**This document has been created as an example of a Carers Policy. It can be amended to reflect an accurate and feasible commitment to carers at your GP surgery.**

**Example Carers Policy**

**Statement of intent:**

[insert Practice name] are committed to ensuring carers in our community are identified early, routed through to appropriate support and recognised for their crucial role as a partner in care.

8% of the population in West Sussex are unpaid carers. Carers are recognised to experience health inequalities themselves which could be better addressed with early identification and support. Carers are also a valued partner in the care of patients with long term illness and disability.

This document outlines the commitment that [insert Practice name] has in place for identifying Carers and routing them through to appropriate support.

**Carer Definitions:**

The NHS defines a carer as **“**anyone, including children and adults who look after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid”.

A **young carer** is under 18 and helps to look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem.

A **young adult carer** is 16-25 and will have particular considerations as they transition to adulthood, like going to university or moving out of home, and the implications for care at home.

 A **parent carer** is aged over 18 and provides care to a child with a special educational need or disability (SEND) for whom they have parental responsibility.

Carers should not be confused with paid or volunteer care workers or people with guardianship of a child without any illness or disability.

Caring roles can vary and include a range of responsibilities include emotional support, administering medication, lifting and handling, personal or practical care.

**Carer Lead**

A named Carers Lead will have operational lead for the implementation of this Policy, with the oversight of the Practice Manager. All employees of the practice, agency workers, locums and contractors are expected to adhere to [insert practice name]’s Carer Policy and related protocols.

Carer Lead Key responsibilities:

* Define what support carers can receive from the GP surgery and publicise it to carers and colleagues. Refer to the [Carers Offer](https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/5.-Define-your-offer-to-carers.pdf) section for more information
* Evolve and develop standardised ways of working to proactively identify carers of all ages including:
  + Information and literature
  + Carer inclusion on new patient forms, on website and general patient correspondence
  + Carer registration forms
  + Inclusion of carer awareness in staff inductions and practice meetings
* Proactively update and use the Carers Register, as per NHS England guidelines, to ensure it remains relevant and purposeful to the GP’s carer offer. See NHSE guidelines [here](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/coding-unpaid-carers-snomed-ct/)
* Educate colleagues on carer awareness and the GP practice’s Carer Protocols. Represent the needs of carers in strategic and delivery planning.
* Ensure the practice proactively refers to Carers Support West Sussex so that carers can have their wider emotional and practical needs addressed.
* Participate in the Carers Lead Network to keep abreast of guidance and good practice.
* Be willing to attend any training/information sessions that relate to the support of Carers within General Practice.

**Carer Protocol**

**Identification**

[Insert Practice Name] seeks to identify carers via the following methods [delete what does not apply]:

* In-surgery posters, literature and information
* Website, digital communication, and text message campaigns.
* New patient registration forms, which clearly explain the role of a carer and ask new patients to identify themselves to the surgery via a tick box.
* Trained staff who ‘Think Carer’ and will proactively look and listen to identify carers in the patient community including:
  + within routine consultations,
  + through appointment bookings and telephone communication
  + searches on long term conditions

**Carer registration and consent**

[Insert Practice Name] operate an up to date and effective carer register.

When a new carer is identified, a carer registration form is completed which will connect the carer and the person with care needs. If both individuals are patients, the relevant consents will be requested to share medical information and proxy access and their medical records will be connected.

Consent will also be sought to refer the carer onto Carers Support West Sussex for any required emotional or practical support, including a statutory Carers Assessment when appropriate. Young carers will be referred to the [Young Carer Team](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/young-carers/#young-carers-family-service-eligibility-criteria) at West Sussex Country Council

Coding will be conducted in accordance with latest [NHSE Guidelines](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/coding-unpaid-carers-snomed-ct/) using the following codes.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SNOMED CT code** | **Term description** | **Definition for NHS LTP delivery and associated metric** |
| 224484003 | Patient themselves providing care | Person who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid. |
| 302767002 | Cares for a relative | Person who looks after a family member who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid. |
| 1366321000000106 | Has Carer Contingency Plan/ Has Carer Emergency Plan | Carer has contingency plan in place for a situation when they cannot provide care and relevant information is accessible to professionals. |
| 199361000000101 | Is no longer a carer | When a person is no longer providing care unpaid. |

We will keep our Carer Register up to date and effective by:

1. **Having a named person responsible for the carers register and its upkeep.**
2. **Coding a patient as a carer** using the latest SNOMED codes / [guidance from NHSE](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/coding-unpaid-carers-snomed-ct/)
3. **Adding an Active Concern** (System1) Active Problem (EMIS). This means that it will be seen on the patient’s summary page and can be referenced easily by clinical and nonclinical staff.
4. **Linking the carer record to the person with care needs** ensuring that it is clear on both patient records.
5. **Seeking consent** from the person with care needs to allow the carer to have access to medical records and correspondence.
6. **Seeking consent** from the carer to generate a referral to Carers Support West Sussex.
7. **Having a clear offer for carers** – which makes your carers register purposeful to the surgery and carer patients. This could include annual health checks, flu vaccines, flexible appointments, access to medical information of cared for, early health screening. See ‘[Define your offer to carers](https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/define-your-offer-to-carers)’ for more information.
8. **Updating our records** – when the status of the person with care needs changes, ensure it is reflected in the carer records. For example, moving from ‘patient themselves providing care’ to ‘Is no longer a carer’.

**Carers Offer**

[Insert Practice Name] have developed a Carer Offer to make it clear to our carer patients what support is available to them via the surgery and our partners.

(refer to [Define your offer to carers](https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/define-your-offer-to-carers) to define your carer offer and list it below)

Our carer offer includes:

|  |
| --- |
| * **Defined health support** * flu vaccinations, * health checks, * screening for anxiety and depression. |
| * **Accessible appointments** * double appointments, * virtual appointments (telephone and video consultations) * A time window for telephone appointments * home visits for carers (if they can’t leave person being cared for) * An understanding and empathetic approach. |
| * **Emergency planning** for the person with care needs in partnership with key partners – CSWS, Carers Health Team. |
| * **Inclusion in care planning** for the person with care needs (where appropriate and with consent). We will recognise and value your contribution. |
| * **Sharing medical information with the carer** (where appropriate and with consent) so that the person with care needs can be effectively supported. |
| * Enabling **online proxy access** (where appropriate and with consent) to improve carer digital access to medical information, consultation records, test results and improve organisation of appointments and prescriptions. |
| * Include information about caring in **referrals to secondary care** for carer and person with care needs. |
| * Referral (with consent) to wider emotional and practical support via Carers Support West Sussex. |
| * Anything else we want to offer carers? |

**Staff Training**

[Insert Practice Name] recognise the importance that all members of the practice staff team understand who carers are, why they may need help and recognise the key role they play in co-ordinating the care and support of the person they care for.

At [insert practice name] all staff will be trained on carers and training will be incorporated into mandatory training for new starters.

**Partnership working**

We will work with key partners including Carers Support West Sussex, Social Prescribers and the Carers Health Team to ensure that carers have access to wider health, emotional and practical support. We will proactively engage with Carers Support West Sussex to keep abreast of guidance and good practice.

**Appendices**

New Patient form

Carer Registration Form

Carer Offer checklist

HR Staff Carers Policy