

## Family Carers Guidance for Healthcare Staff

**These guidelines are to support the role and function of family carers who provide additional support to their ADULT family members with learning disabilities when they are inpatients in Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust.**

### **Definition of a Carer**

*“Carers are ordinary people whose lives change because they are looking after relatives or friends who, because of disability, illness, the effects of old age or a mental health problem, cannot manage at home without help”*

*Carers Wakefield District - 2009*

Carers must be recognised as partners by the health care team. The majority of all care for people with long-term illness or disability is provided by families in the community. They are often relied on as a matter of course to continue the medical regimes prescribed by hospital staff once the patient is discharged and returns home.

### **Guidelines**

1. The duty of care for patients with learning disabilities admitted to Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust remains with Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust.
2. Matrons within Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust have a responsibility to case manage patients with learning disabilities who are inpatients
3. Family carers are there to support their relatives only.
4. Family carers must be recognised as experts in providing care and recognising/meeting the needs of their vulnerable relatives.
5. Family carers must be treated as a valued member of the ward healthcare partnership.
6. Family carers will be informed of all risk procedures by the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust ward staff (Fire procedure, COSHH, out of bounds etc)
7. Family carers will be made aware of who is looking after their relative at each shift hand over and this staff member will be a point of contact for the family carer.
8. Family carers will inform the nurse in charge if they need to leave their relative or the ward.
9. Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust will ensure family carers have breaks when requested or ensure statutory breaks are taken as a minimum requirement.

Family carers must be shown where amenities are located (restaurant, coffee shop, chapel, somewhere to freshen-up).

10. Family members who are providing support to their relatives during the night must have their needs assessed and the ward must make reasonable adjustments in terms of breaks, provision of food and somewhere to sleep/rest.
11. Family members and Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust staff will ensure that there is an appropriate handover at the end of each period of duty.
12. Family members and Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust staff will ensure that there is effective communication with regard to the ongoing or changing needs of the patient. This includes, where appropriate, the use of the Wakefield District Health Action Plan and Vulnerable In-Patient Card.
13. Family members will be kept fully informed with regard to the patients care as part of the ward nursing team.
14. Established policies surrounding confidentiality will be adhered to at all times.
15. Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust staff and family carers will work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcome for the patient to reduce inequalities and improve patient and care experience.
16. In the provision of any care supported with potential risk issues eg moving and handling, cross infection, family members will work alongside hospital staff on a 1:1 basis.
17. Any untoward incident must be reported using Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust policies and procedures.
18. Discharge arrangements/multi agency discharge planning meetings will include, where appropriate, family members and carers.
19. Feedback regarding this guidance will be sort from all stakeholders.

**Document Control**

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