

# CARERS CHARTER

East London NHS Foundation Trust greatly values the very important work that carers of service users provide and we want to work in partnership with you to help you carry out your role more effectively. We also recognise that, on occasions, you also need support and have a statutory right to an assessment of your needs.

We believe that you are carer if you are providing help or support to a relative, partner or friend who experiences mental distress, whether you give practical help or provide emotional support.

This Charter is based on the National Institute for Mental Health in England's work and details how we aim to work in partnership with you and provide you with support and help.

**We are not going to get it right all the time but hopefully with your help we will get it right most of the time.**

## Your role and expertise being recognised and respected.

### We aim to:

- Listen to you without bias or prejudice and take what you say seriously.
- Recognise you as someone who is providing support to the person for whom you care.
- Treat you as someone who has relevant and important knowledge about the person for whom you care.
- Ask your opinion – this should be respected and valued and where necessary kept confidential.
- Give you choice on whether you wish to take on, or continue with, the role of a carer.

- Provide you with staff who understand the distress and anxiety that caring can cause you and hopefully provide you with help to cope with this.
- Inform you how the information you provide would be used.

## **Information and advice that you need to help you care.**

### **We believe that you should be:**

- Helped to obtain, within a reasonable time, the information that you need to get help and support for yourself and the person for whom you care.
- Be given information that is clear and accurate and provided in a way that is helpful to you – for example orally, in writing or on tape, in your own language, through an interpreting service or in discussion with a qualified professional.

## **Involvement in the planning and agreeing the care plan for the person for whom you care.**

### **We aim to:**

- Involve you in the decisions made about you and (with his or her consent) the person for whom you care, including the preparation of the care plan.
- Inform you about who to contact in an emergency or in a crisis, even if the person you care for is unwilling to for you to be involved in their care.
- You should be given a copy of the care plan of the person for whom you care (with his or her consent). This should state the responsibilities of all the people who are involved in providing care.
- Give you an opportunity to state your views if you feel that the care plan is not working and to involve you in discussions on actions to be taken to address any problems identified.
- Involve you in the planning of any discharge, including the date of discharge if the person you are caring for is in hospital.
- Hold meetings, where possible, at a time that suits you and the person for whom you care.

## **Your individual needs being recognised, responded to, and reflected in the care plan.**

### **We aim to:**

- Recognise any additional commitments to that of your caring role, such as looking after your children or going to work.
- Respect and take into account your ethnicity and culture, religion, gender, sexual preference, age and other characteristics but without general assumptions being made about you.
- Provide you with assistance in communicating your views, if English is not your first language or you need a qualified interpreter to assist you.
- Inform you about your right to a carer's assessment under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.
- Provide you with a carer's assessment, with our Local Authority partners, if you request an assessment. This assessment should:
  - Be carried out separately from the assessment of the needs of the person for whom you provide care
  - Give you support while the assessment is taking place and give you the opportunity to assess your own needs, for example your own health and well being and any emotional and other support.
  - Consider how your caring role affects your relationship with other family members and friends and your ability to hold down a job.
  - Consider whether you would like to take a break from caring and if so, look at what type of support you think would enable you to do this.
  - Given a copy of your assessment and care plan.
- Give you a copy of your care plan and offer you at least an annual review of your needs and more often, if you request it.

## **Receiving appropriate help and support when you need it.**

### **We aim to:**

- Inform you who to contact if you need help and to respond to any request for help within a reasonable time.
- Give you the opportunity to consider alternative care arrangements to hospital, if the person you are caring for wishes this and where it is possible locally.
- Inform you about opportunities to take a break from caring.
- Give you information about local support groups and advocacy services, including how to get advice about housing and employment issues, financial matters, including entitlement to benefits, and training for carers.
- The services that you receive should be of good quality, appropriate to your needs and provided within an agreed time.
- Give you advise on what action you can take if you are not happy with any aspect of your assessment or the care plan for the person you are caring for.

## **Being actively involved in the planning, development and evaluation of services.**

### **We hope that you will work in partnership with us, by:**

- Giving us your views on the quality of the services provided and on the range of services that need to be developed.

### **In response, we aim to:**

- Give you adequate notice of meetings, consultation periods and other relevant events.
- Inform you about how a particular consultation process would work and take your views into account as part of an on going evaluation process.
- Give you feedback on consultation and other events, as soon as possible after the event.
- Offer you help in arranging alternative care for the person you care for and give you payment for travel and alternative care costs.

**Agreed by the Trust Board on 2 November 2006**

**This charter is based on a charter that was originally produced by the Carers Advisory Group for Mental Health in London and was first published in 2001, reissued by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) in 2004 and formally adopted by ELCMHT in 2006, now East London NHS Foundation Trust.**