



## Information for Carers

Help and advice for relatives and friends who support people using our services

An estimated six million people in the UK provide unpaid care to someone they know. Millions of people could not manage without the help and support of a friend or relative.

Carers provide a vital support network but thousands experience mental and physical ill health themselves due to the demands of being a carer. Many more are unaware of the support available to them.

This booklet provides information and advice for carers who look after someone receiving services from 2gether NHS Foundation Trust.

The booklet is made available to carers who have contact with teams throughout the organisation and takes into account different levels of need, type of problem experienced by the service user and different but necessary team working arrangements.

"A Carer is a person who provides unpaid help and support on a regular basis to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who is frail or has a physical or mental illness, disability or substance misuse issues. The Carer is not employed to provide this help but does so to improve the quality of that person's life."

Carers Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Carers Support

It is a resource containing general information and guidance about how to find support for specific needs. Some of this can be found in more detail on our website **[www.2gether.nhs.uk](http://www.2gether.nhs.uk)** or by asking a member of staff.



# Carers Charter

Our Carers Charter was developed with and for carers as a joint statement of how we will work together to help make life better. Based on our core values, this charter is our pledge to you. Whenever we can, we will:

## Seeing from your perspective

- Recognise your expert knowledge and understanding of the person you care for
- Seek to understand what being a carer means to you
- Provide you with an assessment of your needs
- Recognise your health needs

## Excelling and improving

- Work in partnership with you to make sure you are involved in the care we provide
- Undertake regular review of feedback from carers
- Provide staff training to further develop our knowledge and expertise of working with carers
- Ask for your involvement in helping us to improve the experiences of carers using our services

## Responsive

- Make sure that you feel welcome in our care environments
- Provide you with relevant information about the care, diagnosis and medication
- Provide you with information about other organisations that can help you

## Valuing and respectful

- Listen to you and respect your perspective
- Take note of what you tell us to help inform best clinical decisions
- Respect that parent carers, young carers and older carers will have different needs
- Value you as a partner in the planning of care and treatment

## Inclusive, open and honest

- Include you by providing clear and accurate information about the needs of the person you care for
- Let you know what will happen in an emergency
- Include you in meetings about the person that you care for

## Can do

- Involve you in the care of and decisions about the person that you care for
- Give you a copy of the care plan
- Seek your views to help us make joint decisions about the care we provide

## Effective, efficient, economic, equitable

- Provide you with the opportunity to share important information to inform the care provided
- Recognise and support your activities outside your caring role
- Support you to access relevant services as your caring role and responsibilities

## Carers Assessment

As the carer of someone receiving our services you should be given the opportunity to talk to a member of the team involved with the person you care for about your own needs.

The team member should discuss having a formal Carers Assessment completed with you.

This may be provided directly by the care team or may be arranged with the local authority depending on who is contracted to provide the assessment for the service your friend or relative is using.

Through the assessment process the assessing agency will take responsibility for organising support with you. This may involve contacting and working with other agencies jointly to access support for you.

A Carer's Assessment is not a test of your ability to care. It recognises your crucial role and may lead to you being offered services and support.

The results of a Carer's Assessment are taken into account when deciding what services to offer the person you care for and can result in:

- More services for the person you care for
- A break for you
- Information about carers' rights and benefits
- Emotional support
- Access to information about treatments, therapies, leisure and employment opportunities
- Strategies for coping in a crisis

A Carer's Assessment is particularly valuable if you feel isolated or your caring role is causing problems.

You can also request a Carers Assessment yourself at any time through your local authority (Gloucestershire County Council or Herefordshire Council).



By law, local authorities must:

- Inform carers of their right to an assessment of their needs
- Consider carers' work, study and leisure interests when carrying out an assessment

Agencies should work together to ensure support is available for carers and delivered effectively.

For more information about Carers Assessments, please contact:

- Gloucestershire County Council's Community and Adult Care Directorate Helpdesk on 01452 426868
- Herefordshire Local Access Point on 01432 364050

In addition to a formal assessment team members should talk to you about how they can best support you in your caring role and how you want to be involved in the care offered by the team. We ask carers regularly about how they are and if they have any concerns, to which we will respond.

Some people using our services will have their care organised through a system called Care Programme Approach (CPA) which formally records and reviews support.

If your friend or relative is cared for under the Care Programme Approach you should be provided with the leaflet *The Care Programme Approach, Your Care Plan and your Information*. If you have not received a copy or would like another copy please ask a member of staff.

## Planning for an emergency

Preparation is the key to dealing with an accident or crisis so it is important to have a list of useful people to contact in a difficult situation.

You and the person you care for should draw up and agree a plan so everyone knows what they need to do if there is an emergency. The Care Co-ordinator can help draw up this plan and, with your agreement, can keep a copy with the individual's notes.

Carers often recognise early signs that someone's mental health is deteriorating and where necessary teams should provide information about recognising when someone is becoming unwell through documents such as the CPA care plan.

If you feel signs of a relapse are present you should contact the most appropriate person for advice – who this is will depend on who is involved in your friend or relative's care. Examples may be the GP, care team or a specialist crisis team whose contact details you have been provided with.

You should not worry that you will be seen as making a fuss – you are the person who may be most aware of a developing problem and staff should respect your opinion.

There are times when it is important that you do not feel isolated, so make that call.

- Take a few deep breaths
- Stay as calm as possible
- Stay safe
- Decide the best person to contact
- Say who you are and what is wrong
- Say what is needed
- Trust what they say to you
- Say if there is any reason why you cannot act as they advise

If you feel in immediate danger, please dial 999 and ask for the Police.

Advance Care Planning is also available in the Trust through the Care Co-ordinator and is a way that service users, friends and family can talk through and record their preferences about treatment and other support in the context of managing future eventualities.

## Carers Emergency Scheme

The Carers Emergency Scheme is for carers worried about what would happen to the person they look after if the carer falls ill or is involved in an accident or emergency.

Carers Emergency Schemes operate alongside the regular health and social care services a person is receiving, including our services, and does not mean that other services would be withdrawn. As support is usually required quickly schemes recommend that carers register in advance.

### Gloucestershire

This free scheme offers peace of mind so that if anything happens to the carer or they are called away suddenly to an emergency elsewhere the person they care for will not be left without help and support. The scheme operates at two levels:

**Level 1:** the carer nominates two contacts – family, friends or neighbours, who are willing to respond in an emergency.

This level can be organised via Carers Gloucestershire 01452 386283.

**Level 2:** Carers looking after someone with high care needs have the additional option having a support worker supplied in an emergency by the County Council to take over their caring role for up to 48 hours (72 over a bank holiday).

This care is provided free of charge.

This level can only be organised via the Adult Services Helpdesk 01452 426868.

### Herefordshire

This free scheme is run in partnership by the Careline Scheme run by Herefordshire Housing and Herefordshire Carer Support. It gives you peace of mind by ensuring there are plans in place should anything happen to you.

To register contact Herefordshire Carer Support on 01432 356068.



## Useful numbers

Don't be afraid to use the numbers below. Fill in the blank spaces with the contact numbers of the people involved in the care of the person you look after.

**NHS Direct:** Confidential advice and information

Tel: 0845 46 47

**Adult Social Care Contact out of hours (emergency only):**

Gloucestershire: 01452 614194    Herefordshire: 0330 1239309

**Gloucestershire Police and West Mercia Police:** Non-emergency advice

Tel: 101

**Samaritans:**

Tel: 08457 909090

**Shelterline:** Housing advice helpline

Tel: 0808 800 4444

**Refuge:** For women experiencing domestic violence

Tel: 0808 200 0247

Please speak to a member of Trust staff looking after your relative or friend for a copy of our useful contacts leaflet or please visit our website:

**[www.2gether.nhs.uk/carers](http://www.2gether.nhs.uk/carers)**

## Your personal contacts

### GP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Community Nurse

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Care Co-ordinator

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Consultant

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Ward/Out of Hours

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_



## Taking care of yourself and respite care

If you are a carer it is important to look after yourself and stay well so you can continue in your caring role.

It is upsetting if the person you care for is distressed or you find yourself in a role you did not choose. Many carers experience depression, sleeplessness or anxiety due to the demands of their role.

The following tips come from other carers and can help you to look after yourself:

- continue doing activities you enjoy
- talk to friends and family about how you feel
- join a support group and share your experiences with others who understand
- make time for yourself each day – go for a walk, watch television, listen to music
- exercise regularly
- eat healthy food
- talk to your GP about your caring role. Ask about stress management workshops or counselling if you feel you need them
- find out more about the illness of the person you care for - this can help to reduce your anxiety or stress
- be clear about what you can and cannot do - and stick to it!



## Respite care and carer breaks

If you go too long without a proper break you may become ill, which can make life more difficult for you and the person you care for.

Having a break is more likely to help you cope with caring and will give you time to recharge your batteries. This can make a real difference to your health and quality of life.

Respite care is short term care provided for someone who usually lives at home so their carer can have a break. Respite care can also benefit a service user by providing a change of environment, meet new people or take part in interesting activities.

### Respite care includes:

- **Residential respite care or care at home:** available for a week or longer to enable you to go away on holiday or have a longer rest
- **Domiciliary care:** a care worker comes into your home and takes on some of the care you usually provide. This can include a variety of help such as prompting to take medication, preparing meals, helping to get the person you care for up, washed and dressed. Helping the person you care for with social activities of their choice such shopping or going to the cinema may also be included
- **Emergency respite care:** care is provided because you cannot fulfil your caring role due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness
- **Day centre care:** the person you care for spends time at a day centre while you have a break

For information about how to access respite care, advice on funding and respite options for your specific situation, please contact:

### Carers Gloucestershire

Telephone: 01452 386283

Website: [www.carersgloucestershire.org.uk](http://www.carersgloucestershire.org.uk)

### Herefordshire Carers Support

Telephone: 01432 356068

Website: [www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org](http://www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org)

## Carer Education and Support Groups

Carer Education and Support Groups provide:

- Time to talk, share experiences and support each other
- Visiting speakers on mental health issues and services
- Increased understanding of mental health problems and how they may be managed
- Education for Carers on looking after their own wellbeing
- Information on Carers' rights
- A social event
- Ask the Care Team or local Carer Support agencies if a group or Carer education programme runs in your area

For further information on Carer Education and Support Groups in your area, please contact:

### Gloucestershire

#### **Carers Gloucestershire**

Tel: 01452 386283

Website: [www.carersgloucestershire.org.uk](http://www.carersgloucestershire.org.uk)

#### **Positive Caring Programme**

Tel: 01452 500885

Email: [positivecaring@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:positivecaring@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

### Herefordshire

#### **Herefordshire Carer Support**

Tel: 01432 356068

Website: [www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org](http://www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org)

## Young Carers

This pack has been designed for adult carers. However young people can also be involved in caring and can really benefit from having their own specialist support and advice.

For further information, you or the young person involved can contact one of the following young carer organisations for further information and guidance:

### **Gloucestershire Young Carers**

Telephone: 01452 733060

Email: [mail@glosyoungcarers.org.uk](mailto:mail@glosyoungcarers.org.uk)

Website: [www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk](http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk)

### **Herefordshire Young Carer Support**

Telephone: 01432 356068

Email: [help@herefordshirecarerssupport.org](mailto:help@herefordshirecarerssupport.org)

Website: [www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org/young.php](http://www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org/young.php)

You can also visit **[www.2gether.nhs.uk](http://www.2gether.nhs.uk)** or ask a member of staff for young carer information.

## GP Practices' Carers' Register

Many GP Practices have an established processes and protocols for identifying carers within their Practice.

However, you should check and inform your GP Practice if you are a child or adult caring for someone at home or elsewhere who has a physical or mental illness, has learning difficulties, suffers alcohol or drug addiction problems or who is disabled, elderly or frail.

Once you are registered as a carer many GP Practices offer some or all of the following:

- Free annual flu vaccination
- Joint appointment for patient and carer
- Make a back-to-back appointment for patient and their carer
- Home appointment for carers who are housebound
- Invite carers for a health check - sometimes linked to an Advice Clinic



- Share relevant information with a carer regarding the illness, treatment and prognosis of the cared-for with appropriate agreement
- Keep one or more emergency appointment slots each day free for carers
- A nominated staff member who telephones older or vulnerable patients who are carers on a regular basis
- To nominate a staff member as a Carer Lead
- A dedicated carer's noticeboard and carer's link on their website for information
- Link entry on their register to a referral for Carer's Assessment and/or referral to relevant organisation or agency for advice and support
- To link registration to an invitation to a local Carers Support Group

## Confidentiality and Information sharing

Our Carer's Charter sets out how we should involve you in the care of the person you care for.

It clearly states that we should listen and respond to your concerns and keep you informed about the care and treatment of the person you care for.

Doctors and nurses have a duty to keep personal information confidential.

If the person you care for has agreed that information can be shared with you, you should be given details of planned care or treatment. If not, you can still receive general factual information both verbally and written.

### **As the carer you should be helped to understand:**

- the present situation
- any confidentiality restrictions requested by the service user
- the service user's treatment plan and its aims
- any written care plan, crisis plan or recovery programme
- the role of the professionals involved in the service user's care
- how to access help, including out of hours services

### **As the carer you should be given:**

- the opportunity to speak to a professional on your own and share information that you consider relevant and important
- rights to your own confidentiality when talking to a professional
- encouragement to feel a valued member of the care team
- confidence to voice your views and any concerns you may have
- emotional and practical support

## Carer's Information

If you do not feel that you are getting the information you need the following questions might be helpful for you to use when talking to staff involved in the care of your friend or relative:

- What tests and assessments will you do?
- Are you able to tell me what the diagnosis/current problem is?
- Will medication help? Are there any side effects? Who can I talk to for more information about this?
- Are there any other treatments and services that might be useful available?
- What is the treatment plan? Can I have a copy of the plan?
- How often will the person I care for be seen?
- What should I do if I think my friend or relative's condition is becoming worse?
- Where can I get further information about the condition and the services available?
- How will I be involved planning care?
- What support is there for me as a carer?

It is important that when we meet with you the information provided is what you need to know, provided and explained at the right time. As a carer, you will have questions about the diagnosis, treatment and progress of your friend or relative at different stages of their contact with us.

In some meetings, for example Care Programme Approach reviews there will be a written record of the discussion. When the contact is less formal you can also ask us to write down the information if you prefer and provide you with any supplementary information like leaflets or information sheets we have that might be useful to you.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists produce a very comprehensive list of questions which can act as a guide during discussions with staff. If this is not available as a leaflet from staff, it can be accessed by visiting:

**[www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about/campaigns/partnersincarecampaign.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about/campaigns/partnersincarecampaign.aspx)**

## Contact us

We hope this information is helpful for both carers and service users.

If you need additional copies of this pack or individual leaflets, please contact us by:



**Writing to:** Social Inclusion Team, 2gether NHS Foundation Trust,  
136 Stroud Road, Gloucester GL1 5JR



**Telephone:** 01452 894200



**Email:** [social.inclusion@glos.nhs.uk](mailto:social.inclusion@glos.nhs.uk)





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