



Carers Support Centre

Carers Support Centre Submission to Bristol City Council Fair and Affordable Care Policy Consultation.

The Carer Support Centre welcomes the various engagement activities with carers and their representatives that Bristol City Council has undertaken, through Bristol Carer Voice, the Adult Social Care Equality Forum and the focus group with carer representatives, before going out for public consultation

We submit this response to highlight the key issues that carers and their representatives have raised during the engagement phase, in addition to individual responses to the consultations.

We do so precisely because the consultation document states that “We want to hear your views on [the Fair and Affordable Care Policy\(External link\)](#) and hear your feedback as it will potentially impact all individuals who approach the council for help with care and support.”.

With this submission we recommend that you consider the impact of this policy on carers’ well-being, and in particular those that provide 35+ hours of care a week, those that are living in poverty, those in employment, those that are digitally excluded, and those for whom residential care does not sit well with their cultural beliefs. **We also ask** that this submission is taken into consideration in the analysis of the consultation responses.

1. Impact on carers well-being

The policy states that “*Adult Social Care will help people to think about what they can do for themselves, and what support may be there from their family, friends and within the area that they live.*”..... “*In many cases we recognise that the most cost-effective way to meet a person's care needs is to support them to remain at home with appropriate support.*” We are extremely concerned that this policy will increase the burden of care

for carers, and particularly those who care for people that want to continue to live in their own homes.

We know from the latest census that nationally, including in Bristol, there has been an intensification of care. The 2021 Census shows that in Bristol 13,040 people care for at least 35 hours per week, of which 9,318 people care for over 50 hours a week. We know that this has a detrimental impact on carers physical, mental and financial well-being.

We are pleased that your Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) finds that the policy is likely to have a disproportionate impact on carers and acknowledges that *“This approach could result in more individuals being accommodated in nursing or residential care homes or might increase level of demand on unpaid carers.”*

The EIA also states that *“When considering any change in circumstances or needs practitioners will need to ensure that they work in partnership with carers to ensure they continue to be willing and able to continue their role..... recognise the potential impact on carers and work with service user and carer to seek agreement agreed with proposed plan.”*

But we remain deeply disappointed that carers and the potential impact on their well-being are not mentioned in the actual policy.

We ask that:

- **the policy be edited to state that when considering changes the impact on the carer’s well-being and their willingness to continue in their carer role will be considered in line with the councils’ duties as per the Care Act 2014.**
- **the guidance should be updated to include the need to demonstrate that, when changes are made, other support is being offered to the carer to mitigate the impact of care intensification on their well-being.**

- **when training is updated and workshops carried out with practitioners on this new policy, carers with lived experience are invited to take part in such training.**

2. Carers living in poverty

We want to draw your attention to carers who are poor, and/or living in highly deprived areas. We know that intense caring is strongly associated with poverty. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (leading voice on poverty evidence) almost half of all working age adults providing more than 35 hours a week care, live in poverty.

Bristol City Council has added social economic deprivation and carers as additional protected characteristic, which is laudable. Indeed, in your EIA you state that *“Some of the more deprived wards appear to have a higher proportion of individuals receiving care and support from BCC at home...This does suggest that those from more deprived areas may be more likely to be more significantly affected by application of this policy.”* This policy however seems to contradict this.

The policy highlights options, which can be *“topped up” by the individual needing care (or a family member or friend) might choose to use their own money to pay the difference to enable them to commission their preferred service.* These options are not available to carers living in areas with high deprivation. Ample studies have shown those people tend to belong to poor social networks. Furthermore, carers keep telling us that it is very difficult to find a PA, and we have been lobbying for PA courses for almost 2 years now. These carers will have no other choice but intensify their care.

3. BAME carers

We often hear from carers who are exhausted but cannot bring themselves, for cultural reasons, to *put their loved ones into a home*. We expect the impact on BAME carers to be much worse. The EIA has found that *“60% of those receiving care at home identified as white, (including White British or white other), 30% Black, Asian or other minoritized*

group.... This indicates that people from Black Asian or other minoritized groups are potentially more likely to be impacted by this policy.”

In conclusion, the policy also states that *“There might be some exceptions where Bristol City Council will agree to fund a more expensive care package if this is required to promote their wellbeing.”*

We ask that:

- **This statement is strengthened and supported by clear guidance to make sure that the impact on carers and in particular the impact on those who care for 35+ hours a week, and/or are living in poverty, and/or hold cultural values that prevent them from putting their loved ones into a home, is not left to the discretion of individual practitioners.**

Thank you for the opportunity to input to the development of this important policy. We look forward to continued engagement to achieve a policy that recognises the additional challenges it will place on carers and promotes appropriate mitigations.

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