

Carer Friendly GP Practice Checklist



Susan Lee, Primary Care Link Worker at Teesside Mind is keen to support GP surgeries to become ‘Carer Friendly’. Susan’s role is part of the South Tees All Age Carers Support Service. The aim is to help carers have better support in primary care as well as being able to identify themselves as an unpaid carer and utilise a range of services.

In June 2019, after extensive consultation with the Carers Trust UK, GP practice staff, local authority commissioners, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Care Quality Commission and carers from within vulnerable communities, NHS England published a framework of questions (quality markers). The quality markers are for use by GP surgeries to demonstrate how effective they are in recognising and supporting unpaid carers in a practical way.

It is imperative that unpaid carers are recognised and supported as a matter of urgency to help them maintain their own mental health and wellbeing.

Here is a quick checklist of the key practical activities that medical practices can introduce to become more carer friendly. This evidence will also be reviewed by the Care Quality Commission officers during an inspection visit.

CARERS AMBASSADOR

- Identify a member of staff as a carers lead or ambassador who is the ‘go to person’ for both unpaid carers and staff on all aspects of carers support. Display a picture of the carers ambassador- if you have one - up on the noticeboard so all staff and carers are aware of who to ask for
- Have a name badge with a title to identify the carers lead or ambassador to both staff and unpaid carers
- Have a dedicated noticeboard kept up to date by the Carers Ambassador for displaying posters, leaflets and upcoming events

IDENTIFY HIDDEN CARERS

- Ensure the patient registration process identifies unpaid carers or someone who is cared for. Encourage all staff to be aware of changes in peoples' circumstances in order to identify new carers and add their names to the carers register. It's important that everyone in the practice is involved
- Opportunistically – attending a consultation together with their loved one; picking up prescriptions, a vaccination schedule; or perhaps the carer is mentioned in a discharge or clinic letter
- The patient doesn't present at all, or delayed presentation as the carer gradually recognises their role as a carer
- During a crisis with their loved one – at which point, their personal wellbeing is usually the last thing on their mind

SHARE YOUR 'CARER FRIENDLY' STATUS

- Share the message you are a 'Carer Friendly' practice on your website, practice information, and newsletters
- Encourage carers to join the Patient Participation Groups so they can share their views and have a voice
- Support campaigns including Carers Week and Carers Rights Day to raise awareness and involve both patients and staff. As well as posters and leaflets
- Evidence the good work you do so it will support the Care Quality Commission visit

BE 'CARER FRIENDLY' WITH ACCESS TO CARE

- Is it possible to offer more flexible appointments for carers?
- Are longer appointments available for both patient and carer?
- Do you offer an annual health check for carers to ensure they are able to maintain their own health and wellbeing?
- Are carers given priority for appointments
- Are home visits available if the unpaid carer is unable to leave the person they care for?

CARER AWARENESS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STAFF

- Offer carer awareness training during 'Time Out' and staff meetings. Ensure this is also part of new employee induction

SUPPORT FOR YOUR STAFF

- Identify staff who are carers and have policies in place to support them by offering flexible working, regular one to ones or a carers passport.
- Ensure you retain valuable staff who are juggling employment and a caring role

ONGOING SUPPORT FOR SURGERIES

- **We Care You Care** is a one stop shop for carers needing general information and advice and signposting to community services
- **<https://wecareyoucare.info>**
- **Email:** Hello@wecareyoucare.info

- **Carers Together** covers South Tees and offers confidential support and advice to unpaid carers
- **Telephone** (01642) 488977
- **E-mail:** carerstogogether@btconnect.com

- Susan Lee, Primary Care Link Worker (Carer Support) to arrange a discussion on the quality markers and staff carer awareness session
- **Email:** susan.lee@teessidemind.org.uk
- **Telephone:** 07543309039

Supporting carers in general practice: a framework of quality markers June 2019
NHS England and NHS Improvement