



**NHS**

**Birmingham and Solihull  
Mental Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Family and Carer Strategy 2019 to 2022



# Contents

<b>Foreword by Carer Governors</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction by Hilary Grant and Sue Hartley</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Who is a carer?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Family and Carer Strategy: Five principles</b>	<b>10</b>
1. Identifying and recognising family and carers	11
2. Working in partnership with families and carers	12
3. Supporting families and carers	13
4. Sharing and providing information	14
5. Improving the involvement of families and carers	15
<b>Implementing the Family and Carer Strategy</b>	<b>16</b>
The Family and Carer Pathway	16
How we engage with our families and carers	17
How families and carers can get involved	18

# Foreword by Carer Governors



As Carer Governors of Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, we are very pleased to support and endorse the new Family and Carer Strategy 2019–2022. We have moved forward since the last Carers Strategy published in 2012, but there is still work to do and as governors we will play an active part in supporting the Trust to move the agenda forward.

We are very happy to see that this strategy shows very clearly how as a Trust we are engaging with our families and carers as well as the opportunities that are available for engagement at all stages of the care journey. It also sets out clear and realistic objectives that we can evaluate to check progress.

We look forward to working with the Trust as it builds on the work that has already been done in order to positively include our families and carers as partners for the benefit of the people we care for and support.



# Introduction by Hilary Grant and Sue Hartley

On behalf of the Executive Team at Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, we both endorse and welcome you to our new Family and Carer Strategy 2019–2022. We fully recognise the vital role that families and carers play in supporting people living with mental health conditions. Families and carers are essential to our service users, and their involvement and engagement can significantly improve our service users' chances of recovery. We also understand that the caring role brings its own support needs at times. We are therefore absolutely committed to the implementation of this strategy, as the involvement of and support for families and carers is a fundamental part of our service delivery.

This strategy builds on the work achieved as part of the previous strategy, and develops the original guiding principles. We are proud of the work that has been undertaken, but we know that we still have much more to do to ensure that the families and carers of our service users are always properly supported and involved. An important element of this strategy is the Family and Carer Pathway and Engagement Tool, which provides our staff with a framework to support the families and carers they work with. We also wish to involve families and carers much more in our Trust through involvement activities such as our experts by experience programme. By placing the voice of families and carers at the heart of our services alongside service users and staff, we can drive quality upwards and ensure that we are properly meeting the needs of all we serve. We look forward to seeing this strategy moving our Trust forward, and how it supports us all to work with our families and carers in an exemplary way.



# Introduction

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust is fully committed to developing and supporting the empowerment of families and carers. This strategy explains how our Trust will support our families, carers and service users, and how staff will ensure that our guiding principles for family and carer involvement are met.

Our Trust recognises that caring responsibilities can place significant demands on people, impacting on the family directly, and on friendships and social relationships. Caring for a relative can also have consequences for the physical and mental wellbeing of families and carers themselves. Often family members, friends and carers give all their energy and time supporting the person they care for. This means they sometimes don't consider, or place any priority on, their own household responsibilities, relationships or wellbeing. Young carers also have very similar issues around caring alongside the challenges of growing up which can impact on their education, work opportunities and friendships. We want to help identify any needs that all carers have, and to support their wellbeing wherever we can.

It is estimated that there are approximately six million families and carers in the United Kingdom (UK), of whom about 1.5 million are caring for a relative who are living with mental ill health. Legislation and government policies highlight the need to involve both service users and families and carers in service design, delivery, and review. Families and carers are essential partners in planning, delivering and improving services not only for themselves, but also to help improve the services for those they care for.

There is a growing evidence base which demonstrates that the positive involvement, support and engagement of families and carers makes a significant contribution in preventing relapse, reducing lengthy admissions to hospitals, and delays in transfers of care. Our Trust recognises the vital role that families and carers play in supporting people who are living with mental ill health. Families and carers are often essential to the service user's support, and their involvement and engagement can significantly improve their chances of recovery.

Our Trust works alongside many carer groups both at a corporate and divisional level and in a variety of ways, from sharing information to working on strategy and service developments. Some groups are strong and vigorous, others are yet to feel listened to and involved. Some groups have a long history of working with us whilst others are just beginning. We also work with many other voluntary sector groups in order to better understand the experiences of families and carers who use our services.



# Who is a carer?

The Carers' Trust defines a carer as 'anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, mental health problems or addiction, cannot cope without their support'. This care might be substantial or occasional.

It is sometimes difficult to identify with the term 'carer' because the person who is supporting may be a parent, a child, or a partner. The carer may not have to carry out any physical tasks for them, such as personal care or lifting, but the support they give them can still be both emotionally and practically demanding.

Our Trust includes a number of different services and we must ensure that we are inclusive and provide support for families and carers from all areas within our Trust, including:

- Acute Inpatient Care
- Dementia and Frailty
- Specialities (deaf services, eating disorders and neuropsychiatry)
- SOLAR (0–19 age group services within Solihull)
- Prison Healthcare
- SIAS (Solihull Integrated Addiction Services)
- Urgent Care (including our Psychiatric Liaison Service)
- Secure care (medium secure and low secure male and female and our forensic child and adolescent services)
- Specialist Psychotherapy Services
- Recovery (Assertive Outreach Team/Rehabilitation/Inclusion)
- Integrated Communities (community mental health teams).

We also recognise the particular support that young families and carers need in order for them to care for someone. Within our Trust, a young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family or a friend who has mental ill health or misuses drugs or alcohol.

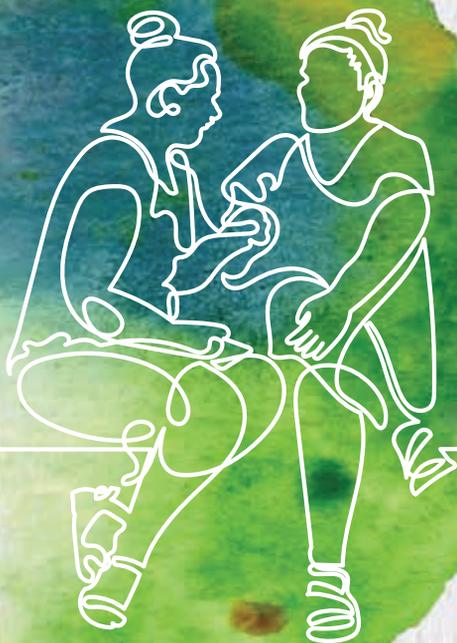


# The Family and Carer Strategy: Five principles

Our first Carers Strategy (2012) was developed in consultation with families and carers, and identified five principles. These were:

1. Identifying and recognising family and carers.
2. Improving the involvement of families and carers.
3. Supporting families and carers.
4. Sharing and providing information.
5. Working in partnership with families and carers.

Over the last six years we have made a number of improvements to the way that we engage with our families and carers. However, we recognise that there is still much to do. We have reviewed and refreshed the principles from our first strategy and we will consolidate and build upon our achievements to date.



# 1. Identifying and recognising family and carers

Many families and carers do not recognise their important role and will only see themselves as supporting our service users as a mother, father, husband, wife, son, daughter, partner, friend or neighbour. Identifying the person who is supporting our service users is the first step in ensuring that families and carers are provided with the right support. An assessment of their own needs will ensure that they receive the right support and be given information and advice.

## **What we will do:**

- A carer will be registered at the earliest stage possible and identified on the service user's record.
- We will encourage and support families and carers to identify themselves to our staff at an early stage.
- We will offer families and carers an assessment of their needs via our Family and Carer Engagement Tool and also facilitate access to a statutory carers assessment provided under the local authority.
- We will identify young carers and provide support for their particular needs.
- There will be training for staff in understanding the needs and roles of families and carers.

## 2. Working in partnership with families and carers

Our families and carers have told us that they value being actively involved in the care and treatment of their relative, partner or friend. We recognise that families and carers can assist staff in helping the person they care for and that this contribution is vital.

### What we will do:

- We will provide families and carers with the chance to speak privately with our staff so that they have a chance to share any information about the service user that may be important in relation to safety or any other concerns.
- We will consider the whole family and appreciate the role of different family members in supporting the person they care for.
- We will offer family-based interventions and support.
- When service users wish for their families and carers to be involved in their care planning and review, we will support this to happen. When service users do not want their families and carers directly involved, this will be respected. However, support can still be provided through our family and carer pathway.



### 3. Supporting families and carers

Family and carers should be empowered to feel confident about their care-giving and how to access and navigate care pathways.

#### What we will do:

- We will provide information, access and support during a crisis.
- We will improve the way in which we support families and carers within our services and enable families and carers to access external sources of support.
- We will provide training through our Recovery College for All for families and carers by ensuring that we deliver 'carer specific' courses.
- We will consider the impact on young people and young carers and ensure that support is provided to them.
- We will provide access to a family support coordinator who can be a point of contact for family members and carers, when the death of a relative or friend occurs who is under the care of our Trust. They offer information and advice on practical issues and signposting to external support agencies.



## 4. Sharing and providing information

Families and carers tell us that a major barrier to their engagement with our services is the issue of communication.

### What we will do:

- We will identify any specific communication needs of the family member or carer through our Family and Carer Engagement Tool.
- Families and carers will have access to accurate information, relevant to their needs, and this should be timely and written without jargon and complex terminology.
- Information, advice and signposting about entitlements to services will be made available.
- We will provide families and carers with information about the service they are using and contact telephone numbers.
- We will ensure that information is available to our families and carers in a variety of forms appropriate to their needs



## 5. Improving the involvement of families and carers

There are significant and wide-ranging benefits in involving families and carers in the delivery of care in the business of our Trust. It ensures that the 'voice' and views of families and carers are prominent within decision making in our Trust. The involvement of families and carers should be meaningful and measured not only by the extent to which people feel that they have been involved, but by the changes and improvements to our services.

### **What we will do:**

- We will support the growth of a positive culture where clinicians, managers, staff, families and carers can work together as equal partners alongside service users.
- Families and carers will be involved in the development of information and be involved in staff training and development.
- We will work with our families and carers to co-produce information and training sessions via our Recovery College for All and through our Experts by Experience Programme.

# Implementing the Family and Carer Strategy

## The Family and Carer Pathway

A key means of implementing the Family and Carer Strategy is our Trust's Family and Carer Pathway. The pathway sets out what carers and families can expect from our Trust. The pathway has five elements that support the strategy's five principles.

### Identify

We will identify and record the contact details of the carer within one week of the service user's contact with our service.

### Welcome

The carer will receive a welcome letter with key contact details and a pack with relevant information.

### Engagement

A meeting will be offered that will include an initial discussion around how the carer will be involved and included.

### Engagement and involvement

If a carer wishes to be more involved and included, a Carer Engagement Tool is completed which includes:

- considering level of involvement
- the care plan and risk assessment
- sharing of information
- signposting to support services and statutory carers assessment if appropriate.

### Review

All plans and agreements will be reviewed every 12 months at minimum.

## How we engage with our families and carers

We engage with our families and carers for a variety of reasons. Sometimes we may want to provide people with information, or consult on something and get feedback, whilst at other times we may want people to participate more actively, so that they can directly influence and get involved in our work. We understand that our families and carers all need different types of engagement at different stages in their caring journey so we hope that there is something to suit everyone within the opportunities we have available, from reading a leaflet to joining with us on our co-production projects.

### What we do

### Meaning

### Impact

#### Inform

To provide good quality information to assist people in understanding key issues.

People are well informed about our work.

#### Consult

To inform people about what we would like to do to improve services and receive their feedback.

People are listened to and their feedback is used to help us with our decisions.

#### Involve

To work directly with families and carers and other individuals to ensure their views are used in the design or redesign of a service or process.

People's advice and ideas are used to improve services and outcomes for themselves and others.

#### Co-production

To work together in partnership with families and carers and other support agencies to design, create or run services.

People will work with us as equal partners to improve services and outcomes.

# How families and carers can get involved







**SMOKEFREE**

We are a smokefree trust

[www.bsmhft.nhs.uk](http://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk)

**Main switchboard: 0121 301 0000**

Ref: PAL0039A-072019 • Review date: July 2022