Information for Carers

Do you look after someone who is in hospital who couldn’t cope without you?

Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered
Do you look after someone who is in hospital?

If the person you care for is now in one of our hospitals, or is going to be admitted soon, you may have questions about how staff will involve you in decisions regarding their care and discharge home again. This leaflet provides information for you and also the person you care for.

Am I a carer?

- A carer is someone who provides unpaid help and support to a partner, child, relative or neighbour, who could not manage without their help.

- A carer often does not realise they are a carer and can struggle to tell someone they are finding it difficult to cope.

- A carer is not necessarily the closest relative of a patient or their next of kin.

- A carer can be any age, including a child.

You may already have been a carer for the patient but the changes in their health, as a result of the current admission to hospital, may now place new demands on you.

Are you trying to juggle caring with work and family commitments?

Speak to your employer to let them know you are caring and the impact this is having on you, particularly as the person you care for is currently in hospital. You have the right to request time off for emergencies and flexible working, to balance your caring and work roles. Also talk to your GP and let them know you are a carer and ask them to add you to their carer register and discuss with you what support they can provide for you.
in your caring role. The Carers Support Centre has dedicated workers supporting carers in paid employment, contact details can be found at the back of this booklet.

**On admission**

It is important to talk to staff as early as possible if you are or might become a carer. If the admission of the person you care for is unplanned please let the staff in the Emergency Department know, or the nursing staff once the patient is admitted onto a ward.

If the person you care for is coming in for a planned admission, they are likely to have a pre-assessment appointment. During this appointment please let the staff know you are a carer and along with the person you care for, agree what information staff can share with you.

**Patient Information and Consent**

As a carer of someone who is in hospital, you may need information about the person you care for, and staff may want to speak to you to gather information about the person whom you care for. As Social Services and healthcare authorities have a duty to protect an individual’s confidentiality, they will seek the patient’s consent before discussing any information with you. If the person is unable to consent, then the Mental Capacity Act will be implemented.

**Mental Capacity Act (2005)**

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) sets out the process to be followed when someone over the age of 16 lacks capacity to make decisions. No one can give consent for another adult, even if they are a family member.
If you care for someone who does not have capacity, there is a legal obligation that you are consulted about any decision that needs to be made, and that you are part of any best interest meeting that is held. Your opinion will be valued and taken into account when considering what action to take.

For more information please visit:

**Carers of patients with dementia**

If you are a carer of someone with dementia, please ask our staff for a copy of the *This is Me* leaflet (available at www.alzheimers.org.uk). It is a simple and practical tool for people going into hospital and their carers. It provides a ‘snapshot’ of the person with dementia and gives hospital staff information about them as an individual, including the patient’s likes, dislikes and interests.

Every week in the Brunel building of Southmead Hospital a **memory café** is run for families and carers of people with dementia. The café offers an opportunity to speak about your situation to workers from the Alzheimers Society, Carers Support Centre and Hospital Dementia Team. It’s an informal session with tea and cake. The Café can be found every Wednesday between 2pm and 4pm on Gate 28 Level 5.

The hospital have also signed up to **John’s Campaign** which recognises the importance of supporting carers of people with dementia to stay involved with the care of a loved one during a hospital admission (www.johnscampaign.org.uk).
Carers of people with learning disabilities

The Trust has two Learning Disability Liaison Nurses. They are experts in the care of patients with Learning Disabilities. They are also available to help with preparation for coming into hospital. If you would like some support from the Learning Disability Liaison Nurses, please get in touch by leaving a message on: 0117 414 1239. The Carers Support Centre also has dedicated workers who can support carers looking after someone with a learning disability. Their details can be found at the back of this booklet.

Young carers

A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 who is providing care for someone. Please let the staff know if you are a young carer when the patient is admitted and we will listen and help support you. You can also obtain support externally from the Carers Support Centre Young Carers Team, whose details are at the back of this booklet.

Parent carers

You may be a parent carer if you are looking after a child with a disability and providing substantial and regular care, beyond what is usually expected for a similarly aged child. The Carers Support Centre, Bristol Parent Carers and South Gloucestershire Parents & Carers organisations can provide you with help and support. Their contact details are shown at the back of this booklet.
Involving you in discharge planning and providing you with support

Planning for the discharge of the person you care for should start to take place at the earliest opportunity. You should both be involved at all stages of planning for discharge home.

Hospital and social care staff should work together to manage all parts of the discharge process. This is to ensure that the patient is suitably cared for after they have left hospital and is not at risk of being unable to cope.

You should also be given an opportunity to talk about your own needs as a carer and what help you may require. It is your legal right to have your needs addressed and to request a carers assessment.

Our Hospital Carers Liaison Worker can provide support for you in the hospital setting.

They can support you to communicate with staff, attend discharge planning meetings with you and can help you look at your own needs and identify where to find help and support.

To contact the Hospital Carers Liaison Worker in Southmead Hospital please call 07557418692.

Other departments who can provide support for you are:-

- Spiritual and Pastoral Care - 0117 414 3700
- Advice & Complaints Team - 0117 414 4569
What can I do if I am worried about my treatment or the treatment of the person I care for?

In the first instance please raise this with a member of staff on the ward as soon as possible. They should be able to resolve this directly with you or find someone to help you. If you cannot resolve the problem contact the Hospital Carers Liaison Worker, or the Advice & Complaints Team (details above).

Can I continue with my caring role whilst the person I care for is in hospital?

Yes, this is welcome. Alternatively, you do not have to continue caring whilst the person you care for is in hospital and may wish to use this time as a respite opportunity for you. The decision is up to you. Please talk to the nurse in charge of the ward about the care you would like to give.

To help during a stay in hospital we have a Carers Support Scheme which supports carers who wish to continue their caring role. If you are spending 3 or more hours on the ward providing support to a loved one you are entitled to:

- Access Card for the Staff Canteen and Ward.
- Free Parking.
- Completion with ward staff of the ‘carer conversation record’ detailing what care you would like to continue to provide and what breaks you wish to take.
- Reclining chairs or mattresses for those wishing to stay over in the hospital.

Details can be provided by the nursing staff on the ward, or the Hospital Carers Liaison Worker.
Preparing for going home

Make sure that you have had all your questions answered and have all the information you need. Ask the nursing staff if you need further help and information, or contact the Hospital Carers Liaison Worker.

Have you thought about support which is available for you once the person you care for goes home. Do you know what is available locally within the community? Speak to the Hospital Carers Liaison Worker if you would like further information.

Do you have a Carers Emergency Card?

The Carers Emergency Card is a free service that provides emergency support to the person cared for in the event of an accident or emergency that prevents the carer from caring.

Each Carers Emergency Card displays a Personal Identification Number (no other personal information) and The Emergency Communications Team telephone number to call in the event of an emergency.

If the carer is taken seriously ill or has an accident, anyone who finds them can ring The Emergency Communications Team telephone number on the card.

The Emergency Communications Team will call the carer’s nominated contacts; if these contacts are unavailable they will inform health professionals, emergency services or home care, as appropriate.
To apply for a card

- 0117 9222700 (person cared for lives in Bristol) call Bristol City Council’s Care Direct
- 0117 9652200 (person cared for lives in South Glos) call The Carers Support Centre CarersLine
Support organisations

The following are the contact details of national and local organisations who provide support and help to carers, which you may find helpful.

**Alzheimer’s Society**
Supporting carers and people with Dementia.
Tel: 0117 961 0693 Web: www.alzheimers.org.uk

**Bristol City Council Health and Social Care (Care Direct)**
Tel: 0117 922 2700 Web: www.bristol.gov.uk

**Bristol and Avon Chinese Women’s Group**
Provides support to carers from Bristol’s Chinese communities.
Tel: 0117 935 1462 Web: www.bacwg.co.uk

**Bristol Black Carers**
Provides information, advice and services supporting carers from black and minority ethnic communities.
Tel: 0117 314 4664 Web: www.blackcarersproject.co.uk

**Bristol Parent Carers**
Provides information, advice and support to parent carers in the Bristol area.
Tel: 0845 642 0124 Web: www.bristolparentcarers.org.uk
Email: info@bristolparentcarers.org.uk
Carers Direct
This is a national helpline that you can call at any time and will give you free information, advice and support for carers.
Tel: 0808 802 0202 Web: www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect

The Carers Support Centre
Provides information, advice and services focussed on supporting carers in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.
Tel: 0117 965 2200 Web: www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/

The Carers Support Centre Young Carers
Tel: 0117 939 2562 Web: www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/

Dhek Bhal
Provides support to carers principally from Bristol’s South Asian communities.
Tel: 0117 955 6971 Web: www.dhekbhal.org.uk

Rethink Carers Service
Provides support services for carers of people with mental health issues.
Tel: 0117 903 1803 Web: www.rethink.org

South Gloucestershire Parents & Carers
Provides information, advice and support to parent carers in the South Gloucestershire area.
Tel: 07827 322 358 Web: sglosparentsandcarers.org.uk
Email: parents@sglosparentsandcarers.org.uk
If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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