

INTRODUCTION

The following protocol sets out the mechanisms the Practice has in place for identifying carers and ensuring that they are referred appropriately to Adult Care Services for a Carers Assessment.

Definition of a Carer

Individuals irrespective of age, who provide or supervise a substantial amount of care on a regular basis of a child, relative, partner or neighbour who is unable to manage on their own due to illness, disability, frailty, mental distress or impairment.

The term "carer" would not normally apply if the person is:

- a paid carer
- a volunteer from a voluntary agency
- anyone providing personal assistance for payment either in cash or kind

A carer can be a child looking after an older person or parent, or an older person looking after a disabled partner. The definition may be quite wide-ranging.

The person being cared for may, or may not be, registered at the Carer's practice. Where the person being cared for is registered elsewhere the practice will not be able to identify routinely where this relationship has ceased. Periodically, the Carer may be asked to re-confirm his / her status. Where the person being cared for is a registered patient, the relationship can be re-affirmed more often, and major events just as death or de-registration may initiate a change of status from practice-held information.

PROTOCOL

Research shows that for every 1000 patients, 120 will be carers. It has also been estimated that 1 in 5 households in the UK may contain a carer.

This protocol aims to ensure that all carers registered with the Practice are identified and referred to Adult Care Services. Basic rights for carers are contained in the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 (not in Scotland), and this places duties (mainly) on local authorities to assess and support carers. GP practices may facilitate this process by active identification and support / referral of carers who are their own patients and / or where a carer cares for a practice patient.

The practice will seek to support carers by:

- Providing information and local authority resources and contact points
- Supporting carers with suitable appointment flexibility and understanding
- Care for the carer to enable them to maximise their own health and needs by providing health checks and advice

There are two methods of identification – self-identification and Practice identification and the Practice has put in place mechanisms for both of these.

SELF IDENTIFICATION

The Practice displays a poster on existing notice boards asking carers to let the Practice know about their caring responsibilities.

The Practice also has a carer's leaflet, which is taken to patients home during home visits; this can be completed and returned to the practice with the carers details.

SELF REFERRAL FORMS

Referral forms, which are sent to Carers and Adult Care Services are displayed in reception to allow carers to complete and hand in to the Practice.

NEW PATIENT REGISTRATION FORMS

The Practice's new patient registration form asks the question 'do you look after someone?' This information will be used in the new patient screening appointment to tag the patient's notes and arrange referral to Care Services.

PRACTICE IDENTIFICATION.

LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE TO PATIENTS

If the Practice writes to a patient, perhaps as part of the flu vaccination campaign, they may be asked to complete a referral form if they are a carer.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Anyone collecting a prescription on behalf of someone else may be passed a Carers referral form.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION

All Health Professionals in the surgery will Read code patient records when they ascertain that a patient is a carer.

CARER CHAMPION

The Practice Carer champion is Kim Humphreys, Reception Team Leader. She will help to identify carers and offer support and information to carers.

PROCESS FOR SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL

The following read codes will be used to tag carers notes:

Carer	Ub1ju
Has a Carer	918F
No able carer in household	ZV604
Carer unable to cope	ZV608

Resources

[BMA - Working with carers: guidelines for good practice](#)

(Note: log-in may be required)