

Lincolnshire's Long Term Commitment to Carers: A Health and Wellbeing Memorandum of Understanding

Supporting an integrated approach to the identification and support of Carers' health and wellbeing needs

1. Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out an agreement to take an integrated approach to identifying and supporting adult carers and young carer's health and wellbeing needs between all relevant organisations across Lincolnshire's Health, Care and Housing system. The document is based on a template from NHS England and others.

For the purposes of this MOU, the following definitions of carers and young carers will be adopted:

"A carer is someone who provides or intends to provide unpaid care for another adult¹"

"A young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person of any age who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.²"

The State of Caring 2018 report by Carers UK showed that the majority of carers are struggling with their mental and physical wellbeing as a result of caring.

There are an estimated 84,000 carers in Lincolnshire who contribute a vital role within the health and wellbeing system of the county.

The 2011 census reported that Lincolnshire had:

- Over 79,000 carers
- 20,000 carers caring more than 50 hours a week
- 53,000 carers of working age
- 1,800 are young carers³

Research by the University of Leeds and Carers UK shows that carers save Lincolnshire an estimated £1,677 million a year⁴.

For more information on carers, see the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapter on Carers [here⁵](#):

¹ Care Act 2014

² S.96 Children and Families Act 2014

³ Research in 2010 by Nottingham University and BBC indicates numbers could be four times as high

⁴ Valuing Carers, 2015

⁵ <http://www.research-lincs.org.uk/jsna-Carers.aspx>

The Care Act (2014) was designed to improve support for carers. The Act gives carers parity of esteem with the person to whom they provide care and introduces a general duty to promote wellbeing and prevent escalation of need.

The Children and Families Act (2014) aimed to improve support for young carers and parent carers by strengthening their right to have an assessment of their needs. A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing or their prospects in education and adult life.

Both Acts created new duties to provide information and preventative support to carers and young carers. The legislation also places a new duty on the NHS to co-operate with the local authority in implementing these duties.

Several key NHS documents highlight the need to improve support for carers including the NHS Constitution, the NHS Five Year Forward Plan, as well as NHS England's 'Commitment to Carers' and guidance on 'Commissioning for Carers' and 'Integrated Personalised Commissioning'

This MOU aims to help improve carer experience and outcomes through enhanced joint working.

2. What Carers Can Expect

Lincolnshire should be a place where carers are recognised, valued and supported, both in their caring role and as individuals. Carers in Lincolnshire should be able to:

- Be identified as a carer as early as possible, be informed and respected and included by health and social care professionals.
- Have choice and control about their caring role
- Be able to stay well and healthy themselves
- Have their own needs and wishes as an individual recognised and supported
- Be socially connected and not isolated
- Be able to access education, employment or help to remain in work
- Have their religious and cultural needs respected
- Have contingency and emergency plans in place

Young carers and young adult carers should be able to thrive and develop educationally, personally and socially, and be protected from excessive or inappropriate caring roles.

These expectations should apply equally to all carers. Partners will therefore endeavour to reach out to hidden and hard to reach carers.

3. Working Together To Support Carers

By signing this MOU, partners agree to co-operate with each other, to promote the wellbeing of individual Carers, and to adopt a whole family approach in their work to support local Carers of all ages, in order to:

- a. maintain the independence and physical and mental health of Carers and their families
- b. empower and support Carers to manage their caring roles and have a life outside of caring
- c. ensure that Carers receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place
- d. identify hidden carers such as young carers and working carers, and those who are seldom heard, such as those from Black and minority ethnic groups, armed forces and veterans, LGBTI, gypsy and traveller etc.
- e. respect Carers' decisions about how much care they will provide and decisions about not providing care at all
- f. ensure that staff working with carers are appropriately trained and 'carer aware'.
- g. ensure that young carers are identified and protected from inappropriate care.

4. Key Principles

This integrated approach to identifying and supporting Carers' health and wellbeing needs rests on a number of supporting principles, informed by what matters to local carers and the key policy and guidance documents cited above.

Partners to the Memorandum of Understanding agree that:

Principle 1 - We will take a pro-active approach in all organisations to identify, register (in Primary Care) and help carers maintain their health and wellbeing. In line with the NHS Long Term Plan, Primary Care partners are actively encouraged to sign up to the [GP Carers Quality Markers](#).

Principle 2 - Carers will be respected and listened to as expert care partners, and through 'a different conversation', will be actively involved in care planning, shared decision-making and reviewing services.

Principle 3 - We will take a community and peer approach to build knowledge and connections, ensure support needs are assessed and met in an integrated way, accessing appropriate services and support both for themselves and the person they look after.

Principle 4 - Carers will be empowered to make choices about their caring role,

Principle 5 - The support needs of Carers who are more vulnerable or at key transition points will be identified early.

Principle 6 - Young carers, young adult carers and carers of working age will be identified and supported in accessing and maintaining education and employment, including the workforce of signatory partners.

Principle 7 - Carers will be supported by information sharing (with their consent) between health, social care, carer support organisations and other partners to this agreement.

Principle 8 - The staff of partners to this agreement will be aware of the needs of carers and of their value to our communities.

5. The Lincolnshire Carers Charter

The principles above are rooted in the Lincolnshire Carers Charter which was co-created by local carers, based on what is most important to them. Partners to this MOU are actively encouraged to sign up to the Charter putting its principles into practice by undertaking the [Carer Quality Award](#). This provides agencies with bespoke support and training needed to develop policy and practice to improve support for carers both as users of their services and as employees / volunteers – and to help implement this Memorandum of Understanding.

Lincolnshire Carers Charter

Identify, recognise and value Carers

Engage with and involve Carers

Inform, advise and support carers

Respect and enable carers

Support Carers in education, training and employment

6. Thinking Carer Across The System

Implementation of this MOU is linked to the delivery of the [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Carers' Priority](#). This is 'co-produced' and links the views of Lincolnshire carers to legislation and national policy that underpin carers' rights.

The Health and Wellbeing Carers Priority Delivery Plan promotes a whole family, whole system approach to supporting carers, including the recognition of young carers. By supporting carers, we are also supporting the person who is receiving care. No one should have to care alone.

Other partners, such as schools and colleges, also play a key role in identification and support of young carers and their families, for example through the [Young Carers in Schools](#) programme.

In order to ensure that carers receive the right support, at the right time, and in the right place, a carer who indicates that they require additional support or that their capacity or willingness to continue caring is diminished, should be referred to the Lincolnshire Carers Service to have their immediate needs addressed.

Where a carer indicates they have a health need during an interaction with the NHS, this health need should be addressed as soon as possible, after which the healthcare practitioner should initiate a discussion about the carer's wider support needs and consider referral as required to the Lincolnshire Carers Service.

Partnership working and co-operation is key to providing a joined up, seamless service. This will include joint working between the local authority, the NHS, voluntary organisations, education, public health, housing and local communities to support carers.

As health and social care develop more integrated approaches to delivering care and support, we will work to develop local data and information sharing processes between agencies. This will help ensure that information follows the carer across their own care and support pathway, without them constantly having to re-tell their story. We will explore initiatives such as [Carer Passports](#) that may assist such approaches.

Carer friendly employment practices will be promoted within partners own organisations. Partners to this MOU are actively encouraged to sign up to and help promote [Employers for Carers](#)⁶.

7. Governance and Continuous Improvement

Actions arising from this MOU are included in the Carers Priority Delivery Plan, delivered by the Carers Delivery Group, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Delivery Group will:

- continue to review, evaluate and identify improvements to supporting carers, reporting these to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- involve Carers, in recognition that they are 'experts by experience', in monitoring and reviewing services, and when seeking to redesign, commission or procure Carer support services.
- continue to offer programmes for learning and development through the [Lincolnshire Carers Quality Award](#) and [Employers for Carers](#) to raise awareness and understanding of the needs of Carers and their families, and of local services.
- continue to support workforce development and assure the quality of services through the provision of appropriate training and support for those undertaking Carers needs assessments to have the necessary knowledge and skills.

⁶ Free membership is offered to Lincolnshire Health providers through Lincolnshire County Council's Umbrella Subscription.

This will include ensuring that practitioners in the local authority and partner agencies are aware of the specific requirements concerning carers in the Care Act 2014 and young carers and parent carers in the Children and Families Act 2014, and accompanying Guidance and Regulations. This also includes subsequent carer specific guidance and policy, such as updates to guidelines for Continuing Healthcare (2018).

9. Our Commitment to Carers in Lincolnshire

This MOU has been signed by the following organisations:

1. Commissioners and providers of NHS-funded care:
 - Lincolnshire CCG's (NHS Lincolnshire West CCG; NHS Lincolnshire East CCG; NHS Lincolnshire South CCG; NHS Lincolnshire South West CCG)
 - United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust (ULHT)
 - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
 - Lincolnshire Community Healthcare Services (LCHS)
 - Primary Care Networks
 - Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Committee
 - East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)
2. Other partners such as Housing, Wellbeing, Employment and Education
3. Local Voluntary and Community Sector partners: including any service that provides direct support to carers and is under contract / grant agreement with any of the above named organisations. Such organisations will be expected to sign-up to this MOU as a contractual obligation.
 - Healthwatch Lincolnshire
 - St Barnabas Hospice
 - The Alzheimer's Society
 - Macmillan
 - Stroke Association
 - Voluntary Centre Services
 - Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service
4. The Lincolnshire County Council, including
 - Lincolnshire County Council, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing
 - Lincolnshire County Council, Public Health
 - Lincolnshire County Council, Children's Services
5. Locally commissioned Carers Support services:
 - Carers FIRST
 - SERCO (Customer Service Centre & CERS)
 - EveryOne
6. Higher and Further Education Providers

Signatories

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