



**Camden Carers' Voice meeting
Minutes – 8th July 2021, 4:30pm-6pm
Via Zoom**

Attendance: (Steering Group) Jacky Spigel (chair), Kate Harwood (vice chair), Jessica, Costas, Sue, Mary, Des. 22 Carers and former Carers. Allegra Lynch, Mollie Delaney (Camden Carers), Bee, Tibor, Anita (Camden Carers Trustees)

Apologies: Leah, Galatea (Steering Group)

Speakers: Ramzi Suleiman, Policy and Campaigns Officer at Carers Trust

- Jacky and Kate welcome the attendees and read through the ground rules.
- Jacky introduces Ramzi Suleiman, Policy and Campaigns Officer at Carers Trust

Ramzi Suleiman, Policy and Campaigns Officer at Carers Trust – Health and Social Care Bill:

- Ramzi works in the Policy Team at Carers Trust, which is a national charity. The Carers Trust Network is made up of over 120 Network Partners across England, Scotland and Wales.
- The policy team influence national stakeholders to shape policy and practice. It's important that Carers have a voice. Carers Trust recognizes that Carers are going through a lot as they've heard back via surveys, emails and networks partners.
- During the pandemic, Carers Trust has helped make sure that unpaid Carers were prioritised in group 6 for the COVID-19 vaccine. As well as making sure that free PPE is available.
- The amount of young Carers in the UK has increased due to schools closing during lockdown.
- The Government have released the Health and Social Care Whitepaper which is a legal document that provides initial information for the public to know what is being debated at Parliament. The first reading has already taken place and the second reading is due to take place next week (The week commencing 12th July).
- This summer is an opportunity for Carers Trust, Network Partners and Carers to talk to MP's before the Houses of Parliament close for the summer.

- Ramzi briefly explains what the bill sets out to do. The new Health and Social Care bill will remove current competition, making it easier for local services to join together. Local authorities will get to decide what is delivered locally.
- The Integrated care systems (ICSs) encourage integration with the NHS. For example, GP surgeries working closely with hospitals.
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) are responsible for monitoring hospitals. They would like to involve Carers more in commissioning decisions.
- Local authorities need funding to effectively meet the Care Act Duties, however this is difficult due to social care funding cuts. Therefore, it's not fair to judge how hospitals are doing if there's a lack of funding.
- CQC would like to see more voluntary sectors on the board.
- Can we use the bill to encourage the government to do more for unpaid Carers? Ramzi suggests that Carers contact their local MP's raising their concerns about the bill.
- **Q** – Can we have a written summary of things that need improving from the bill?
- **A** – Yes, the more people that contact MP's about this, the more that it'll get noticed.

Action – Ramzi to send more information to Mollie

- **Q** – What are the biggest risks and biggest opportunities of the bill for Carers and Voluntary Organisations?
- **A** – Getting rid of the competition element and making it easier for private companies to provide care is both a risk and opportunity. Another opportunity is Carers getting their voices heard.
- **Allegra** – In Camden, Carers do feed into the board on a local level.
- **Q** – It's my first week of being a Carer, how long will it take me to understand everything?
- **A** – Things are always changing so if in doubt, Camden Carers are here to provide you with support and advice.
- **Q** – As the second reading is next week, will Carers have to contact MP's before then?
- **A** – Politicians will be debating the general principles within the bill at the second reading. However, they will be going through it in more detail after the Summer.

- **Carer** – I've read the Kings Fund response to the bill and it concerns me how there's no mention of maternity services and children.
- **Carer** – I'm concerned about the lack of funding for people with Mental Health conditions.

Carers - How has the pandemic had an impact on your life as a Carer?

- Kate asks Carers to share the positive and negative effects that the pandemic has had on their lives.
- **Carer** – The pandemic had a negative impact as it meant that paid Carers weren't able to work for a certain amount of time so unpaid Carers were doing much more. However, the response from Carer organisations has been positive and it's been great to still receive support through Zoom.
- **Carer** – Not being able to see family, including my daughter that I care for has been difficult. However, a positive is that she is being looked after by wonderful staff at social housing. We also celebrated her birthday with cake via Zoom.
- **Carer** – The positives are that there's been more regular Carers and better hygiene. However, I'm now concerned about what will happen on the 19th July. For example, I don't know if masks wearing will be voluntary for care services and whether the staff will be vaccinated.
- **Ramzi** – The government are making it mandatory for paid care workers to be vaccinated by October, if they're not it could result in them losing their job. Free PPE is also being extended by the Infection Control Fund as they are aware of the high risks.
- **Allegra** – Camden Carers Staff have started working in the office again on a part time basis. We're not currently offering face-to-face appointments but we're looking into starting them again soon. We have to respect all Carers views.
- **Carer** – Are Camden Carers able to pass our concerns on to the commissioners?
- **Allegra** – What are your concerns?
- **Carer** – People not being vaccinated, self-isolation being removed, testing etc.
- **Allegra** – Perhaps this could be discussed at the CCV Steering Group and raised as a collective?
- **Ramzi** – Care providers will have to continue wearing PPE. I'll also pass your concerns on to the team at Carers Trust.
- **Carer** – Please can you also look into photo ID cards specifically for Carers.

Any other business:

- Jacky – The next meeting will take place in September, we will include another section on the Health and Social Care Bill.
Action – Health and Social Care Bill to be added to the next agenda, speakers to be invited.

-Date of next meeting – October, date to be confirmed.

