

Support for Carers – Breakout Session

Frances Dewhurst introduced the two speakers for the session:

Jill Nooij – Awareness and Voice Delivery Lead, Caring Together

Jonathan Wells – Rethink Carer Support

A joint presentation was delivered outlining support which is available for carers, with a focus on carers supporting someone with mental health difficulties. The presentation will be shared with participants following the session.

Jill Nooij – Caring together

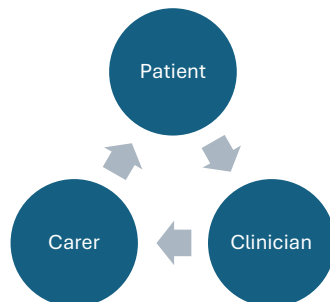
Carers Rights

Hospital Discharge:

The importance of carers being included in discussions around hospital discharge was emphasized. It was discussed that very often this did not happen and carers felt left in the dark about things such as medication and other changes which had taken place during a hospital stay and were not informed of plans for discharge from hospital.

It was shared that only one in three carers are asked whether they are able to or willing to care.

Triangle of care discussed, should be three-way communication between



A short video was embedded in the presentation called 'James's Story', giving an example of the real life experience of James who cared for his mother, including how he had been treated as a carer when his mother was admitted to hospital. Link to video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJXvROXEa3I>

Employment Rights

There is legislation in place which is intended to protect the rights of carers who are in employment, to make sure carers are supported and treated fairly in the workplace. Pieces of legislation include:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Carers Leave act 2023

On average 600 people a day leave employment to care for someone.

The Carer-friendly Tick Award for carers was discussed.

Managing stress

The importance of managing your own stress was emphasized. The presentation listed a 'top 10 list of tips for carers':

- Tell your GP you are a carer
- Reach out to family / friends for support
- If needed, apply for a blue badge
- Register for power of attorney
- Think about having a Carers Assessment/Needs
- Financial check – Carers Allowance
- Carer support groups
- Carer Rights - employed – let your employer know you are a carer
- Access support from other organisations – Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, Parkinsons etc
- Register for a carers magazine / e newsletter
- Emergency planning in place - Register for a what if?
- Your own self-care – carer breaks

It was shared that 60% of carers reported having a long-term health condition or disability themselves.

Local sources of help were shared and discussed.

Jonathan Wells – Rethink Carer Support

Jonathan Wells talked about the role of the carer looking after someone who has a mental health condition, discussing the immense importance of their role in gaining insight into what works well and what doesn't.

People may choose whether or not they want to be identified as a carer.

Key issues include:

- Isolation and stigma
- Significant problems in accessing and getting a clinically effective services from NHS and social care
- Navigating over-complicated systems
- Confidentiality rules

People are very conscious of gaps in services and how they are impacted by them including waiting times.

Confidentiality

It is important to re-visit patient wishes, for example, a young person may wish for their parents not to be involved. It is important to note this can change.

Where families are carers for a young person, they need to have certain information in order to ensure their own and the young person's safety, for example, thoughts shared with clinicians of harming themselves or family members.

Mental Health Act

Legislation related to the Mental Health Act was discussed including people's rights and what can be expected.

The role of the **Nearest Relative** was discussed. The nearest relative has certain powers when the NHS and the local authority are deciding whether their loved one should be detained in a mental health inpatient unit. The nearest relative is not the same as the next of kin or the designated carer

Discussion and Questions

Q: Do we check the number of carer friendly organisations and know who they are?

A: These are shown on the Caring Together website under the section 'carer friendly Tick Award Hall of Fame'.

Q: Do we name and shame companies who are not carer friendly?

A: No, we try to support them and work with them.

Q: Can any employer get the Carer Friendly Tick Award?

A: Yes, if they meet the requirements/expectations.

Q: My wife has Alzheimer's. Is this included under the Mental Health Act?

A: It can be, but depending on circumstances the Mental Capacity Act may also be used.

Q: Do Carers Trust contact care providers?

A: No, however the 'What If? Plan was discussed <https://www.caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/adult-carers/emergency-planning/>

Q: Are Carers Trust services free?

A: Carers Trust are commissioned to provide some services including homecare support. People may buy this support but in some circumstances may not need to pay.

Q: Is there a template or guide to help families discuss wishes about how they want to be cared for?

A: People can contact the carers trust Helpline on 0345 241 0954 or can complete the webform so someone can get in touch to discuss. Local authorities also provide a 'Guide to Independent Living'. See Cambridgeshire, <https://www.carechoices.co.uk/publication/cambridgeshire-guide-to-independent-living/>

or Peterborough, <https://www.carechoices.co.uk/publication/peterborough-guide-to-independent-living/>

Further comments

Once a person has received a diagnosis and someone has been identified as a carer, it would be good if they could be signposted to Caring Together and also for other help.

It is important to note that signposting alone may not work for some people, particularly young carers. Professionals need to be prepared to make referrals for people.