

Community Recovery Team



Welcome Pack

Welcome

We are a carer friendly service, who really value the input of people's family, friends and/or carers.

Caring for someone experiencing a period of mental distress can be a challenging, sometimes life-changing experience. You may be a long term supporter of someone living with a mental health condition, or you may be entirely new to offering care to another person in this situation.

The person you care for is now receiving a service from Livewell Southwest's Community Recovery Team.

We would like to acknowledge the care that you provide, as well as the physical and emotional energy it can take to be a carer. We would also like to support you with this task, and to always be more 'carer aware'.

This is a guide, written specifically for carers, in which we will aim to answer your questions and detail services that might be useful to you and the person you care for.

First, a little about our service to share with you what we do. The team consists of mental health nurses, occupational therapists and support time recovery workers.

The service operates with an emphasis on recovery and social inclusion – providing a service over a 7 day period. Our team helps to promote social inclusion for service users who are both in-patient and community based.

What is a carer?

A carer is an individual who provides unpaid help and support on a regular basis to a partner, family member or friend. The help they provide can be practical help, physical care or emotional support to a person that requires help.

Some people may not consider themselves to be carers, however they are performing a caring role. For example, parents caring for children with additional needs, or children and young people caring for other family members.

Livewell Southwest values carers as “expert partners in care” and aims to ensure carers get the support they need.

The Care Act 2018

The Care Act 2014 entitles carers to expect the same recognition, respect and parity of esteem with those they support. For full information on the support available for carers, please visit www.improvinglivesplymouth.org.uk/our-services/caring-for-carers

Strategic carers and service user meetings

Livewell Southwest holds quarterly meetings with representatives from service user and carer organisations. If you would be interested in finding out more about these meetings, please contact Helen Sharples via telephone on 01752 434719 or email helen.sharples@nhs.net.

Triangle of Care

The ‘Triangle of Care’ is an approach that establishes a working collaboration, or “therapeutic alliance”, between the mental health service user, the professionals and the carer, that promotes safety, supports recovery and sustains well-being.



Livewell Southwest became member of the Triangle of Care scheme in June 2016. Over the next 2 years we will be implementing the Triangle of Care throughout our mental health services in order to ensure that all our staff recognise the importance of involving carers.

The Triangle of Care was initially developed to improve mental health acute services by adopting six principles. It is widely accepted that these key principles can be applied to all service areas and Livewell Southwest will be looking to spread this good practice in all of our services.

What are the standards?

- Carers and the essential role they play should be identified at first contact with services or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Staff should be aware of carers and trained to engage with carers more effectively.
- Policies and protocols should be in place to ensure confidentiality and improve information sharing with carers.
- Defined roles (Carer link workers) responsible for carers should be in place.
- Carers should be “introduced” to the service and provided with a range of information.
- A range of carer support services should be available to offer or signpost carers to.

What can I expect?

Although the very first contact with services may mean that carers are focused on the wellbeing of the person they care for and not on their own needs, professionals should be aware that this could be the most important point where recognition and support can have the greatest benefit. If this is not possible at that time, professionals should identify you and your role as a carer as soon as it is best to do so.

You should expect professionals to be aware of the demands and pressures carers often experience, and know that there is a carer link worker in most wards and teams promoting carer issues and working to achieve greater collaboration with carers and families.

We recognise that carers often hold information that would improve a service user's treatment and care plan; likewise, carers would also welcome appropriate information to ensure they are able to undertake their caring role. Livewell Southwest is working towards ensuring service user and carer confidentiality while adopting safe practices, such as advance statement of wishes, that will improve greater information sharing with carers and families.

What information might and might not be shared with me as a carer?

Carers can understandably find it frustrating when they would like to know more about the support the person they care for is receiving, and they are refused information.

We must acknowledge that there may be some things that the person you care for does not wish for us to share or involve you with. Where this is the case, we will be open about this with you and offer support by other means, for example, by giving general information which does not breach confidentiality.

There may also be times when we have to share information about the person you care for with other services because of our legal duty to keep the person, or others around them, safe from harm. This would be a last choice for us, and would only be done in those very specific circumstances.

Useful links and services

The Carers Trust - www.carers.org

This is a national charity, offering advice and support and access to online communities of carers of varying ages. This organisation developed a strategy for carers of those with mental health issues, called 'The Triangle of Care'. You can read more about that here: <https://carers.org/article/triangle-care>

Carers UK - 0808 808 7777 - www.carersuk.org

This is a national charity offering expert advice, information and support to carers. In addition to fact sheets and other advice publications, Carers UK offer a supportive telephone line which carers can call to get support, as well as online forums where carers can speak to others about caring.

Continued overleaf...

Useful links and services (cont'd)

Opportunity Knocks carers support groups - www.colebrooksw.org/opportunity-knocks-support-groups

This Big Lottery funded project currently offers two support groups - a Mental Health Carers Support Group and an Ex Carers Support Group. Met people who have similar experiences to you, who can offer support, advice and friendship. Full information on when and where these groups are held are available on their website.

Plymouth Music Zone (Open Zone Session) - www.plymouthmusiczone.org.uk/pmz-open-sessions

Plymouth Music Zone is an award-winning charity, reaching out to the community to make a difference in people's lives. Open Zone Sessions include a Carefree Choir for adult carers, and Sharing and Caring for carers of older and disabled people. Full details of all sessions including when and where they are held are available.

Improving Lives Plymouth - www.improvinglivesplymouth.org.uk/our-services/caring-for-carers

Caring for Carers is a partnership between Improving Lives Plymouth and Age UK Plymouth. If you're over 18 and look after a partner, family member, or friend with an illness or disability, you can ask for a carer's assessment to look at how caring affects you and the sort of help you need. Full information on the support that Improving Lives Plymouth can provide to carers are available on their website. You can also subscribe to their newsletter via this site.