



Somerset
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for carers of people with mental health conditions

Carers Assessment Service
Carer information

outstanding care
listening and leading
working together

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What is the carers service?

At Somerset Foundation Trust, we work to the triangle of care standards. This means that we believe for someone to receive the best support and care the client, staff and carers must all work together. The carers' assessment service is a team who specialise in supporting the carers of people who have mental health conditions.

We do this in a variety of ways starting with a carers assessment.

Below are some of the things we can do;

- Signposting on how to access benefits and benefit support.
- Getting a break, holiday or respite (alone or with the person you care for)
- Befriending services
- Accessing advocacy
- Support for physical health needs
- Education sessions
- Peer support via groups
- A listening ear in times of brief crisis
- Onward referral to appropriate support services

What is a carer's assessment?

Together, we will look at how the caring role impacts on your life. This is not an assessment of how well you care for your loved one – we know you're doing a great job. The purpose of this assessment is to make sure that someone is looking out for you.

During the assessment you will be asked a series of questions about your life, your caring role, your difficulties and your strengths.

At the end of the assessment, we will understand more about the things in your life that you enjoy, the things you'd like to do less of, and the areas you need more support in. Your worker will then be able to share what support is available to you, this may include support groups in your local area.

Employment support service

We know that the caring role can take up a lot of time and that this can have a huge impact on your working life. Sometimes employers are not as supportive as we would hope, and sometimes you just don't know what you're entitled to.

As a service, we offer our own employment support. This service supports you to understand your rights, to return to work (paid/ unpaid, full/part time), address issues within the workplace, access legal advice, and understand how work might affect your benefits and/or carer's allowance. Ask your Carer's Assessment Worker for a referral.

Somerset Recovery College

Somerset Recovery College offers opportunities to learn about mental health and recovery by providing a unique curriculum designed to increase your knowledge, understanding and skills to equip you with the tools to live a meaningful, productive and fulfilling life.

All the courses are available free of charge and are accessible to everyone in Somerset.

For more information see: www.somersetrecoverycollege.co.uk

Taking care of yourself

Time for you

When all of your time is put in to caring for someone else, you can end up forgetting about yourself. When you forget about yourself, you run out of energy and can't look after the people you love – remember that saying “Put your own oxygen mask on before assisting anyone else”

Your Carer's Assessment Worker will spend time encouraging you to do the things that make you feel good and help you to take care of yourself, but below are a few ideas to get you started!

A couple of minutes	A bit longer	Lots of time!
<p>have something nice to eat in a peaceful place</p> <p>Have a quiet cup of tea or coffee in the garden or by the window</p> <p>Listen to your favourite song</p> <p>Listen to a shortguided relaxation</p> <p>Text or email a friend to check in</p>	<p>Cut some flowers from the garden – a cup or glass works nicely as a vase</p> <p>Soak your feet in a bowl of warm water with some bath salts or bubble bath</p> <p>Go for a short walk, run or cycle ride outside or do some yoga indoors</p> <p>Practice mindfulness (there are lots of resources online!)</p> <p>Read a chapter of a book</p> <p>Phone a friend for a quick conversation</p> <p>Write a letter to a friend</p> <p>Take a short break from your caring role by wrapping up in a blanket and closing your eyes</p> <p>Go out for a drive</p> <p>Start a crossword</p> <p>Play some word games</p>	<p>Go to your favourite place for a walk</p> <p>Meet a friend for coffee</p> <p>Go out for dinner</p> <p>Go to a beach, lake or river – take a picnic</p> <p>Watch your favourite TV show or film</p> <p>Build something (even if it's just out of Lego)</p> <p>Take a long bath with candles, bath bombs and music</p> <p>Make something – a nice meal, a painting, sew etc.</p>

What can your GP do to help you?

Making your GP surgery aware you are a carer can be very beneficial, there are a couple of ways to register as a carer with your surgery. At the end of this information pack you will find a draft letter you can send to your GP or you can call your surgery and ask to be registered as a carer and they will talk you through the process. Once you have informed your GP surgery you are a carer a marker will be put on your record to make healthcare professionals aware. Benefits of being registered as a carer can include:

- Eligibility for flu jabs
- Possibility of flexible/priority appointments
- Double appointments for you and the person you care for to minimise the amount of time you spend at the surgery and trips you make to the surgery
- Supporting letters from your GP for you and the person you are caring for to help you access benefits and other services
- Information/Advice on services available to you and how to access them
- Some GP Surgeries run their own carers groups.

Most GP Surgery's have a Carers Champion, this is a member of staff from the GP surgery who helps identify, support and act as a voice for carers within the surgery. A Carers Champion can be a key contact to have within the surgery and can inform you of other services that may be able to help/support you as a carer.

Village and Community Agents – Village and community agents are employed by Community Council for Somerset; they are able assist people of all ages find help and support within their local community. Your GP can refer you or the person you care for to the village and community agents.

Please ask your GP for further information or look out for the posters within your GP surgery for up-to-date contact details.

Taking care of others

This section contains a few tips on what to do to support the person you care for when they are struggling with their mental health. For information on where to find more advice for supporting people with specific symptoms speak your Carers' Assessment Worker, GP or loved one's Key worker (if applicable). **If you feel that you or the person you care for is at risk, please see 'What to Do in an Emergency' on page 10 or phone 999.**

Active listening

The first step in supporting someone who is struggling is to listen, this may seem simple and a little obvious but giving time to listen can make all the difference. Active listening is not just about hearing what someone is saying, it's about showing someone that you are listening with your body language and your words. Nodding, maintaining eye contact, keep an open body posture and making reassuring noises and reflecting back what has been said (I'm hearing that your sad/stressed/angry) are all ways to show that you are listening. It is also important to stop any other tasks you are doing - turn off the TV, put down your phone, stop cooking tea etc.

Empathy and validation

Empathising and validating someone feelings and experiences can show that you care, that you are listening and help people feel less alone. Empathy is the act of acknowledging and understanding someone's feelings and validation is showing that you understand why they feel that way. Validation doesn't mean that you agree with how they feel, just that you understand why they might feel the way they do. Sometimes people worry that validating a person's feelings might make the feelings bigger and more difficult to manage, but more often than not when someone has their feelings validated they begin to calm down as they are no longer fighting to be heard or to explain why their feelings are there.

First aid

Looking after someone who is at risk of harm can take an emotional toll on carers and be a source of a lot of worry and anxiety. The most important part of supporting someone following an injury is knowing your personal limits, if you feel like the injury is too severe to deal with at home or they have taken an overdose phone 999.

Being prepared will also make managing stressful situations easier. Keep a first aid and burns kit somewhere that is easy to access – this will save time and make managing when you are worried and stressed a lot easier. Knowing you have the kit to apply first aid in time crucial situations will support you to feel more at ease day-to-day. Remember, if you use something from your kit, restock it. First aid courses may also be available.

If you would like more information on first aid, self-harm or first aid courses please speak to your Carers' Assessment Worker, they will be able to direct you to what is currently available.

They've said they can't tell me anything?!

The professionals involved in your loved one's care might say they can't share information with you. It's really important to know that, whilst they might not be able to share the specifics about your loved one, they can give you general information about the difficulties and potential treatment options for a condition.

It is also really important that you feel able to share the information you believe is relevant and important in your loved one's care, and their 'confidentiality status' should not stop you from doing this.

Triangle of care

The Triangle of care is a service which brings together carers, service users and professionals. It aims to promote safety and recovery for people with mental health conditions and to encourage their wellbeing by including and supporting carers. The approach was initially developed by carers and staff to improve carer engagement in acute inpatient and home treatment services and has now been adapted to be used across all mental health services.

As a carer you might be the only consistent form of support the person you care for has. You may well be there when a crisis occurs, when the person you care for is well and when that person needs help with day-to-day activities. You are also likely to understand their needs and condition extremely well. This can make you a vital partner in their care.

When professionals recognise the support that you are giving and see you as a key partner in care, then the person you care for is more likely to receive better care and support on their journey to recovery.

The triangle of care can help you recognise your own needs as a carer and give you appropriate information and support. In turn this can help you feel less stressed and pressured and keep your own independent and interests, ensuring you have a better relationship with the person you care for.

Supporting someone during difficult situations

We all experience difficult or challenging situations in our day to day lives, and the causes can be numerous and change from day to day. Whether it's the weather preventing us from going for a walk or having a flat tyre on the car.

As carers we also face the additional responsibility of the person that we are caring for and the difficult or challenging situations that they experience. This can on occasions be mentally and physically exhausting.

How we manage our own situations and stress

Breathe – although this seems obvious, many of us don't actually breathe properly, sometimes we hold our breath or breathe too quickly, and this can happen in stressful situations, and it is worth making a conscious effort to slow our breathing down as this will lower our pulse rate and improve our ability to think and communicate.

Seek help – it can often help to share our concerns and worries with others who might be able to offer us guidance and assistance, or just recognise that we're struggling.

Rest – it's important that we have a good sleep pattern and take opportunity to rest throughout the day.

Health and wellbeing – it is important that we look after ourselves with a good and varied diet, exercise and taking time for ourselves to pursue our own interests and recharge, whether it's a hobby or reading the paper.

Be realistic – as carers we often take on too much and this can be detrimental to our own health and wellbeing. We need to understand and accept what our limitations are, as this can reduce our levels of stress.

How we manage others situations and stress

Understanding – try and establish what the situation is through talking and listening, so that you have a better understanding of their perspective of a situation. Recognising that their concerns or worries might be different to yours. Check your understanding.

Calm – try to be calm in your approach. Speak softly and slowly, but without sounding patronising. Encourage the person to sit down with you. Be aware of their personal space.

Work together – acknowledge their point of view and use terms such as, how can "we" work this out, as this removes the control from either person, and demonstrates working collaboratively for a positive outcome. Depersonalise the situation, separate the problem from the person.

Be present – try to focus on the now and future as we can't change the past.

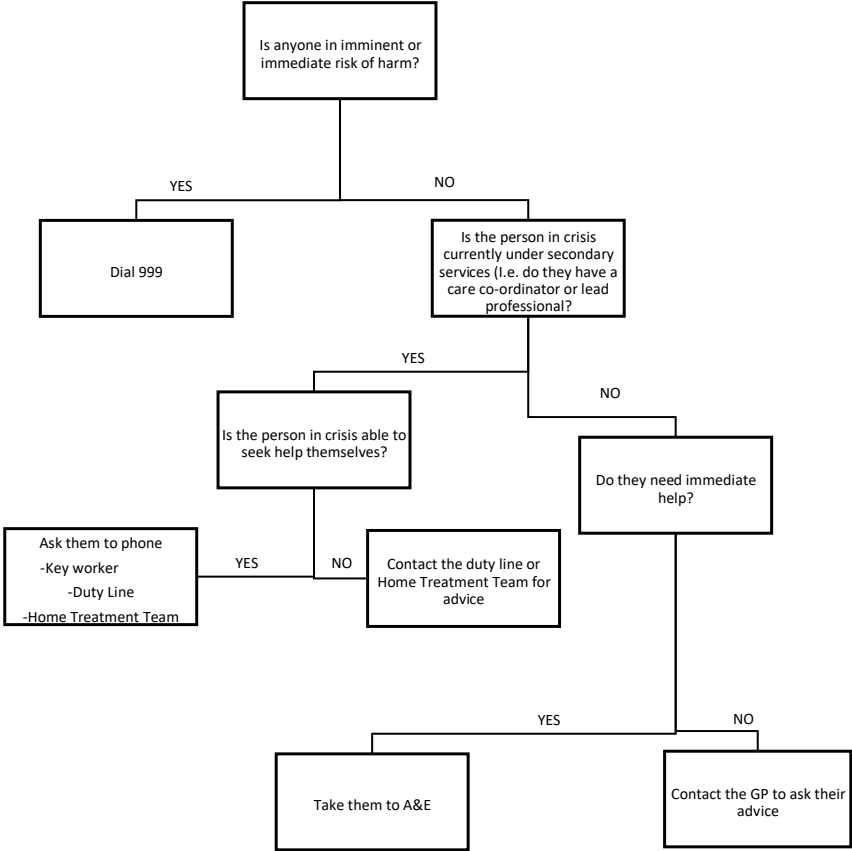
Communication – use language which indicates your openness to other perspectives. Own your views by using terms like "I feel ..."

Be realistic – try to recognise what is and isn't within your control.

Take a break – sometimes it is worth both parties stepping away from a situation in order to gather their thoughts, take a breath and give yourself time to regulate yourself emotionally, so that you can come back to the situation with renewed energy and focus.

Mental Health conditions do not excuse abuse, if you feel you are at risk or suffering abuse, help and support is available. Please speak to your carer’s assessment worker for support.

What to Do in an Emergency



Mindline 24/7 emotional support: 01823 276 892

Services you may come into contact with

<p>ASC – Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Adult Social Care provide personalised and practical support for people over 18. In Somerset this is also known as Somerset Direct and run by the local authority.</p>
<p>AOT – Assertive Outreach Team</p>	<p>The Assertive Outreach services are provided for people who find it difficult to engage with mental health services. Working proactively, seven days per week, this team engages with people with severe and/or enduring mental health conditions.</p>
<p>CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</p>	<p>The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services work with children up to the age of 18 years old who are experiencing mental health conditions.</p>
<p>Chaplaincy</p>	<p>The Chaplaincy service can you support with your spiritual needs.</p>
<p>CMHS – Community Mental Health Services</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) work across Somerset to deliver focused patient care to support the priority mental health need of patients. The CMHS teams work closely with patients, carers, the voluntary sector, Local Authority and GPs, to develop Care Plans to support recovery to meet patient needs.</p>
<p>Dual Diagnosis</p>	<p>Dual Diagnosis specialises in supporting people who have a mental health condition and substance misuse.</p>

<p>EDSA – Eating Disorder Service for Adults</p>	<p>The Eating Disorders Service for Adults (EDSA) is a specialist service embedded within the adult community mental health teams covering the whole of Somerset.</p>
<p>ESS – Employment Support Service</p>	<p>The Employment Support Service offers support to service users and carers with employment. They can help find job/ volunteer opportunities or support a person who is already in a job but may be facing problems.</p>
<p>HTT – Home Treatment Team</p>	<p>Home Treatment services are provided to people living in the community who require intensive, daily support and who may be otherwise likely to be admitted for inpatient care.</p>
<p>IDSS – Intensive Dementia Support Service</p>	<p>IDSS is a service that provides intensive support to patients with dementia while they are in a period of crisis. The support will be provided in the patient’s usual place of residence, or within non-mental health inpatient settings.</p>
<p>LADS – Liaison and Diversion Service</p>	<p>LADS provides a service to individuals appearing at Somerset’s criminal courts (Taunton Magistrate’s Court and Taunton Crown Court) and to those who have been arrested and are detainees in police custody (Bridgwater Police Custody), regardless of their residential address.</p>

<p>MAS – Memory Assessment Service</p>	<p>Early intervention and support services for people with dementia are provided across the county. These services enable initial assessment, provision of information, advice and support, including treatment, for people in the earlier stages of dementia. Support and advice is also provided to carers.</p>
<p>Open Mental Health</p>	<p>Bridging the gap between primary and traditional secondary mental health services. Using a holistic model of wellbeing.</p>

<p>OPCMHS – Older Person’s Community Mental Health Services</p>	<p>The Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT) for older people work with adults aged 65 and over who are experiencing moderate or severe mental health conditions.</p>
<p>Perinatal Mental Health Services</p>	<p>The Perinatal Mental Health Service support mothers suffering from severe mental health conditions following pregnancy (up to oneyear post-partum).</p>
<p>PLT – Psychiatric Liaison Team</p>	<p>The Psychiatric Liaison Team are based in Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital. If the staff in either of these hospitals are concerned about the mental wellbeing of those you care for, they may call on PLT for support and assessment of their needs whilst they are staying are in hospital.</p>

<p>Relational Recovery Network</p>	<p>Relational Recovery Network have replaced the Personality Disorder Service. They offer support and guidance to people who have experienced complex trauma and who struggle with intense emotions, difficulty in maintaining relationships, and struggle to manage distress.</p>
<p>SDAS – Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service</p>	<p>SDAS is a strategic group of public sector organisations who work together to implement the national drugs and alcohol strategies in Somerset.</p>
<p>SIDAS – Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service</p>	<p>Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service is a specialist service who supports people including children affected by domestic abuse.</p>
<p>SPI – Specialist Psychological Interventions</p>	<p>The Specialist Psychological Interventions (SPI) formerly known as Adult Psychology and Psychological Therapies Service (APPTS) operates as a tertiary service, receiving referrals from Community Mental Health Teams, Psychiatrists and inpatient wards.</p>
<p>STEP – Somerset Team for Early Psychosis</p>	<p>The Somerset Team for Early Psychosis (STEP) is a specialist service for people experiencing, or at high risk of developing, their first episode of psychosis. This can be at any age, however STEP prioritise those who are aged between 14 and 35.</p>

Talking Therapies

Somerset Talking Therapies provide emotional and psychological support to any over the age of 18 registered with a Somerset GP who are feeling anxious or depressed.

Compliments, concerns, and complaints

“To make mistakes or be wrong is human. To admit those mistakes shows you have the ability to learn, and are growing wiser.” — *Donald L. Hicks, Look into the stillness*

Compliments and complaints are important to Somerset Foundation Trust as they inform us about what we are doing well and where we need to improve. If you would like to provide any feedback, positive or negative, the first point of call is the staff in charge of your loved one’s care. If you do not feel comfortable or able to speak to the staff you can contact the Patient Advice of Liaison Service, the trust’s complaints manager, or the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Details of these can be found below.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service

The Trust welcomes all feedback from patients and their families. Our PALS service is there to listen to your views. PALS stands for ‘Patient Advice and Liaison Service’. They give patients and their carers’ advice and listen to them and help patients and their carers give their views to the services/teams that look after them. They can also provide information to patients and their families/carers.

How to contact PALS

For queries regarding Musgrove Park Hospital email:
PALS.Acute@SomersetFT.nhs.uk or telephone: 01823 343536.

For queries regarding community, mental health and learning disabilities services email:
PALS.Community@SomersetFT.nhs.uk or telephone 01278 432022.

The office has an answerphone which is available 24 hours a day and messages are checked regularly during office working hours. We guarantee to return your call as soon as we can.

You can also write to PALS at:
Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS), Block 51
Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton TA1 5DA

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The CQC monitor, inspect and regulate all care settings in the UK. They write reports that are available to the public in which they grade the care given on a four-point scale: outstanding, good, requires improvement, or inadequate. These reports can be found on www.cqc.org.uk. You can also raise any concerns by phone on 03000 616161, by email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk or by visiting their website and completing an online form.

Useful Questions to Ask

About the diagnosis

- What is the diagnosis?
- What are the signs and symptoms of this diagnosis?
- What is known about the causes of the illness?
- What is likely to happen in the future? Will it get better or worse?
- Where can we get more information about this diagnosis?
- If there is no diagnosis yet, when is a diagnosis likely? What are the possibilities?
- What help can I get with dealing with the behaviour / symptoms in the meantime?

About the assessment

- What assessments/ tests will be needed?
- What will happen during the assessments?
- What are the results of the assessment/test?

About care and treatment

- What treatment options are available?
- What are the aims of the care and treatment?
- What part will the key worker play in my relative/friends care?
- Who else will be involved?
- How often will you see our relative/friend?

- What is your plan for treatment? How long will it last?
- What happens if our relative/friend refuses treatment?

The family and the treatment

- Will family/ friends be involved in discussions regarding care and treatment plans?
- Are there family/carer support services we can be referred to?
- Are there any local self-help or carers' groups?

Getting Help

- Who do we contact if we are worried about something?
- How can we get in touch with you?
- Who do we contact in an emergency?
- How can we get a second opinion (you are entitled to this)?

Medication

- What medication is to be used?
- What should the benefits of this medication be – short term? – long term?
- What are the possible side effects of this medication – short term? – long term?
- How long will they have to take this medication?
- Is there any other medication that could be used if this one does not work?
- What signs / symptoms might mean that the medication should be changed?
- What will happen if they stop taking the medication?
- Do you have any information about this medication?

Hospital Treatment

- What happens if my relative/ friend needs to go into hospital?
- What happens if there is no bed available?
- How long will they need to stay in?
- What arrangements will need to be in place in order for our relative / friend to leave hospital?

- Can arrangements for Benefits be made/reinstated immediately on discharge so financial security/housing does not become a problem?
- Who will inform utilities etc. that someone is admitted / discharged so that there is no danger of non-payment summons being incurred?
- If it is not appropriate for our relative/friend to return home, what other options are available in our area?
- Who can advise / inform us about this?

Jargon Buster

AA – Attendance Allowance	A benefit for people over state pension age that helps with the extra costs of a long illness/disability, this can be a physical or mental illness/disability.
Advocate	Advocacy is about ways of ensuring that an individual’s voice is heard or represented and their point of view acknowledged. Advocates can support service users or carers.
AMHP – Approved Mental Health Professional	A professional who is trained and approved by the local authority under the mental health act 1983. Their role is to assess people for hospital admission along with up to two doctors they will consider if a hospital admission is deemed necessary, authorise admission and make the arrangements.
BAME – Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic	
CA – Carers Allowance	A benefit that can be awarded to carers to support them financially.

KEY WORKER	A health care professional usually a Community Psychiatric Nurse, Occupational Therapist, or Social Worker in charge of your loved ones care.
CCS – County Council Somerset	

CQC – Care Quality Commission	The independent inspection body for the NHS. It publishes reports on all NHS Trusts, Care and Nursing Homes and Clinical Care in England NHS and private. Its works includes routine inspections of NHS Trusts, investigating serious service failures and publishing performance ratings.
CPN – Community Psychiatric Nurse	
Direct Payment	A payment given to you by social services, so you are able to choose who provides you with care assistance.
DLA – Disability Living Allowance	Disability Living Allowance is a benefit for people who have extra care needs or mobility needs. DLA has been replaced by PIP (personal independence payment) however some people are still in receipt of DLA.

DOLs – Deprivation of Liberties	Deprivation of liberties occurs when a person is under continuous supervision and is not free to leave this can include making decisions for the person or restricting what they do. The person in question lacks capacity to consent to this.
DOLS – Deprivation of Liberties Safeguards	Deprivation of liberties safeguards are a set of checks to make sure that any restrictions put in place resulting in deprivation of liberties are appropriate and, in the person’s, best interest.
EPA – Enduring Power of Attorney	A document that appoints someone to manage your property and financial affairs.

HCA – Healthcare Assistant	HCAs, or support workers, work under the supervision of nurses to offer support, intervention, and care to your loved one.
LPA – Lasting Power of Attorney	Lasting power of attorney is a document that allows you to appoint one or more people to manage your affairs, help you make decisions or make decisions on your behalf. There are two types of lasting power of attorney: Finance and Health and Welfare.
MHA – Mental Health Act	The Mental health Act 1983 is an act of parliament which covers the care and treatment of mentally unwell people.

PALS – Patient Advice and Liaison	The PALS service receives all feedback from compliments to complaints from service users and family members. (More information on this further on in this leaflet).
PICU – Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit	Psychiatric Intensive Care Units are for people who are at their most ill. At this time, they may need more staff support to stay safe or to make sure their needs are met. A PICU is more restrictive in some ways, and this is to promote the safety of your loved ones. If you are visiting someone on a PICU it is wise to check what you can bring in.
PIP – Personal Independence Payment	Personal independence payment is the new disabled living allowance benefit. PIP is broken down in 2 payments, Daily Living and Mobility. This can be paid at a standard rate or an enhanced rate.

POA – Power of Attorney	Documentation completed by a person authorising another person to act on their behalf or help make decisions.
PRN – ‘When Required’	‘When Required’ Medication
OOH	Out of Hours

Safeguarding	Safeguarding is a team that advises staff on the health wellbeing and human rights of vulnerable adults.
Somerset FT	Somerset Foundation Trust

Contact information for the carers assessment service

For any more information please contact your local carer's assessment worker.

Alternatively, you can contact the team single point of access mailbox.

carers@somersetft.nhs.uk

Or

Carers Development Manager

Tel: 07774 207 458

Or

Deputy Manager Carers Assessment Service

Tel: 07810 186 741

Who's who and what do they do?

The road to recovery can be long and may involve many different people from different services. It can be challenging to remember who is responsible for your loved one and what their role is. Below is a form for you to fill in to help you remember who's who and what they do. The person you care for may not have all of these professionals involved so don't worry if you can't fill in every space.

Team or staff member	Phone number
Current Service*:	
Key worker/Lead Professional:	
Consultant:	
Support Worker:	
Social Worker:	
Name of Ward**:	
Named Nurse**:	
Ward Manager**:	
Occupational therapist (OT):	
Independent Advocate:	
Duty Line:	
Home Treatment Team:	

GP:	
Carers Assessment Worker:	
Other staff or teams:	

*for example, Adult Community Mental Health Team or Eating Disorders Team

**Inpatient services only

GP Registration Draft Letter

Dear Dr.,

As a patient at your surgery, I am writing to inform you that I care for

Please could you tag my notes to identify that I am a carer and add my name to your Carers' Register.

I would be interested to receive any information you have that would be relevant to me as a carer and wish to be directed to any support that is available to me (and my family) in the role.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Contact details

Carers Assessment Service

01749 836606

Monday to Friday

9am–5pm

D.Mitchell & L.Lovett/Apr22/Review Apr25

www.somersetft.nhs.uk

All our sites are smokefree



Braille Large print Audio

For translation into other languages or in Braille, large print or audio, please ask a member of staff

