

CARERS' CHAMPION NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2011

Dear Carers' Champions

There is much to celebrate this month, particularly as everything we have been doing has been endorsed by the new initiative from the Royal College of General Practitioners and The Princess Royal Trust which puts the focus firmly on carers.

Paul Burstow launches Supporting Carers



On June 16th, Minister of State for Care Services Paul Burstow launched 'Supporting Carers in General Practice'. For an overview of the initiative, go to:
http://www.rcgp.org.uk/professional_development/continuing_professional_devt/carers.aspx

For the action guide, follow the link:

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/pdf/Supporting%20Carers%20Action%20Guide.pdf>

Developed through a partnership between Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), Department of Health, The Princess Royal Trust and e-LfH, with support from The Children's Society, the free-to-access e-learning resource is primarily aimed at GPs, GP trainees and other health workers in primary care teams. It will also be available to all healthcare staff through the NLMS and the e-LfH LMS. Please go to [Supporting Carers in General Practice](#) for more information on e-learning.

Would you like your whole practice to receive training about carers?

RCGP are developing free DVDs in 4 x one hour sessions allowing training to be fitted around work and practice commitments. This training will also count towards CPD. Register for a copy by emailing your name, job title and address to supportingcarers@rcgp.org.uk

Both the e-learning resource and the DVD are sure to prove extremely valuable and serve to bolster and build on all that we have achieved with the Somerset Carers' Champion Project. The whole initiative places carers firmly in the spotlight and highlights the need to identify and support them. Having worked my way through some of the e-learning resource, I was particularly pleased to see the following extracts, much of which looks extremely familiar...

Identifying a Carers Lead

The Carers Lead may be any practice team member – whether clinical or non-clinical.

The role of the Carers Lead is to:

- Act as a carer champion
- Complete the annual Self Assessment Checklist, monitor carer numbers and Action Plan points
- Collect and monitor carer feedback
- Be the contact point between the practice and carer organisations
- Update colleagues as policies and practices change

In Practice Support

Consider:

- Flexible appointment systems
- Home visits for housebound carers
- Flu vaccinations for carers
- Providing other carer services, such as a carer information board, carer information packs and/or regular liaison with the local carer centre

Confidentiality can be a difficult problem. Where patients with carers are competent to make a decision, consider obtaining a signed consent form to enable carers to share medical information with healthcare professionals where appropriate. Model forms are available from carers' charities.

Tasks that a Carers Lead might undertake

- Be an in-practice contact point for carers
- Maintain the carer register, monitor carer numbers and explore ways that the practice might identify more carers
- Develop links between the practice and local carer support services both in the state and voluntary sectors
- Source information for carers that can be provided by the practice
- Explore ways in which the practice might support carers better (including members of staff that are carers), and produce a carer support policy
- Keep colleagues up-to-date with developments in carer support both at a local and national level
- Audit practice activity to support carers, e.g. use the self-assessment checklist produced by the RCGP and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers [1]
- Seek the views of carers on how the practice is currently supporting carers and for ideas about how it might be able to improve support in the future

So do log on, check it out and share it with your colleagues.

Meeting of South Somerset Carers' Champions on 5th October 2011

It is always going to be difficult to get everybody together in one place! We did however have a very productive meeting on the 5th October. We had a catch-up on how things were going in the individual practices and discussed what support might help Champions in the future.

We then went on to discuss how the federation funds from the Carers' Champion project might be used to increase the number of carers on the registers. Some of the suggestions

were: a website, printing costs, Carers' Champion meetings, advertising etc. After deliberation it was decided that a good way forward would be to prepare a South Somerset Federation 'Pack' which can be personalised to each surgery and then handed out throughout the federation area to carers. We agreed to hold another meeting on Wednesday 16th November to pool resources - leaflets, posters and any other information that Carers' Champions currently hand out so that this can be sorted and then a standard 'pack' decided on. The funds will then be used to print glossy folders to contain the info, which could be maintained centrally to make sure that it is kept as current as possible and be printed off by each practice as required.

If any of you are keen to hold a meeting in your Federation area please do get in touch with me at clare.mather@somerset.nhs.uk and I will do my best to support you.

New report urges kidney teams to 'care for the carer'

Kidney care teams should ensure that appropriate support is provided to the families of patients who dialyse at home, according to a new report which highlights the massive changes that supporting a dialysis patient at home can have on every aspect of a carer's life.

Home Dialysis: Who Cares for the Carer? has been produced by quality improvement organisation NHS Kidney Care and explores the carer's role, highlighting the realities of life for the family members and partners of those on home dialysis.

The report (see: <http://mailshot.kenthouse.com/link.php?M=92670&N=1355&L=2620&F=T>) contains a series of recommendations for healthcare teams to improve the experience of those caring for patients who move onto home dialysis.

Positive Steps Diary

Message from Susan Hartnell-Beavis:

The Positive Steps Diary is produced by Speak Up Somerset in aid of the Mental Health Services in Somerset. There is a danger that this wonderful diary may not be produced if they cannot raise enough money to keep it going, now that their funding has been withdrawn. If you haven't seen one, you've missed something very special. All the artwork is produced by people with mental health problems and it is truly inspirational, and the aphorisms at the top of each page are very thought provoking.

Maureen Streeter has 1000 to sell across Somerset, and it occurred to me that we could get them into more surgeries through the Carers' Champions. They cost £4 each and if each surgery took 5 and put them on their reception desk I'm sure they would sell them quickly. If you feel that you could sell a few copies in your practice please email susan.hbeavis@googlemail.com. Money taken for those sold should be sent to Speak Up Somerset, PO Box 3484, YEOVIL, BA21 5ZH.

I do hope you'll be able to help with this as it would be a tragedy if the project has to end, both for those who produce the diary and those of us who rely on copies each year.

Carers UK Newsletter

Please find attached the Carers UK Newsletter which has information on Carers Rights Day on Friday, 2 December which has a theme of Money Matters, news of the new NHS free, confidential information and advice service to help carers called Carers Direct offered by NHS Choices, as well as events and information specific to Somerset such as the countywide event on 29th November.

Somerset County Council form E2 sent out in September – errors in contact details for Carer Support Groups

Please note that there is a change to the leaflet E2 sent out last month which unfortunately still hasn't been updated on Somerset County Council's website – Under Carer Support Groups in Sedgemoor and West Somerset the details for Bridgwater are incorrect: the group meets on the last Thursday of each month at Ivy house. Contact details for Wendy Preston have also changed to 01278 437424.

Any contributions to forthcoming newsletters would be much appreciated.

Keep up the good work!

Kind regards

Clare

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