



Bridgewater
Community Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

CARERS' PLAN

2022-2025

'Our commitment to Carers'

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

For people who need care and support, the family member, friend or neighbour who delivers care can be a lifeline and their roles cannot be underestimated. Carers are central to how adults and children's services are delivered across all Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust services.

Every year, more and more people take on an unpaid caring role. The enormous contribution of carers not only makes an invaluable difference to the people they support but is an integral part of our health and social care system. This includes children and young people who act as carers, for example, to a parent or sibling.

The value and importance of carers is ever-increasing with our ageing population. However, carers can often feel they are on their own and may not feel respected, valued or supported for the huge contribution they make. Feelings of being taken for granted or overlooked can take a toll on carers' own wellbeing, adding to any emotional pressures and challenges they may already be experiencing from their caring role. Added to this, carers also have to find their way through the complex health care systems with little formal guidance and direction. It is also acknowledged that many carers do not consider themselves to be carers, instead simply caring for a loved one.

Carers need to be recognised and valued. They need access to information and support to help them provide the best care they can. Carers need a healthy balance between their caring responsibilities and their employment, social lives, hobbies, friendships and, in the case of young carers, their education and developmental opportunities, as well as maintaining their own personal health and wellbeing.

This is why we at Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust are committed to recognising and supporting carers and have refreshed our carers' strategy to produce our new Carers' Plan with a supporting improvement plan.

Every one of us must play our part to help recognise, value and support carers who make an amazing contribution looking after so many people in need of support.

Useful facts:

1

There are around 6.5 million carers in the UK – that's around 1 in 8 people. (Carer's UK, 2022).

2

The population is living longer with illness or disability, and more and more people are acting as carers; every day 6,000 people become carers. (Carer's UK, 2022).

3

70% of carers come into contact with healthcare professionals, yet healthcare professionals only identify 11% (Macmillan Briefing, 2013).

WHO IS A CARER?

- Someone who provides unpaid care or support for a partner, parent, child, sibling, family, friend or neighbour who has a disability or long-term health condition. A carer can be of any age.
- They could be caring for someone who has a physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health condition, substance misuse problems or, due to frailty, needs additional support from the carer on a regular basis.
- Carers may not always be recognised for the support that they provide and may not always see themselves as a carer.
- The types of tasks carers do vary from person to person but could include help with practical tasks, emotional support, personal care, attending appointments with someone, help with medication, interpreting, or supervising someone to keep them safe.

WE WANT TO BE INFORMED AND RESPECTED

MY OPINION DOESN'T COUNT

I FEEL ISOLATED

I HAVE A LOT OF ANXIETIES AND WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE

I KNOW A LOT OF CARERS WHO HAVE HAD TO GIVE UP WORK DUE TO LACK OF SUPPORT AND FLEXIBILITY

MY CARING ROLE LEAVES ME TIRED

WHY DO WE NEED A CARERS PLAN?

We aim to do the best we can for our patients, their families and those who care for them. Our plan describes our commitment, vision and direction for how we can identify and better support carers and our supporting improvement plan sets out the practical actions we will take to improve how we work with carers.

In 2019 we produced our first Carers Strategy to demonstrate our commitment to Carers. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic little progress was made due to the prioritisation of service delivery. We have now refreshed and updated our plan with a clear vision and priorities to be delivered over the next three years.

In line with the NHS Long Term Plan, our plan “will improve how we identify unpaid carers, and strengthen support for them to address their individual health needs” (The NHS Long Term Plan 2019). Following the NICE Guidance Quality Standard (QS 200) on ‘Supporting adult carers’, our plan will also ensure that:

“Carers are identified by health and social care organisations and encouraged to recognise their role and rights.”

Carers are supported to actively participate in decision making and care planning for the person they care for.”

“Carers are offered supportive working arrangements by workplaces” (Nice Quality Standard QS 200)

Locally, our plan reflects the Trust’s PEOPLE values, the first of which is to be ‘person centred’ and we are working with local stakeholders in the boroughs where we provide services to ensure that we offer the right support in each area.

OUR VISION

We want to ensure that:

Carers are recognised, valued, and have access to the right support at the right time, to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for both the carers and the people they care for.

OUR COMMITMENT

We have four key commitments that form the basis of our offer to carers:

We will recognise and respond to your needs as a carer, and:

- Ask you about your caring role when you accompany a patient to find out if you need any support
- Recognise your role and rights as a carer and find out what that means for you
- Signpost to appropriate carers support for health, social care, welfare, financial and other needs within our local community
- Take into account your personal needs and preferences
- Not assume that you are willing, or able, to continue to provide the same level of care ongoing

We will recognise your expertise, knowledge and the important role that you play, and:

- Listen to you without bias or prejudice
- Take your worries and concerns seriously
- Recognise that you have relevant and important information about the person you care for
- Value and respect your opinion and, where necessary, keep it confidential
- Take your views into account when decisions are made about the person you care for
- Share information with you about the person you care for whenever this is helpful and possible, with their consent.

We will welcome your involvement in care, and:

- Involve you in planning the care for the person you support, with their consent
- Give you information about what to do to help the person you care for and who to contact if you need help or advice
- Ensure the safety of the person you care for whilst supporting you to care for them
- Give you relevant information about the way our service works
- Discuss with you if you wish to continue with particular caring roles.

We will value your involvement in the development of our services, and:

- Give you the opportunity to state your views on the quality of our services
- Give you the opportunity to be actively involved in the planning, development and evaluation of services
- Inform you of service developments and give you adequate notice of meetings, consultation periods and other relevant events.

OUR COMMITMENT

How will we do it?

We will:

- Support staff to be better at identifying, supporting and working with carers, including colleagues who are carers.
- Develop and embed a 'Golden Thread' training component to run through all Trust delivered training which will equip staff with the tools and confidence to recognise, consider, support, and actively promote the needs of carers within our local community and our organisation.
- Improve the information we provide to carers for appropriate support for health, social care, welfare, financial and other needs within our local community.
- Respect the role of the carer and treat carers with dignity and compassion.
- Support carers to actively participate in decision making and care planning for the person they care for.
- Involve carers in service delivery planning.
- Work collaboratively with other stakeholders to ensure carers are recognised and supported in their communities.

The Carers' Plan is supported by a detailed improvement plan. Progress against the improvement plan will be monitored through the Bridgewater Engagement Group.

What about our staff who are carers?

Our 2021 Staff Survey found that 38.4% of our staff have an unpaid caring role for a relative or friend, which is higher than the national average for the NHS workforce.

The Trust offers a range of support initiatives which seek to enable staff to maintain a positive work-life balance. These include:

- Flexible working such as annualised and compressed hours, job share, and part time options
- Option to purchase additional annual leave
- Special leave policy with specific detail for working carers
- Career break options
- Employee Adjustment Passport
- Carers Support Network (monthly via MS Teams)
- External resources, including carers support groups
- The Health Hub - Health and Wellbeing information and resources, including a Support for Working Carers page
- PAM Assist support and advice line for Bridgewater staff
- Occupational Health and the Counselling service
- Carers UK Digital Resource – access for staff with caring responsibilities
- Dementia resources
- Financial support for carers

The Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Carers' Plan recognises the work done to support staff in their caring responsibilities and this document has been developed alongside this work.

EVALUATION

How will we know we have been successful?

The indicators of success will be:

- 1 Number of carers identified by services
- 2 Number of carers involved in decision making for the person they care for
- 3 Staff training evaluations, surveys and feedback
- 4 Number of staff identified as carer
- 5 Number of carers involved in service delivery planning
- 6 Results of patients and carers satisfaction surveys
- 7 Friends and Family test Results

Where will this plan be monitored and reviewed?

The 'Carers' Plan' implementation plan will be monitored by the Bridgewater Engagement Group and the Quality Council. This plan is a living document that will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed.

What documents have been used when developing the Carers' Plan?

It is imperative that this plan takes into account national and local policy documents relating to carers. The Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Carers' Plan is aligned to several local work streams, projects and strategies. These include:

- Carer Action Plan 2018-2020 Supporting carers today - Department of Health & Social Care (June 2018)
- Carers Action Plan 2018- 2020 Supporting carers today – One year on progress review (July 2019)
- Commissioning for Carers - NHS (2014)
- The hidden costs of caring – Marie Curie (2015)
- Valuing Carers 2015 – Carers UK (2015)
- NICE Quality standard [QS200]
- Nice Clinical Guidance 150
- NHS Long Term Plan
- Warrington Partnership Board's Carers Strategy
- Halton Carers Strategy
- Patient's Charter - Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Working with National Voices 2017-18 - National Voices
- Bridgewater Staff Zone - Support for Carers (2019)
- Staff Engagement Plan 2020-2023 – Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Workforce Strategy 2019-2022 – Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation