

CARERS AT HOME

Caring often begins at home but many people never think of themselves as carers: they are partners, spouses, children, relatives, friends.

Carers are people who care for a family member, a friend or another person in need of assistance or support with daily living. They include those caring for the frail aged, people living with long-term medical conditions, people with a mental illness, people with a disability and those receiving palliative care.

As long as the person you are supporting is content to accept your help, then it's important to make sure that all the people providing advice and services are aware of your involvement. Use the word 'carer' to help others understand why they need to include you. And use the word when you need support for yourself. Your own health and happiness is important to the person you care for and also to the wider world. Please don't neglect it!



Royal College of
General Practitioners



John's Campaign
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ARE YOU A CARER?

Does someone living with dementia, confusion or frailty depend on you?

IS THE PERSON YOU CARE FOR LIKELY TO GO INTO HOSPITAL?

Hospital admissions can be unexpectedly difficult times for people with dementia or frailty but with your help, they do not need to face them alone.

In the past carers — even the closest family members — have been treated as visitors and subject to restrictions. In fact carers are the experts in the people they care for. They can offer the essential understanding that enables the person with dementia to benefit fully from the medical treatment they are offered.

CARERS IN HOSPITALS

Going into hospital can be a very confusing experience for people with dementia and can affect their well-being. It makes no sense that willing carers should be kept away by visiting restrictions. John's Campaign insists that carers have a right to accompany and support those they care for. They should be able to stay overnight if necessary and should be welcomed as part of the patient's team.

Carers have a right to be with those they care for but they do *not* have a duty. They need to think of their own health and their other responsibilities. Open visiting hours can help them manage all these.

Carers in hospital are there to nurture, not to nurse. They must respect the needs and dignity of all other patients and the professionalism of the hospital staff.

Most acute hospitals now welcome carers but some mental health and community hospitals have been slower to lift restrictions. Some hospitals use carer passports, some offer discounted parking and meals. Some have special support schemes such as the Butterfly scheme; others have carer liaison officers, rest rooms, information packs. These are not always obvious on hospital websites, so do ask.

If you wish to stay but are not welcomed, you should do your best to insist. Tell the hospital about John's Campaign.

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'FAMILY' CARERS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

Care homes and nursing homes are not hospitals, they are homes.

Their doors should always be open to family and close friends, who are needed as much as ever – and perhaps even more. People who are moving away from their familiar surroundings need their special relationships for emotional reassurance and to maintain their sense of themselves. The involvement of family carers is also vital to help the care home staff get to know their new resident.

While the best residential homes are welcoming, some can be less so. It may be up to you, as a family carer, to remember how much you matter and insist on your right to remain involved.

“CQC inspectors will consider how family and friends are treated as part of our assessment of services – we want to see an open and inclusive culture and a key aspect of that is for residents to be able to be surrounded by the people they love when they want to be. I would encourage care homes to sign up to the campaign principles and welcome family carers at all times.”

Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Inspector for Adult Social Care

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