



Information for carers



One + all | we care

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How do I know if I am a carer?

A carer is anyone, including children and adults, who looks after and cares for a friend or family member who due to illness, frailty, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction cannot manage without their support. The care they give is unpaid. Carers have a huge impact both directly on the lives of the people that they care for, and indirectly in the contribution that they make towards society.

We believe that carers should have the opportunity to pursue their own goals and aims alongside of their caring role. When we refer to carers in this leaflet, this is inclusive of both adult and young unpaid carers. Many carers don't see themselves as carers and it takes them an average of two years to acknowledge their role as a carer.

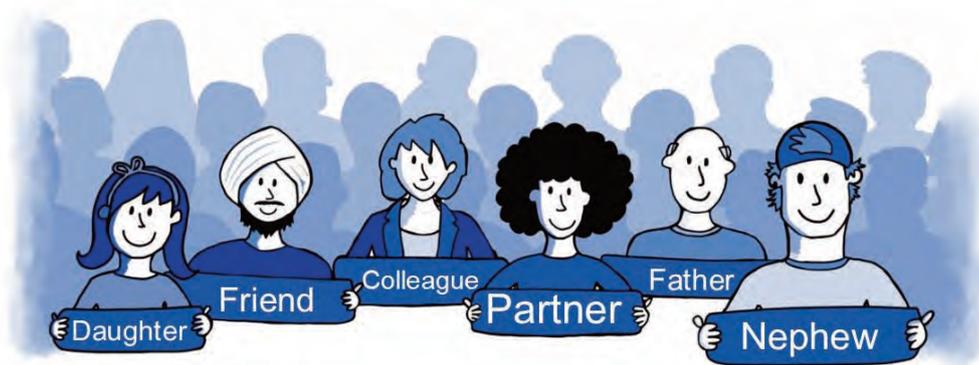
It can be difficult for carers to see their caring role as separate from the relationship they have with the person for whom they care, whether that relationship is as a parent, child, sibling, partner, grandparent, or a friend.

It's likely that every one of us will have caring responsibilities at some time in our lives with the challenges faced by carers taking many forms. Many carers juggle their caring responsibilities with work, study, and other family commitments. Some, younger carers, are not known to be carers. They don't tell relatives, friends or health and care professionals about their responsibilities because of a fear of separation, guilt, pride, or other reasons.

This means that the sort of roles and responsibilities that carers provide varies widely. They can range from help with everyday tasks such as getting out of bed and personal care such as bathing, to emotional support such as helping someone cope with the symptoms of a mental illness. The person may live with you or elsewhere, they may be an adult or a child, but if they rely on you for support, then you are entitled to support as a carer.

Anyone can become a carer. Carers come from all walks of life, all cultures, and can be any age. You may be a wife, husband, parent, partner, friend, uncle, niece, colleague, or neighbour. No matter what your relationship, if the person you care for cannot manage without your support, then you are a carer.

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CFT) and Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust (RCHT) recognise the vital support that carers provide and outline in this passport what is available to carers attending one of our hospitals.



Young carers

How do you know if you are a young carer? Young carers are children and young persons under 18 who provide care, assistance or support to another family member who has a disability, is physically or mentally ill, or has a substance misuse problem. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks, taking on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age or development.

Some of the ways young people care for someone are:

- staying at home to be there and provide support for the person you care for
- helping them to get up, get washed or dressed, or helping with toileting
- doing lots of household chores like shopping, cleaning, and cooking
- looking after younger brothers and sisters
- providing emotional support or a shoulder to cry on
- helping to give medicine
- helping with communication.

As a young carer you should:

- make sure you have time to be a young person
- get the same opportunities as your friend
- get support for yourself and the person you help to look after
- know your rights and have them acknowledged.

More information and/or guidance is available online:

<https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers>

For local support for Young Carers in Cornwall please call, Cornwall Carers Service on 01736 756655 or visit the website: www.cornwallcarers.org.



When the person you care for is in hospital

We recognise the impact that caring responsibilities have on carers and that there is a need to support and help people in their caring role. Periods of inpatient care can be an additional burden for carers. The uncertain situation may increase anxiety and stress levels whilst the emotional and physical strain of hospital visits may lead to greater exhaustion.

Having access to information about diagnosis and treatment can help to alleviate concerns as a carer. Please ask staff on the ward for help and access to the healthcare professionals who are caring for the person you care for.

Following discharge from hospital, carers play an important role in the continuing care of many of our patients, effectively picking up their health and other care needs in the community.

By implementing best practice, we aim to promote the health and independence of carers by:

- identifying and recognising carers of all ages including young people or children caring for family members
- ensuring carers are aware that they have certain rights, including the right to a carer's assessment
- allowing them to make choices about their caring role
- actively seeking the patient's permission to share information with their carers
- involving carers in the patient's discharge planning
- offering relevant support
- monitoring their experience and satisfaction through surveys and carer organisation feedback
- identifying and supporting patients with a caring responsibility
- keeping carers informed of the patient's condition
- helping carers to access the help and support specifically designed for them in their caring role
- offer a hospital carer's passport to support them in their carer's role.

Our Carers Policy is in place to support you – we encourage you to speak to the ward staff about how we can work in partnership to ensure the person you care for receives the best treatment whilst an inpatient with us.

As a carer (during the inpatient stay), please show your Carer's Emergency card to ward staff as **you may be entitled to:**

- drinks and meal vouchers (RCHT)
- help with parking arrangements (RCHT)
- access to Cornwall Carers Service for carer's advice and assessments.

Carer Passport

The Carer Passport is given to identified carers of inpatients of Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust (RCHT) and Cornwall Foundation Trust (CFT) for use during their cared for person's time as an inpatient.

The Carer Passport shows what support the carer is able or willing to give the cared for person during their hospital admission.

RCHT and CFT recognise the vital support that carers provide and holders of a Carer Passport will be entitled to regular liquid refreshment, flexible visiting hours, free car parking and a meal / drink voucher to be used in the main hospital restaurant or pod (if required).

The Carer Passport is given to carers who are contributing to the care of their cared for person on the ward, at the discretion of the ward and is valid for the current episode of inpatient care.

The Carer Passport is intended to be used in conjunction with the peninsular recognised Carers Emergency Card to access carer support such as meal vouchers and free parking. Please see page 9 for more information about the Carers Emergency Card.

Newly identified carers will be issued with a Temporary Carer Card.

How you might be feeling as a carer

Carers say that the role of a carer can often be very rewarding and report a great sense of pride in what they and the person they care for achieves.

At the same time, carers report some negative feelings and mixed emotions. Having to cope with a dependent adult or child whose needs may be complex can be a difficult situation and one for which you feel unprepared. For example, you may feel that your carer role has changed your relationship with the person you care for and has affected your relationship with other family members, and even changed you too – maybe it has made you feel more anxious and stressed?

Being a carer can mean you often get no time to yourself and can become a lifelong commitment.

Caring for the carer

At CFT and RCHT we are aware of how difficult the carer role can be and value the vital work done by carers. We recognise the essential role of carers in supporting people with physical and mental health conditions, learning disabilities and autism, and have introduced several hospital passports to help support them whilst they are in our care.

All hospital passports are available to view on our carers page on our website:

www.royalcornwall.nhs.uk/our-care-promise/patient-experience

Further information can also be requested by emailing rcht.caringforcarers@nhs.net or contacting our Safeguarding or Learning and Disability teams on:

Email:

rch-tr.LearningDisabilities@nhs.net

rch-tr.sgadults@nhs.net

Phone:

01872 255741 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

If you provide care and support for a friend or family member, you may be eligible for support from your local council. The local council also commissions services to support carers.

Cornwall Carers Service

Cornwall Carers Service delivers a range of high-quality support services for unpaid carers throughout Cornwall. It is a partnership of the following 5 charities:



The service is free of charge. These services include: carer's emergency card, emotional support, information, advice and guidance, statutory assessment, welfare benefits, access to grants, community support, carer specific training and dedicated services for young adult carers (18 - 25 year old carers) and young carers. There is also a Hospital Support Worker, who can offer general help and guidance whilst your loved one is an inpatient.

Advice Line Telephone: 01736 756655

Text: 07840 211674

Email: hello@carersadvice.org.uk

Website: www.cornwallcarers.org.uk

Carer's Emergency Card

Cornwall Carers Service provide a pre-arranged response to an emergency situation if a carer is admitted to hospital. Carers must register with the service, identifying two carers who will support an emergency situation (these can be neighbours or family etc). The carers will then be issued with a Carer's Emergency Card.

This credit card sized card has a telephone number and an ID number for the carer. The service is 24 hours a day. In the event of an emergency the scheme can be accessed 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The carer presents this card on arrival to hospital and hospital staff will contact the Carer's Emergency phoneline. For information on how to get a carer's card, please contact Adviceline on 01736 756655.



The Cornwall Carer Emergency Card will have the carer passport logo, which is recognised throughout the Southwest on the back and provides access to all the benefits included in this passport information pack when the person you care for is an inpatient in hospital.

If you are admitted to hospital

Please ensure that you always have your Carer's Emergency Card with you so that if for any reason you are admitted to hospital as an emergency, staff can quickly identify you as a carer when presented with or finding this card. They will contact the telephone number on the back of the card at the earliest opportunity to ensure that alternative arrangements can be made to support the person you care for.

Useful information

Mental Capacity Act

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. A lack of mental capacity may be due to:

- a stroke or brain injury
- dementia
- a learning disability
- a mental health condition
- substance misuse
- unconsciousness and/or confusion
- other impairment of the mind or brain.

Consent

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) and the Disability Act (1995) emphasise the importance of supporting an individual's ability to consent to care or treatment. This may involve extra time, communication aids or environmental factors.

If an individual over the age of 16 has been assessed and lacks capacity, carers or relatives are not legally responsible for signing a consent form on their behalf, unless they have lasting power of attorney for health and welfare. However, they will be involved in making a 'best interests' decision.

Best interests decisions

If a patient lacks mental capacity and a best interests decision needs making, carers, relatives, and others with an interest in the patient's welfare must be consulted for their views about the patient's wishes, feelings, beliefs, and values.

Frequently asked questions

Can I stay?

This is decided on an individual basis. If it is decided that you can stay overnight a reclining chair or bed (if there is room) can be arranged with the ward. However, you should not feel obliged to stay.

Can I help care?

Yes. Please discuss with the ward staff what care you would like to give and what help you need from them. Our clinical and nursing staff are responsible for providing personal and nursing care to our patients and you should not feel obliged to give this type of care. Carers play a vital role with support, communication, and knowledge about the patient, and we welcome this expertise.

Can I bring in our own equipment?

Yes. It is important that patients have familiar belongings and equipment with them. However, infection control issues need to be considered. Please discuss this with the ward and therapy staff before bringing equipment in.

Where can I get refreshments?

Practical arrangements such as breaks and refreshments can be arranged with the ward staff on an individual basis. There are meal/drink vouchers available that can be used at our main restaurant at Royal Cornwall Hospital and the 'Pods' at St Michael's or West Cornwall Hospitals – these are provided by the ward staff. We also encourage you to show your Carer's Emergency Card to the ward hosts when they are doing their patient rounds, as they will be able to provide you with a tea, coffee or water.

Can I get help with parking?

Yes, at Royal Cornwall Hospital free parking can be arranged for you at the discretion of the ward. They can provide a parking slip which, along with your Carers Emergency Card, can be shown at the car park lodge in the car park. The car park team will then direct you to where you may park for free – please ensure the 'Free Car Parking for Carers' slip is clearly displayed in your car. Car parking is free for all patients at our community hospitals on a first come first served basis.

Is there wheelchair access and disabled parking?

Yes. There are accessible parking spaces available outside Trelawny reception and limited parking near the Tower Block. There is accessible parking at all community hospitals.

Is there any help available when we arrive at the hospital?

Yes. At RCHT the volunteers at the front desk offer support and can wait with your relative/person you care for, while you load and/or park your car. There is also support available at all community hospitals – please speak to a member of staff for assistance.

Can I visit if the hospital has an infection control warning in place?

Yes. Visiting can be arranged out of hours and during restricted visiting times. We understand the importance of familiar faces and contact between the patient and carer. This is arranged on an individual basis.

Will I be involved in discharge planning?

Good communication between patients, carers and staff is vital to ensure the patient's safe discharge from hospital. Carers and family members will be involved in discharge planning from an early stage.

The period after discharge from hospital can be a particularly difficult time for both patient and carer. Extra emotional and practical support may be needed, and it is important that you are fully prepared and know what to expect. Your help with the discharge and planning arrangements is so important to us.

Carers can be present during medical and nursing rounds, if appropriate, to aid patient discussions and help represent their patient's views.

Complex discharges may involve a discharge planning meeting where carers play a vital role.

Your wellbeing

When you are focusing on the person you are caring for it is important that you do not neglect your own wellbeing. Below are some tips that many people say have helped them improve their sense of wellbeing. Some of these may seem obvious, but they can often be forgotten during a busy day:

- make time for yourself
- learn to say 'no' – you can't do everything
- don't neglect your own health needs
- find time to rest and get enough sleep
- focus on the positive aspects of your life. What do you enjoy? What are you good at?
- find an exercise you enjoy that gives you time for yourself
- talk to someone – a friend, family member or phone support from a carer group
- ask for a carer's assessment or a review of your needs whenever you need it
- keep important numbers near your phone
- ask your GP to register you as a carer as this will make it easier when seeking support and benefits.

Help and support within CFT and RCHT

Learning Disability Team

By supporting individuals with learning disabilities, we can make sure they get high quality services in hospital, and real choice and control over their care. The team is available to help you, and can be contacted on:

Email: rch-tr.LearningDisabilities@nhs.net

Telephone: 01872 255741 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The hospital Mental Health and Wellbeing service are here to help people with mental health concerns access the hospital. We offer support and reasonable adjustments to people with mental health conditions in Royal Cornwall Hospital, West Cornwall Hospital and/or St. Michael's Hospital. We want your hospital experience to be good. We want you to feel safe and comfortable. We want you to feel you were listened to and treated with respect. We do not want you to have a bad experience or a different standard of care because you have a mental health condition. We will help to arrange your admission or put plans in place during your stay.

Telephone: 01872 255741 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Admiral Nurse

An Admiral Nurse can provide support, advice and guidance to carers and families of a person with dementia when they are admitted to any acute or community hospital in Cornwall. The Admiral Nurse can also provide support and follow up following discharge from any of these care settings. This support is 1-1 telephone liaison. If you feel you need to speak to an Admiral Nurse, please telephone: 01872 250000 (Switchboard, please ask to be put through to the Admiral Nurse Service).

We Are With You

Our We Are With You hospital team works intensely with individuals who regularly present with underlying drug and alcohol issues and are frequently transitioning between the hospital and the community. As well as our hospital in reach team, we offer community services in Truro, Penzance, and Liskeard.

Hospital Office Hours Tel: 01872 255741

Truro Office Number: 01872 263001 Out of hours: 03332 000325.

Inclusion Matters

Inclusion Matters is funded by Adult Social Care and delivered by the Inclusion Matters (IM) partnership, led by Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC) with Age UK Cornwall & Isles of Scilly (Age UK C&IOS), Disability Cornwall, Inclusion Cornwall, and the Digital Inclusion Team.

Online resource

The Cornwall Link connects individuals, carers, volunteers and professionals with services and activities in their area. www.cornwall-link.co.uk (Age UK and Made Open)

Following discharge, the Inclusion Matters team can help you if you would like to find out more about social activities in your area or health related groups to help you stay healthy and active and reduce the likelihood of re-admission. Please phone our helpline on 01872 266383 (Monday - Friday, 9am to 4:30pm), or email: inclusion@cornwallrcc.org.uk.

Practical support

Help with arranging collection of ad-hoc shopping, prescriptions etc.

Wellbeing support

Links to volunteers and community groups for people who are feeling lonely and isolated.

Welfare Support

Help with welfare issues such as benefits, housing, rights etc. For disability related welfare issues you can also contact Disability Cornwall on 01736 759500 or email: advice@dialcornwall.org.uk.

Digital Support

Support you to develop digital skills, including online shopping, joining online groups etc. You can also contact CRCC directly on 01872 243557 or 01872 243534 or email the digital inclusion team: digitalinclusion@cornwall.gov.uk.

Transport

Transport for urgent medical appointments or hospital discharge; volunteer drivers, accessible transport, and electric vehicle hire.

Age UK C&IOS (independently funded) can be contacted directly by telephone: 01872 223388 or email: tap.ageuk@nhs.net.

Hospital Discharge Inclusion Officer

The Inclusion Matters Hospital Discharge Service can support you with your practical and social needs to prepare for a hospital admission, or for your hospital discharge. Provides help to design an action plan and support to put that plan into action. This service aims to reach individuals that are socially isolated who have little support from family and friends. Our friendly Hospital Discharge Inclusion Officer can act as a helpful point of contact providing useful advice, guidance, and support to promote a good recovery. Telephone: 07590 362024 (Monday - Friday, 9am – 3pm). Examples of support include:

- identifying safety concerns in the home
- arranging for collection of ad-hoc shopping/prescriptions
- providing information to keep their home warm
- arranging for someone to call round for a chat
- support with transport options
- link to community IM support.

Other support organisations and helpful contacts

Carers Trust

Telephone: 0300 772 9600

Email: info@carers.org

Website: www.carers.org

Alzheimer's Society

Telephone: 0300 772 9600/ 01872 277963

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Parkinson's UK Helpline

Telephone: 0808 800 0303

Website: www.parkinsons.org.uk

National Autistic Society – Cornwall Branch Email

cornwall.branch@nas.org.uk

Website: www.cornwallbranch.wixsite.com/cnas1

Mencap Helpline

Telephone: 0808 808 1111

Email: helpline@mencap.org.uk

Website: www.mencap.org.uk

Care & Support in Cornwall (Cornwall Council)

Telephone: 01872 323 535 / 0800 587 8191

Email: fis@cornwall.gov.uk

Website: www.supportincornwall.org.uk

Cornwall Face2Face

A befriending service for parents caring for children with additional needs. The service is provided by other parents who have had similar experiences.

Telephone: 01872 271721 / 07842 111 876

Facebook: Friends of Face2Face Cornwall Oasis Group facebook page

Active 8

Offer day and residential activities to 14 – 30 year olds with physical disabilities. Activities are designed to support members to be empowered and develop skills, confidence, support structures and aspirations.

Website: www.active8online.org

Cornwall Accessible Activities Programme (CAAP)

A charity formed by a group of parents of children with additional needs, to support families to access activities during school holidays.

Email: Info@caapuk.co.uk

Website: www.caapuk.co.uk

Cornwall Memory Café Network

A place where anyone with memory loss and their carer or family may find support and a signpost to more formal help if so desired. Over 40+ locations around Cornwall – for more information and to locate your nearest café, please go to the website: www.cornwallmemorycafes.co.uk.

Cornwall Mobility

The centre of excellence for mobility in the southwest, with an expert team providing impartial advice, solutions, and reassurance to people of all ages.

Telephone: 01872 254920

Email: Info@cornwallmobility.co.uk

Website: www.cornwallmobility.co.uk

Cornwall People First

A user-led self-advocacy charity for adults with a learning disability or autism throughout Cornwall.

Website: www.cornwallpeoplefirst.com

Disability Cornwall & Isles of Scilly (IoS)

A values-based, user-led charitable company with a mission to represent, include, support, and empower people living with a long-term health condition or disability, their families, and carers in Cornwall and IoS.

Advice Line: 01736 759500 (Text or Call)
Email: hello@disabilitycornwall.org.uk
Website: www.disabilitycornwall.org.uk

Hearing Loss Cornwall

A unique local Cornish charity set up in 1931. It remains at the forefront of helping people who are deaf or have hearing loss to benefit from fulfilling lives in a world geared to sound.

Telephone: 01872 225868
Text Relay: 18001 01872 225868
Email: info@hearinglosscornwall.org
Website: www.hearinglosscornwall.org

iSight Cornwall

Cornwall's oldest charity. Our sole purpose is to support people who are blind or partially sighted. We understand the impact that sight loss can have on an individual's quality of life, which is why our services are designed to help people lead more active and independent lives.

Telephone: 01872 2611106
Email: info@isightcornwall.org.uk
Website: www.isightcornwall.org.uk

Lifestyles (Mid Cornwall)

Sometimes disabled people need a little bit of extra support to do what they would like to do. Lifestyles offers its unique and friendly service to any disabled person in Cornwall over the age of 16 with no discrimination by location or type of disability.

Telephone: 07967 822340
Website: www.lifestylescornwall.org.uk

Merlin MS Centre

Provides clinical and therapeutic services to people affected by a range of neurological conditions including MS, Parkinson's, Stroke and CFS.

Telephone: 01726 885530
Email: hello@merlinmscentre.org.uk
Website: www.merlinmscentre.org.uk

Patient & Family Experience Team

If you have a concern about the care that you are currently receiving or wish to raise a concern on behalf of a current patient (inpatient or outpatient), please firstly speak to a member of staff providing the care. This could be a nurse, ward sister or matron, a doctor, other health professional or a non-clinical member of staff within the relevant department or clinic. They want to help you and will try to resolve your concerns right away.

If you have questions about an appointment, or would like to change one, please call the phone number on your patient letter or call the switchboard on RCHT: 01872 250000 / CFT: 01208 834600 and ask to be redirected to the relevant department or clinic.

If you have tried this and it has not adequately resolved your concerns, or if you would like some help to do this, then please contact the Patient and Family Experience Team. They will listen to you and work with you to achieve a satisfactory resolution whether you are requesting information, providing feedback, raising a concern, or making a complaint. We encourage you to speak openly about your concerns, which will be treated in confidence, with courtesy and sensitivity.

Contact the RCHT Patient and Family Experience Team

Please email: rcht.patientexperience@nhs.net or leave a voicemail on 01872 252793. We will return your call in a maximum of two working days (although the majority will be returned on the same day, except on weekends and bank holidays). You can also send a letter to:

Patient and Family Experience Team (Complaints)
Clinical Governance Office
2nd Floor Knowledge Spa
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust
Truro
Cornwall TR1 3HD

Contact the CFT PALS and Complaints Team

Please email: cpn-tr.Palscft@nhs.net or call on 01208 834620. You can also send a letter to:

PALS Office
Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Room 11 Banham House
Bodmin Hospital
Cornwall PL31 2QT

Independent Advocacy Services

If you feel you would like some help and support in making your complaint then you can contact the Advocacy People, who are a free, independent advocacy service that can assist you.

Telephone: 0300 440 9000
Email: info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk
website: www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk.

Care Opinion

If you've experienced our services recently, either as a patient yourself or as a carer or friend of someone else, please visit www.careopinion.org.uk to tell us how it was. What was good? What could have been better?

Your story will be handled confidentially by the non-profit service Care Opinion. When you post your story on Care Opinion, they publish it on their public site if they can. It is then shared with people in many different organisations working to make health and care services better and asks them to respond to the feedback.

You can share your story anonymously and Care Opinion do not share your personal details, like your email address or postcode, with anyone else.

We will respond to all comments about us on the Care Opinion website and share them with staff.

This service is independent of both Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust and the NHS. For more information about Care Opinion and how your story is handled, visit: www.careopinion.org.uk

