Caring in Primary Care

a note for healthcare professionals

CARERS UK

DOCTOR PATIENT PARTNERSHIP
Caring in primary care

Who cares?
- 6 million people care for a relative, friend or partner, or for a child with a disability.
- In a typical GP practice around one in eight adult patients will have some kind of caring responsibility.
- Every year significant numbers of carers are forced to stop caring because of illness or injury which also has an impact on practice workload. Much of this can be prevented with more information and guidance.
- Many carers regard the support they receive from their GP and community nurse more highly than that from any other source.

Why identify carers?
- It is a Government recommendation that GP practices identify the carers in their patient population.
- Every year carers suffer ill health and injury as a result of their caring responsibilities – some of which is preventable.
- Flagging this information in a patient’s notes makes it available to all healthcare staff and enables them to raise appropriate issues.
- Identifying carers and the people they care for makes it easier to ensure carers are consulted when care arrangements are discussed.
- Parents of children with disabilities have additional responsibilities and stresses on top of their role as parent.
- Many people don’t recognise themselves as carers and therefore miss out on the support and benefits available.

How to help carers
Confidentiality – explaining confidentiality issues to carers or asking adult patients who need care if they are happy to have health information disclosed can help the process.

Carers health – encouraging carers to look after themselves can help ensure they don’t neglect their own health needs.

Providing information – to carers about potential sources of help such as social services, carers groups and centres is key to providing practical support for your patients. The support pharmacists can offer in medicines management may be something you can remind your patients of. The Carers UK website provides comprehensive information and advice for carers and health professionals www.carersonline.org.uk, carers freephone 0808 808 7777 others should email info@carers.org. Or contact Crossroads – Caring for Carers 01788 573 653, www.crossroads.org.uk, Crossroads Scotland 0141 226 3793, Contact a Family 0808 808 3555, www.cafamily.org.uk, your local carers centre through The Princess Royal Trust for Carers 020 7480 7788, www.carers.org.