

1. Introduction

Kingston Carers' Network (KCN) is a registered charity, established in 1994, providing independent information, support and advocacy to people who provide unpaid care for someone living in the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

A carer is someone who looks after a family member, partner or friend in need of help because they are ill, frail, have a disability, mental health problem or are dependent on drugs. Carers are of all ages and their caring can put them under physical, emotional and, because they are unpaid, financial pressure. In the case of children caring for their parents this can significantly affect future life opportunities by impacting their learning and social activity development by depriving them of educational opportunities and normal social activities with youngsters of their own age.

Carers represent extraordinary value to the community. It is estimated they provide **£239 million** of care across the Royal Borough of Kingston¹ and nationally **£530 million** per day during the pandemic. In 2021 we supported over 4,000 carers, secured in excess £1.1 million in benefits with the help of 3,057 hours of voluntary support.

2. KCN's Vision

To improve the lives of unpaid carers of all ages in the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

3. KCN's Mission

It is KCN's mission to support all carers by delivering a comprehensive and holistic

¹ Valuing Carers
2015 (Universities of

Leeds and Sheffield
with CarersUK)

range of services to reflect diverse and individual needs. We are carer led and will ensure carers are respected, valued, and recognised as experts in the care of the person they support

These services include: information, advice and advocacy, emotional support and counselling, one-to-one mentoring, wellbeing programmes, peer support groups and respite activities.

We seek to increase both identification of carers and recognition of the enormous value they provide.

4. KCN's Values

4.1. The following are our key values:

- ***Independence.*** We are not part of a wider agency, statutory service or 'government' body;
- ***A customised, needs-based approach.*** We treat all carers as individuals, within their specific caring contexts;
- ***Advocacy.*** We speak up – and speak *out* – on behalf of carers;
- ***Perseverance.*** We do not give up until carers' needs have been addressed;
- ***Quality of service.*** We offer the uncompromising expertise that ***only a specialist*** carer service can provide.

4.2. All that we do is driven by what carers themselves see as their priorities.

4.3. We are:

- strong, whilst kind;
- responsive, and proactive;
- professional, whilst passionate too;
- creative and resourceful;
- challenging on behalf of others;
- inclusive and welcoming;
- carer led;
- ***THE*** expert provider of independent information, support and advocacy to carers in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

We demonstrate our caring culture in the way we deal with carers, volunteers and employees.

We have integrity in all we do.

We are open in the way we work and the decisions we make.

We are pragmatic in realising that no matter how much we can do, we have to operate within the constraints of our resources.

We are focussed on delivering services that make a difference to carers.

5. What is KCN striving to do for our carers?

- To reduce their financial hardship.
- To improve their mental and physical health.
- To ensure that they are treated with dignity.
- To enable them so that they enjoy life outside of caring.
- To ensure that they are recognised by health and caring professionals as a full partner in the support of the person they care for.
- To enable young carers to thrive and to provide young carers with a positive future.

6. How will KCN deliver these aims for our carers?

Delivering advice, advocacy and support to:

- adult carers, including carers of people with mental health problems;²
- older carers (i.e., those over 65 years of age);³
- carers of people with dementia;⁴
- delivering benefits advice and tribunal support to carers;⁵
- ensuring the wellbeing of carers by providing social and wellbeing activities;⁶
- delivering a range of support services for young carers throughout the year including respite activities, drop-in youth groups, one to one support, mentoring and work within schools;⁷
- maximising the impact of KCN through engagement of volunteers;⁸

7. What will KCN do to improve our service?

² Operational plan
objective 1

³ Objective 2
⁴ Objective 3

⁵ Objective 4
⁶ Objective 5

⁷ Objective 6
⁸ Objective 7

- We will maintain a strategic presence within Kingston.⁹
- We will act to increase KCN's financial, staffing and volunteer capacity to deliver more services.¹⁰
- We will improve the expertise and knowledge of employees and volunteers to deliver better services.¹¹
- We will improve the communications with the wider caring community, our sponsors and health and caring professionals to increase the impact KCN makes and to demonstrate that impact.¹²
- We will influence the decision makers at national level, campaigning for the rights of carers.¹³

8. What will KCN do?

- Identify and prioritise future services.¹⁴
- Make the service even more efficient by reorganising operations where effective.¹⁵
- Manage within limitations.¹⁶
- Maintain a strategic presence within the Borough.¹⁷
- Campaign for recognition of carers on a national scale.¹⁸
- Build expertise¹⁹.
- Develop capacity to support more carers.²⁰
- Secure longer-term funding.²¹

9. What are our key outcomes?

KCN prides itself on delivering outcomes that are focussed on what the carers say they need. Each of KCN's strategic objectives are driven by these demands.

9.1. Delivering Advice, advocacy and support to adult carers. ²²

The outcomes of this objective will be the services they need to support them in their caring role.

⁹ Objective 11

¹⁰ Operational plan objectives 7

¹¹ Objectives 7 & 13

¹² Objective 11

¹³ Objective 12

¹⁴ Objective 8

¹⁵ Objective 9

¹⁶ Objective 10

¹⁷ Objective 11

¹⁸ Objective 12

¹⁹ Objective 13

²⁰ Objective 14

²¹ Objective 15

²² Operational plan objectives 1-4

- Carers will have their financial hardship eased by KCN ensuring that they and the person they care for receive their full financial entitlements. This will include support through the tribunal process where appropriate.
- Carers' emotional and physical wellbeing will be improved.
- Carers will be respected by health and care professionals as a full partner in the support of the person they care for. They will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role.
- Carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role.

9.2. Ensuring the wellbeing of carers.²³

- Carers will have improved physical and mental wellbeing.
- Carers will be less isolated

9.3. Delivering a range of support services for young carers.²⁴

- Young carers will have improved resilience and have developed healthy coping strategies.
- Young carers will be protected from harmful or excessive caring roles.
- Young carers will have improved educational achievement and attendance.
- Young carers will feel less isolated.
- Schools and other key professionals will be better able to identify and support young carers.

10. Measurement of success

We will measure our success through discussion and feedback with carers. We also use a variety of methods of monitoring and evaluation to measure the positive differences achieved for carers. These include observations, conversations and self-reporting, using feedback forms and interactive monitoring techniques. We employ targeted data collection methods, such as resilience scales and academically recognised carer specific outcome tools.

²³ Objective 5

²⁴ Objective 6

Volunteer satisfaction is important. We know we are succeeding when volunteers remain with KCN for a long time and satisfaction scores in surveys are high.

Fundraising success will be measured by achieving the level of funding required to operate effectively.

11. Finances

We strive to operate as efficiently as possible to optimise the benefits to our beneficiaries. We recognise that the amount of support we can provide depends upon the success of our marketing activities and the generosity of our sponsors. KCN operates as a business to ensure it is both effective and efficient. We have demonstrated financial competence and capability increasing income, and therefore expenditure on carers. Over the last five years its expenditure has increased from £456,000 in 2017 to £651,000 in 2021. Maintaining growth going forward will be challenging bearing in mind the challenging financial situation we, and the rest of society, are facing. However, it is our intention to increase real income and expenditure. Currently 36% of our income is received from statutory sources, 7% from donations and the remaining 57% from a variety of charitable foundations. We will increase our ability to improve our funding capabilities, expanding into new fields, for example corporate and social responsibility partnerships.

12. Summary

KCN is a responsive, caring group of people who continuously strive to meet the needs of carers in the Kingston community. Carers deserve and are entitled to support. In the introduction to this document, we set out the monetary value of what carers do, but over and above that is the human and social value. Carers deserve to be identified, valued and celebrated for what they do, and it is our purpose to support them. Visible, Valued, Supported is the theme of Carers' Week 2022 and by implementing this strategy through our operational plan, we intend to improve the lives of unpaid carers of all ages in the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

Supported by...



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