

CARERS CASE STUDY

OCTOBER 2014

Improving carers' health and wellbeing in Halton

What carers told us

The 2011 national census estimates that there are over 15,000 carers in Halton. There are just over 5,700 young and adult carers registered at Halton Carers Centre. This represents 12% of our total population identifying themselves as carers in the 2011 census, approximately one in every eight people. This is a significant population that have long-term needs and in Halton we feel this demands a co-ordinated approach to address their problems.

Overall levels of health and wellbeing in Halton are poor. 26% of people live in the top 10% deprived areas of England and Wales. In 2010, 31% of deaths were due to cancer, 31% were due to circulatory disease and 15% due to respiratory disease. So whilst life expectancy in Halton is rising, it remains amongst the lowest in the country.

The Department of Health impact assessment of the Care Bill identifies high performing areas as having achieved a ratio of carers' assessments to overall number of service users of 39%. In 2012/13 Adult Social Care data shows that the ratio in Halton was 17%.

Key issues identified through the 2012/13 carers' survey were:

- Improving social contact.
- Reducing the number of carers who thought they were neglecting themselves.
- Taking into consideration that many carers themselves had a long-standing illness.

The Service

Our vision is to utilise the experience of local carers, service providers and key stakeholders to co-produce services that meet the needs and improve the wellbeing of our carers of Halton.

Halton Borough Council and Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are working together to provide a co-ordinated approach with Halton Carers Centre to achieve the following:

1. Increasing the number of known carers.

- Identifying carers in the NHS, particularly in primary, secondary and mental health services.
- Delivering carer awareness sessions to front line health and social care staff.



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2. Providing a range of opportunities for people to have a life outside caring.

- Statutory carers' assessments.
- Ring-fenced budgets held by Adult Social Care and Halton Carers Centre to provide direct payments to carers.
- Funding 16 community and third sector groups to provide activities and support for carers.

3. Improving carers' health and wellbeing.

- The Practice Well Being Project.
- Provision of alternative therapies.
- Provision of advice and information.
- Advocating on behalf of carers.
- Provision of 'caring with confidence' courses.

4. Utilising carers' experiences to improve the commissioning, planning and quality of services.

- Carers attend commissioning boards, (dementia partnership board, mental health board, adults with learning disabilities partnership board).
- Biannual meetings with carers of older people, disability, mental health and substance misuse.
- Focus groups held with carers to look at their experiences of health and social care services.

Fundamental to the success of carers' services in the borough is Halton Carers Centre. This service is jointly commissioned by Halton Borough Council and Halton CCG. The Carers Centre provides the following:

- Carer registrations and reviews.
- Non-statutory assessments that can result in a 'direct payment'.
- Identification and support of carers in hospitals, primary care and mental health settings by dedicated Carer Centre staff.*

- Identification and support of young carers and parent carers (ADHD and autism) by dedicated Carer Centre staff.*
- Activities through which carers take a break from their caring role.
- Carer awareness training.
- Caring with confidence courses.
- Advice, information and signposting.
- Monthly newsletters for primary care.
- Quarterly carers' forum.
- Alternative therapies.
- Young carers' forum.
- Young carers' assessments.

*these specialist posts were commissioned in response to identified gaps in provision.

The impact

Carers

- Improved identification of carers in the health system.
- Carers are reporting an improvement in their health and wellbeing.
- Carers report that their relationship with their GP practice has improved.
- Carers have had medical procedures brought forward to enable them to stay healthy while continuing with their caring role.
- Carers have accessed 'personalised break' funding via the Carers Centre.
- Carers have accessed direct payments via a statutory assessment carried out by Adult Social Care Management.
- An increasing number of carers are accessing activities and groups.



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Staff

- The identification and referral of carers identified in health services has been made quicker and easier.
- There is a Carers Champion at each GP practice.
- Originally the referral of carers by GPs was supported through a Local Enhanced Agreement (LES). The success of this service has meant that funding is no longer required for this LES.
- Improved awareness of carer issues across health, council and voluntary sectors.
- Social workers are able to prevent family breakdown due to pressure on the carer through the use of the ring-fenced budget.

How has the work been funded or commissioned?

Carers' services in Halton are commissioned through a partnership between Halton Borough Council and Halton CCG. The carers' budgets from each organisation are aligned to support the delivery of the four strategic objectives.

Rural or urban - transferring the service

Whilst this is an urban service, it could be transferable to rural areas..

Spreading the learning

This model is being used to identify carers in health services and is being adapted to identify young carers in schools and colleges in Halton.

Evaluation – measuring success

- Using the WHO 5 index, carers' health and wellbeing is measured when they first register with Halton Carers Centre and at the six-week review stage. They are then reviewed annually. 80% (1,040) of carers have experienced an improvement in their health, sleep, social life and ability to cope with their caring role.
- Over the past 4.5 years over 1,500 carers have been identified via their GP practice and referred to Halton Carers Centre for support.
- Over the past 18 months, 233 carers have been identified and referred to the Carers Centre via secondary care settings. Of these 147 were not previously known.
- Over the past 18 months there have been 217 referrals from mental health settings, all of whom were not previously known.
- Referrals of new carers by GP practices are at a rate of 20 - 25 per month.
- 2,630 carers have been given personalised break funding by the Carers Centre since 2009.
- In 2010/11, 71% of adult carers' assessments undertaken by the Local Authority led to them receiving a service. This has risen to 81% in 2012/13.
- 99% of carers were assessed jointly with the cared-for person.
- 62% of carers found information and advice 'very easy', or 'fairly easy' to find. 77% found this information 'very helpful', or 'quite helpful'.
- The total number of carers' breaks in Halton in 2012/13 was 23,500. This rose to 33,400 in 2013/14.
- 70% of people who engaged with *Ignite Your Life*, a community resilience programme commissioned by Halton CCG, were carers.
- In 2013/14 101 carer awareness presentations were given to health, social care and voluntary sector staff.
- The Carers Centre has received many compliments and excellent feedback from carers and GP staff on the referral and support process.





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Carer A

"I have always struggled to get to my GP appointments and have (had) to cancel in the past as my caring role can really restrict me but since they (GP practice) have identified I am a carer they are more flexible with my appointment times but also referred me onto the carers centre where I now often call in and have a chat with the staff. It's nice to know there are people out there that ask how I am!"

Carer B

"I had been visiting my GP for some time as I was feeling very down and isolated, all it took was one GP to dig a little deeper with what was happening at home to see the main source was the stress of my caring role. Within a few days I had a call from Halton Carers Centre who gave me so much helpful information and support they have now helped me access a Carers Assessment, an assessment for my mum who now attends adult placement weekly to give me some respite. I now have that little bit more time for me where I can access therapies, day trips and drop in and have a catch up."

Improving the wellbeing of carers

NHS Halton CCG is the first CCG in the country to adopt wellbeing in primary care on scale. Currently we have all our 17 practices proudly kite marked as "Community Wellbeing Practices". The ethos is to enable the GP/health practitioner to have true whole system alternatives to the prescription pad. By using an asset management approach all practices are seeing the major benefit of utilising the community to support themselves and others. Nationally recognised and backed by the National Association of Primary Care, this preventative way of working is showing exciting statistics and improved outcomes.

One unexpected outcome is the number of carers utilising this scheme. One of the areas we concentrate on is the drive to improve self esteem, build social resilience and improve general wellbeing. One programme that addresses all of these is the *Ignite your life* programme. This one-day course has proven to be an influence in a lot of people's lives. Interestingly the largest number (around 70%) of people utilising the programme are carers.

To ensure we capture and performance measure the outcomes, we have utilised the evidence-based SWEMWBS methodology. This is built on the Warwick and Edinburgh mental well being score and has shown some major shifts in wellbeing. Below is a graph showing the use of pledges with the shift in before, after and three-month follow-up. As we now know that a variance of around 70% of the audience are carers, we are convinced the outcomes and sustainability of that cohort will be greatly improved.

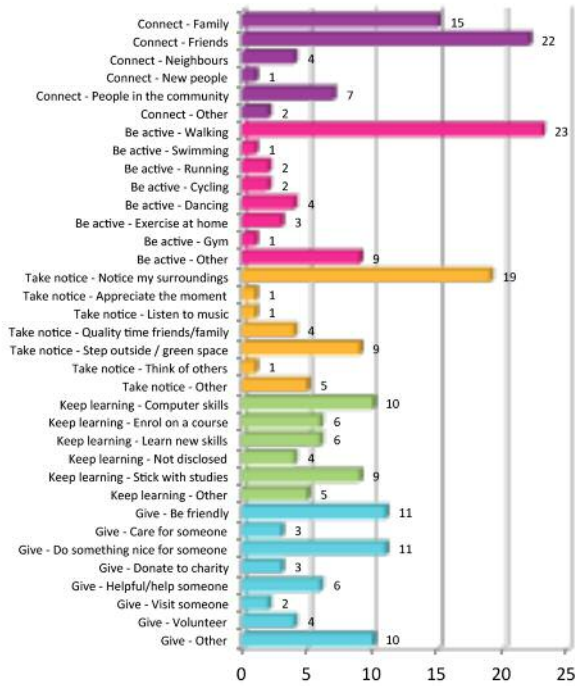
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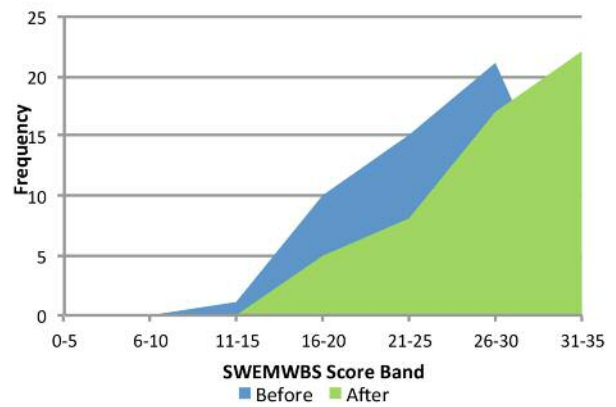


Outcomes

Pledges achieved



SWEMWBS



The chart shows a positive shift in the mean SWEMWBS score of participants before (blue) and after (green) attending the 'Ignite Your Life!' event. Participants showed a distinct improvement in wellbeing after taking part in the event (mean=28.0) compared with before (mean=24.8) $p < 0.001\%$, $df=51$.

