

Supporting Carers

According to the 2011 Census there are over 31,000 carers in the Rotherham area which is 12% of the population. 1 in 12 people visiting a GP Practice are carers. 20% of these will care for more than 50 hours a week. Caring affects the whole family.

Problems faced by Carers

- Poor physical and psychological health
- Feeling lonely and isolated
- Suffering from stress and depression,
- Deteriorations in general health
- Back and other strains
- An increase in all cause mortality
- Elderly carers could have failing health and strength
- Young carers may suffer from tiredness, stress and mental ill health affecting their performance at school and interaction with peers.

Ways to identify Carers

- Carers often do not identify themselves or even realise they are a carer; ask people “Do you look after someone?”
- Carers will have contact with the practice when collecting prescriptions, making appointments and accompanying people. Receptionists, Practice Nurses and GP’s can identify these people opportunistically.
- Practices can keep a register of carers and flag this on their notes.
- Look at disease registers/people with multiple needs and identify who people’s carers are.
- Use leaflets and posters to encourage people to identify themselves.
- Consider other people, especially children, who could be carers but are not seen at the practice
- Identify a carer’s lead within the Practice. This could be a receptionist or Practise nurse, someone with an interest /understanding of Carers and their role. The lead can be the link to other agencies and regional GP Champion , keep carers info up to date, raise awareness

Ways to support Carers

- Involve carers where possible and appropriate. They often have valuable information about the patient and will be involved in providing medication/therapy etc.
- Listen to their concerns, ask about finances etc.
- Screen carers for depression – this could be done annually
- Offer flexible appointments
- Offer the flu vaccine to carers
- Give carers the information to make a self-referral for a carers assessment

- Check whether there are young carers in the family and provide specific support
- Signpost carers to sources of information and support (see Resources below)
- Assist them to plan for emergencies

Resources

The following links will provide information on local and national support available for carers.

- Connect to Support, support, products, services, local groups, organisations and activities: <https://www.connecttosupport.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageld=152>
- Rotherham Gismo, Rotherham voluntary, community and faith organisations: www.rotherhamgismo.org.uk
- Carers Trust, help and advice: www.carers.org
- Carers UK: help and advice: www.carersuk.org
- Carers Assessments: 01709 822330 or http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200015/carers/405/advice_for_carers

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