



‘Are you a Carer?’

Event Report



Haringey Race
and Equality Council

'Are you a carer?' Event Report

The Gallery, Wood Green Central Library

28th January 2015, 12.00 noon - 2.30pm

Part One

Introduction

Our October 2014 consultation considering a refresh of Haringey's Health and Wellbeing Strategy had identified a perceived priority for the borough around support for carers.

In this context and with the imminent (April 2015) implementation of the Care Act 2014 we collaborated with Haringey Council to host an "Are you a Carer?" event delivered by Healthwatch Haringey's staff and volunteer team supported by Haringey Council, the Mental Health Support Association and other local community organisations.

Publicity for the event was distributed by colleagues in community and voluntary organisations involved with Healthwatch. As well as the usual email, social media and website presence, we held a library based outreach desk to publicise the event. We also trialed using pharmacists and GP practices to help us target those with unpaid caring responsibilities resident or working in Haringey. This worked particularly well with Somerset Gardens GP Practice who were proactive in their approach, writing to known carers advising of the event. Part two of this report provides information on how attendees heard of the event and analysis of the completed event evaluation forms.

51 people participated in the event.

Before hearing about the Care Act 2014 (handout of David Cowell's slides distributed at the event) we had a plenary session with feedback from participants, following table based group discussions, on the two questions we posed.

What is a Carer?

Being a carer includes:

- emotional and physical and mental support
- help with day to day life
- active voice
- 24/7 (around the clock responsibility all day, everyday)
- unpaid (sometimes unknown)
- providing significant number of hours looking after someone
- providing a range of services
- cared for - any age
- carer - any age
- companionship
- helping to maintain basic quality of life and dignity (plus legal rights)

What does (did) being a Carer mean to me?

My experience:

- not being able to plan / work
- (mostly women) giving up careers
- fighter
- stress
- complicated life . . . thinking of (cared for) person first
- very stressful, fear of relapse . . . what will future hold (support needed)
- lonely
- taken for granted!
- choice(?) versus expectation (extended family assume you will take on responsibility)
- constant change
- 11 years 24/7 then GAP. . . legacy / impact (on myself)
- humanity of care workers has decreased (over the last 5 years)
- fascinating - understanding difference (context of learning about my son who has autism)
- worry about who cares after me
- meet great people
- rewarding for self i.e. mutual respect (between myself as carer and my cared for person)
- self-satisfaction (despite being hard work at times)
- feeling of guilt - not able to meet my standards
- fight to get heard (Local Authority)
- (realisation that) need to look after my own needs too!

Definition of a carer

“Somebody who provides support or who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their age, physical or mental illness, or disability. This would not usually include someone paid or employed to carry out that role, or someone who is a volunteer.”

Care Act 2014

David Cowell, Care Act Programme Manager, London Borough of Haringey, gave an overview of the new legislation coming in to force from April 2015 (presentation slides were made available to attendees together with the Department of Health factsheet 8: The Care Bill - The law for carers which was included in the delegate pack).

David then took questions on how organisations, including Haringey Council, have been preparing to ensure they can deliver (e.g. on assessment, eligibility and care planning priorities). He was asked how the Care Act legislation might impact on the legality of proposed cuts to services currently subject to consultation by Haringey Council. A question was also raised to clarify how the Care Act requirements would help an individual who is caring for someone whose condition is deteriorating (i.e. including needing updated assessment of a carer's support needs).

Haringey Adults Partnership Board - Carers' Representation

Nuala Kiely, Chair of Haringey's Adults Partnership Board outlined the structures to ensure service user and carer representatives involvement in influencing local plans and improving the delivery of social and health care services and support.

She explained that what was missing in the local board structure was a Carers' reference group for Haringey. She encouraged those present to get involved with her and Healthwatch Haringey to help address this.

Conclusion

Sharon Grant, Chair of Healthwatch Haringey thanked all those present for participating and recognised the hard work involved for individuals in organising to attend whilst having their caring responsibilities.

She thanked David and Nuala for their presentations and commended the useful glossary that Nuala had prepared (circulated in the delegate pack).

The importance of the comments shared by carer participants about the often isolating role of being a carer was recognised. Sharon was encouraged that many of those attending felt able to volunteer to participate in a further meeting to set up a Carers reference group.

A participant asked whether there would be administrative support available for organising the reference group. She said that Healthwatch Haringey would work with Haringey Council and others to ensure that the necessary support was available to help carers, with their range of responsibilities, to attend further meetings.

Many of those participating expressed the desire that the general, information sharing, meetings for all carers were repeated. It was felt that being able to meet others with caring responsibilities and to articulate to each other 'how it is' / 'how it was' was very useful.

9 participants offered to assist and agreed to attend a further meeting to be scheduled shortly to see how best to organise a reference group and a further 6 were interested and wanted more information.

Speakers contact details:

Sharon Grant, Chair, Healthwatch Haringey
Email: info@healthwatchharingey.org.uk 020 8888 0579

David Cowell, Care Act Programme Manager, London Borough of Haringey
email: david.cowell@haringey.gov.uk 020 8489 1482

Nuala Kiely, Service User Engagement Co-ordinator, Mental Health Support Association
email: nuala.kiely@mhsa.co.uk 020 8885 9332

Part Two

'Are you a carer? Event evaluation

Over fifty people attended the 'Are you a carer?' event at Wood Green Central library on 28th January 2015 and 21 completed evaluation forms were received. Analysis of these is shown below.

1. How would you evaluate the event overall? (1 = poor and 5 = excellent)

Attendees were asked to score the event on a scale of 1 to 5. This question was given an average score of 4.4 by event attendees this shows the event was well received.

2. Did you learn anything from the table discussions and meeting other carers? (1 = nothing and 5 = a lot)

This also received a high score of 4.4 from attendees and shows that they felt that this part of the event was beneficial. Detailed table discussion notes are available separately.

3. How was David Cowell's presentation on the Care Act? Did you learn anything new about what support will be available to you as a carer? (1 = nothing and 5 = a lot)

An average score of 4.3 was given, again a positive response indicating that attendees had learnt a lot from the presentation.

4. Following Nuala Kiely's presentation on the importance of a carers' reference group. Would you consider getting involved?

Yes	No	Maybe (more information needed)	No response
9	3	5	4

The 9 attendees interested in the carers' forum / reference group have been contacted and the others will be kept informed of further developments.

5. How suitable was the venue for this event? (1 = unsuitable and 5 = very suitable)

Wood Green central library was considered by most people to be very suitable venue, scoring an average score of 4.3 by attendees.

6. Did the catering meet your expectations?

15 attendees said yes to this question, whilst 6 did not respond to this question.

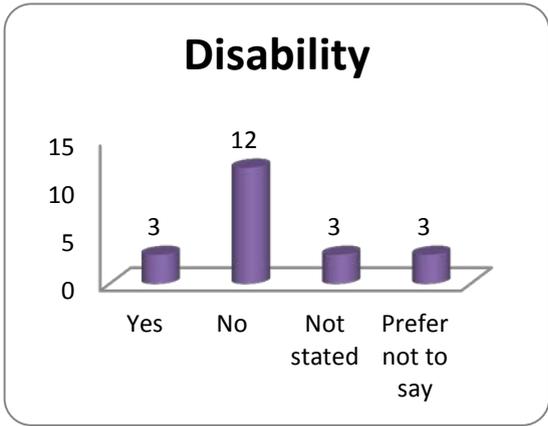
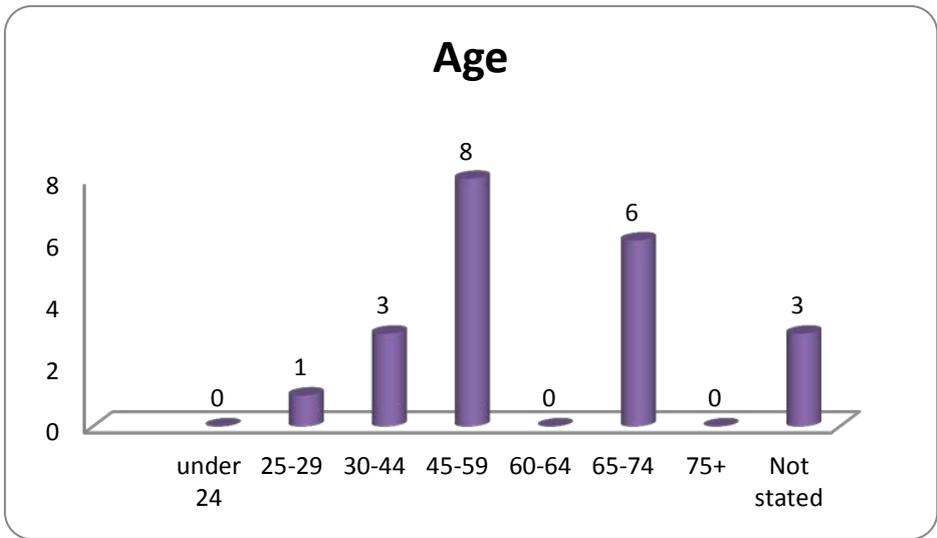
7. Any other feedback/comments

The following comments were received:

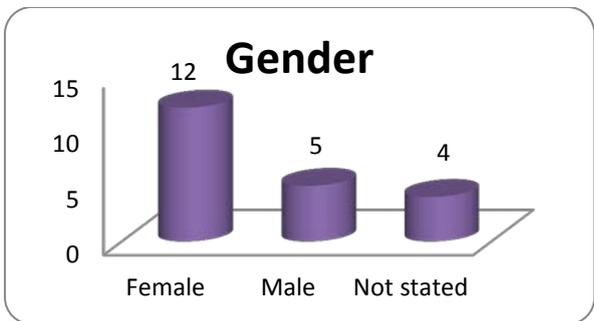
- Was great to share experiences and our commonality in spite of differing experiences. I hope these events will be repeated on a regular basis.
- The room, the acoustic was very bad need a mic.
- This was my first time meeting other carers, it was nice to hear that some of the obstacles I face/emotions I feel, were common to other carers.
- Need more legal and morally specific information in respect of my care for my mother with physical mobility problems.
- Event could have been a bit longer.
- Everything went very well.
- Good to share common experiences.
- These events showed the extent of caring in Haringey and the need for all services to be better collated and acted on, good but too brief.
- Please organise more events/discussions for carers in Haringey.
- It was late.
- An enlightening and interesting information in the carers issues am pleased to know what this issue is thought of in Haringey.
- More Q&A opportunities.
- Very interesting and informative. I learnt a lot, was well presented.
- Very good thanks for inviting me.
- Venue a bit small with poor acoustics. I sat at table 4 and could not read Nuala's presentation.
- Well worth while attending.
- Should be more of these meetings they should also be advertised better and allow more time for Q&As.
- Could/should of provided a soup urn! And more variety of ie salads, yoghurts to reflect dietary needs ie diabetics etc.

Diversity Monitoring

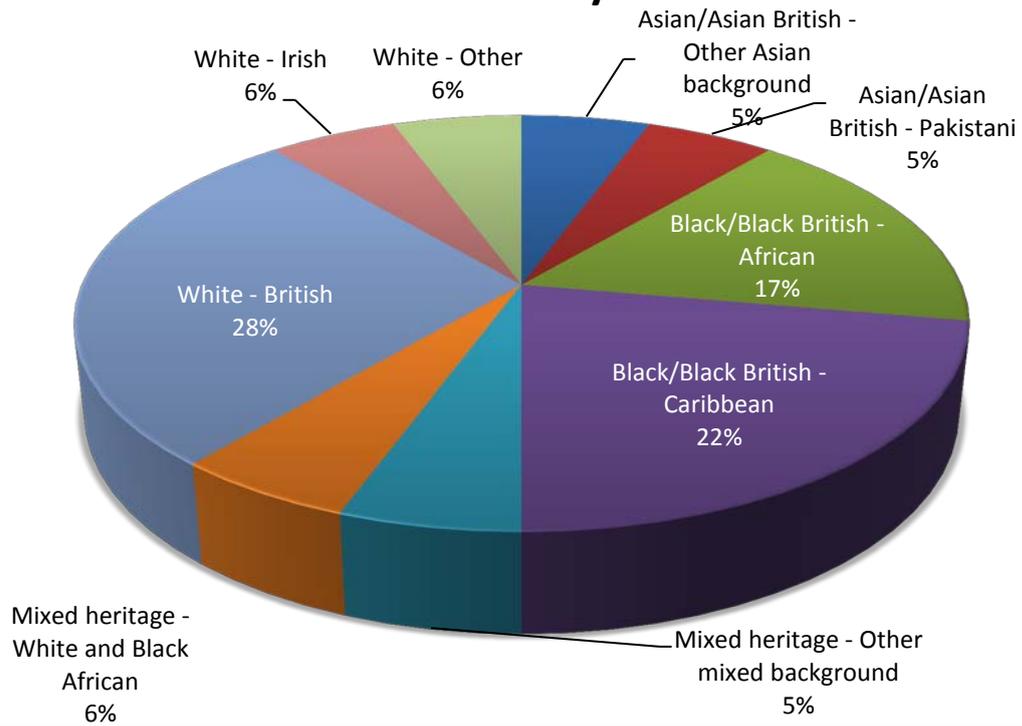
The information received from event attendees is shown in the graphs below.



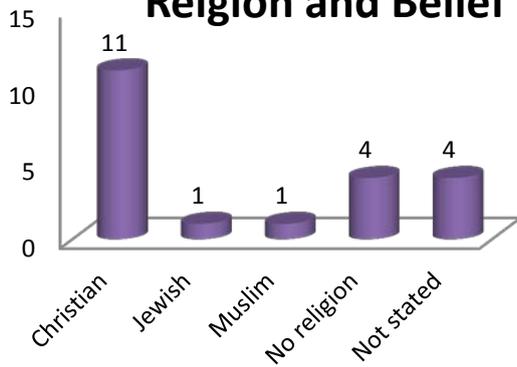
The disabilities specified included dyspraxia, long term condition and back problem.



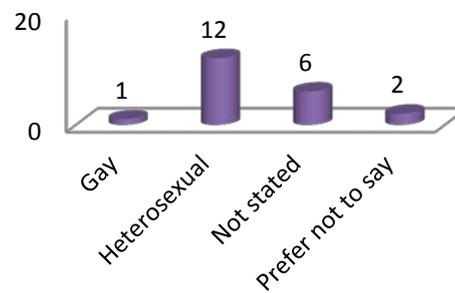
Ethnicity



Religion and Belief

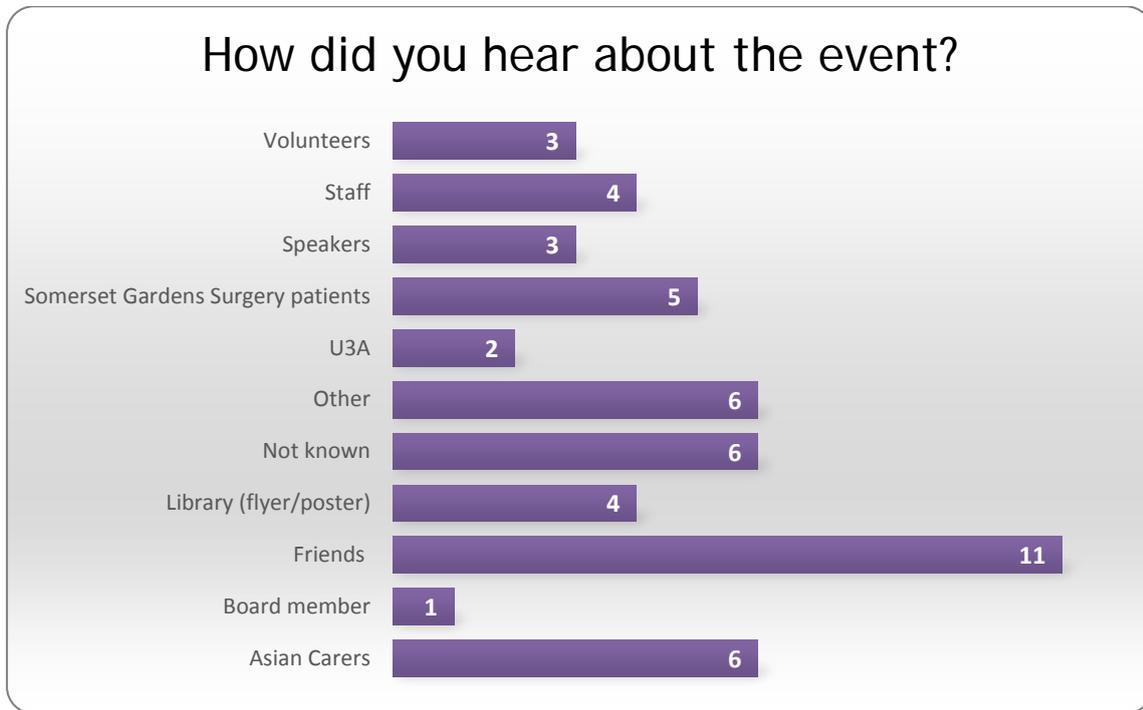


Sexual Orientation



How did you hear about the event?

This information was collected when attendees booked for the event and during registration.



Conclusion

The event was very successful with carers being brought together to share their experiences and increasing their knowledge of the Care Act. The comments highlight the need for similar events and perhaps slightly longer events with more time for Q&A's. One of the main objectives of the event was to create a Carers forum / reference group and as can be seen from the graph on page five, 9 people expressed an interest in being part of this.

Next steps: For more information or to get involved in the Haringey Carers' Reference Group (first meeting scheduled for 6th March 2015) contact Healthwatch Haringey by email info@healthwatchharingey.org.uk or call 020 8888 0579.