

Bolton's Carers Strategy

2013 – 2015



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Partners

We are working together to improve the health and wellbeing of carers across Bolton.

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Foreword



Being a carer for someone you love who needs extra help and support can be immensely rewarding but it is usually extremely hard work. Becoming a carer often has a dramatic effect on the rest of your life - your employment, aspirations, other relationships and your health.

Many of us will assume the role of carer at some point in our lives. It is therefore in everyone's interests that carers in Bolton are recognised and supported so that they are able to provide the essential care that they do. That's why we have developed a new local Carers Strategy to set out priorities and practical ways to ensure the best possible outcomes for carers and those they care for.

The new strategy builds upon the achievements of the previous strategy, 'Supporting Carers in Bolton - Everyone's Responsibility 2009-12'. There have been positive developments for carers in recent years: for example, the opening of the Carers Resource in Bolton, and campaigns to identify carers and raise awareness of their needs.

Informed by the concerns and ideas of local carers, the Carers Strategy 2013-2015 identifies a number of areas of work which will require multi-agency action, and the continued involvement of carers themselves. Developing the ways in which carers can make their voices heard is an

important element of the strategy, as is strengthening networks of support for carers, for example by facilitating ways for carers to make contact with one another.

For public services, a key theme in the strategy is about recognising and listening to carers. Challenges and opportunities are subsequently posed for how services are delivered, and services need to work together to enable carers to make informed choices about the care of the person they support and about their own lives.

The Carers Strategy sets out a programme of realistic actions to ensure that the vital role of carers is recognised and supported during the next three years. We now need to respond to the immense commitment shown by carers, by committing ourselves to taking forward the priorities in this document and making a real impact on the lives of local carers.

Councillor Linda Thomas
Deputy Leader of the Council

Background and context

National and local policy

In the national carers strategy, 'Carers at the heart of 21st-century families and communities, 2008' the Government set out its vision for ten years ahead:

'Carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities. Support will be tailored to meet individuals' needs, enabling carers to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, while enabling the person they support to be a full and equal citizen.'

The previous decade had seen the importance of supporting carers to gain greater recognition, with national and local strategies being developed, and important Acts of Parliament such as the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004, which established carers' assessments. Nationally and locally, carers and carers' organisations had increasingly been involved in having their say on local services and plans. 'Carers Direct' was set up by the Department of Health in 2009 to provide a national information and advice service to carers, comprising of the Carers Direct website, part of NHS choices, and a telephone helpline.

Locally, Bolton published its local Carers Strategy, 'Supporting Carers in Bolton - Everyone's Responsibility 2009-12'. This set the scene for a number of valuable developments and initiatives. These included publicity to reach 'hidden carers', a training programme and the opening in 2010 of the new Carers Resource at the Thicketford Centre, bringing local carers' organisations together under one roof. The work done at that time broadened support and local awareness of carers' issues and strengthened networks and relationships which can be built upon further.



Carers Resource at the Thicketford Centre

Bolton's Carers Resource centre opened in the summer of 2010 on the first floor of the Thicketford Centre in Tonge Moor. The centre brings together key services for local carers in one location, with local organisations Bolton Carers Support, Crossroads Care and Dementia Support Group based there. The centre has office space for carer organisations and a suite of meeting rooms for carers and groups to use. After a successful first couple of years, we need to make sure that more carers and carers' groups can make the best possible use of the high quality facilities in the Carers Resource.

Building on the 2008 Carers Strategy, the Coalition Government established priorities for carers from 2011-15 in 'Recognised, valued and supported – next steps for the carers strategy, 2010':

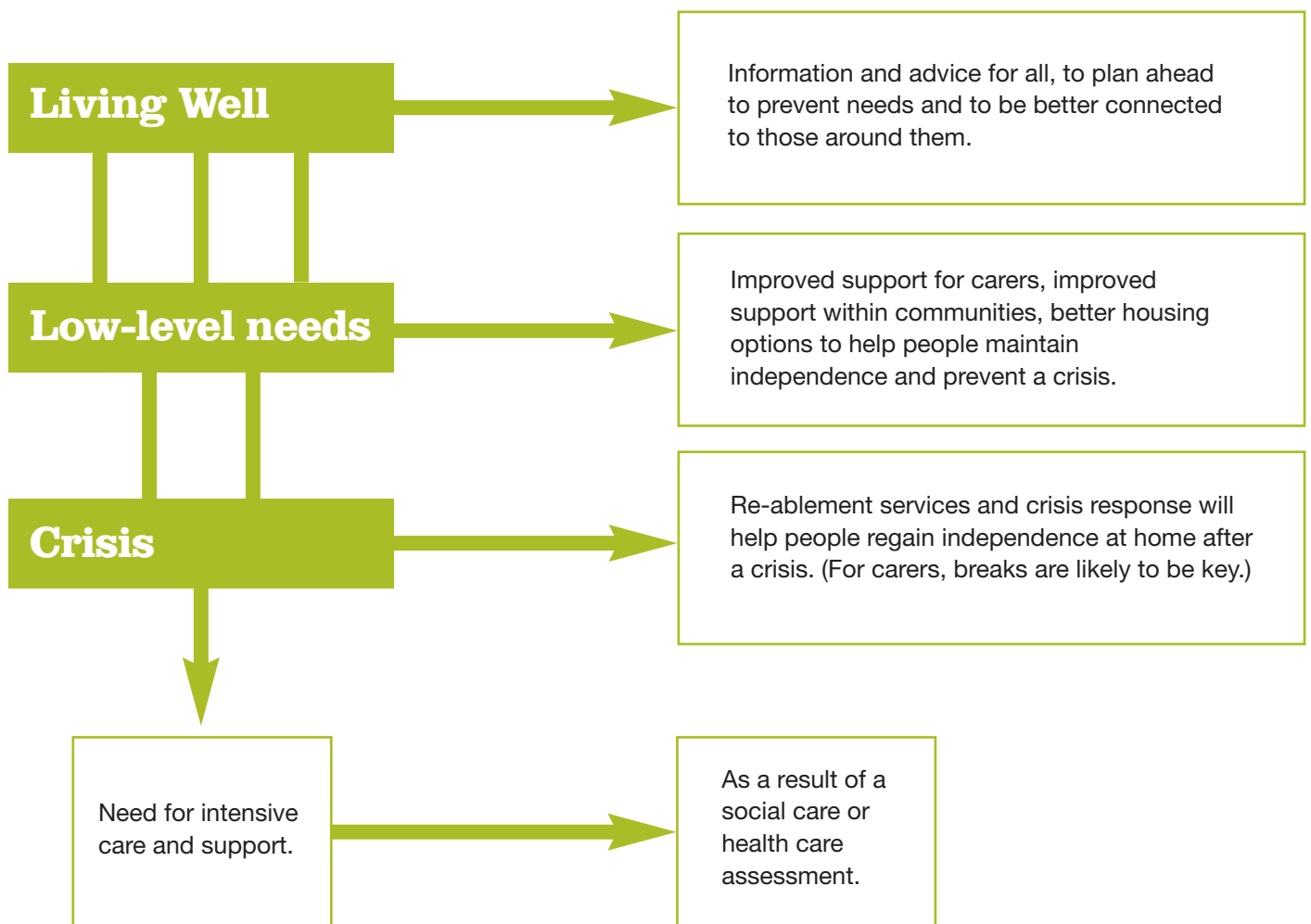
- Supporting those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage, recognising the value of their contribution and involving them from the outset both in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages.
- Enabling those with caring responsibilities to fulfil their educational and employment potential.
- Personalised support for carers and those they support, enabling them to have a family and community life.
- Supporting carers to remain mentally and physically well.

Against this backdrop, support for carers has continued to be an important part of developing Government policy on care and support issues. The recent (summer 2012) Health and Social Care White Paper and draft Care and Support Bill referred to various developments relating to carers, including extending the right to a carers' assessment, new plans for identifying and supporting carers and improving online information on care and support.

Figure 1:
Carers and the vision for a reformed care and support system

This diagram illustrates the need for the Carers Strategy to outline a clear vision and actions to support carers at each level, from the universal to crisis response.

The new system will promote health and wellbeing at all stages to reduce the risk of people reaching a crisis point and thus improve their lives.



Source: Adapted from the Caring for Our Future White Paper 2012, Executive Summary.

Scope of the strategy

Carers look after family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability. The care they provide is unpaid.

Bolton's Carers Strategy follows on from and replaces the previous local strategy, 'Supporting Carers in Bolton - Everyone's Responsibility 2009-12'. The new Carers Strategy responds to national Government policy and strategy concerning carers and addresses the key priorities and outcomes for the next three years for individuals in Bolton who have caring responsibilities for persons over the age of 18; including support for families to avoid young people under this age carrying out inappropriate caring roles.

Led by the council's Children and Adult Services Department, the strategy's approach, strongly informed by local engagement with carers and with stakeholders, is to identify local priorities for supporting carers and respond to national carers strategy themes. It seeks to influence commissioning across health and social care and link to and inform other related strategies and areas of service delivery. The strategy is an important part of the Bolton Health and Wellbeing Strategy aim, to ensure carers receive the support they need, within the context of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Carers Strategy sets the scene locally to respond to the requirement from April 2013 for the council to work with the NHS clinical commissioning group, local partners and carers' organisations to ensure that carers are identified and supported and to agree plans and budgets for identifying and supporting carers.

The strategy has been developed at a time of significantly reducing resources and emphasis has therefore been placed upon identifying priorities that can be taken forward in a cost effective and sustainable way.

The strategy's Implementation Plan consists of practical actions that are wide ranging but not exhaustive. These are realistic in terms of capacity and resources. The Implementation Plan will be subject to annual review.



Evidence about local carers

There are many sources of evidence that we have drawn upon to inform Bolton's Carers Strategy.

The key sources are demographic information about the numbers of local carers, projections about future carers and care needs, surveys and research about carers' needs and both local and national engagement with carers. Consistent local engagement with carers has been particularly important in shaping the strategy's priorities and actions, which also respond to what we know about the needs and profile of the local carer population.

Details of this evidence can be found in Bolton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which can be found on Bolton's Health Matters website www.boltonshhealthmatters.org. This website is updated as soon as possible whenever new evidence and relevant information on carers becomes available. For example, the 2011 Census and the 2012-2013 Carers Survey, which asked carers of social care service users about their experience of social care services and access to information.

A link to this information about carers can also be found at the council's carers web pages at www.bolton.gov.uk/carers. On these pages there is up to date local and national information about carers, links to helpful information and carers' organisations, and details of recent engagement with carers.

Facts about Bolton's carers

At the time of the 2011 Census there were 30,649 people in Bolton who said they had caring responsibilities. This is an increase of more than 2,000 on the previous 2001 Census figures. The number of carers is expected to increase further in future years as the number of older and disabled people increases.

Around 3,000 local carers are looking after someone who is a social care service user. The person they care for may need help because of long term illness, physical disabilities, mental health problems or substance misuse. Bolton Carers Support, the borough-wide local carers' organisation, currently has around 3,500 carers on its mailing list. Most of the other carers in Bolton may not be in regular touch with any services and simply look upon themselves as sons, daughters, husbands, wives, friends etc.

The 2010 Bolton Health and Wellbeing Survey gives us the most recent snapshot of the variety of caring roles that local people carry out for their loved ones. The survey indicated that 11.5% of adults in Bolton provide care for someone with a long term illness or disability, other than as part of their job, with women slightly more likely to be carers than men. Two thirds of carers lived in the same home as the person who they cared for.

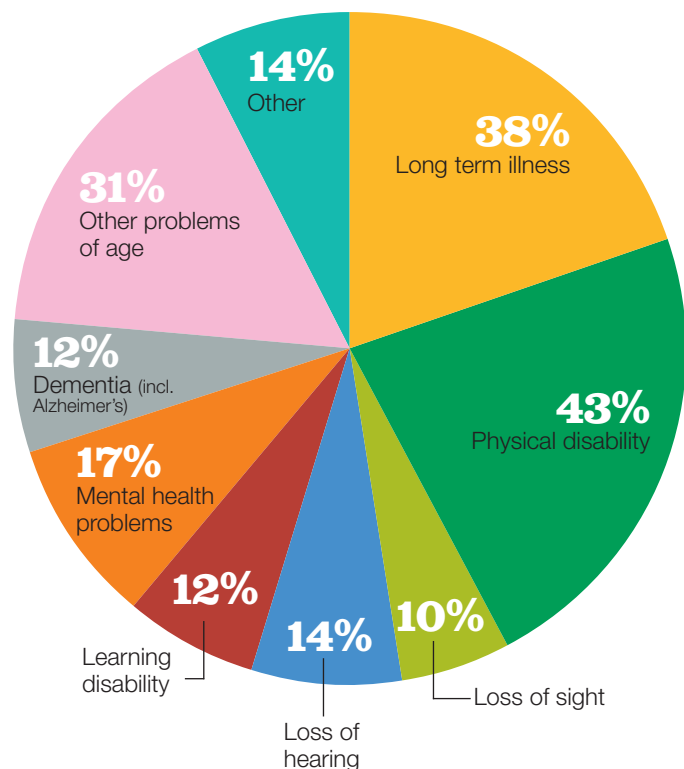


www.boltonshhealthmatters.org

Almost half (47%) of carers in Bolton in 2001 were aged 45-64 years with 1 in 5 of all people (21%) in this age group providing some informal care.

According to the Health and Wellbeing Survey, carers in Bolton provided care to people with the following types of illness or disabilities (multiple answers were possible):

Caring for others: What Problem(s) does the person you care for have?



Source: Bolton Health and Wellbeing Survey 2010.

Compared to the findings from the previous Bolton Health Survey (in 2007), there had been an increase from 13% to 17% of those supporting people with mental health problems.

The 2010 Health and Wellbeing Survey found a significantly higher proportion of carers compared to non-carers reported that they had suffered with depression in the previous year. A significantly higher proportion of carers report having a long term health problem or disability than non-carers. National research has found that carers' health suffers as a direct result of caring as personal health needs are often neglected when faced with the priority of caring for somebody else.

The National Carers Strategy Demonstrator Sites

programme highlighted many ideas that work in helping carers to stay well and healthy or to get a short break or a chance to meet their own needs, explaining how and why these ideas can work. The study showed, for example, that for carers struggling to make ends meet, small investments in gym memberships or short breaks could make a real difference - yet cost a fraction of what would need to be spent if their care breaks down or cannot be sustained.

The study also found that special health and wellbeing checks could pick up carers' physical or mental health problems – spotting many conditions, including diabetes, depression and cancer, which would otherwise be left undiagnosed, as carers often put their own needs second to those of others.

Another key finding was that when GPs or hospitals work together with social services and voluntary agencies in their area, support for carers can really improve - yet the better support carers receive through these integrated partnerships costs comparatively little.

As part of the national programme, Greater Manchester West Mental Health Trust ran a Carer Demonstrator Site in Bolton that has brought lasting benefits for carers of people with mental health problems. The project included carer awareness training for staff, involvement of carers and the promotion of carers' assessments. There is now a GMW Carers Strategy, a Carers Charter and a comfortable and welcoming Carers' Room near their inpatient wards at Royal Bolton Hospital.

Engagement with local carers

During June and July 2012, a number of discussion groups were held with carers at the Carers Resource centre, exploring themes including breaks for carers; information and advice; recognition and support for carers; carers' health and wellbeing; and making sure that the voices of carers are heard. Discussions were also held with various carers' groups. Below is a summary of the key issues and concerns raised by carers under each heading:

Recognition and support for carers:

- Experience of recognition of the carer's role varies enormously. It matters most with health professionals, and can be particularly affected by whether carers share a GP with the person they care for. Many felt there should be a common system of highlighting carers' details and status on patient files.
- Other ideas were offered of ways to improve experiences of NHS services, e.g. some priority or flexibility with appointments for those people with autism, mental health and others who struggle with long waits.
- Lack of recognition by the carer was noted, with people not recognising themselves as carers. Where some carers are 'propping each other up' there is an even greater barrier to accepting the term.
- Some carers reported that they did not feel fully recognised and respected as the carer by services, for example if not related to the person being cared for; or where the pattern of caring responsibilities was uneven, such as when a loved one has an alcohol or drug addiction.
- More general awareness was called for to encourage understanding in universal contact points, e.g. shops, libraries and health centres. There is a need for staff training/messages about carer awareness.
- A number of carers shared stories of giving up work to care. In many cases the decision was taken quickly. The challenge of recognition and support from employers is a difficult one and more information is needed by carers.
- Carers allowance recognises the carers' role but many carers are not eligible (e.g. pensioners).

- A good relationship with professionals and building understanding of carers' circumstances was highly valued. Some carers expressed concern that adult social care processes required them to 'start again' with enquiries rather than go back to social workers they had got to know.
- Being the sole carer for someone over a long period of time, if there are no other relatives or friends to lighten the load, takes its toll. If there is no-one to call upon to help out if the carer is unwell or has an emergency, this is an extra worry.
- Examples of the extra pressure being put on carers when those they care for refuse help.
- Carers assessments should be promoted positively and be triggered at information and treatment points e.g. at memory clinics.

Information and advice:

- Information is vitally important to carers. People need information and explanations of 'what's available to help' – encompassing benefits and services, health conditions and hints and tips.
- All information needs to be concise, jargon-free and up to date. Different needs should be considered such as translations, easy read documents and videos on the web.
- Information on the internet should be improved and expanded locally. However, there are still many older people not accessing the web, so they need alternatives such as information sheets.
- Newsletters produced by carers' organisations were highly valued. They can be picked up, put down, and kept. They are important in making carers feel part of a network and news and events was felt to be as important as service information. Topic based information sheets were also popular.
- Good information and explanations about social care in general is needed. Carers need an understanding of social care, assessments and entitlement and can be very confused about contacts, processes and rights.
- The need for advice to be given sympathetically was emphasised by many carers. Carers need encouragement as well as the factual information and contacts.

- Information of different kinds will be needed by carers at different points/events in their lives, e.g. diagnosis, hospital discharge, thinking of giving up work.
- Carers will often need advice and help when their caring role comes to an end. Benefits and financial advice may be needed and there may be the challenge of re-entering the workforce after many years.
- Services talking to one another and signposting effectively were important – for example, people who contact access Bolton and are identified as carers should be made aware of Bolton Carers Support.
- Internet training should be provided for carers, and looking for relevant information could be part of their learning. There is a particular need for practical training and tips on caring activities such as lifting and moving, plus first aid.
- ‘Peer support groups’ – groups of carers in similar situations, e.g. caring for people who have the same condition, were a popular idea and it was pointed out that such groups can have an information role as well as providing emotional support and friendship.
- There is a big demand for advice on benefits and money matters. At carers’ information events, benefits advisers are inundated with enquiries. A high proportion of Bolton Carers Support helpline queries relate to money/benefits.
- Carers often need support to improve their financial situation, which can involve more than help with claiming benefits. Carers may need advice and information on the financial implications of giving up work to care, pensions provision and dealing with debt.
- Carers referred to particular events and episodes of stress or difficulty which they felt had taken their toll on carers’ health: coping with health problems of those they care for, who may have episodes of time in hospital: getting into debt; trying to get help and pushing for the best care and services for your loved one.
- Examples of the effects of these pressures include loss of weight, loss of sleep, going on anti-depressants, sleeping tablets. Some felt that anti-depressants could be too easy an option and that there should be health checks for carers and counselling available.

Breaks for carers:

- Everyone agreed that carers needed to have some kind of breaks, but that what this should be was very personal. Carers had different circumstances in relation to getting a short break and having informal cover for a while, e.g. to go shopping or to the hairdresser. Some parents can get break in school hours; some rely on day care for their loved one; some can be left for a couple of hours or with a sandwich for lunch. The pressure was enormous for those who couldn’t get any break at all.
- For some, work provides a break, if the balance can be struck between work and care.
- Carers emphasised the importance of day care enabling carers to have a regular break.
- Respite was greatly valued but difficult to organise. The £75 payments currently made after a carers’ assessments were very much appreciated. Day trips and meals provided by Bolton Carers Support (funded by the Big Lottery) were greatly valued. Many carers would be willing to pay charges.
- Carers and cared for sometimes want a break together. There seems to be growing demand for this kind of provision.
- The Care4 group said that stress relief was very popular and helpful but they were struggling to fund it for their members. A number of carers suggested that a planned once a month pamper or activity would make an enormous difference.
- Many examples were given of the person who was being cared for not allowing the carer to get a break.

Carers’ health and wellbeing:

- A number of carers referred to the cumulative pressures of long term caring. Services should recognise this and not just respond to immediate ‘snapshot’ current needs.
- The impact of caring can result in grieving for what you have lost: loss of job/career, loss of social life, loss of plan for the future as a couple, or for your child’s future.
- Caring roles which involve daily personal and physical care have a significant impact on the carers’ physical health. Those who care for people who have mental health issues or autism have different pressures; some felt they were hidden conditions.

Making sure that the voices of carers are heard:

- Carers found it really helpful to meet with other carers and hear their stories. A big event that any carer could attend should be held from time to time.
- Equally it was recognised that small topic groups were important too and enabled people to consider issues in more depth.
- Carer representatives should be involved in partnership meetings but a greater number of carers need their own place to have a voice, or simply listen to what is being planned.
- Carers need to be involved to influence action in services such as at the hospital.
- Peer support groups were very positively regarded. These groups could invite speakers and influence specific services, and representatives of different groups of carers could be identified.
- A strong carers' voice was needed to monitor action on the Carers Strategy. Carers need to know next steps and get reports back.
- It was remarked that the new strategy needs to emphasise the diversity of carers' needs.

- It was requested that the strategy emphasises the enormous role that carers have and should acknowledge the need for long term carers to look ahead as they are concerned about future support for those they care for.
- Strong working relationships between carers' groups and the council were seen as vital to the involvement of carers and effective service delivery.
- Newsletters and the internet were both referred to as important for spreading information and asking for views so that carers' voices will be heard, as not everyone will be able to attend meetings.

Many strong, clear themes ran through discussions with carers and many of them have been concerns voiced by carers over a number of years. Information and advice, the need for carers to get a break and the need for emotional support are examples of issues that were amongst the themes and priorities in the previous carers strategy.

Issues raised by carers do not differ greatly from area to area, but clearly there are particular needs in different communities. In Bolton there is an increasing number of older people and a changing, diverse community, with areas of deprivation and relative affluence and a need to address various problems of ill health and exclusion. This is why we need to make sure that we root our actions to improve life for carers firmly in the evidence, listening to carers and understanding our population.



Our Vision for Bolton's carers

Bolton's Carers Strategy sets out our vision for the next three years:

To promote greater awareness of the vital role of carers, to build strong networks of support for them and for public services to work creatively alongside carers to enhance their quality of life and ensure the best possible care and support for their loved ones.

The strategy establishes the following priority outcomes for local carers up to 2015:

- Carers are enabled to make informed choices about care, support, health and wellbeing.
- Those who are carrying out a caring role are recognised and their contribution, knowledge and perspectives are valued.
- A network of sources of support and opportunities to get a break are accessible to carers in Bolton, including targeting aimed at meeting diverse needs.
- Carers are enabled to make contact with other carers, supported by an active community network, helping to maintain their caring role.
- Carers' needs are promoted in wider society, e.g. in workplaces, in education and in tackling barriers to services of all kinds.
- Bolton's carers have opportunities to influence the design and delivery of local services.

Our strategy has been developed with the involvement of local carers and the experiences and ideas they have shared have been invaluable in setting our themes and priorities. In particular, carers consistently emphasised the following issues:

- Their need for good quality information and advice.
- The value of being in contact with other carers.
- The importance of the carer role being recognised by professionals.
- Concern about looking after one's own health.
- Concern about money and benefits.

- The difficulty of balancing caring and work and having a life outside of caring.
- The need to get a break from caring.

Informed by these concerns and supported by a wider body of evidence, the strategy sets the direction and focus for the council and local organisations to work together with carers to bring about tangible and lasting changes and improvements in the coming years. Many of these will be in health services and social care, but there are also challenges for wider services and society.

The strategy goes on to identify a range of practical and realistic ways to pursue these outcomes, bearing in mind resources are limited, but also explores what may be achievable by seeking to bring influence to bear on a broad range of fronts. The strategy emphasises the importance of embedding carers' involvement in the strategy's implementation and the careful planning and review of activity.



What are we going to do?

Our vision is:

To promote greater awareness of the vital role of carers, to build strong networks of support for them, and for public services to work creatively alongside carers to enhance their quality of life and ensure the best possible care and support for their loved ones.

What we are going to do will be aimed at achieving our strategy's priority outcomes for local carers up to 2015.

These are described below:

- **Carers are enabled to make informed choices about care, support, health and wellbeing.**

Information about services and support needs to be available and accessible. This will include information relating to health conditions, rights and benefits, as well as information about the care system. Help and advice may be required to help carers 'navigate' local services or a listening ear to discuss their worries and pressures.

- **Those who are carrying out a caring role are recognised and their contribution, knowledge and perspectives are valued.**

Naturally, most carers simply look upon themselves as sons, daughters, husbands, wives, friends of the person they care for. Carers UK says it can take three years for carers to find out about help. Ways of identifying carers through primary care need to be developed so that awareness and support can be available at an early stage, potentially avoiding more costly crisis intervention later on. Professionals should make the most of carers' expert knowledge and experience.

- **A network of sources of support and opportunities to get a break are accessible to carers in Bolton, including targeting aimed at meeting diverse needs.**

Carers need to be able to get some kind of break, and a range of ways to enable breaks (not just in a crisis) should be available, which take into account carers' personal circumstances and cultural requirements. Funding for carers' organisations and carer support needs to address the diverse needs of local

communities and the different pressures that carers are under, so that limited resources can support innovative and cost-effective interventions.

- **Carers are enabled to make contact with other carers, supported by an active community network, helping to maintain their caring role.**

Opportunities for carers to meet and support each other are greatly valued. Sharing encouragement and experiences with others in a similar caring situation breaks down isolation and increases confidence. The potential for more peer support groups should be explored, building on the experience of carers' organisations and maximising the use of facilities in the Carers Resource.

- **Carers' needs are promoted in wider society, e.g. in workplaces, in education and in tackling barriers to services of all kinds.**

Outreach and promotions to carers need to be planned and co-ordinated. Awareness of carers' roles should be highlighted during events, e.g. Carers' Week and Carers' Rights Day, and by developing a wider network of supportive organisations and individuals to take up issues that affect carers in all aspects of their lives.

- **Bolton's carers have opportunities to influence the design and delivery of local services.**

New networks and partnerships will enable carers to have their say and to be involved in planning services and in driving forward the implementation of the Carers Strategy vision and priorities. Their ideas and experience will inform care and health services, with their views and expert role taken into account in how support is delivered.

Specific actions under these headings are set out in the following section, 'Our Implementation Plan'.

Our Implementation Plan

The strategy's Implementation Plan is structured according to our local priority outcomes.

Our Implementation Plan will keep us on track throughout the delivery of the strategy and allow us to evaluate our progress. For more information about this, see the section on 'Monitoring progress'.

Key 'milestones' have been identified for the whole three year life of the Strategy, but there will be a need to identify and agree specific actions that are relevant to the times as

the strategy progresses. There are a number of national plans that indicate the need for local action, but the detail of what we need to do may not yet be clear. The Implementation Plan will therefore be reviewed in the autumn in 2013 and 2014, and amendments or additional actions will be proposed at these times. The strategy will be fully revised in 2015.

Priority Outcome:

Carers are enabled to make informed choices about care, support, health and wellbeing

Action	When	How we will know we have been successful
Provide good information and advice for local carers via carers web pages – updating the council's web information for carers to link to the best available information.	Spring 2013	We receive positive feedback from local carers and carer organisations.
A wide range of local information and advice services will be provided for local carers through the council's Carers Grants Scheme, opening access to support and information to carers from across the borough and addressing their diverse needs. This will complement and build upon established information sources for carers and broader local advice provision and web information.	Summer 2013	Joined up and comprehensive formats and channels of information and advice are available for local carers, e.g. helpline, information sheets, newsletters, advice and emotional support. Positive feedback is received from carers and carer organisations. Numbers of enquiries should increase.
Ensure effective signposting and referrals for local carers who seek information and advice. Information and advice givers and networks will develop links to channel enquiries to the best source.	Autumn 2013	Carers report a positive experience of seeking information. Specific arrangements for referrals will be in place. Links in place to key areas where carers need advice: for example, housing, money advice and benefits.
Planned outreach and promotions to promote carer awareness and access information will be placed on a firm basis, making the most of carers' organisations and service providers' resources.	From Summer 2013	Successful Carers Week and Carers Rights Day events held. Other promotions well-planned and cost effective, taking opportunities to address unmet needs or hard to reach groups.
Improved care and support information on the web via a new national website at www.nhs.uk linked to local council websites. Ensure local information is effective for carers and compliments existing provision.	From April 2014	Positive feedback from local carers. Volunteers involved in preparation and testing. Monitor web page traffic.

Priority Outcome:

Those who are carrying out a caring role are recognised and their contribution, knowledge and perspectives are valued

Action	When	How we will know we have been successful
Launch Bolton's Strategy for Carers.	Spring/Summer 2013	Positive feedback on the strategy and launch event and subsequent involvement from carers and stakeholders.
Once statutory Carers Survey results are received and analysed, explore individual quality of life outcomes for carers to understand these better for the future.	Autumn 2013	Bolton is well placed when benchmarked/ compared with other neighbouring areas. Carers involved in exploring quality of life issues with Adult Social Care.
Comprehensive summary of local carers' needs and related issues regularly updated and improved in Bolton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment at www.boltonshhealthmatters.org .	Early 2013	Increased awareness and use by agencies and carers and evidence used to inform service provision and improvements, and to reach different groups of carers.
Planned promotion to identify carers via GP practices. From April 2013 the NHS Commissioning Board and the new local clinical commissioning groups will be responsible for working with local partners to ensure that carers are identified and supported. NHS organisations will be required to work with their local authority partners and local carers' organisations to agree plans and budgets for identifying and supporting carers.	Autumn 2013	Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group encouraging use of Royal College of GPs' guidance, building on work done by NHS Bolton and Bolton Carers Support and good practice and commitment of local GPs. Carers and carers' groups are enabled to get involved in this area of work. Carers identified in this way are signposted to information and services in effective ways and numbers and outcomes monitored.
Adult Social Care will work with local carers and carers' organisations to explore the implications for the expansion of carers' assessments, referred to in the Care and Support white paper (2012).	April 2014	Carers report that carers' assessments have been helpful and have led to greater awareness of available help or information.
Improved liaison between local agencies, particularly Adult and Childrens' Social Care, to support families where a young carer (aged under 18) is or is at risk of playing a caring role.	Autumn 2013	Local Memorandum of Understanding agreed to establish best practice and procedures.

Priority Outcome:

A network of sources of support and opportunities to get a break are accessible to carers in Bolton, including targeting aimed at meeting diverse needs

Action	When	How we will know we have been successful
Ensure that a range of breaks are available for individuals to get a break from caring, both as a result of assessment of need and also promoting universal opportunities that are preventative.	Summer 2013	Feedback from carers on the benefits of getting a break, and what this means for individuals. Extend number and range of breaks available and improved information on getting a break.
Establish a new council funded Carers Grants Scheme to fund the local voluntary sector to provide support and information for carers in Bolton.	Summer 2013	Successful implementation of new Carers' Grants Scheme, obtaining a balance between continuity and new initiatives. Cost effective use of resources, with services delivering Carers Strategy priority outcomes. External funding opportunities identified to enhance voluntary sector provision for carers.
Explore opportunities for training for carers.	Summer 2013	Response to issues raised by carers through engagement, e.g. training on health conditions, practical caring etc. Related training available mapped and promoted to carers.



Priority Outcome:

Carers are enabled to make contact with other carers, supported by an active community network, helping to maintain their caring role

Action	When	How we will know we have been successful
Support and increase opportunities for carers to meet and support each other and establish 'peer support groups', e.g. related to health conditions or in local areas. Maximise the use of local networks, resources and funding opportunities to encourage and support new groups. Promote the availability of national on-line forums for carers.	Autumn 2013	New peer support groups are established and become independent. Groups enable more carers to have a voice. Groups benefit from establishing local networks and contacts.
Develop the Carers Resource at the Thicketford Centre to enable involvement/use by more groups and a key base for carers engagement.	Spring/Summer 2013	Greater use of the centre by a wider range of carers groups and activities.

Priority Outcome:

Carers' needs are promoted in wider society, e.g. in workplaces, in education and in tackling barriers to services of all kinds

Action	When	How we will know we have been successful
Ensure that promotions such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day reach out to 'hidden' carers.	Summer 2013	More new carers come forward and seek information.
Work with service providers and key partners to encourage them to consider how the priority outcomes of the Carers Strategy apply to their services and develop their own response/action plan.	Spring 2013	Meetings and processes are set up. Carers are engaged and involved. Tangible actions and improvements are identified.
Arrange an 'Employers for carers' event - an informal network of employers interesting in supporting carers in the workforce.	Autumn 2013	Profile raised of work and caring issues, example of good practice shared and momentum begun.
Promote access for carers to adult and community learning opportunities, in response to assessment of need where relevant, and also making information available about universal learning opportunities.	Summer 2013	Potential barriers to learning for carers identified. Information targeted at local carers to enable them to enrol for courses, and to consider wider opportunities, e.g. distance learning. Monitor take-up of learning opportunities.

Priority Outcome:

Bolton's carers have opportunities to influence the design and delivery of local services

Action	When	How we will know we have been successful
Establish new arrangements for all local carers to be able to make their voice heard. Establish an annual Carers Voice event to bring carers together, raise issues and comment/feedback on progress on the Carers Strategy.	Autumn 2013	Carers Voice event held and feedback received, with concerns addressed in reviewing progress on the strategy. Carers are able to comment and engage in increasing numbers and in different ways.
Relaunch the Carers Impact Group as the key information sharing network of organisations working with carers in Bolton. Review and extend membership of the group and ensure carer involvement, linked to Carers Voice meetings. Establish monitoring/progress checking of the Carers Impact Group, which will meet quarterly.	Spring/Summer 2013	Carers Impact Group set up with new membership and effective monitoring in place. Improved information sharing between carers and those working with them.
Establish working groups/topic groups of carers to explore key issues, working with relevant professionals. Determine the potential role of carer organisations and local Healthwatch in supporting and facilitating groups, and how these feed into Carers Voice meetings and subsequently influence greater awareness of carers' concerns.	Summer 2013	First topic groups identified, roles agreed and professionals engaged. Higher profile for carers' issues, with representation of carers considered by relevant bodies.
Promote to carers the various ways in which they can make their voices heard on social care, healthcare and wider services, e.g. to local Healthwatch.	Spring 2013	Issues raised by carers fed back to inform the Carers Strategy and influence other plans or services.
Involve carers in examining the implications of proposed new laws set out in the draft Care and Support Bill 2012 to extend carers' assessments and potentially extend carers' entitlement to support through personal budgets, on the same footing as users of services.	2013/2014	Establish involvement at an early stage, building on work of topic groups, as timetable and detail emerges.

Monitoring Progress

Progress will be monitored via the Implementation Plan which will be updated and a progress update presented once a quarter to the multi-agency Carers Impact Group. Members of the Carers Impact Group will feed back to their organisations and reports will be made as required to local partnerships under the new Health and Wellbeing Board structure.

The Implementation Plan will be reviewed in the autumn in 2013 and 2014 and amendments or additional actions will be proposed at these times. A summary of progress will be reported to new annual Carers Voice meetings to feed into these reviews. The strategy will be fully revised in 2015.

Progress and updates will be published on the Bolton Council website at www.bolton.gov.uk/carers.

Useful links

Bolton Council web pages for carers

www.bolton.gov.uk/carers

Carers UK

www.carersuk.org

Carers Trust

www.carers.org

Carers Direct

www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

Bolton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

www.boltonshhealthmatters.org

