

## **Carers Briefing for Carers Week w/c 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

### ***Making Carers Visible and Valued***

The 2011 census found that there were 17-18,000 carers in Portsmouth, we believe the number now to be much higher.

Carers UK estimate that carers save the UK economy £132 billion a year, roughly equivalent to the annual cost of the NHS.

- 9.1 million unpaid carers across the UK before the COVID-19 pandemic
- 4.5 million new to caring since the start of the pandemic

Carers UK Caring behind closed doors: six months on report looks into carers experience 6 months on from the beginning of the pandemic – key stats:

- 81% are currently providing more care than before lockdown.
- 78% of carers reported that the needs of the person they care for have increased
- 64% have not been able to take a break in the last six months
- 58% of carers have seen their physical health impacted by caring through the pandemic
- 64% said their mental health has worsened

### **Portsmouth Carers Service**

- Based within Adult Social Care, carers have legal parity of esteem in terms of their entitlement to assessment and support through the Care Act 2014
- We conduct the majority of Carers Assessments work to promote shared responsibility for carers
- Early intervention and prevention approach
- Common things carers want help with are;
  - Help to get a break
  - Information, advice and gaining useful knowledge
  - Emotional support, problem solving and risk management
  - Planning for an emergency
- Breaks offer includes non-chargeable one off payment, replacement care equivalent to 6 hours p/w sitting service, chargeable access to 2 respite beds
- Carers Centre is a community hub for a range of carer activity including groups, training, cooking activities, events

### **Covid 19 Response**

The Carers Service continued to operate with a combination of remote support and with the building open when we were able. We have been led by carers in terms of what services we have prioritised.

## **Recovery from Covid 19**

Key issues for carers, many of these existed before the pandemic and have been exacerbated by it;

- Isolation - many carers have shielded alongside the people they support, most have not had their usual support networks around them and did not access usual services during the pandemic either through choice or because services were unavailable.
- Financial - "1.2 million carers were living in poverty before the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>11</sup> and during the earlier stages of lockdown, carers were twice as likely as the general public to have used a foodbank." Carers UK
- Health and Wellbeing - "Only 29% of carers feel that they have been able to maintain their health and wellbeing during the pandemic and only 43% have been able to maintain a healthy diet" Carers UK

## **Carers Service Priorities**

- Covid recovery work - improving access to Talking Change services, BH Live for physical activities and peer support through carers groups
- New Portsmouth Plan for Carers - in partnership with Solent, Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust, Public Health, CCG, the HIVE, Healthwatch and other partners - 5 key areas of work including supporting working carers
- Work to improve the Carers Centre public spaces for carers and groups

## **Regional and National Policy Work**

The Team Manager of the Carers Service, Clare Rachwal, supports and informs regional and national policy work via NICE and ADASS.

Clare was a committee member on the recent Supporting Adult Carers NICE Guideline (Published January 2020) and Quality Standards (Published March 2021) and is supporting the ongoing implementation of these documents including being a panellist on a SCIE webinar.

As SE ADASS Carers Network lead on the ADASS Carers Policy Network Clare has participated in regular meetings with DHSC contributing to their understanding of how carers were experiencing the pandemic and how local services were responding.

Clare Rachwal - Team Manager

08/06/2021