

DEVELOPING A CARERS STRATEGY FOR BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION TRUST (BSMHFT)

Introduction

- This document is an addendum to a full report prepared by The Meriden Family Programme called, 'Raising the Profile of Carers within BSMHFT' which was prepared in January 2011 as a starting point for the development of a Carers' Strategy for BSMHFT.
- It is intended as the basis for consultations with carers in December 2011 and January 2012 which will be organised through a series of meetings with carers within Birmingham and Solihull
- These consultations should enable a Carers' Strategy to be developed and adopted by the Trust in partnership with carers.
- The document includes some specific suggestions in respect of training which are now being implemented by Meriden as part of the training it delivers within the Trust.

Suggested Guiding Principles to a Carers' Strategy

- *Raising awareness of carers and their needs*
- *Improving the involvement of carers*
- *Supporting carers better*
- *Sharing and providing information*
- *Working in Partnership with families*

Raising awareness of carers and their needs

- Provide opportunities for BSMHFT staff to raise their awareness and understanding of carers and increase their knowledge of signposts and carer support arrangements
- Help staff who engage with carers on a regular basis to develop the skills and knowledge to enable them to support and involve carers better
- Consider how carers might contribute to the training of BSMFHT staff
- Promote the role of Carer Leads: identify/appoint one in each team across the trust with clear responsibilities; establish a small working group (including some carer leads) to discuss and recommend the content of training needed by staff related to carers; organise an event for Carer Leads, re-launch the Carer Leads Network on a Trust wide basis and promote the Triangle of Care across all inpatient and community teams.

Improving the involvement of carers

- Meet with those Governors who are carers as a group to discuss the actions needed to improve carer involvement in the Trust particularly related to the planning and development of services
- Map the current roles and activities undertaken within the Trust at present
- Develop a Trust wide policy on carer involvement taking into account mechanisms already established by commissioners
- Provide training and development opportunities for carers taking part in involvement within the Trust. In particular this training might include new health structures, meeting skills, presentations etc.
- Identify new opportunities which enable carers to become more effective stakeholders
- Any involvement opportunities should be held at convenient times and venues, and publicised appropriately.
- Develop and agree a policy of involvement fees and reimbursement of expenses
- Clarify management responsibilities in relation to carers (support and involvement)
- Improve opportunities at all levels in the Trust for carers to get involved in. For example: encourage invitations to carers to attend forums, conferences, events, service review meetings, participate in recruitment interviews, staff training, research activities and communications and its development.
- Ensure that all opportunities for carers to be involved are communicated appropriately including through the Trust's internet website.
- Ensure that once agreed, the Carers' Strategy is fully endorsed and acted upon at all levels of management within BSMHFT

Supporting carers better

- Review all current carer support arrangements in conjunction with organisations commissioned to provide support to carers of people who use services provided by BSMHFT; make available updated information and appropriate signposting for carers and ensure that this is published on the intranet and issued to all teams
- Encourage clinical staff to be more proactive in identifying and supporting carers and encourage teams to have family sensitive approaches
- Seek to ensure that each team in the Trust (acute and community) has staff who have undertaken the Meriden 3 day Caring for Carers course and has rolled out (or has plans to do so) an education/support course for the carers associated with their team
- Ensure BSMHFT has knowledge of all existing carer networks (local and national) and support groups (geographical, cultural and condition specific) and makes this information available to carers
- Review the current policy in relation to carer assessments in conjunction with the 2 local authorities with a view to improving the effectiveness of these assessments

- Ensure all information is easily accessible, understandable and in relevant languages to meet the needs of carers.

Providing and sharing information

- Ensure that carers have access to a wide range of information to support them in their role and that this information is accurate and relevant
- Review the 10 information leaflets prepared by the Trust related to carers and ensure that the information is accurate and helpful to carers.
- Consolidate information into a pack/ leaflet which summarises relevant information in respect of assessment, support and involvement and which gives advice on where to find further and more detailed information,
- All staff should have access to accurate information about organisations (with contact details) which may be helpful to carers and ensure that relevant and appropriate information is passed on to carers
- Establish a mechanism for the on-going review of information relevant to carers so that it is accessible and accurate including information on the internet and intranet. Clarify who has responsibility for this.
- Ensure that staff are fully trained in the broad principles of information sharing so that whilst respecting patient confidentiality issues they can also take into account the needs of the carers and the possible role of the family in the longer term.

Working in Partnership with families and carers

- Promote the importance of the fact that carers are key stakeholders in the work of the Trust at both an operational and personal care level and encourage staff to recognise and support this concept
- Propose a framework which enables carers to contribute to solutions as well as identify problems
- Ensure that the approach taken to the involvement of carers recognises partnership working with carers in all aspects of the work of the Trust eg governance, audit, training, service development, recruitment etc.
- Consider establishing mechanisms to ensure carer feedback on aspects of the work of the Trust including having more carers as mystery shoppers
- Support the Triangle of Care initiative (as referenced in both the national Carers Strategy and Mental Health Strategy) which is being championed by Meriden in the Trust.
- Ensure that full account is taken and appropriate provision made for children and young people who are also Young Carers

CARERS' CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

These are the questions to be put to carers at the consultation meetings to be held in Birmingham and Solihull in December 2011 and January 2012. The answers given by carers will inform BSMHFT of the key issues that carers would like to see included in the Carers' Strategy being developed.

If you are unable to attend one of the scheduled meetings please complete this form and return it to:

***The Meriden Family Programme, BSMHFT, Tall Trees, The Uffculme Centre,
Queensbridge Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8Q.***

If you would like to speak to someone about this questionnaire please telephone 0121 678 2708 and speak to a member of the Meriden team.

1. Raising awareness of carers and their needs

- a) *In what ways do you think BSMHFT might improve the awareness of staff of carers and their needs?*
- b) *How do you think this might be achieved?*
- c) *What sort of thing would you regard as good practice in terms of staff showing a helpful awareness of carers—have you any examples?*
- d) *Do you think a Carer's charter would be helpful?*
- e) *What other suggestions or comments do you have?*

2. Improving the involvement of carers

- a) *How might carers be more involved in the care of their family member/friend who uses services provided by BSMHFT?*
- b) *What might be done to improve communications between carers and the care team?*
- c) *How might carers be more involved in the planning and delivery of services provided by BSMHFT?*
- d) *What do you regard as the key areas of the work of BSMHFT in which carers should be involved?*
- e) *What actions might be taken to ensure that the Carers' Strategy, once agreed, is fully endorsed and acted upon at levels of management within BSMHFT?*
- f) *What other suggestions or comments do you have?*

3. Supporting carers better

- a) *What are the key areas of support to carers that you feel could be improved by BSMHFT?*
- b) *How do you think BSMHFT should inform carers of the assessment and support arrangements that exist?*
- c) *How can carers be encouraged to attend the carer education and support courses that are being developed within the trust?*
- d) *How do you think staff could be more supportive of carers?*
- e) *What other suggestions or comments do you have?*

4. Providing and sharing information

- a) *What are the key pieces of information that should be communicated to carers by BSMHFT?*
- b) *How should information be made accessible to carers?*
- c) *How can carers be involved in the development and communication of information?*
- d) *How can the needs of different cultures be best addressed in terms of information sharing?*
- e) *What other suggestions or comments do you have?*

5. Working in partnership with families and carers

- a) *What do you think can be done to develop better partnership working between staff and families?*
- b) *In what activities do you think partnership working is particularly important?*
- c) *Do you think initiatives such as the Triangle of Care are helpful?*
- d) *Do you have any examples of effective partnership working?*
- e) *What special arrangements should be made in order to address the special needs of children and young people who are Young Carers?*
- f) *What other suggestions or comments do you have?*

6. Do you have any other points that should be considered?