

The Joint Bristol Carers Strategy

Bristol City Council, NHS Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG),
Carers Support Centre Bristol and South Gloucestershire and other partners

We made it happen for carers



Since 2008 there have been many positive developments to improve the lives of carers and those they care for. These are some of them:

- **A new Carers Strategy**
- **New breaks services**
- **Better support for young carers**
- **Improvements in mental health services**
- **Better planning for hospital discharge**

We continue to strive for further improvements.



The Carers' Support Centre



We made it happen for carers

We are **Carers in Bristol**. We have lots of different experiences between us and have cared for children parents, spouses and others. In 2008...



We said: *“Things need to improve for carers.”*

We did: We re-wrote a **Carers Strategy** alongside Officers from Bristol City Council, health services and carers organisations.

We said: *“Let’s make this happen.”*

We did: **We came together in a group to make it happen:** The Bristol Carers Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG) has overseen a number of developments and innovations, applied for external funding and brought agencies and services together to work jointly. Carers played an important role alongside officers; carers have a “critical friend” role. Because we work together we’ve been able to work in a different way.

We said: *“Change affects carers in many different ways, good and bad.”*

We did: **Carers and Change Protocol:** We worked together to produce a toolkit on best practice in working with carers where a service is being changed. This will help carers and agencies as services change or are developed.

We said: *“Carers always say we don’t know what’s going on and what help is available.”*

We did: **Information and advice:** We ensured a range of up-to-date information is available for all carers, much of it through voluntary sector partners, and services like libraries. We have written guidance for carers about things to think about before a carers assessment, and for staff on how to carry it out.



We said: *“Carers don’t always know what help social care can give us, and it doesn’t work for us anyway.”*

We did: **Making sure carers get help: Assessments that lead to support.** An Integrated Carers’ Team is now in place, funded jointly by the NHS and council, to ensure that all carers have access to their own carers’ assessments, including those that have missed out: Continuing Health Care carers, Young Carers, Parents of disabled children, and Carers who are not yet eligible for adult services.

A simple, light touch assessment (which doesn’t necessarily need a social worker) is now available.

For carers of adults with more substantial needs we improved the social work assessment process and made it possible for carers to have an on-going budget according to their need or a range of services.

For carers of disabled children with more substantial needs, the child’s assessment now places more emphasis on the needs of the parent as well as the child.

We said: *“Residential respite can be important for some of us and our families. It doesn’t work for everyone, and we need other support.”*

We did: **Personal Budgets for carers.** Rather than concentrating on “respite” we developed “personal budgets” for carers. This means a small amount of money on whatever makes the carer feel they have had a break or improves their wellbeing.

So that carers can access a personal budget, we’ve improved how ALL Bristol carers access an assessment. An assessment is the process by which our needs and how caring affects us is discussed with (usually) a social care or health professional. It is about our needs, not how “good” we are at caring.

We said: *“If we have personal budgets we need something that works for us.”*

We did: **New Breaks Services.** We encouraged the development of new services including caravans for carers’ holidays, memory cafés where people with dementia and their carers can get advice, volunteer services to give carers a break at home, sports and leisure clubs for carers and the people they support, day support and other things. We have encouraged more services to enable disabled children to access holiday play schemes.

We said: *“Carers aren’t always included in planning for hospital discharge.”*

We did: **Hospital Discharge.** We improved how health services work with carers, by setting up a team to help make GP practices and hospitals more carer friendly and respect carers as partners. Hospital Trusts in Bristol have developed carers’ charters and strategies.



We said: *“Carers often feel ignored by Mental Health services.”*

We did: **Improvements in how Mental Health services work with carers.** We improved how the problems for carers of people with mental health problems are recognised and the support they receive, including special groups and support.

We said: *“Young people who care aren’t noticed or supported, and this impacts on their whole life.”*

We did: **Support for young carers.** We have made sure that the needs of young carers are highlighted and met.
Services like children’s service, schools and adult social care have learnt about young carers’ experiences through Young Carers Voice.

We said: *“Carers worry if anything happens to them, what would happen to the person they care for?”*

We did: **Supporting carers in an emergency.** We developed an Emergency Card scheme so that any carer can be identified if they are taken ill and their own “contingency” plan put into action. Carers of adults also have access to a funded carers’ emergency service, which replaces them for 48 hours in an emergency, supporting their relative in their own home.

We said: *“When a child becomes an adult it is a very difficult time.”*

We did: **Improving the pathway to adulthood.** We have contributed to changes to make it easier for young people and their families as they move from children to adulthood. This includes more young people getting a special transitions service. Now we are working toward one service for all disabled young people and adults 0–25.

We said: *“Professionals don’t understand what carers do.”*

We did: **Improved training for paid staff.** We worked together to train lots of different professionals from a variety of backgrounds. We built this training into on-going courses. Lots of professionals (and carers) can use our new e-learning guide available on the Bristol City Council website.

We said: *We know things are still not perfect. And we know some of us are still having a hard time. For some of us it’s an emotional time and we may not be able to change that. We hope our improvements have made things easier ... we’re not finished yet.*



The Joint Bristol Carers Strategy is delivered by a partnership including:

- Carers from Bristol
- Bristol City Council
- NHS Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group
- Carers Support Centre Bristol and South Gloucestershire
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
- Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group
- Bristol Black Carers
- Dhek Bhal
- North Bristol Trust
- University Hospitals Bristol
- Rethink

If you are a Carer wanting support:

- For Information about Carers Short Breaks and Personal Budgets, call the Integrated Carers Team on **0117 352 1668**
- For support if you or the person you support/care for, may be eligible for services call Care Direct on **0117 922 2700**
- For support from the Carers Support Centre, call the CarersLine on **0117 965 2200**
- Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group call **0117 935 1462**
- Bristol Black Carers call **0117 314 4666**
- Dhek Bahl: support for carers from South Asian communities – **0117 914 6671**
- Rethink for carers of people with mental health issues – **0300 5000 937**
- If you are an agency wanting to get involved with the Bristol Carers Strategy, contact Carol Watson, Bristol City Council **0117 352 5624**
- If you are a carer wanting to get involved in representing the carers voice and making even more things happen, contact the Carers Support Centre on **0117 935 1462**
- If you want to help shape the services provided for children & young people with SEND (0–25 years), contact Bristol Parent Carers on **0117 939 6645**



Documents available in other formats: If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact us on 0117 352 5624.