Carer Friendly Communities

are places where Carers feel supported to look after their family or friends and recognised as individuals with needs of their own.

VSA Carers Resource Service
38 Castle Street
Aberdeen AB11 5YU

Tel # 01224 212021
Email: Carers.Info@vsa.org.uk
Carers are key partners in managing the care needs of the people they look after. That’s not all: Carers also form a hugely significant group of patients who need particular support to look after their own health.

From simple one-off actions to ongoing commitments, there are all kinds of ways for health services to recognise Carers’ role, involve and consult them about the treatment of the person they care for, and help them look after their own health at the same time.

Use this checklist as an opportunity to identify the Carer-friendly practice that’s already taking place, and kick-start new measures with inspiration from our Carer-Friendly Checklist.
GP Practices

GPs are in touch with Carers every day either as patients or on behalf of those they care for. There are lots of things that can be done to make GP surgeries and their staff more Carer-friendly and create an environment where Carers are identified and supported to look after their own health and care for their loved ones.

In order to be more Carer-friendly, do you as a GP Practice:

- Offer flexible appointment times, priority slots for Carers or home visits for Carers as routine.

- Encourage Carers to identify themselves by having
Use phrases like ‘looking after someone’ when seeking to identify patients with caring roles. Many Carers don’t identify with the term “Carer.”

Note on patient records both whether the patient has a Carer, and if so who that Carer is, but also if they are a Carer themselves. If they are, do you ask them how they are managing their caring and whether they need support with it.

Have an information stand where Carers can find out what kinds of support the surgery and the community offer to Carers.

Currently send a letter to any patients with a condition which suggest they are likely to have a Carer? The letter could include information explaining what’s available for Carers and could encourage their Carers to identify themselves to the practice.

Have a policy for Carers, informed by Carers and the patient participation group?

Have a Carer lead within the practice.

 Hospitals

Many of the patients who come into hospital will be cared for by a relative or they will have caring responsibilities themselves. Some hospitals are
recognising that supporting families means that the patient is better supported too. Carers can be of any age, from a young Carer to a centenarian.

There are many simple actions that hospitals can take to become more Carer-friendly. Do you:

- Have Carer Passports for Carers of patients.
- Have Carer-friendly policies such as allowing some Carers to spend time with their family member or friend outside of visiting hours, or giving them free car parking.
- Offer flexible appointments for tests to those people with caring responsibilities.
- Have information stands about local Carer services which helps to connect families with available support services.
Ensure that family members are given the right information and advice on how to care safely and well and understand the implications by ensuring staff are aware of families’ needs.

In involve Carers in decisions about their loved ones’ care including discharge planning if the patient agrees. Carers have expertise and should be respected and listened to.

Link with key local organisations to help signpost families to support.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies and community health services often have more direct contact with Carers than most other services. As a local pharmacy in the community do you:
• Help anyone who might be caring to identify themselves as a Carer.

• Signpost Carers to local support services such as a local Carers centre.

• Offer home deliveries.

• Offer a medication review, with permission from the patient.

• Help Carers with advice on medication i.e about side effects or administering medication, or health and wellbeing.

• Display information to encourage people to recognise themselves as Carers.

• Ensure that the right support and training are available to help Carers to care well.

• Have a Carer Champion within the staff team?
VSA Carers Resource Service can be contacted at the following locations:

Adult Carers Service
VSA Head Office
38 Castle Street, Aberdeen, AB11 5YU
01224 212021 | Carers.Info@vsa.org.uk

Royal Cornhill Hospital
Clerkseat Building, Royal Cornhill Hospital
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