

Implementing the Care Act in health settings: identifying carers and signposting them to support



Carers policies, strategies and charters

Having a carers policy or strategy in place in your Trust is an important way to demonstrate a commitment to carers and a key step in ensuring that carers are prioritised across the organisation.

If you do not currently have a carers policy or strategy that you think is adequate you can look at examples of others below.

Some Trusts have a carers policy in place which outlines working practices and standards, while others have a carers strategy, which fulfils a similar function but also outlines a framework for improvements. Some Trusts and services also have a charter, which lays out what carers can expect from them.

Suggested content

In a policy document, common areas to include guidance on are:

- Definitions of a carer
- Identifying and recognising carers
- Communicating with carers and involving them
- Providing information for carers
- Access to support for carers themselves (particularly including carers assessments and social services)
- Working in partnership with other agencies
- Working with young carers
- Some also include background information on national levers and drivers behind the Trust having a policy.

It is important that information in these documents is used and plans in strategies followed through. When new staff are inducted there should be accessible versions of this information supplied, or training given. Frontline staff should particularly be made aware of their responsibility under the Care Act to identify and signpost carers to support, where to signpost, protocols for hospital discharge and confidentiality and sharing information, as well as your other ways of working regarding carers.

The Trusts below have allowed us to signpost to their carers policies, strategies and charters as examples:

- <http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/files/2010/03/CP181-Carers-Policy.pdf>
- <http://www.gmw.nhs.uk/carers-information>
- <http://www.hpft.nhs.uk/uploads/documents/carers-strategy-may-2013.pdf>
- http://www.thh.nhs.uk/documents/Publications/Carers_Strategy_2012-2015.pdf
- <http://www.eastlondon.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/Carers-information/Carers-docs/Carers-Strategy-2013-2016---final.pdf>

Got any good practice examples you'd like to share, or is there more information you'd like to see on this page? Email Charlotte Argyle, Carers Support Programme Manager: cargyle@macmillan.org.uk