

## COMMISSIONING FOR CARERS PRINCIPLES

### Principle 8 - Prioritise carers' health and wellbeing

The GP Patient Survey in 2013 highlighted the impact of caring on carer health – whilst 51% of non-carers had a long-standing health condition, this rose to 60% of all carers and 70% of carers caring for 50 or more hours a week. The survey also highlighted higher levels of arthritis, high blood pressure, long-term back problems, diabetes, mobility problems, anxiety and depression amongst carers.<sup>1</sup> Caring responsibilities can have an adverse impact on the physical and mental health, education and employment potential of those who care. This can result in significantly poorer health and quality of life outcomes. These in turn can affect a carer's effectiveness and lead to the admission of the cared for person to hospital or residential care.<sup>2</sup>

**(Select one colour only. Rate where red lowest-----and green highest)**

How assured are you that all identified carers of any age in your locality have their health and wellbeing monitored?

□	□	□
---	---	---

What could you do to improve the rating? -----  
-----

How assured are you that all identified carers in your locality are receiving Carers' Assessments?

□	□	□
---	---	---

What could you do to improve the rating? -----  
-----

How assured are you that your plans for the Better Care Fund have the right level of funding to support carers in your locality?

□	□	□
---	---	---

What could you do to improve the rating? -----  
-----

**Ask yourself...**

## OFFICIAL

- Do you have an assurance framework for the services you commission to ensure carers have a care plan?
- Do you invest in self-care to support patients and their carers to understand and manage their conditions better?
- Do you have an assurance framework to ensure carers are offered training in managing medication, moving and handling etc.?
- Are your commissioned services linking with [your local school nursing service](#) as school nurses are being trained in supporting young carers but will now be commissioned by local authorities through public health?
- Are your commissioned services linking with local carer support services for carers of any age?
- How do you address the physical and mental health needs of young carers and young adult carers through services for them and the person that they care for?
- Do you offer self-care support programmes such as the Expert Patient Programme derivative?
- Do you know how skilled, knowledgeable and confident carers are to manage their health and wellbeing and the health and wellbeing of the person they care for? (Carers Patient Activation Measure (Carers PAM)? In development by NHS England.
- What do you have in place to reduce future emergency admissions? For example reducing the number of days cared-for individuals take up a hospital bed).
- What do you do to ensure carers' physical health, mental health and wellbeing is maintained?
- Do you know if carers are offered a flu jab?
- Is Improved Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) available to carers on line and over the phone?
- Do you promote the use of [the Triangle of Care](#) in physical health services?
- Do you provide holistic whole family centred services for carers?
- Have you considered commissioning carers respite breaks? For example; "There is evidence to suggest that a significant number of admissions are due to problems associated with the carer rather than the person admitted. One study found that problems associated with the carer contributed to readmission in 62% of cases. Carers of people readmitted were more likely than other carers to:
  - be experiencing ill-health, fatigue and interrupted sleep;
  - be conducting at least one intimate task;
  - generally feel frustrated.<sup>3</sup>
- Are you using carers' breaks effectively?

- Are you assured that you can provide person centred support to carers, which may not routinely be provided by the NHS so they can continue in their caring role, for example to provide support at home for everyday tasks for the carer, housework to enable the carer to continue caring for a 'loved one'? This was a learning point offered by carers during the introduction of Personal Health Budgets in the NHS.

### Good practice examples:

- "Looking after Me", Self-Management course for carers – Kirklees. This is an evidence based self-management education course for adults who care for someone living with a long-term health condition or disability. [http://www.nhs.uk/media/2573743/carers\\_case\\_study\\_-\\_kirklees\\_self\\_management.pdf](http://www.nhs.uk/media/2573743/carers_case_study_-_kirklees_self_management.pdf)
- NHS Devon County Council and Devon Carers-Health and wellbeing checks part of the joint Strategic needs assessment, evaluated by University of Plymouth and CIRCLE University of Leeds. [http://www.nhs.uk/media/2535883/carers\\_case\\_study\\_-\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_checks\\_in\\_devon.pdf](http://www.nhs.uk/media/2535883/carers_case_study_-_health_and_wellbeing_checks_in_devon.pdf)
- Northumberland carers wellbeing checks- The development prompted a new CQUIN (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) target for community nursing. [http://www.nhs.uk/media/2563036/carers\\_northumberland\\_carers\\_checks.pdf](http://www.nhs.uk/media/2563036/carers_northumberland_carers_checks.pdf)

## References:

---

<sup>1</sup> Policy Briefing, May 2014, Facts about carers; <http://www.carersuk.org/>

<sup>2</sup> [Department of Health](#). (2012) *Assessment, eligibility and portability for care users and carers online*).

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/136450/IA-Annex-C-assessment-and-eligibility.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136450/IA-Annex-C-assessment-and-eligibility.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Williams, E, Fitton, F (1991), 'Survey of carers of elderly patients discharged from hospital'. *British Journal of General Practice*, 41, 105-108.