

RICHMOND CARERS CENTRE – BRIEFING PAPER

'A Carer is someone of any age, who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addition or disability.'

Background Information

Richmond Carers Centre (RCC) is based at 5 Briar Road, Twickenham. The premises are fully accessible at ground floor level, with staff offices located in offices on the first floor.

RCC was established in June 2002, and is a network partner of the Carers Trust. RCC is a company limited by guarantee, and a registered charity.

A recent survey by the London Research Centre showed an estimated 20,820 carers in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames, but less than 15% are known to existing organisations, most of whom do not have the resources to seek out and adequately support more carers. Richmond Carers Centre seeks to find more of these 'hidden' carers, listen to what they say, identify their needs, help them to access appropriate existing services and respond to identified unmet needs.

RCC currently leads the Carers Hub Service - a contract to develop, manage and deliver services to carers, jointly commissioned by LB Richmond upon Thames and Richmond Clinical Commissioning Group. This currently includes sub contract arrangements with 5 other voluntarily organisation in the Borough of Richmond to deliver local carer focussed services.

Services for Carers

RCC has two main service offers for carers. These are:

- Adult Carers – carers over 18 years of age and includes parent carers (caring for a child under 18 with additional needs)
- Young Carers – children aged 5 to 18. This includes sibling young carers affected by the care needs of a brother or sister. Young carers provide care and support, or are affected by the care needs of an adult in the family.

In addition to direct support service for carers, RCC is also engaged in activities to raise awareness of carer's needs and issues with other professional services for example

- Schools and education establishments
- GPs and pharmacies
- Other local organisations who might become aware of carers
- Work with statutory services on staff training and awareness such as social care teams, hospital discharge services and community health services.

Support for young carers and sibling young carers. This includes but is not limited to:

- On referral to the service, a home visit by a Young Carers Support Worker to fully explain the Young Carers Service and start building relationships with wider family members
- Individual mentoring sessions for young carers either in school or after school at Richmond Carers Centre
- Referral to and liaison with other voluntary and statutory sector organisations
- After school group activity programme during term time and ad hoc activities
- School holiday programme to give young carers a respite break during holiday periods

Richmond Carers Centre is committed to Equality of Opportunity
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- Support for young carers where safeguarding or child protection is involved
- Schools engagement programme supporting schools in their identification of and engagement with young carers and their families
- Schools and Professionals Newsletter and Twitter activity to promote young carers activities and news

Support and information service for adult carers. This includes but is not limited to:

- Individual support (information, advice, emotional, signposting, a listening ear) through telephone support service, face to face contacts and electronic media for adult and young adult carers
- Referral to and liaison with other voluntary and statutory sector organisations
- Peer support through a range of informal activity groups
- Planning and provision of events and activities for adult carers
- On-site complimentary therapy treatments and other wellbeing services for adult carers (to aid relaxation and reduce stress)
- Counselling service for adult carers
- Provision of learning opportunities for carers through coordination and delivery of an annual training programme and promotion of a range of learning opportunities delivered by other training providers
- An active volunteer recruitment programme

Strategic Leadership

In addition to providing direct services for carers, RCC engages in influencing strategic decision making between Social Services and Housing, Health and Community services, our local Council for Voluntary Services and other carer focused organisations. This is achieved through:

- Ensuring carers are actively considered for consultation exercises;
- Promoting and raising awareness of issues relating to carers within health, social services and voluntary sector environments;
- Taking a lead role in reviewing and implementing the local Carers Strategy;
- Participating in local service reviews and planning exercises along with other strategic groups lead by Social Services and Health;
- Continually reviewing our service offer to carers to ensure we can meet perceived and changing needs and expectations;
- Chairing and coordinating local Action for Carers Network;
- Contract management of Carers Hub Service.

Communication and information

To promote our services to carers and professionals, help carers self-refer, and raise awareness about carer's issues with the community, RCC has a number communication strategies. These include:

- A 24-page newsletter sent to carers and supporting organisations four time a year.
- A digital version of the newsletter
- A website for Richmond Carers Centre www.richmondcarers.org
- A website for Richmond Carers Hub Service www.richmondchs.org
- Posters and leaflets promoting Richmond Cares Centre Services
- Mail chimp information drops to carers and professionals
- Twitters accounts (including a young carers twitter account)
- Attending Market place events with carer support staff
- Monitoring RCC service information on other websites and directories
- Supporting staff team with direct promotion for activities and workshops.
- Carer engagement opportunities.