECORDING PROGRESS

Methodology

We regularly monitor and evaluate our services; indeed we have to produce detailed and comprehensive monitoring information for a range of funding bodies. We generate this information through:

- Four annual surveys – adults, young carers (5-10 years), young carers (10 plus) and parents of children and young people supported by our services.
- The maintenance and analysis of statistical data, which gives us a profile of carers and caring in Hillingdon. Quantitative data provides us with details such as the volume of contacts we have, the number of services we provide, the number of carers we support, the amount of welfare benefits we have secured, the number of carers assessments we have conducted and so on.
- Use of qualitative and anecdotal evidence and case studies to bring carers' experiences of our services to life.
- Short qualitative evaluation questionnaires after every trip, arts course or other activities to evaluate each service and to ensure we can deliver continuous improvement.
- We also try to measure 'distance travelled', which involved a pre- and post- assessment for activities such as training (how much has a participant learned?) or therapeutic care (how has the course of therapies impacted on perceptions of general health or stress or anxiety levels?)
- Feedback at every contact and via established engagement structures, such as Carer Forums and our annual Carers' Fair.

Accountability and reporting

We report to funding bodies on a regular basis as per the terms and conditions of our funding:

- For our contract with the London Borough of Hillingdon, we provide 6 monthly details reports of our performance against our agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), followed by a meeting with lead senior officers and commissioners.
- We report to grant-giving trusts and foundations according to their requirements. This can vary from four times per year to once per year, depending on the funding body. Many funders now also convene learning networks to share what we have learnt with other projects under the same funding stream.
- We publish progress annually for our membership in our Annual Report and give accounts of activity at Carer Forums and other public events.
- Our finances are audited annually by an independent external auditor.
- We hold Trusted Charity, AQS (Advice Quality Standard) and Youth Work quality awards, for which we are assessed every two years.



**COMFORT TOUCH,
PART OF OUR
THERAPEUTIC CARE
PROGRAMME**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the carers that have worked with us to set these priorities. It is testament to Hillingdon's carers and their relationship with Carers Trust Hillingdon's staff and volunteers that we have some of the best carers' services in Greater London and almost certainly beyond. It is carers in the driving seat, carers ensuring resources are used to best effect and carers that are advising the team on where to focus their efforts.

In addition, we are grateful to all the carers who have passed on comments, suggestions and personal stories at cafes, clubs and classes – their experiences are critical to ensuring we are focusing our efforts where they are most needed and we appreciate them sharing their stories. Our further thanks go to the carers that gave up their valuable time to attend the Big Listen, Carers Forum or Carers Trust Hillingdon's AGM to give their views.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the London Borough of Hillingdon for their significant financial support which makes the majority of our services possible. Additionally, our many thanks to other funding bodies who have helped us to extend opportunities for valuable support for the borough's carers. We look forward to a continuing relationship with them.

Our thanks also go to our many colleagues across both the voluntary and statutory sectors who have commented, read, supported and generally helped to shape our thinking. We appreciate their input and look forward to our continued partnerships as we deliver on our plans.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to all our colleagues who are supporting carers in our partner organisations. The Hillingdon Carers Partnership is fabulous, we love working with you and it is comforting to know that we have jointly made things that little bit easier for carers.

The Staff, Trustees and Volunteers of
Carers Trust Hillingdon

**LOCAL
SERVICES
CARERS
TRUST**

CARERS TRUST

Hillingdon

Formerly known as Hillingdon Carers, Carers Trust Hillingdon is the lead organisation for the Hillingdon Carers Partnership:



Harlington
Hospice 

**CARERS
TRUST**
Hillingdon

Harlington
Care 



Hillingdon Carers Partnership

Working together for unpaid carers

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