

The Carer-friendly Pharmacy Pilot. Frequently asked questions for pharmacy teams.

- **What is the correct definition of a carer?**

A carer is somebody who, unpaid, looks after a partner, relative, friend or neighbour who can't get by on their own (due to illness, frailty, disability, mental ill health or addiction).

- **Aren't all parents carers?**

A parent would only be considered to be a carer if their child had a disability, serious illness or long-term condition, when they are referred to as 'parent carers'.

- **What about people who are employed and paid to care for someone?**

The correct term for people who are employed to look after someone is 'care worker', although they are sometimes incorrectly described as 'carers'. The emphasis of this pilot is only on unpaid carers.

- **How will carers attend activities run by carers organisations if they can't leave the person they care for by themselves?**

The support carers organisations offer carers is based on each individual carer's circumstances and needs. If a carer feels they can't leave the person they look after alone but would benefit from a break, then the carers organisation might suggest replacement care.

- **How can we spend time talking to carers when we have a queue of customers waiting to be served?**

While it's always helpful to speak to the carer directly, at busy times we suggest you give them one of the leaflets to have a look at, saying that you think it might be useful to them, and ask them to fill in the form before they go.

- **What if a carer starts crying?**

While this can be challenging, especially if you're busy, crying may be a sign that the carer is under a lot of stress or feeling relief that someone has finally recognised the impact caring is having on them. So your offer of support may be very timely and could even prevent a carer from reaching crisis point. Inviting them to sit down for a short while in your consultation room may be helpful, as with any patient showing signs of distress, but remember your role isn't to counsel them or offer them advice. Acknowledge their feelings, and say that you're not an expert but you can refer them to people who can offer them expert advice and support.

- **What is the start and finish date of the pilot?**

The pilot will start in all areas on 3rd November 2014 and end on 28th February 2015 when the number of carers you have identified will be passed on to the University of Leeds who are producing a report on the pilot. You can still continue to refer carers after this date, of course, but the number of carers referred after the end date won't be included in the report.

- **How many pharmacies are involved in the pilot?**

A total of 45 pharmacies are involved across 9 different Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) areas. Each area will have a maximum of five pharmacies taking part.

- **What are the benefits to the carer of being identified at the pharmacy and being referred to their local carers organisation and/or GP practice?**

If referred to the Carers Service

Carers organisations can provide information and advice on a wide range of topics including benefits, breaks, respite and support services, carers assessment and aids and adaptations. They can also offer the carer emotional support and the opportunity to talk through their concerns, both individually and in group sessions, with staff, trained volunteers and other carers who understand their situation.

On receiving a referral, the carers organisation will contact the carer to find out how best they can support them. Some carers may need support quite urgently, whereas for others, such as those who have started to care for someone with a long-term condition, simply knowing that help is available may be all they need at present.

If referred to their GP

If the carer's GP practice is aware that they are a carer, they can 'tag' their medical records so that everyone in the practice team will know that they are a carer. Some practices may then offer the carer more flexible appointments (or home visits if the carer struggles to attend appointments). GPs and other healthcare workers at the practice will also be able to take into account the particular stresses and strains that being a carer might have on the person's health.

If the carer becomes seriously unwell and is no longer able to provide care, it's important that the practice is aware that the person is a carer so that alternative support can be put back in place for the person they look after as well.

If a patient is the main carer of someone whose health would be at risk if the carer was too ill to look after them, their GP practice can also offer them a yearly flu jab. Some GP practices also offer carers regular health checks.

Carers should also be included in putting together a care plan for the person they look after, so knowing who the carer is can be helpful in this respect as well.

What are the benefits of our pharmacy team knowing that someone is a carer?

If you know someone is a carer, you could offer them a range of services such as prescription collection, home delivery and repeat dispensing, depending on the carer's individual needs. You could also offer a Medicines Use Review to the person they care for while the carer is present, disposal of unwanted or out-of-date medicines, and advice on minor ailments and injuries.

- **What is PharmOutcomes?**

PharmOutcomes is a web-based electronic system that records information and helps community pharmacies to provide services more effectively. The system can provide data and send electronic messages (in this case referrals and emails), and this information can be used for evaluation and analysis (for pilots such as this) as well as to make commissioning and audit decisions easier and more effective.

- **Who else is involved in the Carer-friendly Pharmacy pilot?**

Organisations directly involved in the development of this pilot have been: Carers Trust; Carers Trust's network partners; Rochdale Council; City Healthcare Partnership, Hull; Local Pharmaceutical Committees; pharmacy staff; the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee; The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education. Carers UK and the Royal College of GPs also provided input at the design stage.

The carers services and Local Pharmaceutical Committees in each of the pilot areas have provided ongoing advice and support, with the West Yorkshire and Devon areas providing additional feedback and suggestions. Final-year students at the University of Brighton Business School have provided support in relation to marketing.

- **Who is funding the pilot?**

The pilot is funded by the Department of Health as part of the Supporting Carers in General Practice Programme.

- **Who is evaluating the pilot and who will see the final report?**

The Centre for International Research on Care, Labour and Equalities (CIRCLE) at the University of Leeds have been commissioned to carry out the evaluation. The evaluation will take place throughout the month of March 2015 and a report will be produced in May 2015.

- **Who will see the evaluation?**

The evaluation report will be a public document and so anyone will be able to see it.

- **What happens after the pilot finishes?**

If the pilot is successful, we will be looking to roll out the carer-friendly pharmacy concept more widely.

- **Can other pharmacies take part in the pilot?**

Not at this stage but that doesn't prevent other pharmacies taking a 'carer-friendly' approach and working closely with their local carers service, but they will not be included in the current pilot. However, only pharmacies taking part in the pilot will be able to refer carers using the PharmOutcomes system.

- **What training is available for pharmacy teams taking part in the pilot?**

An interactive 1.5 hour training session has been developed in partnership between Carers Trust and CPPE, and is being delivered by the carers service based in each area. At the beginning of 2015, pharmacy teams should also be able to access carer-awareness learning resources on CPPE's 'Learning Pharmacy', a free online learning environment which provides learning activities for the whole community pharmacy team. It has fun and interactive bite-sized learning challenges that can be accessed by everyone without the need to log in.

- **Can other pharmacies be given access to the training?**

Local carers services may wish to train additional pharmacies to help them to become more carer aware and carer friendly, but additional pharmacies trained in this way will not be a part of the pilot. However, we hope the workshop training developed for the pilot will eventually be made available more widely in the future as part of the learning CPPE provides to all pharmacies across the country.

- **Who chose the LPCs and pharmacies that are involved in the pilot?**

Expressions of interest were invited from areas where the LPC, Local Authority and carers services agreed to work together. All the areas that met this criteria and expressed an interest were selected. The pharmacies involved in the scheme were nominated by their LPC and have confirmed that they would like to take part.

- **What resources are available to pharmacy teams during the pilot?**

A variety of resources have been developed by Carers Trust, with input and advice from a range of stakeholders. These include:

- Posters (A3, A4 & A5)
- Leaflets (with dispensers)
- Service flyers (details of available services)
- Referral forms (with dispensers)
- Badges (to be worn by staff)

These resources have been sent to the local carers organisations involved in the pilot for distribution to the relevant local pharmacies. Extra resources should be ordered through the local carers organisation.