

# Carer support guide

Information for carers, friends and families



Advice and resources to support you  
in your caring role

## What is a carer?

A carer is anybody that provides, or intends to provide care to an adult. The care and support provided could be to a friend, neighbour or family member who could not otherwise cope. This could be due to illness, a disability, mental ill-health or substance misuse.

To meet the criteria for support you must not be paid for providing such care, nor provide care as a volunteer on behalf of an organisation. This does not include carers that are receiving carer-related benefits, such as carer's allowance or carer's credit.

## Young carers

If you are a young carer between the ages of 5 and 18, you are welcome to have an assessment of your needs to explore the support that may be available to you. This may include help at home, school, or finding fun things to do in your free time.

Please contact the service based on where you live. If you are not sure which area you live in, you can check using the website <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>. You will need to know your postcode which you can find at the end of your address on letters that come through your letterbox at home.

If you live in Southend: contact Southend Carers

Telephone: 01702 393 933

Email: [youngcarers@southendcarers.co.uk](mailto:youngcarers@southendcarers.co.uk)

Website: <https://www.southendcarers.co.uk>

If you live in Essex: contact Essex Young Carers

Telephone: 03330 322800

E-mail: [young.carers@essex.gov.uk](mailto:young.carers@essex.gov.uk)

Website: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/young-carers>

## Responsibilities of your local council

The Care Act 2014 places clear duties on the local authorities (councils) in Essex and Southend to identify carers and offer them an assessment of their needs. This is called a carer's assessment.

Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council have the ability to delegate this responsibility. They have formed an agreement with Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) to provide support to carers of those accessing our mental health services on their behalf. This means that the staff at EPUT supporting your loved one are responsible for recognising your important role as a carer.

## Carer's assessment

The carer's assessment will consider the impact that your caring role has on your day to day life. It will consider the things that you want to achieve such as whether you work or want to work, and whether you want to study or do more socially as well as whether you are willing and able to continue caring for someone.

As part of the assessment process, we will prepare and agree a support plan with you which sets out how your needs will be met. We will consider options that can contribute to your desired outcomes, and what services are available to help you.

## Your rights as a carer

You do not need to 'prove' that you are a carer to access support. Under the Care Act 2014, you are entitled to receive an offer of a carer's assessment where there appears to be a need for support in your caring role.



## Benefits for carers

As a carer, you may be entitled to receive benefits such as:

- carer's allowance
- carer's credit
- council tax reduction
- carer's direct payment or personal budget

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/benefits-for-carers/>

## Discharge from hospital

When a person is admitted to a mental health hospital, the engagement and active participation of the person and their carers is central to the delivery of care and the planning of a successful discharge.

Patients and their carers must be kept fully informed by the allocated key worker within the hospital, who will work together with the multi-disciplinary team to develop and agree an appropriate care plan, taking into account the needs of the patient and their carer's wishes.

Discharge planning is a continuous process which should begin at the point of admission, ensuring that patients and their carers understand and are able to participate in care decisions.

The hospital discharge process must not put the patient or their carer at risk of harm, and must not create a situation whereby the independence of the carer or the sustainability of their caring role is jeopardised. Carers should be involved in decision making from the beginning and those involved in coordinating a discharge should not assume that a carer will necessarily be able or willing to continue in a caring role.

Although patients in general have no right to remain in hospital when their medical needs no longer deem this necessary, their carers cannot be compelled to provide care in order to facilitate a discharge.

## Local resources

You may benefit from joining a local organisation for carers to access information, advice and ongoing support.

### Southend Carers

Offer services for carers who live within the Southend borough.

Telephone: 01702 393933

Email: [admin@southendcarers.co.uk](mailto:admin@southendcarers.co.uk)

Website: [www.southendcarers.co.uk](http://www.southendcarers.co.uk)

### Carers FIRST

A registered charity that supports carers living within the Essex County Council area.

Telephone: 0300 303 1555

Email: [hello@carersfirst.org.uk](mailto:hello@carersfirst.org.uk)

Website: [www.carersfirst.org.uk](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk)

### Action for Family Carers

Provide a range of support services across Essex to those in a caring role, including young carers.

Telephone: 0300 7 70 80 90

Email: [info@affc.org.uk](mailto:info@affc.org.uk)

Website: [www.affc.org.uk](http://www.affc.org.uk)

### Trust Links

Offer a dedicated service to those experiencing mental ill-health and their carers living in Southend, Castle Point and Rochford.

Telephone: 01702 213134

Email: [admin-support@trustlinks.org](mailto:admin-support@trustlinks.org)

Website: <https://www.trustlinks.org/>



## National resources

### Samaritans

Are available with trained listeners to take your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whatever you're going through, you can call the Samaritans.

Telephone: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### Carers UK

Provide expert telephone advice and an online support service if you want to talk about your caring role.

Telephone: 020 7378 4999

Email: [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)

Website: [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

### Mind

Provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem, including a dedicated section to supporting carers, friends and families.

Telephone: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## Suicide and suicide prevention

It is understandable that carers, friends and family members may often feel overwhelmed, stressed and fearful when their loved one is struggling with their mental health. Having a loved one express a desire to end their life can have a significant impact on your own mental well-being, and there is an unwritten expectation that as carers we should be able to save our loved one and deliver an instant fix.

Many of us can feel a real fear of having to 'do something' about a disclosure, and our natural response may be to withdraw from talking about it in order to protect ourselves from these feelings. The person themselves could bury their feelings and pretend they are fine out of a fear of upsetting others.

There are many reasons for a person to feel suicidal. These could include not knowing where to go for help, a history of trauma or living with pain and feelings of guilt or shame. Those experiencing thoughts of suicide can often give a rational explanation, that makes sense to them, for their desire to end their life and may base this upon their feelings of isolation and hopelessness.

An increase in hopelessness increases the risk of the person acting on their suicidal thoughts and urges.

In many cases the person doesn't want to die, they desperately want their situation to be different. It is important to understand how to sensitively approach a conversation about suicide and when to communicate your concerns with the appropriate services.

### What can you do?

Talking about suicide and making it a normal part of conversation can significantly reduce the risk as the person experiencing suicidal thoughts may feel that they have been heard.

You can contact the NHS mental health crisis phone line by dialling 111 and selecting option 2.

You can also support your loved one in creating a safety plan for use during times of distress.

Website: [www.stayingsafe.net](http://www.stayingsafe.net)

Free app: Download 'Stay Alive' from your mobile app store.



## Perinatal mental health

EPUT offers a dedicated perinatal mental health service which aims to provide help and advice to carers, partners and fathers who may need additional support for themselves or their partners during pregnancy and after the birth of their baby.

To access this service please contact the relevant team based on where you live:

**North Essex** - Telephone: 01245 315637

**South Essex** - Telephone: 01702 538170

Office hours are 9:00 to 15:00, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)

## Contact us

Please contact a member of the Carers Support Service if you have any questions or concerns regarding your caring role.

Email: [epunft.carers@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.carers@nhs.net)

## Patient Experience Team

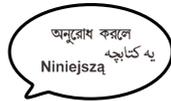
The team is responsible for engaging with patients, carers and third party organisations, and facilitate regular community forums across all areas of the Trust to gain feedback from service users and carers.

Email: [epunft.pet@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.pet@nhs.net)

## Patient Advice and Liaison Team

If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services, you can speak in confidence to the Patient Advice and Liaison Team on **0800 085 7935** or you can email [epunft.pals@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.pals@nhs.net)

This leaflet can be produced in large print, CD, Braille and other languages on



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