

Carers Week 2024 Conference Summary Report

“Putting Carers on the Map”

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The overarching aims and objectives of this Enfield Carers Centre Carers Week Conference were:

1. To promote and explain the need for a borough-wide, integrated, cross sector Strategic Action Plan for Family/Unpaid Carers
2. To actively co-produce and involve Carers in the development of the Action Plan
3. To gather feedback on Enfield Carers Centre's services and carers services in general, help to identify any unmet areas of need and to facilitate improvement in existing services

Part 1

Conference

The conference was opened by **Pamela Burke**, Chief Executive of Enfield Carers Centre (ECC), who welcomed everyone and explained the objectives of the conference.



Tim Hellings, ECC's Chairman, followed with a short address about ECC's ongoing commitment to supporting Carers in Enfield. Tim also shared demographic data on the location of Carers in Enfield, according to the last census.

Doug Wilson – Director of Health and Adult Social Care at Enfield Council shared his personal experience of being a Carer and discussed Enfield Council’s continued commitment to supporting Carers in the borough. Doug advised Carers to contact him through ECC if they had any specific questions and he gave a commitment to answer each one personally.

Pamela Burke – Chief Executive, Enfield Carers Centre delivered a presentation explaining ECC’s proposal for a Joint Carers Strategic Action Plan to be developed and signed up to by Enfield Council, the Mental Health Trust and the NHS/North Central London Integrated Care Board (ICB). The presentation outlined the local and national drivers and why Carers’ involvement in developing this plan is so important.

[Appendix A: Draft Joint Carers Strategic Action Plan](#)

Vhenekayi Nyambayo –Head of Strategy & Partnerships – North Middx University Hospital – talked about their commitment to Carers support at the hospital including: the Carers’ Passport and their pledge to include carers more meaningfully in the discharge process.

Carla Brain – Young Carers Project Manager, Enfield Carers Centre, presented an update on Young Carer Support services and activities delivered by ECC for 5–18 year olds.

Mark Warwick – Healthcare Manager at Enfield Carers Centre, delivered a presentation on the health and wellbeing services offered to Carers at ECC. Services include counselling sessions, mental health support, GP & Hospital support and wellbeing sessions.

Part 2

Tabletop Discussions – Outcomes and Feedback

Carers were asked to consider and feedback on what support they feel is needed in 4 main areas of service provision and how the issues identified need to be addressed within the borough's statutory and health and social care services. Feedback from the tabletop discussions was collated using both paper and digital methods e.g. Menti poll software.

1. How can there be better identification, recognition and support of carers?

Greater recognition and support for Carers will help prevent carer-breakdown, ensure they are fully equipped to care, address their individual health needs, protect their wellbeing, prevent financial hardship and enable them to continue caring for their loved ones if they are able/wish to. Ensure commissioned provision of carer support services.

- The discussions around this question were very much linked to Carers saying that, post covid, services and support staff, in particular GPs and Social workers have become less available, leaving Carers feeling isolated and unsupported.
- In addition, it feels to Carers like the move to online appointment booking and form filling by the statutory services has resulted in there being less human interaction and opportunities to support for Carers. This is leading to increased frustration and stress levels and is impacting on Carers' overall wellbeing.
- There was also pretty much unanimous agreement that GP Practice staff need to be better trained to be more Carer aware and friendly, particularly for example, when dealing with Carers of neuro divergent children or adults with Dementia and/or mental health conditions where there may be situations in which challenging behaviour is displayed. Carers felt they were often treated unkindly, with no understanding by some practice staff.

See Fig. 1 overleaf for additional Menti Poll comments relating to question 1.

Fig.1 Menti Poll Comments



2. How can there be better involvement of and support for carers in hospital discharge situations?

The recently launched “Carers Hospital Discharge Toolkit” embraced by NHS England and London councils promotes the need for London Hospitals to involve Carers more consistently in hospital discharge planning to improve discharge rates and prevent unnecessary hospital admissions. Training for Carers to better equip them to care will help prevent re-admissions and improve the success of virtual wards/reablement teams.

The discussions around this topic centred on Carers saying they are not sufficiently heard or included in the discharge process and feeling as though they do not understand the process or what questions to ask.

- Carers feel that often, no discussions take place asking about their needs and whether they can cope, which results in healthcare professionals often making assumptions about whether they can continue / begin to care for their loved one.
- Post discharge services not being put in place in a timely manner leaving Carers unsupported or the needs of patient not being met due to this.
- Lack of communication with family/Carers. Often there is no recognition that they may be the experts in the care of this person which can then result in them feeling intimidated by medical staff. Carers felt they lacked the confidence to speak up.

See Fig. 2 for additional Menti Poll comments relating to question 2.

Fig.2 Menti Poll Comments



3. How can better contingency planning be made for carers' emergencies?

Carers should not have to deal with emergencies on their own. Joined up support for devising and storing contingency plans will ensure that more Carers understand the out of hours options available to them and have appropriate backup support in place for when they need it.

- Carers generally felt that emergency & contingency planning was not something they were ever asked about by health and social care professionals.
- Single parent Carers felt they were lacking in support in this area and did not feel that they could discuss it with social workers. Carers felt that this should be a standard part of a needs assessment and a Carers Assessment with a structure in place for emergency plans.

See Fig. 3 below for additional Menti Poll comments relating to question 3.

Fig. 3 Menti Poll comments



4. How can there be better recognition and support for young carers?

To ensure that young carers don't struggle to cope alone or provide inappropriate levels of care, NHS providers need to recognise and identify Young Carers (YC) in families they support, refer them for assessments and acknowledge that young carers can provide valuable information about patients and service users. Local authorities have a duty under the Care Act to ensure young carers are identified, assessed and supported. Robust commissioning should provide specific young carer support services which are separate and distinct from generic children's services.*

- The table discussions around YCs centred around the lack of statutory service support and the fact that social workers do not identify YCs for support. Part of the work that ECC does through its Lottery funded YC Project is raising awareness in schools and delivering professional training to teachers. There is, however, still a need for schools to be much more aware of this issue.
- Carers thought it shocking that Enfield Council has no YC service, no funding and there are very few referrals to Enfield Carers Centre's YCs project.

See Fig. 4 overleaf for additional Menti Poll comments relating to question 4.

Fig 4. Menti Poll comments



Part 3

Enfield Carers Centre Question & Answer Panel

This section of the Conference encouraged Carers' questions and feedback on the quality and variety of services provided by Enfield Carers Centre.

Panel Members:

Pamela Burke (PB) Chief Executive Officer

Fiona Jones (FJ) Operations Director/Deputy CEO

Danny Newland (DN) Carers Advice & Support Manager

Mark Warwick – (MW) Healthcare Manager

Q1. Why is the Carers Gold Card no longer valid at Enfield Leisure Centres ? At times when Carers are suffering more than usual with rising costs and council tax bills this is another thing that has been taken away from them .

FJ explained that Enfield Council has signed a new contract with Better Leisure and, despite Enfield Carers Centre asking for months before the new providers took over the contract, the Carers Gold Card from ECC is not recognised by Better Leisure. Instead, they insist that people to sign up to Carers UK and have a limited period (twice per year) when Carers in Enfield can sign up for their leisure centre discount card.

FJ advised that she has been talking to managers at Better Leisure and asking why Carers in Enfield are not being offered the same opportunity as Carers in Barnet. There Carers have access to an ongoing leisure card issued by Barnet Carers Centre which can be applied for at any time and which gives access to free swimming at all Barnet's leisure centres. The question is, therefore, why are the 1000 Carers in Enfield who have an Enfield Carers Centre gold card not being offered this same opportunity?

Enfield Carers Centre has been advised that this is because Enfield Council did not stipulate this requirement when the contract was issued and agreed. FJ has spoken to various officers at Enfield Council and is awaiting a response. FJ did not think this change was solely connected to the Council's financial difficulties but confirmed that Enfield Carers Centre would let Carers know the outcome as soon as an updated reply is received from Enfield Council.

Q3. Why are there are no longer named social workers assigned to the cared for person? The lack of consistency means it is hard to get a response when there is a problem, as there is nobody who knows the family.

PB advised that, unfortunately, this is not something that Enfield Carers Centre has any influence over and that, most probably, where social workers aren't assigned, this may be linked to lack of local authority resource and the increased demand for social care services. However, this question will be noted in the conference report and forwarded to Enfield Council for a response.

Q4. Why is the regular Enfield Carers Centre Mental Health Group is no longer running?

PB explained that as attendance numbers were low and often with the same 4 people coming every time, the group was changed to try and encourage new Carers to attend and increase numbers. Various formats and ideas have been tried by Enfield Carers Centre over the to encourage attendance (e.g. ringing / texting / emailing reminders prior to the event) but these hadn't resulted in achieving greater numbers. During 2024 Enfield Carers Centre have offered MH training workshops and held a mental health conference during Mental Health Action Week. These events achieved good attendance and the feedback from Carers showed they found these events more productive than a support group.

PB also explained that every effort is being made to increase attendance numbers for the MH group and that she would be happy to meet with Carers afterwards to discuss any additional suggestions for attracting better attendance.

FJ added that we have a contractual obligation and duty to our main funder, Enfield Council, to ensure we use their funding in the most productive way and that we also have attendance number targets to reach to fulfil our contract.

Conference Feedback/Carers 'Comments

- 100% said they found the event worthwhile
- 62% said the event helped them to feel less isolated.
- 95% said it helped them to meet other Carers and share experiences.

What portions of the Conference did you find most useful?

Carers Gold card..... discharged from hospital

Realising there is support in areas I was not previously aware of

All

Guest speakers

Q & A

Q&A

Guest Speakers and Q & A

Update on services

Pam's talk

Table session

No answer

Q+A

All useful

No answer

Pam's speak and group ideas

Mainly adults baring topics

Recognition of the importance of unpaid Carers

ECC carers services

I got useful information

Carers support

Other comments included:

Thank you

Excellent

More events like this

Hard to find. Would like similar events

More meetings like this

Evening Drop ins at centre

More like this please. Cared for to be able to on trips

Need to hear what hospital N Middlesex do for Carers

It's wonderful to know that I am not only Carer and meeting with other people

More events should take place

Having been referred to ECC by Enfield Memory service

Well lead - Good balance of listening to people without it becoming 50 people moaning about lack of services

Well done ECC

Very useful and very welcome all the Carers

Thank you

Thank you

Excellent

More events like this

M H Support group to reinstated

Thank you



Conclusion

1. Many Carers report feeling digitally excluded and less supported post covid because of the push by GP Practices and the local authority to move to online services which remove or seriously reduce options for human interactions. This unfortunately increases Carer stress levels.
2. Many Carers reported that they were often treated unkindly and without understanding at GP practices or hospitals. Staff did not understand the difficulties Carers experience when waiting for long periods in open waiting areas with their loved ones.
3. NHS* and GP Practice staff could benefit from carer-awareness training, particularly Dementia and Mental Health Carers and Carers of neuro-divergent children or adults in order to address point 2 above.
4. Carers reported that they were still being left out of care and discharge planning discussions or were sidelined by NHS staff. In contrast, Carers were often assumed to be automatically capable of continuing to provide care without being asked to confirm this.
5. In the rush to discharge, aids and support services aren't always put in place once the patients return home, leaving Carers and patients unsupported.
6. Carers acknowledged the importance of making emergency/ contingency plans but are often so overwhelmed by their caring circumstances that they don't have the time to consider or finish making a plan.
7. Carers (particularly single parent Carers) weren't asked about contingency planning by health and social care professionals in a consistent or structured way.

Recommendations

1. Managers and staff within Enfield's NHS* Trusts, Mental Health and Social Care Officers should work together as a matter of urgency to develop a meaningful, joint action plan that will address the issues raised by Carers at this conference.
2. Senior NHS*, Mental Health Trust and Social Care Managers should commit to their staff receiving mandatory carer-awareness training to improve carer/staff interactions. Such training should be linked to (what is assumed to be mandatory) Dementia, LD and MH awareness training for staff.
3. Each Enfield GP Practice should maintain a Carers Register to clearly document which of their patients are Carers so that they can offer annual health checks, flu jabs and extended appointment times.
4. GP Practices in Enfield should adopt Carer-friendly policies which allow for extended appointments, early/late appointment slots, quiet rooms and appoint Carer Champions within their workforce.
5. National research and the Enfield Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has shown that people with additional learning needs and those with mental ill health suffer poorer physical health outcomes. Hospitals serving Enfield residents should invest in more specialist nurses/staff to support patients with these needs so that their physical health outcomes improve.
6. Discharge awareness training for Carers should be offered more widely throughout the borough. Enfield Carers Centre currently offers this training free of charge to Carers once a quarter either at their Centre and at North Middx. University Hospital. Funding to publicise and increase the availability of this training is essential, particularly for Carers from hidden and harder to reach communities.
7. Local hospitals serving Enfield residents should formally adopt the London Hospitals Discharge Toolkit which champions the need and benefit of identification, recognition and involvement of Carers from admission to discharge. This will improve each hospital's ability to achieve smoother, faster, safer discharges and improve the experience of Carers and enhance patients' recovery.

8. Making contingency planning an integral part of needs assessments, carers assessments and annual reviews would help Carers to focus on this area and plan for the future/emergencies.
9. Social Care, NHS* Trust and GP Practice staff should receive Young Carers awareness training. As a result, more Young Carers could be identified for support at an earlier stage. In this way they can also be properly assessed so that they can be relieved from providing inappropriate levels of care.
10. A larger support service for Young Carers should be urgently commissioned, preferably building on the service provided by local charity – Enfield Carers Centre which has operated a robust, not-for-profit Young Carers service for almost a decade. Additional funding would allow a greater number of Young Carers to be supported than can currently be accommodated with the charity's Big Lottery grant.

* References to NHS in this document include retitled Integrated Care Board/Integrated Borough Partnership systems and services



