Year One 2004/05

Wigan Borough Carers' Strategy 2004-9

CONTENTS

ARE YOU A CARER?

Many carers do not recognise themselves as carers or the impact that caring is having on their lives. Many carers also do not choose to call themselves 'carers' and/or do not like distinctions to be made between different kinds of carer (eg older carer, young carer) although from a service point of view that is sometimes necessary. We have tried to keep those distinctions to a minimum in this document.

The definitions shown below are those found by the Department of Health to be helpful in understanding whom carers are.

A Carer is someone looking after a relative, friend or neighbour who needs support because of age, a physical disability, a learning disability, a physical illness or a mental illness. A carer can be of any age and can be of either sex. Carers come from all backgrounds and communities.

By parent carers we mean a parent of a disabled child. Parents will often see themselves as parents rather than carers, but their child will have additional care needs and may be entitled to additional services. The term parent includes foster carers of disabled children.

Young carers are carers who are under the age of 18 years. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a brother, a sister, a grandparent or a relative who needs support.

Although many carers are entitled to receive a Carer's Allowance, they are not paid to look after someone and so are very different to paid care workers.

Are you a carer?

If you can recognise yourself from any of the above descriptions, then you are a carer and this document applies to you.

Locally in the Borough of Wigan it is estimated that there are approximately 46,000 carers. It is important that we reach out to as many carers as possible in the Borough to let them know about what help and support there is available and so that they can find out about their rights and entitlements.

If you know of someone who is a carer, then please let them know about this document, or give them a copy.

WIGAN BOROUGH CARERS' STRATEGY UPDATE

Launch of the draft Strategy 2003

Last year at the annual Carers' Day event held at Wigan Investment Centre (June 2003), the first 'draft' of the Wigan Borough Carers' Strategy was launched. This draft explained what the Strategy was about and it gave a brief summary of the local and national background to the Strategy being developed in Wigan. It also outlined the consultation that had taken place with local carers and provided information about the services and support identified by carers that they would like to see maintained, improved and developed in the Borough.

The draft Strategy also described how an Action Plan would be drawn up in partnership with a wide number of agencies and organisations who share responsibility for the aims and objectives in the Action Plan.

What has been happening since last year?

Over the past 12 months since the draft Carers' Strategy was launched, a detailed Five Year Action Plan has been developed with the co-operation and involvement of a number of agencies, organisations and carer representatives. The full, detailed Action Plan is available for carers to view on request. However, because of its size, and because it is an ongoing working document that is subject to further revision and updating on an annual basis, a more accessible summary of its contents have been included in this document, in particular those actions planned for this coming year.

Your comments about the draft Strategy

We would like to thank all those carers and individuals who took the time and trouble to tell us what they thought about the draft Strategy as this has helped us in developing the Action Plan and the Carers Strategy' document for this year. The draft Carers' Strategy received many positive comments and most people said that they liked it. We have tried to take account of the comments made which included:

- Make sure carers are involved in developing the Strategy and Action Plan.

A small number of carers regularly attend meetings and they have helped to develop and draw up the Action Plan

- Make sure you produce something that is easy to read and understand.

This document has been put together with the help of carers. They have also helped to write and proofread it to make sure it is jargon-free and can be easily read and understood.

- Make sure that what is said in the Strategy actually happens in practice.

Each year we will be updating you about what has been happening and what has been achieved over the past year. This is as important as telling you what is planned for the future.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill

Since last year there has been another important development at national policy level concerning carers with the introduction in January 2004 of the above Bill, which is currently going through parliament.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill was introduced by Dr Hywel Francis MP. The Bill had its Report Stage and Third Reading on 14th May. If it is successful, the Bill will give carers new rights to information and more opportunities for work, education, life-long learning and leisure. It will also add weight to this Carers' Strategy and Action Plan.

Copies of the Bill are available from: www.parliament.uk and further information about the Bill and its progress can be found on the Carers UK website: www.carersonline.org.uk

Give us your views

Every year we will also be giving you the opportunity to tell us what you think about the Wigan Borough Carers' Strategy and to tell us how we can continue to improve and develop services and support for local carers.

Do please take the time and trouble to complete the feedback sheet enclosed with this document as we rely on YOU to help us to help carers.

STANDARDS FOR IMPROVING SERVICES AND SUPPORT

We are using the five quality standards developed as part of the Government's National Strategy for Carers. We have also added a sixth - Recognition - that we feel is important. These quality standards also complement and take account of the principles included in Valued Partners - A Carer's Charter that was produced in June 1999 in the Borough by key agencies working with and for carers including Social Services, Health and voluntary organisations. The six Quality Standards that have been incorporated in the Action Plan to monitor improvements and developments in services and support for carers are as follows:

Standard 1: Information

To provide information for carers that is comprehensive, accurate and appropriate, accessible and responsive to individual needs

Standard 2: Providing a break

To provide 'short break' services for carers and quality services for the person being supported. Any service offering a break should work in partnership with the carer and person being supported, and should be flexible, reliable and give confidence

Standard 3: Emotional support

To provide carers with access to emotional support that meets individual needs, is confidential, offers continuity and is accessible to all carers

Standard 4: Support that helps carers to care and maintain their own health

To provide services that support carers to care and to maintain their own health and well-being by offering training, health promotion and other personal development opportunities

Standard 5: Having a voice

To provide services that support carers to have a voice, individually and/or collectively, and that are accessible to all carers. Also to ensure carers are consulted, listened to and responded to appropriately

Standard 6: Recognition

To ensure carers are recognised and valued as individuals with their own unique skills and needs. This includes recognition and support for those who do not identify themselves as carers

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR - 2003/04

Carers' involvement with the Strategy: Alan McLeod, Wigan and Leigh Carers Helpline

`Large trees from little acorns grow`, and that is how carers throughout the Borough of Wigan can look back over the past eighteen months and reflect upon their involvement in the preparation of this Wigan Borough Carers' Strategy. Carers have indeed had a very sizeable input, initially into the draft Strategy document launched at Carers Day in June, 2003 and now this updated document.

Thirty-five carers from throughout our Borough attended a Pre-Strategy Meeting at the Greyhound Hotel, Leigh in February last year to discuss those topics which could be built upon to give rise to the Strategy we now have. Standards such as `Provision of Information`, `Recognising Carers`, `Ensuring quality services for the carer` were just some of the topics discussed.

That preparatory work provided the nucleus for the Carers Strategy Day held at Robin Park in March 2003 when some 70 carers attended, either as individuals or as representatives of the 50 plus Carers/Support Groups operative within Wigan Borough. This full working day teased out the major issues of concern to local carers that, in turn, gave rise to the six Standards included in this Wigan Borough Carers' Strategy.

From that large meeting at Robin Park, the further development and fine-tuning of our present Strategy Document has been undertaken by the Carers' Partnership Group comprising of carers and representatives from Wigan Social Services, Housing, Education, Benefit Agency, Primary Care Trust and Leisure to name but a few! On occasions the Partnership Group divided into Sub-Committees to carry out research into the six identified Standards to a greater depth, and carers were well represented in the work that was undertaken at every stage.

Activities have continued for carers within Wigan and Leigh during the past months, including short training sessions for carers, theatre trips, a trip to Southport Flower Show, a Carers Supermarket, other days out and a weekend away at Llandudno, North Wales when 100 persons attended.

Looking back over this busy and yet exciting time, carer Mike Aspinall of the `Think Ahead Community Stroke Group` and a member of the Partnership Group said, `Our current Strategy Document is by no means set in concrete. It is but a foundation or base upon which we must continue to build. It is not a definitive document, and carers from the Borough will certainly be helping to contribute again in the future. This is, however, a Strategy document that we sincerely hope will enhance the quality of services provided for carers in the

unpaid caring roles they undertake every day. It is up to those agencies that have signed up to the Strategy Document to ensure they meet with those Standards. Watch this space!`

Older Carers and their need for recognition: Marilyn Locke, Older Carers Social Worker

Of the estimated 46,000 carers in the borough of Wigan, approximately one in 7 are over the age of 65. Unfortunately, many older people who provide care do not describe themselves as a "carer" and therefore the number of older carers may be much higher than is recorded. Regardless of the age of a carer, caring can be both physically and emotionally demanding. However, older carers appear to have additional unique needs in relation to their own age and well-being. Older carers are identified as one of the poorest groups in society. They are often caring without support and so are very isolated. The daily and often intensive care tasks they provide further impact health problems of older carers. Sadly, older carers are less likely to have had a break from caring for many years.

To address these needs we are raising awareness of older carers to all health and social care professionals so that hidden older carers can be identified and supported. In particular, a project with Pemberton Primary Care Resource Centre is successfully working to raise awareness of older carers and provide an opportunity for patients to discuss their caring issues with a Carers Social Worker. An Information book specifically for older carers is to be published and widely distributed which will provide valuable advice and information aimed at promoting carers' physical and emotional well-being, reducing isolation and maximising their quality of life. Several support groups specifically for older carers have been set up in local communities for easy access. Also through good use of the Carers Grant short breaks have been successfully facilitated for small groups of older carers who have otherwise been unable to take a break themselves. Positive comments from carers who have been on these breaks illustrate their benefit:

> *"The break has been wonderful…we have never had such a laugh for a long time."*
>
> *"Being able to relax and come home feeling calmer… feeling that the two days were for me and away from my everyday routine"*

Supporting carers of people with learning disabilities: Caroline Tomlinson, Wigan and Leigh SCOPE

Scope currently has a project for older carers of people with learning disabilities. The project has so far identified 170 older carers and has been working with families giving information, advice and support, as well as a personal advocacy service. The project has identified the wishes of families to develop a plan for

the future and is currently working with several families to develop a person centred plan with individuals. The plan states the needs in detail of the family member with learning disabilities including all of the emergency contacts. The plan also looks at the families' plans for the future. All of this uses the essential lifestyle planning model and is recorded in an accessible book designed on an individual basis using pictures, photographs and words. Once they are completed, the books will be kept in a safe place in the person's house and the Central Duty Team will be notified where it is kept in case of emergency. This will also link with the Carers Emergency Card.

Scope also has a project funded through the Children's Fund working specifically with children and their families. The service offers support to families through information, advice, support and advocacy and person centred planning.

Scope has developed and delivered family leadership training through the Partners in Policy Making course. Currently there are 35 graduates who have completed this course. Two-thirds are family members from the Wigan area. The leadership training has developed a clearer understanding amongst families who took part and has given them information, which will empower them to influence change.

Carers in mental health: Karen Jones, Carers Social Worker Mental Health (under 65s)

Looking after a relative or close friend who has a mental illness can be stressful or difficult to cope with. Up to one and a half million people in Great Britain are involved in caring for someone with a mental illness such as dementia, schizophrenia or depression. Over the past 12 months there has been a significant amount of progress made within mental health services to highlight the needs of carers and to develop services to meet those needs

A carers' resource room has been established at Leigh hospital. It is a dedicated room for carers to access to gain information and advice on mental illness, treatments, and services available locally, etc.

A website for carers in mental health is in the process of being developed. The web site will enable carers to keep up to date with their rights and what services are being developed within mental health in Wigan

Information leaflets have been developed that inform carers of their rights to assessment, raise their awareness of mental illness and the difficulties carers face.

Carers' assessments have been increasing over the past year for those within mental health. This is as a result of having a dedicated worker who works with carers caring for those with complex mental health needs.

Making Space sitting service is a new service designed to meet the needs of carers caring for people with complex mental health need. The scheme employs 3 workers who spend time with the cared for person which enables the carer to have some time to themselves.

Training The 5-Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust have opened up their training to carers and service users. This has led to carers becoming better informed about mental illness and treatment and this has had an impact upon improving carer's lives.

Carers in the local ethnic minority community: Marilyn Rothwell, Carers Service Manager

For many reasons, members of the local ethnic minority community are reluctant or unable to seek help from statutory organisations. However, we do know from discussions with the community that there are carers in Wigan and Leigh. They are more likely to be women caring for family members.

The Social Services Carers Team has made links with the Leigh Ethnic Centre with the intention of identifying reasons and problems carers face and why they do not seek support. The Team is also looking at ways of offering support that reflects and is sensitive to their needs. In the first instance we have agreed the need to identify individual carers and their needs and problems. The possibility of establishing a support group at the Centre has also been suggested and is being considered.

Young Carers: Brenda Rudkin, Young Carers Development Worker

Young carers are first and foremost young people and need to be supported to enable them to have the same life chances as other young people. Wigan and Leigh Young Carers' Befriending and Groupwork schemes aim to provide young carers with the help and support they need by providing peer support, advice and information, and by enabling young carers to have a collective voice. The schemes also help to raise awareness of young carers' issues throughout the borough.

In the last twelve months referrals have doubled and we now have five groups in the borough. We also have a well-established, committed team of befrienders and more befrienders are being recruited through advertisements.

During the past year we have also consulted with all the young carers we are in contact with to find out how they feel about their caring role and the kind of support they would find helpful.

The support we provide through the befriending and groupwork schemes seeks to alleviate the problems faced by young carers and their families by giving them a break from their caring role and having someone to talk to.

WIGAN BOROUGH CARERS' STRATEGY YEAR ONE ACTION PLAN 2004/05

The following is a summary of the full Action Plan, focusing on actions and developments planned for the current year 2004/05. Some actions are already underway and some are ongoing. Some actions may not necessarily be completed within a year, but are developments that will progress year on year.

Standard 1: Information

Action/Objective	Timescale	Person/agency responsible
Production of Information Pack for older carers	Within 12 months	Marilyn Locke, Carers Resource Team
Continue to promote and distribute Young Carers Pack, particularly to local schools	Ongoing	Young Carers Workers
Emergency Contact Card Scheme for carers	✓ **Achieved**	Carers UK
Develop carers' identity card system linked to Central Duty Team to assist in the setting up of a carers' database to ensure timely and professional interventions in emergencies	Within 12 months	Carers Resource Team
Leaflets for carers in GP surgeries to be regularly distributed, kept updated and re-stocked	Ongoing	Jill Petite, GP Liaison Worker
Leaflets for carers in libraries to be regularly distributed, kept updated and re-stocked	Ongoing	Libraries Service
Leaflets / information relevant to carers to be regularly distributed to carer groups	Ongoing	Wigan & Leigh Carers Helpline
Establish inter-agency Carers Information Group	Within 12 months	Carers Partnership Group
Continue holding Carers Information Days at local public venues such as supermarkets and libraries	Ongoing	Carers Resource Team / Carers Partnership Group
To make information available in other formats when required and to monitor requests made	Ongoing	Carers Information Group
Carers Webpage to be regularly reviewed and updated*	Ongoing	Dorothy Latham, Carers Resource Team / Karen Dunn, Social Services Public Information Officer
Develop website for carers in mental health	By Sept 2004	Karen Jones, Carers Resource Team

*Webpage available at: www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/socs/carers.htm

Standard 2: Providing a break

Action/Objective	Timescale	Person/agency responsible
Continue developing respite services and monitor and evaluate existing services, e.g. Crossroads, Making Space, Mencap and those provided by Health and Social Services.	Ongoing	Marilyn Rothwell, Carers Service Manager
Encourage and promote development of new respite break services to meet gaps identified by carers (eg emergency care, MS, specialist respite for under 65s)	Ongoing	Marilyn Rothwell, Carers Service Manager
Implement and pilot Carers Voucher Scheme to enable more flexibility and choice of breaks	Within 12 months	Julie Webster, Carers Grant Development Officer to implement and monitor
Promote Carers Grant 'one-off' Payments Scheme with the aim of reaching more and new carers	Ongoing	Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre / Carers Resource Team
Raise awareness and inter-agency co-operation in supporting carers while they undertake training, learning, employment, social opportunities etc.	Ongoing	Carers Partnership and Joint Training Partnership
Promote and raise awareness of Direct Payments amongst carers	Ongoing	Social Workers and Carers Social Workers

Standard 3: Emotional support

Action/Objective	Timescale	Person/agency responsible
Monitor, evaluate and, subject to available funding, continue and further develop relaxation therapy sessions for carers	Ongoing	Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre
Monitor, evaluate and, subject to available funding, further develop and promote counselling sessions for carers	Ongoing	Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre / Wigan and Leigh Wigan and LeigH Scope
Support and promote Carers Helpline which provides out of office hours advice, support and information for carers	Ongoing	Wigan and Leigh Carers Helpline
Develop Young Carers Helpline	Within 12 months	Young Carers Focus Group / Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre
Continue to develop befriending scheme for young carers	Ongoing	Young Carers Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator
Ensure staff training programmes to include listening skills training and carer awareness training	Ongoing	Inter-agency training and development staff

Standard 4: Support that helps carers to care and maintain their own health

Action/Objective	Timescale	Person/agency responsible
More training courses for carers to be organised following success of recent series* (see below)	✓ **Achieved** Funding secured for more training sessions within next 12 months	Wigan & Leigh Carers Centre
More courses relevant to carers to be developed by the Joint Training Partnership Board, which has been set up to provide appropriate training for carers	Ongoing	Joint Training Partnership Board
More courses relevant to carers to be provided by the 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust	Ongoing	5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust
Carers to be targeted to join health / active living / wellbeing initiatives	Within 12 months	Health & Active Living Teams
More support to help carers get back to work to be provided. Series of 'Care to Work' events promoting NVQ qualifications for carers to be organised	Within 12 months	Joint Training Partnership Board / Jobcentre Plus
Implement Information Technology (IT) project to develop IT computer/typing skills for carers returning to learning/work (also links to Standard 1)	Within 12 months	Julie Webster, Carers Grant Development Officer / Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre
Continue to support and help develop new carers support groups	Ongoing	Carers Resource Team Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre
Implement new project to support carers looking after someone with dementia	Within 12 months	Age Concern

*Training courses provided included Benefits, Carers' Assessments, Disability Discrimination, and the Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS). For information about future courses being planned please contact Wigan & Leigh Carers Helpline on 01942 606086

Standard 5: Having a voice

Action/Objective	Timescale	Person/agency responsible
Ensure carers are represented on relevant committees, Boards, groups etc. with training/support as appropriate	Ongoing	Carers Partnership Group
Establish Carers Panel to help administer Carers Grant (this also links to Standard 2)	✓ **Achieved**	Julie Webster, Carers Grant Development Officer
More carers assessments to be carried out with carers informed beforehand that they will be having an assessment, so that they can prepare for it, and during the assessment so that they are aware when the assessment takes place	Ongoing - this is a national target that is closely monitored	All social workers / Social Services Care co-ordinators / Health Carers Resource Team / Carers Assessment Monitoring Group
Carers to be encouraged to give their views on services and support received	Ongoing	All agencies
Ensure carers are informed about and have access to advocacy support	Ongoing	Patient Advisory Liaison Service, Wigan Social Services Personal Advocacy Service, Organisations providing advocacy support to carers (eg Wigan & Leigh Scope, Add A Voice)
Establish Carers in Mental Health Group to increase their effective involvement in mental health services	Within 12 months	Carers in Mental Health
Support and develop other carers involvement/advocacy groups	Ongoing	Carers Resource Team / Carers Organisations / Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre / Carers Partnership Group

Standard 6: Recognition

Action/Objective	Timescale	Person/agency responsible
Awareness of carers and their needs to be publicised and promoted as widely as possible	Ongoing	Carers Partnership Group / Carers Resource Team
Carers' events, activities, information etc. to be targeted as widely possible to try and reach the maximum number of carers, especially 'hidden' carers who may not recognise themselves as 'carers' and/or those who do not want to be called 'carers'	Ongoing	Carers Partnership Group / Carers Resource Team / Wigan and Leigh Carers Helpline
Staff in all partnership agencies to receive 'carer awareness' training	Ongoing	All agencies (as listed at the back of this document)
More carers assessments to be carried out with carers informed beforehand that they will be having an assessment, so that they can prepare for it, and during the assessment so that they are aware when the assessment takes place (this also applies to Standard 5)	Ongoing - this is a national target that is closely monitored	All social workers / Social Services Care co-ordinators / Health Carers Resource Team / Carers Assessment Monitoring Group
Work on raising awareness of carers and their needs to be carried out with GP surgeries and health care staff	Within next 12 months and ongoing	Jill Petite, GP Liaison Worker / Chris Arkwright, Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre / Marilyn Locke, Carers Resource Team
Continue projects around recognising the needs of older carers	Ongoing	Marilyn Locke, Carers Resource Team / Wigan and Leigh Scope
Update Social Services Department Carers Policy in the light of new legislation / policy guidance	Within 12 months	Carers Resource Team

If you would like clarification or further information about any of the above actions/objectives included in the Action Plan for this coming year, please contact the relevant person or agency responsible. Alternatively, you can telephone the Carers Resource Team (Tel: 01942 705976) or Wigan and Leigh Carers Helpline (Tel: 01942 606086).

CARERS' ASSESSMENTS

What is a Carer's Assessment?

As a carer under the Carers' Recognition and Services Act 1995 and the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 you are entitled to an assessment of your own needs. This applies even if the person you care for is eligible for services but for some reason does not want to have an assessment of their needs. As their carer, you can still have an assessment of your needs in your own right.

An assessment takes into consideration all the things that you as a carer have to do when looking after a relative or friend who, as a result of illness or disability, is unable to manage at home without help. The assessment process looks at how your caring role affects your health and well-being and whether you want to and are able to continue with caring. The assessment is based on individual needs and is your opportunity to tell us about the things that could make caring easier for you. As a carer it is important that you are involved in the assessment process as you probably know the person you care far better than anyone else. As a result of an assessment you as the carer or the person you care for may be offered a service/help/advice.

Assessments can be either joint, carried out at the same time as the person you care for, or separate, and carried out with you on your own. A separate assessment may give you the opportunity to discuss your own needs more fully.

A carer's assessment should be a positive experience giving recognition to you as the carer and an acknowledgement that you may need support. Feedback from carers indicates that many do not know about assessments and also do not know if they have actually had an assessment or not because they have not been given any information or seen any outcomes as a result of an assessment. This highlights the need for a pro-active approach in raising awareness about carers' assessments with both carers and professional staff responsible for carrying out the assessments.

Future Developments

In response to feedback from carers we aim to:

- develop a consistent approach to undertaking assessments
- promote good quality carers' assessments and ensure that carers are given a copy of their Assessment of Needs and their Care Plan
- improve outcomes for carers as a result of their assessments
- increase the number of carers' assessments carried out

Information on the number of assessments carried out is counted and compared with other Councils nationally. In Wigan, the number of carers' assessments being carried out is increasing year on year.

CARERS' GRANT UPDATE

"The Carers Special Grant, wisely distributed within our Borough, has helped greatly towards better relationships, understanding and the promulgation of what carers need to know"
Alan McLeod, Carer and Secretary of Carers UK (Wigan and Leigh Branch)

"…a group of like minded carers including myself decided to form a support group to help carers in the sad position that we found ourselves through no fault of our own but by just wanting to treat our loved ones with dignity and respect… To help achieve our objectives we were given a small grant of £2000 from the Carers' Grant to start us off. This has helped us as a group to provide over 2000 hours of first quality respite care for carers in our first year…"
Alan Kendrick, Chair, Directions Carer Support Group

Background – The Present Situation

The Carers' Grant is an annual grant provided from Central Government to Social Services Departments. The Carers' Grant forms part of the Government's National Strategy for Carers, published in 1999. It was introduced to enhance and stimulate diversity and flexibility in the provision of breaks for carers in all service areas from mental health, older people, disabled adults and children's services. The money may also be used to develop carers' services for non-break carer support and 5% is allowed for administration of the grant. It is important to recognise that the money is for "additional" services and does not replace money also identified by Social Services and other agencies for carers' services.

In previous years the grant has been 'ring fenced' or paid under s93 of the Local Government Act 2000, which required the Secretary of State to issue guidance on the grant. However, from 2004/5 the ring fencing has been removed, and the grant is paid under s31. This means that the grant is paid with or without conditions being attached and need not be spent on services for carers. Wigan Council is, however, still committed to providing services to Carers and it should be noted that the Department of Health request statistics on services for carers in order to measure how an Authority is performing.

How much money?

In 2003/4 the Carers' Grant allocation for Wigan Borough was **£617,000**, and this was spread across the different service areas. The money helped to provide a range of services such as residential and home-based respite services, holiday and activity breaks for carers and support via individual grants. Some of the money given to the voluntary sector was used for new, innovative schemes

such as the provision of short break training sessions and carer focused equipment. The breakdown of the total number of carers who benefited across the different service areas, together with the total number of breaks, is shown below:

Carers' Grant allocation 2003/4 across service areas

Service Area	Number of carers benefiting
Mental Health	295
Learning Disability	558
Physical Disability	233
Older People	367
Children with Complex Needs	532
Young Carers	74
Ethnic Groups	4
Total number of carers	2,063
Total number of breaks	12,090

As the figures above illustrate, still only a small percentage - just under 5% - of the total number of estimated carers in the borough are benefiting from the Carers Grant.

Allocation for 2004/5

An annual increase has raised the Carers' Grant allocation for Wigan Borough this year to **£764,000**. A percentage of this will continue to fund existing services under close monitoring and evaluation. During 2003/4 a great deal of time was spent on evaluating how and where we spent the money and helping to set up new and different projects for carers. Monitoring and evaluation systems have also been put in place.

Linking the Carers' Grant to the Carers' Strategy

This year a panel has been appointed to make recommendations on how some of the Carers' Grant should be spent. The membership comprises representatives from voluntary and community groups and carers from a range of service areas. This is intended to make the Grant more open and transparent, so that people outside of social services can see how the money is spent and have a voice in this. The Panel members have received training from an outside agency to help them to agree a process for making recommendations and applying criteria for making decisions.

Priorities for the grant are around reaching and supporting more carers and to continue to increase the range and type of breaks available to carers, as well as making these more equal. These priorities and developments will be linked with those identified in the Strategy and to ensure that the money is spent purposefully and not purely on an ad hoc basis.

Linking the Carers' Grant with a 5 year Action Plan

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee a secure Carers' Grant process with continued increases in the amount beyond 2006. However, until then it is possible to link expenditure of the Carers' Grant with requirements of the Strategy. Even if the Government decided to discontinue the Carers' Grant in its present form, it is likely that money for carers' services will remain, although it may be received in a different way. It is important to plan for the future and to try to ensure that money for carers' services, including services and support for carers from voluntary sector providers, is secured.

Gaps

- There is currently no method to move permanent/long term packages for carers to other funding streams.

- Awareness raising sessions have taken place with other agencies but work needs to continue to find new ways of identifying new carers or carers' groups and to encourage applications from them in order to ensure wider and more equitable use of the grant.

- There is a need to provide more flexible respite care for carers. A voucher scheme will be set up this year to facilitate this.

Objectives to Fill Gaps and Improve Services by Use of the Carers' Grant

Social Services, in partnership with the voluntary sector, the Carers Partnership Group and individual carers intends to:

- Align spending from the grant with priorities, strategy and developments as identified in the Carers' Strategy.

- Find ways of using the money flexibly and ensure financial capacity to allow continued new and extra breaks and services for carers

- Look at ways of ensuring security of funding for carers in the longer term

WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Wigan and Leigh Carers Helpline provides information and advice on a range of issues relevant to carers, including the support that is available through carers' groups, help available from voluntary and statutory agencies and carers activities. The service is available 9am - 10.30pm Monday - Friday and 1pm - 10.30pm Saturday and Sunday.
Telephone: 01942 606086

Wigan and Leigh Crossroads Care Scheme provides short respite breaks to carers in their own home during the day, evening or at night
Telephone: 01942 700612

Carers UK (Wigan and Leigh Branch) Carers UK is a membership organisation of carers that campaigns to improve services and support for carers. The local Wigan and Leigh branch meets monthly.
Telephone: 01942 606086

Wigan Social Services Carers Resource Team provide information and advice on services and support available for carers. The Carers Social Workers offer support and advice to people caring for someone and also carry out carers' assessments. Young carers workers provide support to children and young people caring for a relative, through support groups and befriending. They also visit schools and colleges to talk to pupils and teachers about the needs of young carers.
Telephone: 01942 705976

Help available from Social Services for carers includes:

- Home care
- Support from a social worker or carers groups, and
- Short term breaks (respite care)

To request help from Social Services, contact the Central Duty Team

Location: Central Duty Team, Hyndelle Lodge, King Street, Hindley, Wigan

Hours: 8.45am - 8pm (Monday - Friday) 8.45am - 1pm (Saturday)

Telephone: 01942 828777
Outside these hours, in emergencies only, phone the out-of-hours service on 0161 834 2436

WIGAN BOROUGH CARERS' STRATEGY PARTNERS

This is a list of all the partner agencies that have collaborated, contributed and co-operated in helping to put together the Wigan Borough Carers' Strategy and Action Plan for this year. They are 'signed up' and committed to this Strategy and are committed to maintaining, improving and developing services and support for local carers living in the borough.

Carers UK (Wigan and Leigh Branch)
Social Services Department, Wigan Borough Council
Specialist Health Promotion Services
Community Legal Service Partnership, Wigan Borough Council
Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust
Wigan Borough Information Advice & Guidance Partnership
Positive Futures Ltd
Jobcentre Plus
The Pension Service
Wigan and Leigh Housing
Education Department, Wigan Borough Council
Wigan and Leigh Libraries
Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust
Wrightington, Wigan & Leigh NHS Trust
Making Space
Think Ahead Community Stroke Group
Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre
Wigan and Leigh Carers Helpline
Wigan and Leigh Crossroads Care Scheme
Wigan and Leigh Scope
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust

In addition to the agencies named above, there are a number of individual carers who have given freely of their time to help guide and direct the shape and content of this Strategy, including all those carers who have been consulted over the past three years. Grateful thanks are extended to everyone who has played a role in developing this Strategy.