

Carers Assessment and Support Procedure

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PROCEDURE SUMMARY
These procedural guidelines provide the knowledge base and guidance on identifying family members, friends and neighbours, who are Carers of the people receiving a service from the Trust and assessing their needs.
The Trust monitors the implementation of and compliance with this procedure in the following ways:
Monitoring of compliance will be undertaken by annual audits of Carer activities (Identification of carers, Referral, Carers Assessment and Carer Review) supported by the Carers Support Team as part of the Social Care Leadership Team

SCOPE

Services	Applicable	Comments
Trustwide	✓	

The Director responsible for monitoring & reviewing this policy is the Executive Chief Operating Officer & Deputy CEO

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Diagram: CARERS ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT PATHWAY

ESSEX PARTNERSHIP UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

CARERS ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT PROCEDURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Trust recognises that carers are equal partners in care and it is the responsibility of Trust staff to follow these procedures and the associated policy.
- 1.2 These procedural guidelines provide the knowledge base and guidance on identifying family members, friends and neighbours, who are Carers of the people receiving a service from the Trust and assessing their needs.
- 1.3 These procedural guidelines and the associated policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Carers Framework 2018-2020 and associated policies referred to within the Carer's Policy.
- 1.4 Carers' assessments are a mechanism to ensure carers are supported in their roles, and are able to access additional help to lead their day-to-day lives fully.

2.0 EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF CARERS AND THE REFERRAL PROCESS

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of the care co-ordinator or named worker to identify carers who are providing care and support for someone using Trust services.
- 2.2 Identifying Carers should be done at the first contact with the service user or as soon as possible thereafter. It is important that the essential role Carers play in supporting the service user is identified at first contact or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 2.3 It is not necessary for practitioners to seek the consent of service users to undertake a Carers Assessment. Trust confidentiality procedures must be adhered to at all times.
- 2.4 Carers can also be identified throughout service delivery and it is possible for more than one carer to be identified.
- 2.5 A Carer also has the right to an assessment if the Carer requests one.
- 2.6 Carers have the right to decline a Carers Assessment. In these instances the assessor must ensure they provide advice and information. For example, available crisis support and relevant community support services. This must be recorded as a low level assessment of need.
- 2.7 Whilst it is important to recognise that not all relationships between carers and the cared for are constructive, information sharing in many cases can be beneficial. The close relationships that exist between these people mean that a carer often knows the service user extremely well and can be of assistance to professionals. When information is shared, carers can provide more effective support (Royal College of Psychiatrists, n.d.).

3.0 CARERS ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1 The Care Act 2014 imposes a duty on the Trust to actively identify and assess the needs of carers, regardless of their level of need or financial resources.
- 3.2 While the term 'Carers' assessment' has an important legal meaning, it need not be used initially when speaking to a Carer. A good relationship needs to be built between practitioner and Carer, and a conversation needs to be started regarding what help is available to them (Centre for Mental Health, 2017).
- 3.3 The assessment process differs throughout the Trust localities due to service structure but locality service areas must emphasise the importance of Carers in making decisions and being involved with a service user's care (Carers Trust, 2016).
- 3.4 Service areas and professionals must work proactively to establish a therapeutic alliance', whereby service users, professionals and carers work together to maximise wellbeing and recovery (Carers Trust, 2013).
- 3.5 In the North of the Trust, Carers Assessments are undertaken by the relevant Community Mental Health Recover Teams. Each team must identify someone who has the relevant skills and knowledge to undertake the Carers Assessments for their respective teams. A referral form must be completed when allocating an assessment to the relevant assessor.
- 3.6 In the South of the Trust, including Thurrock and Southend, assessments are undertaken by the relevant Community Mental Health Team. Where teams have dedicated Carer Link Workers who will undertake the Carers Assessment, the Care Coordinator or named worker, must complete a referral form to facilitate this process.
- 3.7 All assessors must ensure that following the assessment, a Care Support Plan for the Carer is completed and where appropriate, referred for Carers Direct Payment support or signposted for further support where appropriate. Assessors must also ensure that a copy of the assessment and support plan is given to the Carer. This must be made accessible on the Trust Electronic Patient Record (Mobius and Paris)
- 3.8 The Trust are not required to assess the needs of Young or Parent Carers. They are protected under the Children and Families Act 2014. However the assessor must identify this group of Carers and signpost or refer them to services that can. The following services will ensure their needs are assessed.
 - Essex [Carers First](#) or the [Essex Youth Service](#)
 - Thurrock Young Carers are referred to [Thurrock Young Carers](#).
 - Southend Young Carers are referred to [Southend Young Carers](#)
- 3.9 Carers who are providing care and support for Service Users aged 65 and over should be referred to their respective Local Authority.
 - Essex Carers First.
 - Thurrock Carers Service
 - Southend Carers Hub.

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- 3.10 Carers should be offered an individual assessment. However, they can choose to be supported by a friend, family member or an Advocate.
- 3.11 Carers assessments should cover whether a Carer is able and willing to care, the outcomes a Carer wishes to achieve in their day-to-day life, and whether any support can be given in response to these (Care Act, 2014). Discussion should also centre on the willingness of an individual to continue caring, rather than it being naturally assumed. The needs of the family should also be considered.
- 3.12 The assessment can take many forms, from a face to face assessment to a supported self-assessment. Sometimes joint assessments take place, where the carer and the individual who is cared for are assessed simultaneously.
- 3.13 A Carers assessment is not a financial assessment, but instead aims to provide extra support for carers. Local authorities across Essex do not charge for support given to carers.
- 3.14 If the assessor has concerns about the safety and wellbeing of the Carer, family, the service user or a member of the public, they must follow the Trust's safeguarding procedures.
- 3.15 The Carers Assessment is undertaken depending where the Service User resides. For example if the Service User resides in Southend. It would be the responsibility of services in that area to assess the needs of the Carer.

4.0 METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The Statutory guidance enables the assessor to use various methods of assessment, depending on the Carers level of need. The assessment must always be appropriate and proportionate to the identified need.
- 4.2 The assessment must be written carefully from the Carers perspective. It must be provided in an accessible format to ensure the Carer understands the assessment, the content and their support plan. The assessors can refer to the [Trust's Information Governance Team](#) or [Translation Services](#)
- 4.3 The Statutory guidance provides examples of different methods of assessment. In all methods the Trust must ensure it fulfils statutory duties around safeguarding, advocacy and mental capacity. Within EPUT, the following methods of assessments may be referred to:

4.3.1 Telephone

Telephone health assessments can be a useful way to provide a fast and effective contact. Assessors must consider the needs of the Carer and determine the most appropriate means of undertaking the assessment.

4.3.2 Supported Self-Assessment

The Carer may choose to provide a written account of their situation. The assessor must support the Carer to ensure the self-assessment is accurate and a complete reflection of their needs.

4.3.3 Combined Assessments

The Service Users needs are assessed jointly with the Carers needs, if both parties agree.

4.3.3 Face to Face

This is a meeting between the Carer and the assessor. The assessment can be carried out within a Trust location. If a home visit is required or the Carer chooses a different location the Trust's [Information Governance Guidelines](#) and [Lone Worker](#) procedures must be adhered to.

4.3.4 Joint Assessment

Relevant agencies can work together to avoid the Carer undergoing multiple assessments. For example the Carer may have complex physical or sensory needs. They may have multiple caring responsibilities.

4.3.5 Whole Family Approach

This can be meeting with the Service User and their family. This ensures everyone's needs are identified and they are referred to the appropriate services.

4.3.6 Virtual Assessment

If the Carer agrees the Trust supports the use of Microsoft Teams as a safe and secure method to undertake a Virtual Carers Assessment.

5.0 ACTION TO TAKE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Following the assessment process the carer must be given a written record of their assessment.
- 5.2 The assessment should only be shared with other relevant bodies when the carers consent has been sought.
- 5.3 Support resulting from an assessment can come in many forms, for example advice and information, additional support, care package or respite.
- 5.4 Easy access to information for carers is also essential, as the health and social care landscape can be difficult to navigate. Good quality information leaflets and guides are useful as they allow carers to digest information at their own pace.
- 5.5 It is important that the carer understands their assessment and the outcome of it. To this end it should be provided in a format that is accessible to them.

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- 5.6 If an advocate is already involved they should be informed when the assessment has been provided to the person so that they can support them to understand it. If the assessment has been provided in a format that the Local Authority knows or suspects the person or carer will not be able to understand, the duty to make an Independent Advocate available may still apply.

6.0 PERSONALISATION AND CARERS DIRECT PAYMENTS

- 6.1 If the Carer meets the eligibility criteria a Carers Direct Payment or Personal Budget can be applied for to meet part or all of their identified needs. Eligibility can only be determined following a recent Carers Assessment
- 6.2 The Carers Assessment and Support Plan must identify clear milestones that the carer wishes to achieve by receiving the Direct Payment, and should detail how the Direct Payment will support them to continue in their caring role.
- 6.3 The Support Plan should focus on encouraging independence and increasing the carer's ability and desire to sustain their caring role.
- 6.4 The assessor must document alternatives that have been explored prior to requesting for a Carers Direct Payment.
- 6.5 The Local Authority, where the cared-for person ordinarily resides, is responsible for the provision of Direct Payments
- 6.6 Once the assessor has completed the Carers Assessment or review they will need to complete an [EPUT/ECC Social Care Funding Form](#). Once completed please submit both documents to: epunft.ccp@nhs.net For members of staff within south Essex please email: epunft.personalisationinbox@nhs.net

7.0 REVIEWS

- 7.1 Carers should have their support plans reviewed on a regular basis.
- 7.2 Carer Reviews should be undertaken at least once a year or as the needs dictate (often by the changing circumstances of the Carer)
- 7.3 Where Carers Assessments were previously declined, named workers must ensure that Carers are regularly reminded of their right to have a Carers Assessment.

