



Health and Community Directorate

Halton and St. Helens 
Primary Care Trust

CARERS STRATEGY 2008 – 2009

***DRAFT (as at
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FOREWORD

This 2008 – 2009 Carers Strategy is as a result of on-going consultations and contributions from all stakeholders, including Carers, Health Authority and Service Providers.

The Carers Strategy includes an Action Plan for the continued development of services for carers in Halton over the next 12 months.

The main objectives of this strategy include the need to identify hidden carers, recognise and respond to carers needs, and improve information and access to support services.

On the 3rd March 2008, we held an event at Halton Stadium; where it provided an opportunity for Carers, to contribute to the development of the services that we provide for Carers. At the event, Carers had the opportunity to review services that have been provided over the last two years.

We have listened to what carers have told us about the help and support they need and responded by addressing the issues throughout the Strategy.

We are proud of what we have achieved for carers since the production of the last Carers Strategy. The Carers' Centres in Widnes and Runcorn have continued to provide a wide range of services including counselling, complementary therapies and a place for support groups to meet. There has been a considerable increase in the number of individual carers registering and receiving breaks from the Centres.

There are as many as 13,500 carers in the Borough who provide help and support for their partners, children, relatives and friends. We know that many carers are not in touch with services that could improve the quality of their lives and have specifically begun to target hidden carers. We recognise that Halton has a high percentage of people who are unable to read or write and have previously been unable to access help and support within their caring roles, with this in mind; we have provided face to face presentations and outreach sessions where our staff can offer information and signpost Carers to available services.

We recognise and value the essential role that carers play in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community. We believe that this strategy demonstrates our commitment to recognising, valuing and working with local carers.

Audrey Williamson
Operational Director (Adults of Working Age)
Chair of Carers Strategy Group

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the last nine years Halton Borough Council (HBC) has been working with stakeholders to develop and improve the Carers Strategy year on year. During the last nine years many of the actions in these strategies have been implemented and has led to significant improvements in services for carers.

More recently HBC's Carers Development Team, in consultation with the Carers Strategy Group and local carers, produced a three-year Carers Strategy for 2006 –2008. The Carers Strategy Group includes members of staff from the Health and Community, and Children and Young People Directorate's, the Primary Care Trust, local voluntary organisations and members of Halton Carers Forum. This document focuses on building on the firm foundations of the former Carers Strategy and responds to the increased local and national priorities for carers.

1.1 Who is a carer?

A carer is someone who cares, unpaid, for a relative or friend who is unable to manage on his or her own because of illness, disability or frailty. The majority are unpaid **family carers**. Carers can be any age and come from all walks of life and backgrounds. More women are carers than men and they are more likely than male carers to care for someone with very demanding care needs and to care for a wider range of relatives.

A parent carer is a parent or guardian who is likely to provide more support than other parents because their child is ill or disabled. Parent carers will probably support their child for many months or years and this is likely to have a significant affect on the other children in the family.

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 years who looks after another member of the family or close friend who is ill or disabled. They may be taking on the kind of responsibility that an adult would usually have. This may affect their education or social opportunities.

Caring relationships can be complex and family members may provide different types of care for each other in order to live independently in the community.

1.2 What do carers do?

- Carers give practical, physical and emotional support to vulnerable people. They help the person they care for to deal with problems caused by short term or long-term illness or disability, mental distress or problems resulting from alcohol or substance misuse.
- Where the person being cared for no longer has the mental capacity to make a decision, the carer may be required to make decisions on their behalf.
- Carers may supervise someone to keep him or her safe.
- Caring responsibilities may vary over time and may be difficult to predict from day to day.
- Anybody can become a carer, as a result of a sudden event such as an accident or this may be a gradual process when someone's physical or mental health slowly deteriorates.

2.0 NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTENT INFLUENCING THE CARERS STRATEGY

2.1 Carers in Britain

Carer UK statistics show that:

- 6 million carers. 1 in 10 adults are carers
- 724,802 in the North-West are carers
- 3 million people juggle work with caring responsibilities for a disabled, ill, frail relative or friend
- The main carers' benefit-Carers Allowance- is £50.55 for a minimum of 35 hours, equivalent to £1.34 per hour
- People providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled
- Every year 2 million people take on new caring responsibilities
- 1.25 million people provide over 50 hours a week on their caring responsibilities
- 58% of carers are women, 42% are men
- 1.3 million carers are over the age of 65
- 27% of carers questioned said they had been offered a health check; 88% believed that carers should receive annual health checks
- Carers save the country/Government £87 billion each year
- In 2001 11.44% of the population of Halton were carers.

2.2 Profile of carers in Halton

Census 2001 found there were 13,528 carers in Halton.

- 7,942 individuals provide unpaid care for 1 -19 hours per week
- 1,887 individuals in Halton provide unpaid care for 20-49 hours per week
- 3,699 individuals provide unpaid care for 50 or more hours per week
- It also showed that 3,083 unpaid carers were aged 60 and over
- It is estimated that there are between 900 parent carers of children with a disability
- It is estimated there are 474 young carers in Halton

2.3 The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995

The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 was implemented in April 1995. Under this legislation:

- All carers of any age are given the right to request their own carers assessment
- The carers assessment looks at the ways in which the carer can be supported in their caring role
- The information from the carers assessment can be used to increase the services to the cared for person

2.4 The National Strategy for Carers 1999

In February 1999, the Government released the national strategy for carers 'Caring for Carers'. The strategy recognised the important role that carers play in supporting the people they care for. It emphasised that all social and health care organisations must focus not only on the client, patient or service user, but also the carer.

The National Carers Strategy has three key messages:

- Carers should be informed and supported, and receive better care to improve their health and well - being.
- Carers should be involved at local level in policy and service development.
- Carers should be treated as partners by all agencies.

It also emphasised the need for local authorities to develop their own local carers strategy.

From late summer the National Strategy for Carers 2008 will supersede the current 1999 strategy as soon as such this strategy will be received and updated to take into account any changes.

2.5 The Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000

The Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000 was introduced in April 2001. Under this legislation:

- Unpaid carers over the age of 16 years who are caring for an adult have the right to request a separate assessment of their own needs. A carer may request his or her own carers assessment, even when the person they care for refuses their own assessment or support services
- People with parental responsibility for disabled children may also request a carers assessment
- Children's views are taken into account with the provision of service
- Local authorities have the power to provide services directly to carers to help maintain their health and safety and support them in their caring role
- Services to carers may be provided in a variety of ways, such as Direct Payments to carers

2.6 The Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004

This Act became law from 1st April 2005. The new law has numerous positive effects for carers in Halton. It means that carers will:

- Be told about their rights to their own carers assessment
- Have their wishes to remain in, or return to work and education, taken into account when decisions are made about support given to the person they care for
- Have better information about opportunities for work, education, training and leisure
- Benefit from more emphasis on joint working between statutory services such Halton Social Services, the Primary Care Trusts and 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust
- Carers will have equal access to services, advice and information and support regardless of gender, age, race, disability, religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

Benefits of the new legislation include:

- More carers being able to continue in work or study whilst caring
- Increase the employability of carers who wish to return to work or study
- More opportunities for carers to have access to education, training and leisure services and lead to a more fulfilled life

2.7 The Mental Capacity Act (2005)

The Mental Capacity Act applies to all individuals in England and Wales who are aged 16 and above and who lack capacity to make decisions. Hence everyone directly involved in the care of such individuals or employed in health and social care will be subject to the Act.

An individual demonstrably lacking capacity will need someone (often their carer) to make decisions on their behalf. The more important the decision the greater the likelihood that more people will be involved. An assessment must be made for each decision.

Useful sources of expert help or information can be obtained from advice agencies such as the National Autistic Society and The Alzheimer's Society. In Halton, the following sub groups are an important source of information for carers: Older People Carers LIT, Adult Learning Difficulties Carers LIT, Physical and Sensory Disabilities Carers LIT. HBC has also produced a set of 'Guidance Notes For Assessing Mental Capacity.'

If an individual is shown to lack capacity then those acting on their behalf must do so in the 'best interests' of the person. It is important to ensure that 'best interests' actually represents the person's true wishes. Carers are often best placed to provide such information.

Benefits of the Act:

- The Act serves to protect individuals who for whatever reason are unable to make a decision that has consequences for their finances, health care and quality of life.
- Individuals are assumed to have capacity unless assessment evidence is provided to the contrary.
- Any decisions made by a carer must be demonstrably in the individual's 'best interests.'
- The terms of the Act provide protection for both the carer (as decision-maker) and the individual being cared for.
- All possible means of communicating with a person must first be explored and documented before any decision is made on their behalf.

2.8 Quality Standards

The King's Fund, after extensive consultation with voluntary organisations, statutory bodies, social service departments and health authorities, published **Quality Standards for Local Carer Support Services** in 2002. There are five quality standards, which include:

- Information
- Providing a break
- Emotional support
- Support that helps carers to care and maintain their own health
- Having a voice

2.9 White Paper: Our Health, Our Care, Our Say

The White Paper, published in January 2006, sets out the reforms intended to develop modern and convenient health and social care services. The White Paper acknowledges the vital role carers play. They provide a valued preventative service and it is imperative they and their families receive good quality, flexible and tailored support services in order to work and live their lives.

The White Paper recommends;

- Establishing an information service/helpline for carers
- Establishing short-term, home – based respite support to carers in crisis or emergency in each area
- Allocating funding to train carers
- Encouraging councils and Primary Care Trusts to nominate leads for carers services.

The local authority will be working with the Primary Care Trust to implement the recommendations related to establishing a short term, home based respite service; providing more training for carers and collaborating with local health care services.

3.0 CARERS GRANT

3.1 Funding support for carers

Each Local Authority receives Carers Grant to primarily fund carers breaks and implement legislation, such as the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. Halton Borough Council uses this grant in accordance with guidance provided by the Department of Health. The main use of the grant is to provide breaks available to carers who are providing regular and substantial amounts of care. The Department of Health has notified each local authority that Carers Grant will continue until 31st March 2011.

Many local organisations have received Carers Grant funding to provide carers breaks to carers during 2007/08. These were:

- Halton Young Carers Project (HITS)
- Halton Crossroads
- Barnardo's Wider Horizons Project
- Halton Autistic Family Support Group
- PSS Ltd
- Alzheimer's Society
- Halton Healthy Living Programme
- Halton Haven
- The Lets Go Club
- Halton Happy Hearts
- Mencap
- Halton Independent Living Trust (HILT)
- Widnes and Runcorn Cancer Support Group
- Parkinson Society
- Halton Disability Service and Shop mobility
- Bridgewater and Astmoor Day Centres

Funding is provided to two Directorates in Halton Borough Council to provide additional support and carer's breaks. These are;

- The Children and Young People's Directorate – specifically to provide services to parent carers of children with a disability.
- The Health and Community Directorate who provide services to carers who support Adults with a Learning Disability, Adults with a Physical or Sensory Disability, Carers of people with Mental Health Needs and Carers of Older People.

4.0 HALTON CARERS STRATEGY GROUP

This is a multi agency partnership group who meet every three months to monitor and oversee the Carers Strategy in Halton. Since the group was first established there have been many changes in legislation and Government service directives aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable people and their carers.

Membership of the Carers Strategy Group consists of representatives from;

- Social Care (Health and Community Directorate and Children and Young People Directorate)
- Halton Primary Care Trust
- Other voluntary sector providers
- The Chair of Halton Carers Forum
- Carers
- Halton Children with Disabilities Partnership Board
- Adult Learning Team
- Employment Services
- 5 Borough's Partnership NHS Trust

The group discusses matters such as the issues related to implementation of Government legislation relating to carers, matters discussed in carers forums, information relating to changes in service delivery and the use of Carers Grant to meet the diverse needs of carers.

4.1 Monitoring the Carers Strategy 2008 - 2009

The Carers Strategy Group will monitor the implementation of the Carers Strategy for 2008 – 2009 to ensure the targets and priorities have been achieved.

Consultation takes place at the Local Implementation Team Carer Sub groups (LIT) with all stakeholders who contribute to delivering the Carers Strategy. This involves talking to Halton Carers Forum, to monitor the delivery of the targets within this carer's strategy. The feedback provided will help with directing future developments and commissioning intentions of Children and Young People Directorate and Health and Community Directorate, the local Primary Care Trust and 5 Borough's Partnership NHS Trust.

5.0 CARER CENTRES

Since the opening of the Carers Centres in 2004, it has been the intention that the management of the Centres by the Local Authority would only be a temporary arrangement, until a voluntary sector organisation could be identified to undertake it. One of the main reasons for this was to ensure that Carers would be able to maximise their access to funding streams e.g. Lottery funding, that otherwise would not have been able to be accessed by the Centres under Local Authority control. As such within Halton Borough Council's Carers strategy (2006-2008), the intention to transfer the management of the Centres to the voluntary sector was stated as an objective, and in particular with acceptance into the Princes Royal Trust (PRTC) network. Acceptance of the Halton Carers Centre into the PRTC would mean being part of a long established and respected network offering expertise in responding to Carers needs.

During the last 12 months a number of activities, including meetings and consultation events, have taken place to identify the options and their associated advantages and disadvantages, for the future provision of Carers Services within Halton. During this time it has been highlighted that whatever approach was adopted it would need to safeguard the financial future of Halton Carers Centre, improve and expand the services provided, and be acceptable to Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust, to Halton Borough Council, and to local carers.

As such the work is being progressed to establish a Halton based charity to run the Carers Centre. A Centre within the voluntary sector will have access to new funding streams and most importantly will be able to offer an independent service to carers, which may enable the Centre to be more effective in reaching carers who are at present 'hidden'. The voluntary sector may also provide the Carers Centre with the opportunity to develop more innovative and tailored provisions allowing them to reach out to a wider range of carers. In selecting this option for the future of Carers Services, the Council recognises the importance of Carers issues and ensuring that the services provided to them are maximised.

As part of this work, it has been decided to deliver services from one site in Runcorn but to ensure that services are still provided to carers within Widnes and as such it is planned to close the Widnes Centre during 2008. It is recognised that Carers would prefer to see two centres within Halton, one in Runcorn and one in Widnes and this aspiration will be incorporated into the Carer Centre 3 business plan to be prepared in conjunction with the Princess Royal Trust.

Halton Borough Council and Halton & St Helens PCT have given a 3-year financial commitment to initially support the Carers Centre thus ensuring continued funding of the Centres until such time as the Centres are sufficiently established to ensure that it can access appropriate funds itself.

In summary the changes in the provision of Carer Services within Halton demonstrates that the council recognises the importance of Carers issues and ensures that the services provided to them will be maximised.

An independent Princess Royal Trust for Carers Centre in Halton will be able to access new funding streams and most importantly will be able to offer an independent service to carers and provide an opportunity to develop more innovative and tailored provision allowing them to reach out to a wider range of carers.

The centre will also be in a strong position to effectively respond to the increased national agenda around Carers culminating in the publication of the new National Carers Strategy during 2008.

6.0 VISION, VALUES AND AIMS

This strategy builds on the vision, values and aims of the Carers Strategy 2007/08

6.1 Vision

- Carers will be recognised and valued
- Carers will be supported and enabled to care as long as they wish to do so
- Carers will be enabled to have some regular time for themselves, free of their caring duties
- All agencies will work in partnership with carers to provide the help and services carers need
- All agencies will work together to plan and develop services for, and with, carers
- Information on issues of relevance to carers will be made available to carers, Statutory and voluntary agencies, and the wider community.

6.2 Values

The Local Authority, the Primary Care Trust, local health trusts, voluntary and independent sector agencies will work in partnership to improve support for carers as part of mainstream community care and children's services. Positive steps will be taken to identify, accommodate and support diverse needs.

- The major role played by carers in supporting people in the community who are frail, ill or disabled is recognised and valued
- Carers will be encouraged to identify themselves at the earliest possible stage, and will be empowered to ask for the service they require
- Carers will be involved in decision making about their needs and consulted about their preferences for services
- No carer will be compelled to care or to continue caring if they no longer feel able to do so
- Former carers will be helped to access support to enable them to adjust to their new circumstances
- Service providers will ensure equity in the provision of support to carers, whatever the illness or disability of the person they are caring for
- Carers will be involved in planning and determining the types of services available
- Carers will be invited to take part in the evaluation of services.

6.3 Aims

The strategic aims of this strategy are:

- 1. Recognition** – to identify carers and encourage them to identify themselves.
- 2. Information** - to ensure that carers are provided with the information they need, in an appropriate and accessible form, to enable them to function as carers.
- 3. Emotional support and support services** – to ensure a full range of co-ordinated and flexible services and support are provided for, and planned, with carers in Halton.
- 4. Assessment and assessing carers needs** – to ensure that carers are fully involved as partners in the assessment of the person for whom they care and are always offered their own assessment where appropriate.
- 5. Having voice** – to ensure that carers are actively involved in the planning, development and evaluation of services.
- 6. Provide a break** – develop services that offer a break to local carers.
- 7. Support that helps carers care and maintain their own health** – support carers to care and to maintain their own health and well being by offering training, health promotion and personal development opportunities and is responsive to individual needs.
- 8. Young Carers** – develop ways of identifying and meeting the needs of young carers.
- 9. Parents of children with a disability** – to ensure parents of children with a disability are aware of their rights as carers and are receiving appropriate services.
- 10. Financial support/carers in employment** – provide welfare benefit advice to carers that request it. Employees who are carers will have access to support to help them at times of crisis/emergency.

7.0 CONSULTATION ABOUT THE CARERS STRATEGY

A Consultation Event took place on Monday 3rd March 2008 at Halton Stadium and was designed to seek the views of local carers on Halton's Carers Strategy. Carers were consulted about the 2006 – 2008 Carers Strategy.

The main aims of the day were;

- A) To review the current Carers Strategy document, running from 2006-8
- B) To propose ideas for incorporation into the new Carers Strategy for 2008-09.

172 Carers attended the Consultation Event. There were in addition 2 cared for people and 16 staff working closely with Carers in the Borough.

The feedback from the event about what Carers felt was needed to improve performance has been incorporated into the Halton Carers Strategy and Action Plan 2008 - 2009.

A consultation event will be held in March 2009 to review progress of the 2008/2009 Carers Strategy.

Attached at appendix 2 are details of the feedback received from carers on the 3rd March.

7.1 Recognition - Identifying Carers

Many individuals who are carers do not recognise themselves as carers. They are usually family members or close friends. Many carers, including those from ethnic minorities, remain 'hidden' to statutory services. These carers may not be accessing services or receive support from the many local agencies that can assist them. It is important for all agencies to identify carers including parents of disabled children who are required to provide a level of care above what is expected with a child without a disability. This will ensure;

- They can be provided with information about carer support services
- Ensure carers needs are assessed and appropriate action taken
- They can be consulted about services designed to help them
- Carers receive training, practical support and a break from caring
- A rigorous analysis of the numbers of carers and their needs is undertaken

What has been provided so far

- Outreach services in health centres in Widnes and Runcorn
- Outreach presentations at faith and community groups across the borough.
- Liaison with Halton Primary Care Trust resulted in initiatives to access hard to reach carers
- Information giving events such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day. These were attended by over 165 carers
- Events and activities specifically designed to reach hidden carers and carers from ethnic minorities
- Parent support groups, e.g. Halton Autistic Family Support Group, Parent Partnership
- Drop in session and events for carers of disabled children.

7.2 Information

Carers can access information in a number of ways. They can telephone or drop into the Widnes Carers' Centre and Runcorn Carers' Centre. They can contact Customer Services at the Halton Borough Council call centre or Direct Link offices based at Halton Lea, Runcorn and Halton Direct Link, Widnes (near Widnes Market), Carers can use the Council's web site or Halton Information Exchange will provide information to parents of disabled children. Carers can go to other specialist organisations in the borough with a special interest and expertise in dealing with carers. The contact details of these organisations can be found at the back of this strategy.

Information is one of the main needs of carers. Carers need good information to help them carry out their caring role and to have their own support needs met. Carers require information that is:

- Tailored to their needs
- Clear
- Comprehensive
- User friendly
- Up to date
- Accessible
- Age appropriate
- In the carers preferred language
- In a range of formats including the Internet and telephone to signpost them to support and services

The information provided should cover access to services, assessment, the illness/disability/condition of the person they care for, their rights as carers, charges for services, the roles of different agencies and professionals, what to do when things go wrong and how to complain. In addition it should provide details of where carers can access independent support and advocacy services.

What has been provided so far

- Carers Information Packs containing information about local services for carers including information about their right to an assessment. This publication has been revised and updated in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007.
- Halton Information Exchange (children) provides information to carers of disabled children through an information pack and regular newsletter.
- Children's Information Service provides a range of information to all parents including parents of disabled children regarding childcare
- A Quick Guide to Services for Carers leaflet, distributed at carers events
- A Young Carers Information Pack
- Explaining Carers Assessment leaflet
- Two Carers' Centres providing a drop in information service in Widnes and Runcorn
- A database to identify carers and inform them of carers day trips, pamper sessions, training courses and services available to help them as carers
- Two Carer Information Officers

7.3 Emotional support and support services

Providing care to another individual can be lonely and demanding. Sometimes carers can become socially isolated. Also a carer may find that when their caring role ends (for example when the person they are caring for dies), they find it difficult to adjust to the change in their life.

Different kinds of emotional support may be necessary. Widnes and Runcorn Carers' Centres provide access to appropriate counselling services. Other voluntary organisations including Age Concern Halton, Kings Cross Project, Barnardo's, Scope, HAFS, Halton Young Carers Project and Widnes and Runcorn Cancer Support Group are available to provide emotional support to carers.

Carers want co-ordinated and flexible services that will assist them in their role as carers. They want to be recognised, respected and listened to. They want services, provided by the Primary Care Trust, Social Services, Children & Young People Directorate and voluntary agencies to meet their needs as carers. They want to be able to access an independent advocacy service and dedicated services that are flexible, accessible and meets their needs.

Services for the cared for person have substantial impact on their carer. It is important they receive good quality, reliable and efficient services to enable them to take a break from caring. All agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector need to ensure they employ well-trained, well-informed individuals who have had a criminal record bureau check. Carers want access to Direct Payments to provide them with choice about service they can access.

What has been provided so far

- Access to counselling services at Widnes and Runcorn Carers' Centre provided by two voluntary agencies
- Confidential advice service to carers on a drop in basis at Widnes and Runcorn Carers' Centre and provided by other local voluntary sector organisations
- Referral to social workers and other local agencies providing advice and support
- A range of short breaks services for families of children with disabilities
- Sibling support group for siblings of disabled children
- Specialist support service for children with severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour
- Key workers to provide a co-ordinated package of services to families of disabled children
- A meeting place Runcorn Carers' Centre for carer support groups.
- Complementary therapies specifically for carers
- Pamper sessions for carers
- Use of carers grant to provide carers respite services

7.4 Assessment and assessing carers needs

In Halton there are various agencies that collect information about carers. Halton Borough Council's Health and Community Directorate and Children and Young People Directorate and Widnes and Runcorn Carers' Centres are all in contact with carers. The Primary Care Trust and 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust also have contact with large numbers of carers. Numerous voluntary organisations including Age Concern Halton, Kings Cross Project, Barnardo's, Scope, Halton Young Carers Project, Halton Autistic Families Support Group and Widnes and Runcorn Cancer Support Group work with and provide services that support carers.

Carers can register their details at both Carers' Centres in Halton and can obtain help and support and be referred to have their needs assessed. Carers needs differ in a number of ways depending on factors such as:

- The level of support or personal care they provide to the person they care for
- The relationship to the person they care for
- The illness or disability of the person they care for

- Their cultural needs or those of the person they care for
- Whether the carer is in employment
- If the carer lives a distance from the person they care for.

What is a carer's assessment?

If the carer looks after someone regularly they can have a carers assessment. This assessment looks at the care or support they provide and how it affects their life. The assessment is for the carer, not for the person who needs support or care.

Carers of disabled children should provide 'regular and substantial' care in line with the provisions of the Carers Disabled Children's Act 2000.

Who can have a carer's assessment?

Carers of adults

Under the Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000, a carer over 16 years of age can request an assessment of her/his needs if:

1. The person being cared for is over the age of 18 years and is eligible for, or has had, a community care needs assessment
and
2. The carer is not providing personal assistance for payment in cash or in kind or is a volunteer or working for a voluntary organisation
and
3. The carer provides, or intends to provide, regular and substantial care

People who are about to take on a caring role are eligible for assessment as long as the above criteria are met and the care they intend to provide to someone looks likely to be regular and substantial.

A carer has a right to an assessment as long as the person they care for is, or would be, eligible for a community care assessment, even if they have refused to have one or have refused any services offered.

Carers of disabled children will have a right to an assessment if the child being cared for is eligible for a child in need assessment.

'Regular and Substantial' care is not defined within the Act. It is the 'impact' of caring on a person's life that is important not necessarily the nature of the caring tasks or how often or how much time is spent caring.

Halton has agreed to a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) to increase the number of carer's assessment it provides for carers. It was agreed that in 2008/09 600 carers will receive a carers assessment.

What is available

- Under the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and the Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000, all carers providing regular and substantial care have the right to request an assessment of their own needs from Halton Social Services
- All carers on the care programme approach (mental health and learning disability) should be offered a carers assessment

- Since April 2005 the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act means that identified carers will be told about their right to a carers assessment and have their wishes to remain in or return to work and education taken into account during the assessment.
- New carers assessment forms have been produced to comply with the changes made by the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- New carers assessment forms have been produced to assess the needs of carers of disabled children.

7.5 Having a voice

In 2006 Halton Carers Forum was established. The Carers Forum hold regular meetings with carers. The Carers Forum is currently made up of an elected Chairperson, an Executive Board and registered carers

Other people who may attend the forum are:

- Representatives from Health and Community Directorate
- Representatives from Children and Young People Directorate
- Representatives from Primary Care Trusts
- Representatives from other organisations who help carers

Carers are already involved in commenting on services provided by the local authority and the Primary Care Trust.

The Children Act 2004 required local authorities to lead on the development of Children's Trust. In Halton the Children's Trust is known as the Children's Alliance to reflect the spirit of partnership. The Halton Children and Young People's Alliance Board will provide the appropriate vehicle for the development of the Trust. The development of the Alliance will be informed by the needs of the carers and young people and parent and carer forum has been established that will allow all parents and carers, including those of disabled children, to influence developments. Carers are also represented within the Children's Disability Mini Trust

The Patient Advice Service (known as) PALS is part of the Government's commitment to ensuring that the NHS listens to patients, resolves their immediate concerns and then uses their views to develop services so they continue to meet the needs of patients, carers and relatives.

PALS officers are based in every Primary Care Trust, in Halton, Warrington and Whist on Hospital and 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust.

What has been provided so far

- Financial assistance for the Halton Carers Forum in order to enable them to meet regularly
- Carer representation on Mental Health Carers LIT Sub Group, Older People Carers LIT Sub group, Adult Learning Difficulties Carers LIT Sub Group, Physical and Sensory Disabilities Carers LIT Sub Group, Valuing People Carers Implementation Group, Partnership Boards and LITS.
- Consultation about services and training for carers provided by the Carers' Centres
- Participation in Halton Carers Forum meetings
- Carers representation within all levels of Halton Children with Disabilities Partnership Board

7.6 Providing a break

The 2001 Census showed that 3,699 carers in Halton are looking after someone with an illness or disability for more than 50 hours per week. This may be providing help with personal care such as:

- Washing/bathing
- Dressing
- Walking around the house
- Getting in and out of bed
- Cooking and keeping the house clean
- Communication because of sight or hearing difficulties or difficulty understanding
- Helping with finances or paying bills
- Collecting medication or making sure someone takes prescribed medication

Being a carer can be emotionally and physically very tiring. Carers often do not think enough about their own health and well-being, and find they suffer from exhaustion and stress.

Taking a break from caring is essential for most carers, even if it's only a few hours. It allows them to see friends, relax, sleep, join classes, and meet other people – to do all the things that most people take for granted.

Some carers feel guilty about taking time for themselves. They see it as a sign of failure. However, without regular breaks, carers are putting their own health at risk. Everyone needs time to recharge his or her batteries.

Ideally, breaks from caring should be planned breaks so that both the carer and the person looked after are happy with the arrangements.

What has been provided so far

- Day trips to Llandudno, Bolton Market, Trafford Centre, Southport, Botany Bay, Salford Quays, Chester, Blakemere, Blackpool, Antony Cotton Show, Widnes v Castleford Rugby, Widnes v Blackpool Rugby, Everton Reserves v Man Utd Reserves, Everton v Wigan Athletic Reserves.
- Funding to local voluntary organisations and charities to arrange carers breaks for their members
- Increased the number of carers receiving a break each year since 2003.
- A range of carer short breaks for carers of disabled children
- Carers of adults and older people were provided with over 19,000 breaks in 2007/2008.

7.7 Support that helps carers care and maintain their own health

Caring can be physically and emotionally exhausting. As a result, many carers suffer from physical injury or need treatment for stress related problems.

Carers UK research has found

- Carers are twice as likely to have mental health problems if they provide substantial care
- 316,000 people in the UK who provide care describe themselves as 'permanently sick or disabled'
- Seven out of 10 carers worry about their finances and six out 10 believe this has an effect on their health

(Source: www.carersuk.org.uk)

Some studies show that 52% of carers need treatment for stress related problems and 51% of carers have a physical injury as a result of caring.

Many carers have to give up work and caring because of the effect caring has on their own health. However, with the right information and support, many of the health problems affecting carers are preventable.

Carers should be able to:

- Get enough sleep and rest
- Get regular and planned breaks from caring
- Have time for themselves
- Get enough information about services that could help
- Feel free from financial worry because they have access to financial information on benefits or debt
- Receive advice and training on aspects of caring.

Carers need to:

- Make sure their GP knows they are a carer
- Ask social services for a carers assessment to find out about breaks from caring, receive services to support the carer with caring or get advice on health awareness courses
- Contact Widnes or Runcorn Carers' Centre to ask about complementary therapies, counselling and health awareness courses
- Get financial advice on benefits or debt
- Find out about training courses that can help the carer

What has been provided so far

- A comprehensive complementary therapy service for carers
- A training programme for carers
- Pamper sessions, at various locations including the Widnes and Runcorn Carers' Centres and Riverside College.
- Support groups use, free of charge, the Runcorn Carers' Centre to meet and support their members
- Kings Cross Project provide a counselling service at both Carers' Centres
- Drop in information and advice and referral of carers to the Welfare Benefits Service and Citizen Advice Bureau
- Reduced rates at many indoor and outdoor leisure and recreational activities via the Halton Leisure Card.

7.8 Young carers

The government document 'Caring about Carers' states: 'the experience of growing up in a family where a parent, relative or sibling is ill or disabled can bring both rewards and difficulties'.

Children and young people under 18 who have caring responsibilities are often referred to as 'young carers'. These are young people whose lives are restricted in some way because they are supporting or taking responsibility for care of a person who is ill, has a disability or mental illness or misuses a substance.

Not every young person who has a parent, sibling or grandparent who is ill or disabled is a young carer, but of those young people who are taking on extra

responsibilities, recent research has shown that;

- One quarter are missing school or have difficulties with lateness, no time to do homework or have other problems
- 12% cent of young carers are caring for more than one person
- More than half are providing care for their mother and one third for their brother or sisters

Halton's Children and Young People Directorate fund the Halton Young Carers Project through their mainstream budgets and additional funding is provided from Carers Grant for support, activities and short breaks for Young Carers.

What has been provided so far

- A Young Carers Information Pack has been produced, in conjunction with young carers
- Additional funding to identify 16 –17 year old young carers
- Support for Halton Young Carers Project to provide additional carers breaks for young carers

7.9 Parents of children with a disability

Social Services have the responsibility for assessing the needs of disabled children and their carers, and for co-ordinating services to meet those needs. They will arrange an assessment, a process to identify all the needs of the child and the family. A worker from the team will visit the family and provide them with a 'Care Plan'. This will show the needs of the child and family and the services, which will be provided. Carers will also be entitled to a carer's assessment that will provide them with a Carer's Action Plan. Services offered by Children and Young People Directorate may include a home from home family based short break, advice and support to families, after school clubs, Direct Payments, outreach support and a range of social and leisure opportunities.

What has been provided so far

- Crossroads support services for carers
- Saturday and after school clubs
- Inclusive play and leisure groups
- Sibling support group
- Parent Partnership
- Early Support programme
- Halton Information Exchange
- Children's Information Service
- Youth Clubs
- One to one volunteer links
- School holiday play schemes
- Direct Payments
- Carers Assessment

7.10 Financial Security/Carers in employment

Carers and working

Many carers find they are unable to work because of the amount of time they spend caring. Other carers try to 'juggle' work with caring and find themselves doing two jobs, one paid and one unpaid.

Problems faced by carers who are working include:

- Stress and anxiety from constantly juggling work and care
- Tiredness and having to cope with little or broken sleep
- Isolation because they have no time to go out and socialise
- Feeling that their colleagues think they are not committed to their paid work

The support the carer needs to keep working may be very simple. For example, a carer might need to be able to use a telephone and check the person they care for is all right. Sometimes carers do need to take leave to help them through difficult times.

Financial security

Money matters more than ever when caring for someone. Carers may find they are:

- Unable to work
- Living on less money
- Faced with decisions that will affect money in the future, for example in the area of pensions
- Experiencing poverty because of being a long-term carer
- Needing to sort out debt problems

Many carers do not claim enough benefits or discounts for themselves because the benefit system is complex and they do not know what to claim.

Carers UK research has shown

- One in five carers has to cut back on food
- One in three have trouble paying utility bills
- Four out of ten find the level of charges for services cause financial difficulties
- One in three carers have no savings at all

(Source: www.carersuk.org)

Many carers experience debt and the financial stress affects their health.

What has been provided

- Many carers requesting benefit advice have been referred to Halton Borough Council's Welfare Rights Service
- General advice service and debt counselling is available through the Citizen Advice Bureau
- Information for working carers and benefit advice is included in the Carers Information Pack and A Quick Guide to Carer Services leaflet.
- Return to work information is available in the Carers Information Pack. It is provided to each carer when they receive a carer's assessment.
- Information about carer's rights and their benefit entitlement was available at Carers Week and Carers Rights Day events and other community events for carers.

- Carer Awareness training provided within all staff teams at Halton Borough Council in order to identify employees who are carers.
- Flexible working conditions at Halton Borough Council
- Funding provided at Halton People into Jobs to support and train Carers wanting to return to work.

8.0 CARERS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2008-09

AIM 1 : RECOGNITION

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
1.1	Develop a strategy to publicise and promote issues concerning carers	Develop and publicise the Carer Promotion Strategy and implement aims/objectives	CDO	Ongoing	Ongoing	Increase new carers – registering @ CC and accessing information & full assessment
1.2	Raise awareness of carers needs with health & social care staff and in the community	Briefing sessions for health & social care staff to be held	Carer Development Team	April '08	Ongoing	
		Induction pack to include a specific section on Carer recognition (inc. Young Carers)	HBC Training Team	April '08	Ongoing	CIO distributes packs by request
		Annual File audit to take place to ensure that carers are recognised by professional staff and that they are offered an assessment	SDO	April '08	Ongoing	Attendance and contribution at LITS. Increased understanding of carer issues by staff
		Action provision of training to call centre staff. CDO to deliver awareness raising training to call centre staff	Team Managers	April '08	Ongoing	CDO to deliver awareness. Raising training - increases
1.3	Identify 'hidden carers' to make their lives better	Maintain and regularly update Carers Databases	All Agencies	Ongoing	Ongoing	Carers Centres database has 890 carers MH Team database has 404 carers recorded
		All teams to produce plans which show how they will identify hidden carers and set targets for referrals for assessment	LIT/ALD Partnership Sub Group Chairs	April 2008	March 2009	LIT/ALD Sub Groups Implement Action Plans
		Develop and implement action plan @ Equal Opportunities Sub Group	SDO (Carers)	Ongoing	Ongoing	Increased presentations to faith/community groups – increased number of carers registering at CC.

AIM 2 : INFORMATION

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
2.1	Keep Carers up to date with current information and carers legislation to help make informed choices about their caring role	Quick Guides to be widely distributed in the community	Carer Information Officers	Ongoing	Ongoing	5,000 Newsletters & Quick Guides distributed throughout 07/08.
		Carers Web page to be regularly updated	Carer Development Team	Ongoing	Ongoing	Up to date information inputted regularly
		Continue to provide a service via the Runcorn and Widnes Carers Centre (drop in & telephone). Information library to be available at Carer Centres	Carer Development Team	Ongoing	Ongoing	Service available Monday – Friday 10.00am – 4.00pm
		Plan carers events and review publicity materials etc in liaison with carers via HCF & LIT Sub Groups	Carer Development Team Chairs of LITs/ALD Partnership Sub Groups	April 08	Ongoing	Meet needs of carers.
2.2	Ensure information is accessible and easy to understand and available, on request to carers with a disability and to carers from ethnic minorities, where English is not their first language	See 2.1	See 2.1			
		Ensure all new service developments and local changes made are widely know to carers via briefings, newsletters etc	LITs/ALD and Equal Opportunities Sub Group	April '08	Ongoing	Leaflets and the Carer Information Pack can be produced in different languages and formats on request.
		Develop/produce DVD raising carer issues etc publicising available services within Halton	PSD LIT Sub Group – Melanie Giannasi	April 08	Ongoing	Currently a national DVD available
2.3	Quick Guides for carers in GP practices, libraries and made available.	CIO distribute literature on bi-monthly basis	Carer Development Team	April '08	Ongoing	New carers receiving service & information

2.4	Carers accessing services and requiring support to be recorded on Care First	Statistics/activity reported on 1/4 basis @ Carers Strategy Group & LIT Sub Groups	All Agencies monitored via the LITs	Ongoing	Ongoing	Increased transparency in working
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AIM 3 : EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
3.1	Recognise the emotional needs of all carers especially those hard to reach	See 2.1	See 2.1	See 2.1	See 2.1	
		Carer assessors pro-actively provide assessments and record client need	Carers Assessment Group	April 2008	March 2009	Provide 600 assessments for carers by end of March 2009
3.2	Continue to provide complementary therapy sessions for carers	Commission a complementary therapy service from Riverside College	Carer Development Team	April 2008	March 2009	Riverside College to continue to provide 1000 therapy sessions to 250 carers '08-'09
3.3	Carers Centres to continue to provide a signposting service providing advice, support and information for carers	See 2.1	See 2.1	April 2008	March 2009	Telephone support is available Monday – Friday 10.00am – 4.00pm
3.4	More carers to be provided with control and choice using Direct Payments and IB agenda	Promote the use of Direct Payments and monitor the carer's opinion of the service	Direct Payments Team	April 2008	March 2009	In 07/08 440 individuals received a direct payment; 285 of those people were new Carers

AIM 4 : ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSING CARERS NEEDS

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
4.1	Carers to be offered an individual assessment of their own needs in accordance with the Carer Act 1995/2000 and Carers (Equal Opportunity) Act 2004	Strategy implemented	Carer Assessment Group/LIT & ALD Sub Groups	April 2008	March 2009	LPSA target of 600 carers receiving an assessment by end of March 2009
		Carers Awareness Training	Training Manager, Health & Com. Directorate	Ongoing	Ongoing	
		Establish a system to record number of carers assessments offered, refused and completed	Carer Assessment Group. LIT/ALD Sub Groups			Outcome reports to be provided to Carer Strategy Group/LIT Subs & Assessment Groups
4.2	Promote carers right to an assessment	See 2.1	See 2.1	See 2.1	See 2.1	
		Inform carers of their rights to an assessment during advice sessions	Care Managers	Ongoing	Ongoing	Carers Quick Guides and News Letters distributed to libraries, health centres and social work teams
4.3	Carers to be consulted about the level of care they are able to offer	To be undertaken via the carers assessments	Care Managers	Ongoing	Ongoing	

4.4	Provide access to an independent advocacy service	Ensure contact details are updated on regular basis	Care Managers	Ongoing	Ongoing	Advocacy Services available Halton Borough Council website under Social Services
4.5	Carers issues are identified during the review of the Choice Based Lettings Policy	Ensure that the allocation of 'Social Points' for being a Carer is addressed within the Policy	Housing Strategy/Halton Housing Trust	Ongoing	Ongoing to March 2010	

AIM 5 : HAVING A VOICE

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
5.1	Ensure Carers are represented on relevant committee's, boards with agreed support both practical and financial, to enable carers to attend	All LITs/ALD Partnership and associated sub groups, committees etc to have at least one carer representative	LIT/ALD Chairs & LIT/ALD Sub Group chairs	April '08	March '09	Evidence via group minutes
5.2	Carers are to be provided with training to help them effectively contribute to meetings	Chair of Halton Carers Forum to organise and deliver influencing skills training in partnership with Halton Voluntary Action	SDO	April '08	March '09	Increased confidence and effectiveness of carers in groups
5.3	Carers to be involved in the Carers Grant Allocation	Carers to be involved in LIT/ALD Sub Groups	SDO/Chairs of LITs/ALD sub group	April '08	March '09	
5.4	Carers encouraged to give their views on services	Carers Assessments and Events/Activities Questionnaire and evaluations provided	Carer Development Team			Outcome report produced – services developed as a result
5.5	Support the development of the Halton Carers Forum	Continue to provide support to the Forum	Carer Development Team			Carers Grant and staff support has been provided to Halton Carers Forum to convene regular meetings
5.6	Carers involvement in planning and monitoring of services	See 5.1	See 5.1	See 5.1	See 5.1	

AIM 6 : PROVIDING A BREAK

Ref.	Objective	Action	Lead Responsibility	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
6.1	Carers of people who are assessed as being in need of community care services will have the opportunity for a break	Respective LITs/ALD Sub Groups to assume responsibility for the management of the Grant	LITs/ALD Sub group	January 2008	March 2009	Greater partnership working with carers
		Audit of needs identified in carers assessments to be carried out to help inform grant allocations	LITs/ALD Sub group	Ongoing	Ongoing	
		Formal Evaluation process to be devised for carers breaks, event etc to help inform future service development	Carers Development Team			Requesting events planned – client satisfaction forms recorded
6.2	Continue to develop a range of opportunities for carers to have a break	Halton Carers Forum to feed in their views to the LITs	LITs/ALD Sub Groups	April 2008	March 2009	Forum members involved in Carers Strategy Group and other decision making groups
6.3	Promote and raise awareness of Direct Payments amongst Carers as per Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000	See 3.6	See 3.6	See 3.6	See 3.6	
		Publicise in the Carer information pack and at Carers events and forums	Carer Development Team	Ongoing	Ongoing	Highlighted in Carers Information Pack and promoted within social work teams

6.4	Continue developing respite services and monitor and evaluate existing services	LITs to report back to the Carer Grant Accountability Committee on a quarterly basis	LITs/ALD Sub Groups	Ongoing	Ongoing	
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AIM 7 : SUPPORT THAT HELPS CARERS CARE AND MAINTAIN THEIR OWN HEALTH

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
7.1	Provide training course for carers to help them maintain their health & respond to carers requests for training to help them in their caring role		Carer Development Team	April 2008	March 2009	A training programme for 2008/09 will be agreed and publicised in newsletter.
		Training Needs etc to be addressed via Carers Assessments and appropriate information provided to Carer Development Team	Carer Assessors	April 2008	March 2009	Raise Awareness of Carers
7.2	Promote caring issues in GP practices throughout the PCT and 5 Boroughs Partnership	Produce and implement Information Strategy that addresses the health needs of Carers	Primary Care Trust 5 Boroughs Partnership	April 2008	March 2009	Carer Development Team provide outreach sessions in GP Practices in Widnes and Runcorn.
7.3	Implement the new "PCT GP Enhanced Service For Carers"	Carers receiving a more flexible and responsive service at GP surgeries, encouraging and promoting Carers to take care of their own health care issues.	PCT	Dec 2007	On going	Carer receiving a more flexible service from GP surgeries.

AIM 8 : YOUNG CARERS

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
8.1	Support Halton Young Carers Project to identify and work with Young Carers as covered by; The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995, The Children's Act 1989 The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004	Information about project to be distributed and promoted in Carers Information Pack	Carer Development Team	April 2008	March 2009	Carers Pack includes information to all Y.C. and is widely distributed across Borough.
	Steering Group – Ensure focus for development of protocols & services for carers	Develop protocol for the transfer of young carers from children services to adult services when they reach 18 years	Jane Bennett Sue Rothwell	On going	On going	Ensure smooth transition for young people into adult services
	To provide an arena where Young Carers can access support and information	HYAC to set up peer support group, identifying the most appropriate way of providing information to Young Carers and offer on-going support	Sue Rothwell	On going	On going	Young People receive appropriate information, which may include DVD
		Continue to deliver a programme of training for young carers including Halton FM – media (5-11 years), Duke of Edinburgh Award – Older (12-18 years), Drama & Art (5-11 years)	Jane Bennett	On going	On going	Young Carers receiving training

8.2	Provide Young Carers with carers breaks and activities they want	Deliver support sessions for young people after school, along with up to 3 x residential programmes and weekly day activities – sports after school Monday (Council Widnes Sport Development Group). Residential programmes. Young Carers Festival (10M)	Halton Young Carers Project - HITS CYP Directorate	3 x per year	On going	11 Young Carers received breaks
8.3	Ensure that the views of young carers are heard and considered when planning services	Provide age appropriate opportunities for young people to express their views	Halton Young Carers Project	On going	On going	HITS have “Hear My Rights Award” for work undertaken to provide Y.P. opportunities to express views and influence services
8.4	Strengthen links with other agencies that may be aware of and/or provide support for young carers	Relevant signposting to relevant support services to be made	Halton Young Carers Project	On going	On going	Young Carers have increased knowledge of services and more support and information
8.5	Increase numbers of Young Carers and enable them to access support	HAFS to undertake an analysis of children and young people in its group to identify: Total number of sibling young carers Those that provide significant support to their siblings	HAFS HBC	April 08	March 09	
8.6	The nationally recognised definition of Young Carers as used by CYP and HITS to be adopted by all agencies	Young Persons Steering group to drive forward	Sue Rothwell	April 08	March 09	All Agencies to share a common understanding of the definition of Young Carers

8.5	Recognise the emotional and physical impact that a caring role may have on a young person	Appropriate Carers Assessment to be carried out and signposting to relevant support services	Care Managers	Ongoing	Ongoing	Young Carers to access appropriate services
	Increase health awareness of Young Carers Pilot School Nurse attending a Young Carers activity	100 % of Young Carers attending the pilot activity would have access to health information	PCT	May 2008	March 2009	

AIM 9: PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
9.1	Raise the profile of the needs of carers of disabled children	Deliver information sessions in schools, children's centres and other child centred venues	Children's Carers Development Officer	On going	On going	Increase numbers of Young Carers accessing services
9.2	Keep carers of disabled children updated on new information	Provide information packs and regular newsletters to carers of disabled children	Halton Information exchange Co-ordinator and Children's Development Officer	On going	On going	Develop new information leaflet aimed at parents of children with disability
9.3	Promote the use of Direct payments	Provide support to access Direct Payments	Children's Disability Team Direct Payments Team	On going	On going	Increase choice for Carers
9.4	Continue to provide support/carers in relation to Special Educational Needs	Provide independent support and advice to parents	Parent Partnership Co-ordinator	On going	On going	
9.5	Provide Carer Breaks	Commission a range of short break services	Strategic Manager – Children with Disabilities	On going	On going	Increase numbers of carers accessing a break

AIM 10 : FINANCIAL SECURITY/CARERS IN EMPLOYMENT

Ref.	Objective	Action	People Responsible	Timescales		Progress to date/Outcome
				Start Date	End Date	
10.1	Provide access to information on benefits and finance	Carers to be referred to HBC's Welfare Rights Team or Halton Citizen Advice Bureau for welfare benefit advice	All Agencies	On going	On going	Carers Centres continue to signpost carers to Welfare Rights Team
10.2	Carers provided with the opportunity to enter training or employment	Issues to be addressed via the Carers Assessment and appropriate advice given to support carers into employment or education Fund HPIJ to provide training and support	Carers Centres HBC Adult Learning Team	On going	On going	Briefings given to Adult Learning Team and Halton People into Jobs
10.3	Provide support working carers	All employers to identify working carers and made aware of the need to adopt carer friendly employment policies	All Agencies	On going	On going	Carer Development Team to identify carers employed by HBC
		Working Carers to receive advice and support to help remain in employment	Job Centre Plus Carer Development Team	On going	On going	Provided at Carers Centres on request

9.0 Comments and Complaints

Your comments, compliments and complaints are important as they help us to improve and develop the services we provide.

Sometimes decisions are made or things may happen that you are unhappy about or disagree with. If this happens we want you to tell us – but we also want you to tell us when you are pleased with the help you have received.

Sometimes it is not possible to resolve a complaint about a service. In these circumstances, when all stages of the procedure have been completed, an individual complainant should contact the Commissioner for Local Administration (York Office).

If you want to write, our Freepost address is: -

Complaints, Freepost (CS/3)
Customer Care Officer
Health and Community Directorate
Halton Borough council
Grosvenor House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2ED

Mr Les Platt
Customer Care Officer
Children and Young People Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Grosvenor House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2ED

Email: ssdcomplaint@halton.gov.uk

If you require more information about how to make a complaint, you can contact Customer Services Advisor Tel; 01928 704406 or visit Halton Direct Link, Halton Lea, Runcorn and Halton Direct Link, 7 Brook Street, Widnes

Useful addresses and telephone numbers

Health & Community/Children and Young People Directorate Customer Services		01928 704406
Halton Borough Council Welfare Rights Team	Halton Direct Link 7 Brook Street, Widnes, WA8 6NE	0151 471 7448
Halton Crossroads Caring for Crossroads	18 Waterside Court, St Helens, WA9 1AU	01744 612499
Advocate	Kipling House, 2 Kipling Crescent, Widnes, WA8 7BT	0151 257 9663
Runcorn Carers Centre	62 Church Street, Runcorn, WA7 1LD	01928 580182
Halton Carers Forum	C/o Runcorn Carers Centre, 62 Church Street, Runcorn, WA7 1LD	01928 580182
Widnes Carers' Centre	C/o Age Concern Halton, 106 Albert Road, Widnes, WA8 6LG	0151 257 7767
Halton Young Carers Project	C/o HITS 84 Grangeway, Halton Lodge, Runcorn, WA7 5HZ	01928 564663
Halton Primary Care Trust	Victoria House, Holloway, Runcorn, WA7	01928 593672
Halton Information Exchange	Woodview CDC, Crow Wood Lane, Widnes, WA8 3L2	0151 424 4454
Halton Direct Link	7 Brook Street, Widnes, WA8 6NE	0151 907 8300

Age Concern Halton	44 Church Street, Runcorn, WA7	01928 590600
Halton Direct Link	Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2ES	0151 907 8300
Halton Citizen Advice Bureau	Lugsdale Road, Widnes, WA8 6DJ	0845 1304055
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust	Hollings Park House, Hollins Lane, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8WA	01928 664000
Age Concern Halton	106 Albert Road, Widnes, WA8 6LG	0151 424 9000
Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group	21-23 Alforde Street, Widnes, WA8 7TR	0151 423 5730
Barnardo's Wider Horizons Project	Grosvenor House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2HF	01928 719031
MIND	Mental Health Resource, 30A Widnes Road, Widnes, WA8 6AD	0151 422 1714
Scope Family Link Scheme	Old Police Station, Mersey Road, Runcorn, WA7 1DF	01928 588516
Making Space	C/o Mental Health Resource, 30A Widnes Road, Widnes, Wa8 6AD	0151 422 1714
PSS Ltd	18 Seel Street, Liverpool, L1 4BE	0151 702 5555
Halton Happy Hearts	56 Oxford Road, Widnes, WA8 6DE	0151 420 5432
Alzheimer's Society	C/o Runcorn Carers Centre, 62 Church Street, Runcorn, WA7 1LD	01928 580182
Let's Go Club	46 Thirlmere Close, Frodsham, WA7 7LZ	01928 731165

Halton Shopmobility & Disability	87 Albert Road, Widnes, WA8	0151 424 8080
Halton Shopmobility & Disability	102 River Walk, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2BX	01928 717445
Mencap	Acorn Club, Laburnham Grove, Runcorn, WA7	01928 574867
Halton Healthy Living Programme	Suite 1E, Midwood House, Midwood Street, Widnes, WA8 6BH	0151 495 3293
Halton Autistic Families Support Group (HAFS)	Trinity House, 78-80 Victoria Road, Widnes, WA8 7RA	0151495 3540
Kings Cross Project	C/o Trinity Methodist Church, Peelhouse Lane, Widnes, WA8 6TJ	0151 420 4905
Halton Healthy Living Trust	C/o 1 Henley Court, Runcorn, WA7 5QL	01928 580987
Stroke Association	Halton General Hospital, Hospital Way, Runcorn, WA7 2DA	01928 790372
Halton Voluntary Action	Sefton House, Public Hall Street, Runcorn, WA7 1NG	01928 592405
The United Carers of Halton (TUCH)	C/o 11 Tennyson Road, Widnes, WA8 7DA	0151 424 8502
Halton Parkinson's Disease Support Group	23 Park Road, Runcorn, WA7 4SS	01928 580015

**Carers Consultation Feedback
3rd March 2008 – Halton Stadium**

Recognition (1)

What Carers Say

- Carers need to be INVOLVED in plans made by professionals for the cared for person
- Doctors need to be persuaded to point carers in the right direction
- Should be put on people's medical records at their GP
- Work on raising carers' needs with health and social care staff and the community
- Look for hidden carers
- Needs communication with groups and regular meetings
- Ensure carers' needs are assessed and appropriate action taken quickly
- Receiving help and information from the Carers Centre
- When trips are organised for carers, if there is no provision for the person being cared for the CARER CANNOT GO
- Yet respite for carers is apparently closing
- Agencies need to communicate with each other and the carer
- Young carers – provide information at school, recognition for teachers and other staff. Use assemblies and inset days. Why not have a play about being a young carer?
- Elderly carers aged over 65 – perhaps a separate Focus Group is required to discuss older carers and how their needs could be met?
- There could be a national publicity campaign.
- Other ideas for identifying carers through:
 - GP surgeries
 - Asda
 - Hospitals
 - Carers' stand during Disability Day
 - Carers' Bus
 - Leaflet drop
 - Advert/information in paper
 - Road shows
 - Library
 - Websites
- Need to increase the availability of counselling services and support for carers
- Professionals working with carers need to understand how they can work together.

“If there is no provision for the person being cared for the carer cannot go on trips.”

What do carers want from the new Strategy?

- More funding right across the board
- More relevant information at the right time
- More facilities with a central drop-in centre
- Consistency in assessment

What more could be done to support carers?

- More money may open up the right to choose what carers need and want

- Complimentary therapies and breaks – services that provide mental, emotional, physical and social uplift
- Awareness events
- Promote carers' groups
- Better awareness at school through video/play and literature
- Use libraries and shops to promote carers and give advice and guidance
- Use local press/TV/ Radio/ Internet
- Questionnaire across the borough

What might stand in the way?

- Lack of funding
- Pride, not wanting to ask
- Not knowing how to tap into what is available through lack of information
- Fear
- Lack of confidence in our own ability – e.g. to fill in forms
- Lack of trust of people in authority
- Dignity/family ties/assumptions
- Not realising “I am a carer”
- Benefits/income impacting on services
- Just want to be left alone
- Resources from agencies are limited

Information (2)

What Carers say

- Information is important, as many people do not realise they are carers
- Registered carers will receive more information than others
- Some GPs have information about carers, some haven't
- If there was a document with all the services on, coloured sections would designate different services for carers
- Information around discounts for carers
- First information should come from GPs
- Information for carers in surgeries needs to stand out, not leaflets hidden behind other leaflets
- There should be more information broadcasts for carers on television and radio
- Social services should be able to give carers the information they require or put them onto the right people
- Benefits helpline? Carers may not know where the first port of call is, or even know if they are entitled to Carer's Allowance
- Do databases cross-reference?
- There needs to be information when you lose a cared for person
- Carers Centres need to be able to point carers towards more specialised services, such as groups for disabled people
- Around Carers Centre their whereabouts, some publicity of the work they do

“If carers don't get the information we don't know what's there! Information is the key.”

- The GP is responsible for referring people to where help is really needed – they should have a sheet of all the relevant organisations
- Getting the message across through supermarkets and pharmacies
- Everyone should have had a copy of the Carers Strategy.
- Only one person had read it, two had heard of it, and others were not aware.
- A lot of carers still not on database.
- Carers feel there is not enough information on benefits such as Carers Allowance.
- There is a need for Citizen Advocacy for carers.
- Widnes and Runcorn need a Carers Centre on both sides of the river which is a 'one stop shop'
- "If we don't get the information we don't know what's there. Information is the key."
- Outreach is needed
- We need to be proactive
- Staff need to be properly trained to help get the message across to carers.
- People should join up to the Carers Forum and try to get the right information.
- Some carers have never had a social worker
- Assessment should be done every 12 months to look at the carer's health needs as well as the person who has the service
- Information on benefits
- All information under one roof
- More money invested towards information
- To follow alongside the pathways with carers and their changing roles whatever they may be
- Pharmacists may be important in providing information
- Finding hidden carers so that they can be given the information they need#
- One database only please!
- Carers' Information Packs need to be more widely available in pharmacies and surgeries
- Why not distribute a carers' leaflet in the free newspaper?
- A family scene around the table: mum cooking with a caption above her head saying 'mum' and a child with a caption saying 'carer'...
- To take the age limit off the Carers' Allowance
- Why do carers have to jump through hoops to get their entitlement?
- Carers must be listened to by the council and their officers
- Carers need to get together and be a voice
- Carers' grant money has to be scrutinised in-depth
- Carers should not be made to feel grateful for services
- What information you get depends on what database you're on!

Emotional Support and support services (3)

What carers say

What has been achieved?

- Complementary therapies and pamper sessions – achieved!
- Outreach groups
- Coping with stress sessions
- Carer assessments
- Direct Payments
- Carer Groups
- Carer Trips – achieved!

“Services need to LISTEN to the carer – at the end of the day they know the person they are caring for better than anybody else”

- Counselling sessions (these need to be publicised/advertised more)
- Carer Newsletter – achieved!
- Carer-designated building – achieved!
- Coordinated assessment package has been achieved
- More recognition of carers' emotional needs
- Continuation of therapies and pamper sessions
- Direct payments from Carer Break Budgets
- Carer Assessors in each team
- Implementation of Community Bridge Builders

What has worked well?

- Newsletter
- Day trips for carers
- Pamper sessions and complimentary therapies
- Direct Payments (for those who know about them)
- Therapies and pamper sessions
- Direct Payments for things needed rather than being told what we want
- Carers Assessments

What could have been done better?

- A lot of people don't about them
- Some coping with stress sessions
- Lifting & handling workshops – keeping the carer safe
- Carer assessment – need for lot more information
- Direct payments – need for lot more information
- Taster sessions for complimentary therapies – need to explain what each therapy is in straightforward terms
- More Carers Groups/ support groups around disabilities and health issue
- The new Carers Centre must be wheelchair-friendly, have plenty of disabled access, parking facilities, disabled toilets
- Life planning sessions – e.g. when people with learning disabilities move out of family home – and emotional support especially for older family carers.
- More partnership working between carers and professionals
- Crisis intervention – need to know who to contact
- First aid training is needed for carers – straightforward instructions
- Information on different aspects, should be able to get more information from GP
- Emergency service – if something happens to the person you care for and they need to go to hospital, people need someone to stay with other disabled family member or children
- Need a lot more services for young carers
- Information and how it's given
- Night services
- All carers need to be linked with a carer assessor
- Ongoing therapy and pamper sessions
- Communication
- Referrals to appropriate services
- More support when carers are ill.
- More time for carer's breaks – allocated out of carers breaks budget.
- More professional support – carers feel that social workers do not provide enough support
- Lack of information about available support
- Not being kept up to date

- Need to reach hidden carers
- Would like outreach – at GPs and community centres
- More newsletters and presentations to groups
- More involvement in assessment process
- More information about benefits – expert help

What do carers want from the new Strategy?

- More understanding – about the physical and mental conditions of the person being cared for and for carer themselves
- Services need to LISTEN to the carer – at the end of the day they know the person they are caring for better than anybody else
- Listen to and act on what the carer actually says and wants
- Continuity of care is essential, it is very stressful to keep repeating the same story to so many different people (professionals should look at the past history file prior to conducting new assessments)
- Log to be kept on each person so information is contained within, any assessments all need to refer to one set of notes
- A correct assessment by a social worker should be open for other healthcare professionals to read and a copy sent to the carer to keep to prevent duplication at any other meeting
- More joint assessments between health and social care teams to avoid duplication
- GP to make more of a stand to identify carers and their needs and treat their needs accordingly
- Health checks for carers (e.g. stress etc) and emotional support should be forthcoming
- Better communication
- We need a 24-hour contact number in case of crisis, even if it is somebody just to listen to the carer's thoughts and fears

What more could be done to support carers?

- INFORMATION INFORMATION INFORMATION the beginning middle and the end!
- Suggest comprehensive DVD about services available
- Tailor-made person-centred approaches to meet the needs of the individual and carer instead of just what is available
- Identified key worker to work with carers and have consistency
- More of what we have already got – information, training and support, more understanding from professionals, better communication
- More choice about the type of service they receive
- Support for former carers

What might stand in the way?

- Main problem is that carers do not always recognise themselves as carers
- What is the definition of a carer? We need a specific definition so that carers recognise themselves as carers
- Carers not feeling able to admit they cannot cope
- Don't feel as if somebody else could care for their relative, partner etc as well as they can themselves
- Lack of funding to offer enhanced support services for carers
- Non-accessible information
- Carers need to keep asking for what they want and if this is not available for this to be logged as a deficit in the service. This will help inform and direct future Carers Strategies

Assessment and assessing carers (4)

What carers say

What has been achieved?

- We have been successful in identifying hidden carers
- We have identified the need for support groups – now we need to support them
- We have achieved 600 carer assessments in 2007/2008

What has worked well?

- Self assessments – but these must be followed up

**“We have achieved 600
carer assessments in
2007/2008.”**

What could be done better?

- Need to consider the carer when carrying out assessments for the cared for person
- Need more information leaflets at the assessment stage
- Would like assessments to lead onto more training opportunities to help carers cope on a day-to-day basis.
- Finding hidden carers. Are people afraid to ask?
- Promoting carers' services at GP surgeries, having information tables and having advertisements
- Need for better communication between agencies so all are aware of services, including carer assessments
- Need to overcome carers' fear of being dependent on other people
- Need for good diagnosis by GP of the cared for person – this can be key to accessing assessment and getting services
- One carer present was caring for two people and had no help whatsoever

What do carers want from the new Strategy?

- Better communication between agencies working with carers, so that all relevant information is offered at assessment
- Accountability – carers want to know who is accountable for each service
- A complaints procedure
- Not too much signposting so it does not appear to be 'passing the buck'
- Full publicity – forums, local TV, radio, papers, internet and chat rooms, GP surgeries, pharmacies, schools, libraries
- Timescale of 4-6 weeks maximum between referral and assessment with assured reviews annually
- For carers to be involved in all stages of the cared for person's review
- For GPs to be sent copies of reviews and/or care plans to promote carers' problems and to educate GPs
- For there to be an identified carers' assessor and a Carers Team of all assessors for consistency of approach and service and quality, trained staff all working together
- Need for out of hours support/ help-lines

What more could be done to support carers?

- Stigma/ pride issues tackled in publicity (e.g. £4 billion unclaimed benefits 2006-7)
- More information in newsletters to include practical articles about caring such as:
 - Different guest professionals to write an article once per month
 - New legislation
 - First aid 'tip of the month'

- Points of safe handling etc
- Not everyone can go on training courses but some points should be included to educate everyone through the newsletter
- Communicate that carers' right to support is not begging!
- Pathway information for older carers – knowing what will happen to the person they care for long term
- Assessor to determine confidentiality preference over the phone before
- Through carer assessments identify training needs for the individual carer such as;
 - Coping strategies
 - To stop feeling guilty when you cannot do things
 - Awareness about carers' mental and physical well-being
 - Schizophrenia etc
 - Stress management
 - Medication and side effects
 - Covert medication within care plan

What might stand in the way?

- Dispersal of services
Concerns that lack of finances/ carers' budget/ carers' grant and its effect on all service provision (assessment of needs, but no money to provide services)

Having a voice (5)

What carers say

What has been achieved?

- There is better representation and access to carers support officers and assessors
- Halton Carers Forum exists for you to pass on complaints and comments and requests
- Having a voice is about full participation and being actively involved in designing policy and services not just being informed of what they are going to be.
- We have more informed choices and we are encouraged to give feedback on the quality of service providers
- Mental health LIT
- Focus groups
- Support groups
- Some training has taken place
- Good involvement and decisions made by carers in support for allocation of carers grant
- Opportunities to express views

“There are barriers to having a voice – for example, there will be people who have not come along today because they have no one to look after the cared for person.”

What has worked well?

- Involvement with links for health service feedback
- Being made aware of standards for services
- Better feedback mechanisms
- Carers Grant Allocation
- HVA newsletter

What could be done better?

- “There are barriers to having a voice – there will be people who have not come along today because they have no one to look after the cared for person.”
- Need for a well-resourced advocacy service for people who don’t know where to go and what their entitlement is
- Would like more surveys/questionnaires for carers – verbal or written
- We would like any help available
- Need for more training
- Need for better financial support
- Not enough carer involvement – it’s alright if you are already in a group
- Need for more focus on transport
- Planners should listen more to carers
- It sometimes feels as if the decision has already been made
- No feedback on performance of services

What do carers want from the new Strategy?

- More and better quality information
- Jargon-free, plain English
- More financial support
- Need to cover crisis as well as routine
- Need to be clear about how the Strategy covers out-of-hours and weekends

What more could be done to support carers?

- More clarity and expertise in the assessment of need
- Full resourced advocacy service with specialist knowledge
- Use the experience and expertise of carers and former carers
- Support to allow carers to have a voice and fully participate
- Strong Carers Forum and Carers Centre
- Empowered/ assertive
- Training and support for escorts
- Reduce uncertainty
- Keep promises
- Counselling for carers
- Financial support around areas such as transport – perhaps a Carers’ Bus Pass?
- Clarity about what carers are entitled to
- Support workshops (similar to Making Space 2006)
- Funding to keep support groups going
- GPs more aware of carer’ responsibilities and health
- Carers ‘buddy’ service
- More days like today!
- Carer involvement on assessment and care plan
- More supported housing
- Invest in today’s cares as that will make things better for carers of tomorrow
- More home visits/ support/ counselling
- ‘Can do’ attitude from the Council and PCT

What might stand in the way?

- Barriers such as bureaucracy/ red tape/ procedures used as excuses for poor service
- Criteria level set too high, more common sense/ compassion needed
- Negative attitudes to carers – not listening/acting, not responsive
- Money, money, money

- People can't be bothered (some)
- Attitude of professionals (some)
- Staff training
- Bureaucracy – departments not talking to each other
- To quote Captain Kirk, the Strategy needs to boldly go where no one has gone before

Provide a break (6)

What carers say

What has been achieved?

- Carers' breaks such as trips and pampering have been very enjoyable
- Carers are being offered a carer assessment
- Carers are being offered a break
- Someone is able to listen and offer advice and support
- Having your voice heard
- The Carers Information Pack quick guide

“Carers’ breaks such as trips and pampering have been very enjoyable.”

What has worked well?

- Direct payments seem to work well
- Services from the Carers Centres
- The efficiency of carers care team within Halton GPs, district nurses etc

What could be done better?

- Encourage take-up of carer assessments
- Clarify information and make it simpler
- Make direct payments to family members in the same household (carers feel more confident if a relative is giving care)
- What happens when a carer is tired or ill and no longer able to care? There is a need for specialist care whilst the carer has a break
- Utilise former carers – some are prepared to volunteer, e.g. at the Carers Centre
- Advocacy is needed
- Boundary difficulties need to be clearer – e.g. carer and cared for person living in different areas
- More information for carers in all age groups, for example from hospitals and GPs
- The carer's whole needs should be taken into account, which may involve support to the whole family to allow the carer to have a break
- Some carers are not aware they may be entitled to a carer assessment
- Carers' breaks – more than one allocation of funding should be applied for annually
- More short breaks – for example someone coming in for just one day
- Carers should have more choice and flexibility on how they spend the funding and should be able to use some of the funding to pay family members who the cared for person is familiar with

What do carers want from the new Strategy?

- Accessible to ALL carers
- Flexibility
- Social life

- Be aware carers' roles mean they can't always attend meetings
- Drop-in – place to meet and talk and have a cup of tea

What more could be done to support carers?

- Look holistically at the impact of caring (especially in the family)
- Something more for men/ partners/ husbands – the forgotten ones
- Think long term for carers who are concerned that as they get older who will continue to care?
- Consultation before the event/ issue changes
- Consider how carer and cared for might lead a 'normal life' with access to places in the same way as mainstream society
- More information and better publicity about breaks
- Surgeries should give information and guidance following initial visit to GP
- Better communication between all professional bodies – and passed out to carers and third party groups
- Coordinator to gather information, put together and distribute to GPs, hospitals etc
- More information on planning for the future
- It is important to know that someone is there to listen when you need them
- More flexibility of breaks and sitting services

What might stand in the way?

- Money/funding
- Growing population of older carers and limited resources
- Perception of caring (why not shadow a carer for the day?)
- Dysfunctional organisation/ structure – involve corporate businesses to advise/support and develop services
- Continuity of worker involvement – often have several workers involved through assessment and review

Support that helps carers care and maintain their own health (7)

What carers say

- Information is the key to all this
- GPs and health professionals should be able to provide more information and refer carers once they are identified – it should not be left to the carers to find out what's available
- The present strategy is not being implemented
- Carers should have an independent benefits check, e.g. through CAB
- If carers are not registered how do we give them support?
- Why not send out a letter to every household in Halton asking if there is a carer in the household (this could go out with the council newsletter)
- We need carers and cared for persons to have a chance to go on holiday together, as some carers won't want to leave the person they care for
- Not everyone has access to Crossroads (respite) so they can't go to the therapies on offer – the same goes for carers' support groups
- We need an emergency service to provide cover for carers when they are unwell.
- Important to relieve stress to maintain carers' health

“Carers need to keep asking for what they want and if this is not available for this to be logged as a deficit in the service. This will help inform and direct future Carers Strategies”

- A back-up service to aid in emergencies
- A list of volunteers who could come out at short notice
- More courses to train carers
- More alternative therapies
- Listeners who could discuss problems and point carers in the right direction for help
- Holidays with paid carers to take care of the sick person whilst the carer goes out alone
- Sort finances with expert help

Young Carers (8)

What Carers Say

- More resources for HITS
- Publicise the young carers' pack better, e.g. in schools
- Better awareness amongst professionals of what's available for young carers
- Are there meetings for young carers?
- Have a session with young carers and get their views – we are not qualified to answer on their behalf
- Very important that support is at hand for bereavement (the Butterfly Project is available)
- Identify very young carers and be aware of their situations
- Ask young carers what they want
- Good relationships with schools
- Not having to constantly campaign for publicity
- More information available at schools
- More funds for young carers
- Advertise in public places such as surgeries, baths, etc
- Provide young carers with carers' breaks and activities they want
- Newsletters monthly to schools and highlighted questionnaires asking, are you a carer?
- Stronger links with adult mental health services
- It would have been useful to have had more young carers involved with this consultation process

Parents of children with a disability (9)

What Carers Say

- There is a lack of information
- Battle for everything
- Carers' assessment – length of time this takes when this involves children, length of forms
- Transition between children and adults relating to benefits payments and services
- Respite breaks – for children with disabilities there are four beds in Runcorn and two in Widnes
- For children with mental health problems you have to go to Chester for an assessment and even that has limited resources
- There is a lack of social workers and continuity with the same worker
- Replace day centres that have been closed?
- Speed to offer a service for both parent and cared for child
- To meet with other carers as a social group at a community centre
- Internet chat room for the children
- Halton information exchange

- Improve profile of the caring side of social services

What Carers Want;

- Must have schools for children with disabilities with expertise and resources under one roof, with health expert on board
- Council agencies to become more involved with schools
- Direct payments – can it be confirmed that these can be paid to a family member who does not live with the cared for person?
- Support carers with specific forms of counselling service
- Council to incorporate educational views from health and work together more
- Parents to be invited to take part in current schools review
- The transition at ages 16-18 is often a limbo area, often the child is forgotten about and this needs addressing.
- Social services should not discharge cases because you may not have had any contact for months
- Promote social care (social services)
- To access individualised help
- All GP practices have generalised information for carers
- Ongoing support
- Finance might stand in the way
- Simplification of information

Financial support/carers in employment (10)

What carers say

- More publicity
- Funding to be less complex
- Halton Borough Council's Direct Link does not link fast enough
- No personal contact appears to be allowed with the Benefits Section, which drives stress levels up
- Carers Allowance is so little, yet carers save the country so much
- Carers want more benefits, not means-tested
- Carers are limited in the number of hours they can work
- Carers shouldn't be taxed – maybe even working carers should be taxed less
- Health professionals need to be informed about carers' benefits
- It is not a choice to care for someone, it is something one must do, and money can be missed out on
- More opportunities for working from home
- The state pension should not interfere with getting Carers Allowance
- Carers in work should be made aware of opportunities for flexible working through promotion and advertising
- Working of the benefit system is confusing and not explained
- More flexible respite helps working carers and can help carers return to work
- If you can only work part time you lose benefits

“Carers Allowance is so little, yet carers save the country so much.”

What Carers want;

- More access to crisis care (without affecting respite beds etc) Short term support – e. g. someone to sit in whilst carer tends to shopping etc