

Healthwatch Greenwich – Updated Response to Recommendations

1. Review

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is currently undertaking a comprehensive recommissioning exercise for carers' services, which provides a key opportunity to review existing provision.

This process is being used to evaluate how effectively current services meet the needs of all unpaid carers, with a particular focus on equity, accessibility, and cultural responsiveness for carers from Black and Global Majority backgrounds. A core strand of this work involves assessing whether services are meeting carers' cultural, social, and practical needs, and identifying where improvements are required.

Feedback gathered through the recommissioning process is informing an assessment of existing services, highlighting both areas of good practice and gaps in provision. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that future services are designed to be inclusive and equitable in practice, with clear expectations that providers demonstrate how they will meet the needs of a diverse carer population.

2. Community Engagement

Significant work has been undertaken to strengthen engagement with Black and Global Majority carers as part of the recommissioning process. A key focus has been on adopting a co-production approach, ensuring that carers' voices are central to shaping future services.

Targeted efforts have been made to engage carers from Black and Global Majority backgrounds, recognising that these groups are often underrepresented in traditional engagement activity. This has included proactively meeting carers where they are, within community settings, faith groups, and trusted local networks in order to reduce barriers to participation and build trust.

Through this engagement, we are gaining a deeper understanding of carers' experiences, challenges, and preferences, including factors affecting access to support, perceptions of services, and the extent to which current provision reflects cultural needs. These insights are being used directly to inform service design and ensure that future provision is more responsive, inclusive, and culturally competent.

This approach ensures that engagement is meaningful and ongoing and that the experiences of Black and Global Majority carers are embedded in service design.

3. Culturally Relevant Support

A comprehensive carers' guide, '*Our Greenwich, Our Carers*', has been developed. This resource was co-designed with unpaid carers to ensure it reflects lived experience and real needs. The guide provides accessible information on support available locally and nationally, and is designed to support carers throughout their entire caring journey, from the early stages of identifying as a carer through to more complex and end of caring journey considerations.

In addition, information on the Community Directory has been reviewed and updated to improve accessibility and ensure that carers can more easily find relevant services and support. This includes a focus on making information clearer, more user-friendly, and inclusive.

Some of our commissioned carer services are also taking steps to improve inclusivity by making their resources available in multiple languages, helping to reduce barriers to access and ensure that carers from diverse backgrounds are better able to engage with services.

The current recommissioning exercise is further building on this progress. Insights gathered through engagement and co-production are informing how services can strengthen their approach to cultural relevance, ensuring that future provision is more responsive to the needs and preferences of Black and Global Majority Carers.

4. Collaboration with Community Organisations:

We are looking to strengthen our partnerships with Black and Global Majority-led community organisations through our engagement and co-design work which supports our recommissioning of carers services and development of a new all ages carers strategy.

5. Representation:

We strive to make co-production, co-design and engagement a part of our everyday practice. This includes making sure the voices of carers are heard and directly influence the way we design our services. We currently have a carer's partnership board which oversees the delivery of the carers strategy delivery plan. This group includes carers, voluntary and community sector representatives, and local government officers as members. The board provides transparency, challenge, and support for the carers strategy deliver plan, as well as wider strategic carers support work.

6. Information Accessibility:

On Carer's Rights Day in 2024, we launched the '*Our Greenwich, Our Carers*' guide. This is a comprehensive guide, co-produced with carers. It aims to give information about support available to carers locally and nationally. It covers topics such as access to

services, financial support, and mental health resources. This guide is available both online and in print. Physical printed copies are available from Greenwich Carer's Centre and in local community spaces.

Through working closely with our commissioned providers, we are supporting them to develop their approaches to increasing awareness of carer's rights including support services, benefits, rights, entitlements, while strengthening access to these.

We also run communications throughout carer's week and carer's rights day. This has been both internally to staff to develop their practice in providing support, as well as to residents highlighting their rights and entitlements. This has also included social media content to tell real life lived experience stories from carers. We continue to work closely with unpaid carers to design communication campaigns on the issues most important to carers.

7. Addressing Stigma:

We have started focused work to understand the intersectionality of inequalities faced by carers. This has included working with internal staff networks to address taboos and stigma around being recognised as an unpaid carer, and gain understanding of the broader social, economic, and political contexts that shape the lives of unpaid carers. Alongside this, we will be strengthening our relationships with children and young people to ensure that the identification and support of young carers is embedded within our wider approach, including through our communications and awareness-raising campaigns. We will work with commissioned providers to develop their approaches to addressing the inequalities faced by Black and Global Majority carers.

8. Research and Evaluation:

While we have not conducted specific research into the impact our support services have on Black and Global Majority carers, we are committed to continual learning and development through our relationships with commissioned providers and internal social care practice.

Through our recommissioning of carers services and carers strategy, we are using the insights gathered through engagement and co-production to determine the extent to which current provision meets cultural needs. Using these insights, we are assessing the extent to which services meet and adapt to the needs of Black and Global Majority Carers. This approach will then help us ensure there is a system wide response to tackling structural inequalities faced by carers.