



University Hospital Southampton
NHS Foundation Trust

Carers Strategy

2021-2023



Developing and delivering our carers strategy

Why we need a carers strategy

Without carers health and social care would be impossible. The value of unpaid caring has been estimated at around £132billion a year, with 3 out of 5 people becoming carers at some point in their life. Despite their immense and important contribution, carers often face barriers when accessing health and care services. These barriers include not being identified as carers, and not having reasonable adjustments made to enable improved access to services; a lack of awareness about what carers do, their role as expert partners in care, and a failure to involve carers in care planning and decisions; and not being able to have their own health and well-being needs met due to caring responsibilities.

As a major NHS provider, University Hospital Southampton has an important role in ensuring that carers in our region have these barriers removed and can access and receive care and services in an appropriate, enabling, and supportive way. This strategy sets out how we will achieve this.

Setting our carers objectives

Our carers lead has been working with carers, staff, and patients, to identify key areas for development and improvement, and from these conversations, workshops, and engagement, three major areas of improvement have been identified:

- How we identify carers
- How we ensure the right resources are available at the right time
- Work collaboratively with carers to ensure they are partners in all care planning



Our journey so far

Over the past 18 months we have focused on implementing and embedding resources and initiatives to improve the support we provide to carers. We have:

- Introduced a carers experience lead post
- Made our carers cafes virtual in response to COVID19
- Embedded carer cards & hidden disabilities lanyard scheme
- Reinforced links with carers support organisations
- Produced accessible guides to some of our services
- Commissioned AccessAble access guides to assist visit planning
- Opened an accredited Changing Places toilet facility
- Agreed carer concessions for food and parking at our hospitals
- Ensured our COVID response considered the needs of carers
- Introduced a carers working group

Where we want to be

Our aim is to deliver the very best standard of care and support for carers across our trust. To do this, we will:

- Use the standards set out in the Triangle of Care accreditation scheme to benchmark our support
- Learn from best practice in community and mental health NHS settings where carer support is an integral part of care provision
- Embed and resource the carers workstream

This strategy sets out our next steps towards achieving this goal.





Identifying carers

Without identifying carers and recognising their needs and preferences, we will be unable to deliver responsive care and support. Our first objective is to ensure we have the right tools and processes in place to effectively identify carers.

- ▶ Early identification of carers on their admission to hospital, with their needs and preferences effectively recorded and met on each visit
- ▶ Digital systems will flag carers prior to admission or attendance at outpatient appointments, allowing relevant information to be provided before arrival at the hospital
- ▶ The sunflower lanyard scheme will support easy identification for carers and quick provision of support
- ▶ Carers who are admitted to hospital will be identified and supported to have assistance in managing their caring responsibilities
- ▶ The trust will work with local partners to implement emergency plans for carers identified when admitted to our Emergency Department



Timely support with the right resources

We will ensure that once we have identified carers and recorded their needs and preferences, these will be met by providing timely support, reasonable adjustments, and relevant information and resources.

- ▶ We will sustain the ‘carers experience lead’ post to coordinate and develop the support available for carers
- ▶ Carers will be empowered to make decisions about their caring role, and will signposted to the relevant hospital teams, who will be trained to understand the needs and rights of carers within the hospital
- ▶ The Patient Support Hub will provide effective facilitation between carers and clinical services as well as deploying volunteers to support in accessing these as required
- ▶ Online resources will be available to support carers in identifying and accessing appropriate services within the hospital and wider community
- ▶ A carers guide to UHS services will be produced to ensure carers can access advice and information regardless of what service they are using, while staff will communicate effectively with prompt and clear information and updates





Working collaboratively with and for carers

We will ensure that carers are recognised as care experts and are fully integrated and involved in care planning and decision making. We will work to ensure carer voices are heard and influence service development and improvement. We will also work with our colleagues across the health and care system to better support carers.

- ▶ Carers will be recognised as Experts in Care and be actively involved in care-planning, shared decision-making, and discharge
- ▶ Carers will be empowered to make decisions about their caring role, with access to appropriate services and support for them and the person they care for
- ▶ Carers' right to a life of their own outside of caring will be recognised and considered at all stages of care planning
- ▶ Community health, local authority, and voluntary sector partners will be engaged in the development of a clear 'pathway to support'
- ▶ Carers will be invited to share their views and experiences to deliver improvements to the quality of care and services

What we will do in 2021/22

Identifying carers	
Action	When by
To create and implement a flag for carers which is to be added to the CPI alert system to allow early identification of carers at arrival	December 21
All carers to be directed to register for the sunflower lanyard scheme at the trust which will record support needs of carer and the person they care for	June 21
Development of 'crisis plan' paperwork to provide key information for clinical teams should a carer be admitted	December 21
Timely support with the right resources	
Action	When by
Dedicated online resources for carers and internal resources for staff, to include: referral and signposting information, a guide to UHS for carers, and the continuation of the carer experience lead post to facilitate positive relationships between clinicians and carers	December 21
A single point of contact for carers via the Patient Support Hub to access support around reasonable adjustments and additional requirements	June 21
A VLE training package for staff which provides information on how to support, involve and work with carers	March 22
Working collaboratively with, and for, carers	
Action	When by
Regular carer cafés to offer advice and support to our carers, as well as providing a forum for raising concerns and suggestions	June 21
Work with local partners to create recognised 'pathway to support' to enable carers to access the right support	March 22
Carers' voices being heard, influencing and driving service change and improvements to quality and experience	March 22

This strategy has been circulated for consultation to

Community organisations	Public Sector
Defence Medical Welfare Service	Hampshire County Council
Carers in Southampton	Southampton CCG
Carers Together	Southampton City Council
HealthWatch Southampton	University Hospital Southampton
HealthWatch Hampshire	Learning Disability Team
Jane Scarth House	Speech & Language
MENCAP	MND
Opensight	Dementia Team
Southampton Sight	Safeguarding
Sonus	Palliative Care Team
Spectrum	Wards: E2, F3, F8

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