

February 2014

The Carer-Friendly Pharmacy Project – 3rd November 2014 to 28th February 2015

The Carer-friendly Pharmacy Project, led by Carers Trust and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, is part of a programme of work funded by the Department of Health and forms part of the 'Supporting Carers in General Practice Programme' involving Carers Trust, the Royal College of GPs and Carers UK. The aim of the Programme is to increase the identification and support of unpaid carers within primary care and community settings so that carers receive support before they reach crisis point.

What are we trying to achieve?

Over recent years a number of carer-identification initiatives have been developed that have involved community pharmacies and local carers support organisations such as Carers Trust's network partners. These have made use of the accessibility of community pharmacies, the frequency with which many carers visit their local pharmacy and the supportive and professional relationship many carers already have with their community pharmacy team.

Carers Trust and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) would like to see whether this local activity could be developed and replicated in other areas of the country, where local pharmacies, Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs) and carers centres and schemes are willing to collaborate in identifying, referring and supporting carers.

In developing the pilot we have involved a wide range of stakeholders and maintained their involvement on an ongoing basis to enable us to produce a proposal that is realistic, achievable, measurable and outcome-focused. We have been particularly mindful of the competing demands on participants' time and resources, as well as the barriers carers may face in accessing support. Our aim is to ensure that the model we test dovetails with the ethos and practice of the organisations involved, the people delivering services on the front line such as staff from carers services, pharmacies and GP practices and the patients and carers in receipt of services. In particular, by replacing or reducing the use of time-consuming paper-based referral forms and recording mechanisms with a PharmOutcomes¹ tool, it is our intention to reduce the time currently spent on the referral process from both the carer's perspective and that of the pharmacy team while simultaneously providing an impeccable audit trail and clear outcome measures.

¹ A web-based system which helps community pharmacies provide services more effectively and makes it easier for commissioners to audit and manage these services. By collating information on pharmacy services it allows local and national level analysis and reporting on the effectiveness of commissioned services, helping to improve the evidence base for community pharmacy services.

What is a Carer Friendly Pharmacy?

The project will test the concept of a ‘Carer-Friendly Pharmacy’, which pharmacies participating in the project will seek to become. A Carer Friendly Pharmacy as one where:

1. all staff are trained to be carer aware, sensitive to carers’ needs and the challenges they face and have developed enhanced communications skills to enable them to engage effectively with carers;
2. all staff are pro-active in identifying, referring and supporting carers;
3. the pharmacy identifies a member of the team who takes on the role of Carers Champion along with a deputy (see appendix 1). Their role is to lead and facilitate carer referrals, act as a contact point for external agencies such as the local carers centre and GP practices to support a multi-disciplinary approach and to maintain stocks of resources;
4. posters and/or other related materials make it clear to the customer that the pharmacy is carer-friendly and encourage them to self-identify; NB. It is acknowledged that displaying materials will be easier in larger pharmacies and Healthy Living Pharmacies where there is a dedicated notice board to display such information;
5. the pharmacy offers a range of services, such as Medicines Use Reviews and prescription collection and delivery, in a manner that is relevant to the carer;
6. with the carer’s consent, the pharmacy will refer the carer to their local carers services and/or their GP

The core model could, in some localities, be augmented by add-ons such as pharmacy delivery driver engagement with carers, pharmacy-based carers’ health checks and free flu vaccinations for carers where the pharmacy has been commissioned to do so or where the pharmacy agrees to provide such services free of charge as a proof of concept trial².

Evaluation and wider dissemination

Some of the areas participating in the project will be the subject of monitoring and an evaluation by the research team at CIRCLE (University of Leeds). The number of people being referred and the percentage of the total actually making contact with the carers centre will be an important outcome measure for community pharmacies. It will also be important to demonstrate the outcomes for those carers identified and referred by pharmacists to carers centres and schemes and also the outcomes for those referred to their GP practice.

It is anticipated that the results of this evaluation will add to the evidence base for community pharmacy services and their role in supporting people to live independent lives in the community. This may then provide the evidence for wider roll out of the concept and commissioning of such services from community pharmacies at either a local or national level. It will also demonstrate the benefits of adopting an integrated, partnership approach to carer identification, referral and support in community

² In such cases, measures will be put in place to demonstrate the outcome of providing the service with a view to providing evidence to commissioners that will inform future commissioning decisions.

settings and pinpoint key success factors that will enable this approach to be adapted and adopted by other public-facing businesses, agencies and groups within the community including those in non-health settings.

Training and development

A training package for pharmacy staff has been developed in partnership between Carers Trust and the Centre for Postgraduate Pharmacy Education. This will be delivered by the local carers service, at a time and place that is convenient to all participants. The training will focus on awareness of the issues facing carers, as well as strategies for identifying and talking to them.

Which areas are involved in the pilot?

Carers Trust and the PSNC have identified the following Local Pharmaceutical Committees who have agreed to work in partnership with local carers services/centres and other stakeholders:-

- Bury and Rochdale LPC
- Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire
- Devon LPC
- Kent LPC
- Gateshead and South Tyneside LPC
- Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes LPC
- East Sussex and Brighton LPC
- Central Lancashire LPC
- Community Pharmacy Humber

The Role of the Pharmacy Carers Champion

- ✓ Attend carer awareness training;
- ✓ Attend Carers' Champion meetings, a maximum of twice a year;
- ✓ Maintain and refresh your Carers Notice Board or other information point for carers within your pharmacy;
- ✓ Display and maintain supplies of carers' leaflets and, where possible, posters in your pharmacy;
- ✓ Identify yourself to customers as a Carers' Champion by having your name displayed on your Carers' Notice Board and wearing a Carers' Champion badge or sash;
- ✓ Co-ordinate carer referrals and other initiatives relating to carers;
- ✓ Read Carers Champion E-bulletins and brief colleagues.

Skills and knowledge

- ✓ Enthusiasm and motivation for the role;
- ✓ Basic understanding of carers' needs or a willingness to learn;
- ✓ Empathy for carers.

A Carers Champion is not expected to be an expert on 'carers issues' or provide carers with one-to-one support.