

CARING FOR CARERS

2006-2009

Carers Strategy

'Improving the experience of carers'

Our Continuing Commitment to Carers

One of the key values of the Trust is being positive about the contribution that informal carers can make to improve the services we provide. We continue to recognise however that being a carer does have an impact upon their lives and there is sometimes a need to provide support to help in the caring role.

Some two years ago the North East London Mental Health Trust published its first Carer's Strategy and this revised edition builds upon the principles outlined then, reviews what has been achieved so far and looks forward to our goals for the next three years. As part of that review we have asked individuals, groups which represent carers and our statutory partners about how they feel about progress and what still needs to be done to improve the support we are able to give.

Our strategy continues to be based upon the Trust and its staff recognising and valuing the role of a carer whether as a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who provides any kind of support to a user of our mental health services. Carers are considered important and informed members of the team which provides support to people referred to our service because of mental distress or ill health.

We very much hope that we can continue to work in partnership with individual carers, representative organisations and Local Authorities and aim to improve the experience of all carers who become involved with our services.

Jane Atkinson
Chair

Judy Wilson
Chief Executive

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Some questions from carers

Could tapes be made available as well as leaflets for those not able to read?

Will there be a Crisis response service available?

Who can we contact at night in a crisis?

Is it possible to have a NELMHT carers information telephone line which would cover the four boroughs?

Will every carer be offered a Carer's Assessment and what is NELMHT's timescale?

Who is not fulfilling the obligation to carry out a Carer's Assessment?

What are the statistics of carer's assessment being carried out?

Could there be a carers representative in each Mental Health Team, possibly piloted over a 6-12 month period?

Could contact telephone numbers as well as e-mail addresses be made available?

Will the review highlight what has been achieved 2003/2004 and is there supporting evidence.

Who is a carer?

If someone takes responsibility for helping a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who cannot manage without help because of disability, illness or frailty, then they are a carer. The person for whom care is provided may have a mental health problem, a drug dependency or a disability. The carer doesn't necessarily live with the person they care for. Carers are generally unpaid for this kind of activity.

This could be:

- An adult who looks after another adult, such as a spouse, partner, friend or relative;
- A parent who looks after an ill or disabled child; or
- A young carer under 18 years of age who may take responsibility for the care of a parent, grandparent, brother or sister.

Why does North East London Mental Health Trust think carers are important?

Since the Trust was created in April 2001, we have had a commitment to putting the interests of our service users and carers first. In addition, we recognised the essential role of carers in supporting those with mental illness and disability and acknowledge the significant contribution they have to offer an individual on their journey to recovery.

This updated carers strategy sets out how the Trust will support carers and promote services that help them in that role, based on what we have learnt since our original strategy was published.

Guiding principles

The Trust's aim is to achieve an atmosphere where carers can participate in and feel empowered in decision making at various levels, including:

- Using their experience to feedback about services
- In the planning and delivery of care
- In evaluating and monitoring care

We believe the following principles should guide our actions:

- Recognition and understanding of the carer experience
- Courtesy, responsiveness and respect
- Meaningful involvement, relevant information and choice
- Accessible services
- Effective partnership working with carers
- Individual/collective empowerment
- Maximising carer participation

Aims

We aim to:

- Produce clear information about our services and how to access them including ensuring that carers know about who to contact and what to do in time of crisis.
- Improve the level of carers assessments and carers support plans offered to those who care for people on the "Care Programme Approach" (CPA) in order to improve support whether this is practical, emotional or simply to give better information.

- Improve the level of training given to NELMHT staff about working with carers, including using the staff induction programme to provide awareness of carer issues.
- Work with other organisations in Social Services, Primary Care and the Voluntary Sector to produce clear procedures for carers' assessments and ensure these are carried out.
- Promote training and education amongst carers to cope with the effects of mental health problems and to develop skills in the care of the supported person.

Improving communication

Good communication is essential in providing information for carers and listening to their views so we can act on them.

Our commitment

We aim to provide up to date information in a format suitable for carers, ensuring that it is appropriate for the carer and the service user he or she is caring for, and give relevant information at the right time, e.g. after diagnosis, during treatment, or at times of crisis. We also aim to develop methods of working with carers so we never lose sight of their needs.

What we have done

- Produced a leaflet "A brief guide for carers" for carers of those on the 'Care Programme Approach'.
- Produced Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) leaflets
- Established a PALS Freephone which can be accessed by carers etc.
- Appointed a permanent and full time User and Carer Involvement Co-ordinator.

What we will do

- Produce a regular news sheet for service users and carers organisations to ensure up to date information is available.
- Improve the quality of care plans given to service users so that they all contain information about what to do in a crisis to ensure that carers have this information.
- Build upon existing links with carer organisations and NELMHT Carers Support Service and listen and act upon their views through the User and Carer Involvement Co-ordinator.

Better information: Faster response times

Carers said they wanted to be better informed about what services were available and what these included so that they could use these more appropriately. They also expressed the importance of response times, and that services should be available when needed, particularly at times of 'crisis'.

Our commitment

We aim to provide clear service information and enable clear and simple access to services, with rapid access when appropriate.

What we plan to do

- Monitor service waiting times and work toward improvements.
- Seek to make the training mandatory and incorporate it into the revised Trust Induction Programme, thereby ensuring that appropriate training, development and induction opportunities for staff include a carers' perspective.

- Implement information technology systems so information is readily available to enable prompt and appropriate service response.
- Continue to make the ways into our services as simple as possible.
- All services will have written information available which includes how they can be accessed.
- Improve links with NHS Direct to support carer information

Training and development for NELMHT Staff

Carers highlighted the important role of our staff, their responses and knowledge, particularly in that first contact with services, and the value of that continuing relationship.

Our commitment

We aim to ensure our staff are appropriately trained and well informed about local services, the role of carers and their needs. Even though members of staff change, have time off duty and other breaks, we want to develop that feeling of continuity which carers say they value.

What we have done

- Developed a package of training called 'Partners in Caring'.
- Employed Carers Support Workers

What we plan to do

- Improve access to training

- Improve the carer support role in conjunction with partner organisations.
- Consult carers to enable them to influence the development and delivery of staff training and education.

Carers Assessment and Support Plans

'One size doesn't fit all' – carers are individuals and our service responses need to take account of our diverse community

Our commitment

We recognise the importance of paying attention to the needs of diverse communities including addressing language and communication needs.

What we have done

- Agreed a Carers Assessment and Care Plan policy which is intended to help or support carers.
- Establish procedures for carrying out carers assessments and accessing resources for carers.
- Carers Support Workers operate in most areas of the Trust and we also have an Admiral Nursing Service, operating in Redbridge.

What we plan to do

- Develop a pack of assessment and care planning documentation including provision for young carers.
- Ensure better understanding of the process for undertaking carers assessments and accessing local resources for carers.
- Continue to improve how we offer carers' assessments and progressively increase the number we complete.
- Seek to use the Carers Assessment process to determine individual need to help people cope with dealing with mental illness.
- Identify unmet needs amongst carers' services.

Monitoring progress

We want to ensure that carers are central to our work and we will monitor our progress with them on achieving the priorities and intentions in this document through:

- An annual report to the Trust Board on the progress of implementing the priorities and intentions within this document, led by the Director of Nursing, Patient Carers and Public Involvement.
- Participation in the annual Carers Week, organised in conjunction with Carer Organisations, to promote NELMHT's services to carers.

Recognition of your contributions

We would like to thank all of you who contributed to the development of this document. Many individuals as well as voluntary groups and statutory organisations made valuable contributions, and though we are not able to mention everyone who was involved we list some of them below.

- Many individual carers who contributed personally
- Waltham Forest Carers Association
- Carers of Barking and Dagenham
- Havering MIND
- Redbridge Carers Support Service
- Black and Ethnic Forum
- Carers of Goodmayes and Rethink of Redbridge
- Havering Carers
- Carers Group. Red Oak Lodge
- Havering Primary Care Trust
- NELMHT staff, many of whom contributed
- North East London Workforce Development Confederation

Useful contacts

PALS Freephone 0800 783 1853

NHS Direct for 24-hour confidential health information and advice
0845 4647

National and local information for carers

www.carersonline.org.uk

Advice and information

www.mentalhealthcare.org.uk

For factsheets and leaflets about common mental health illnesses

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

MIND (National Mental Health Charity)
020 8519 2122

Rethink (formerly National Schizophrenia Fellowship)
020 7974 6814

www.rethink.org

Children's mental health

www.youngminds.org.uk

National Institute for Mental Health in England

www.nimhe.org.uk

Havering MIND

01708 457040

Carers of Barking and Dagenham

020 8593 4422

Redbridge Carers Support Service

020 8514 6251

Waltham Forest Carers Association

020 8531 0652

Indigo (formerly Redbridge Young Carers)

020 8554 2888

Rethink Carers (Redbridge)

020 8554 0490

Rethink (Havering)

01277 211662

One Stop Mental Health Service

020 8514 5586

NELMHT Carers Support Services (For Barking & Dagenham)

020 8276 7880

Contact us

For more information about our services, or about our Carers Strategy,
please call 020 8970 8422

www.nelmht.nhs.uk

**NORTH EAST LONDON MENTAL HEALTH NHS TRUST
DIRECTORATE OF NURSING AND PATIENT, CARER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

CARERS' STRATEGY 2006-2009 – ACTION PLAN

WORK AREA	ACTION REQUIRED	DESIRABLE OUTCOMES	HOW TRACKED	LEAD PERSON	TIMESCALE
Improving Communication	Produce a regular news sheet for service users and carers organisations to ensure up to date information is available.	News sheet produced regularly	By production of News Sheet	User and Carer Involvement Co-ordinator	Annual review and report
	Ensure all leaflets e.g. A brief guide for Carers, PALS Leaflets etc. are kept up-to- date.	Information up-to-date	Regularly revisit documentation	PPI Lead	Annual review and report
	Improve the quality of care plans given to service users so that crisis contacts are included	Subject to appropriate consent Care plan to be always given to carers with up-to-date contact information	Recorded in case notes and on IT system	Manager of Service	Annual review and report
	Regular contact with carer organisations with a quarterly meeting arranged with Trust and Carers Organisation across NELMHT re: networking and information exchange	Carer Organisations to be visited/ contacted regularly resulting in better relationship built. Any issues arising can be taken forward.	Record of visits kept Annual report	User and Carer Involvement Co-ordinator	Annual review and report
WORK AREA	ACTION REQUIRED	DESIRABLE OUTCOMES	HOW TRACKED	LEAD PERSON	TIMESCALE
Better information: Faster response	Monitor service waiting times and work towards	An improved service	Questionnaires sent out and response	CMHT Managers	End Year 1

<p>times</p>	<p>improvements.</p> <p>Ensure adequate IT systems in place across whole service with training provided.</p> <p>Ensure carers have prompt access to information about services and advice including considering an out of hours service.</p> <p>Define responsible person within NELMHT to liaise with NHS Direct.</p> <p>Explore a scheme to allocate worker with responsibility for under 18's who are primary carers, within teams and link with young carers service.</p>	<p>Clear available information accessed by all.</p> <p>Easy access for public to Mental Health Services.</p> <p>Ensure links improved with NHS Direct.</p> <p>Better service for young carers</p>	<p>recorded.</p> <p>Regular data update provided and support for staff.</p> <p>PALS questionnaires and further survey work</p> <p>Request NHS Direct to provide feedback.</p> <p>Annual report</p>	<p>IT Manager</p> <p>PPI Lead</p> <p>PPI Lead</p> <p>Team Managers</p>	<p>Annual review and report</p> <p>Within 2 years</p> <p>End year 1</p> <p>Within 2 years</p>
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WORK AREA	ACTION REQUIRED	DESIRABLE OUTCOMES	HOW TRACKED	LEAD PERSON	TIMESCALE
Training and development for NELMHT staff	Recruitment - person specification should include knowledge of carers as an essential requirement.	All interviewees must have reasonable knowledge of carers issues.	Monitored by HR Department	HR Director	Annual review and report
	Ensure all new staff attend induction training which includes carers training within 6 months of commencing employment.	All staff to consider carers needs within their work with every service user. Targets set for each Borough to ensure staff receive training.	Partners in Caring training recorded and monitored.	HR Director	Annual review and report
	Ensure there is at least one Carers Support Worker in each Borough and ensure adherence to London Development Centre guidance.	Consistency of training across NELMHT that links in with other agencies.	Monitored by HR Department	HR Director	Annual review and report
	Ensure existing staff attend carers training	Refresher training bi-annually	Appraisals	Team Manager	Annual review and report
	Young Carers Assessments carried out with support from Young Carers Services.	Identify young carers and ensure assessment take place.	Case note audit	Team Manager	Annual review and report
WORK AREA	ACTION REQUIRED	DESIRABLE OUTCOMES	HOW TRACKED	LEAD PERSON	TIMESCALE
Carers Assessment and Support Plans	Consider identifying Carers Champion in each	To monitor number of carers assessment	Monthly returns produced.	Team Manager/Supervisor	By end year 1

	<p>Mental Health Team who is fully supported by management</p> <p>Ensure information technology adequate to support the recording of carers assessment and support plans and ensure compatibility with other systems.</p> <p>Ensure all carers to be offered carers assessment.</p> <p>Each Borough to consider devising user friendly "Application to Carers Grant" forms in support of carers support plans.</p>	<p>and support plans and to encourage participation in training.</p> <p>Ensures data is readily available and used for monitoring and planning purposes</p> <p>Assessments to be offered and documented with reasons if recording does not happen.</p> <p>Accessing Carers Grant simplified once need identified.</p>	<p>Carers assessment and outcomes recorded and audited on a quality basis</p> <p>Case notes audits. Standard supervision Evaluate outcomes of carers assessment Regular reports produced</p> <p>Carers Champion to report staff experience of accessing carers grants quarterly to Director.</p>	<p>IT Manager</p> <p>Team Managers</p> <p>Borough Director / Carers Champions</p>	<p>Annual review and report</p> <p>By end year 1</p> <p>By end year 2</p>
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WORK AREA	ACTION REQUIRED	DESIRABLE OUTCOMES	HOW TRACKED	LEAD PERSON	TIMESCALE
Carers Assessment and Support Plans (Contd)	Young carers assessment process and forms to be highlighted within Child Protection training	All young carers offered assessment and support plan.	Listed on Child Protection training.	Team Managers/ Child Protection Officer	By end year 1

