

BUCKLAND MEDICAL CENTRE
TARA SURGERY

Buckland Medical Centre & Tara Surgery
Policy Name: Identification and support of Carers Policy
Version 1
Latest Version Date: November 2018
Next Review Date: November 2019

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Policy Author	Dr Preeti Kaushal
Policy summary:	This policy outlines the appropriate actions for dealing with the identification and support of carers.

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to set out a simple, straight forward way in which GPs, Health Care and other Practice staff at Buckland Medical Centre and Tara Surgery, can identify and offer support to carers. The Practice will identify carers that it comes into contact with and continue to update its records.

Who is a carer?

A carer is someone of any age, gender, sexual orientation, culture or background who provides unpaid support to relatives or friends, who could not manage without this help due to illness, disability, mental ill-health or a substance misuse problem. Parents are included if their child has a disability or chronic illness that has substantial effect on day-to-day life.

Objectives

The primary objective of this Protocol is to ensure that all patients registered at Buckland Medical Centre and Tara Surgery with a caring role are identified, registered and signposted for support as early as possible standard of practice and care to maintain their funding arrangements. The Practice will seek to support carers by:

- Nominating a carers' champion [Peri Evans], who will co-ordinate activities in relation to carer recognition and support.
- Providing direct support to carers by showing understanding of their role and offering some flexibility with appointments.

- Keeping all carers under review to ensure that they are offered regular depression screening; influenza vaccine and other health checks that they require to optimise their own health and well-being
- Maintaining a carers' register to monitor carer numbers and explore ways that the practice might identify more carer.
- Audit the Practice's activity to support carers.
- Involving carers by seeking their views about how the practice is currently supporting carers and how it might improve support in the future. This should be done where possible, through current Patient Participation Group.

More good opportunities for carer-identification that could be considered:

- **Notice boards:** Where possible, Practices should have a dedicated notice board for carers, which has details of the Carer's Champion, display a poster asking patients to let the Practice know if they have a caring role; or to tell the Practice who their carer is. The Practice should also display a poster on existing notice boards, with information that encourages carers to come forward.
- a. **Letter and questionnaire to patients:** If the Practice writes to patients perhaps as part of the influenza vaccination campaign, they should be asked to complete a referral form if they are carers.
 - b. **Providing accessible documents:** The Practice ensuring that any forms or documents used for carer identification are accessible. When requested, referrals, forms should be provided in an alternative format, which is easy for the carer to read, understand and complete.
 - c. **Printing out or collecting prescriptions:** Reception staff could also endeavour when possible and appropriate to ask anyone collecting a prescription on behalf of another patient, if they have a caring role. They could also be informed about the benefits of accessing support and whether they would like to be referred to the SPOC.
 - d. **New patient registration forms:** The Practice's '*New Patient Registration Form*' should ask the two questions namely:
 - Are you a carer?
 - Do you require any support with your caring role?
 - Would you like to find out more information about appropriate support agencies in your area?
 - e. **Patients likely to need care:** The Practice enclosing a copy of a standard letter to carers and referral form, when contacting patients, who are likely to require informal care. Examples of patients in this group would include those invited to attend:
 - Free influenza vaccination
 - Periodic review of a potentially debilitating condition.

See 'Appendix 1' for an example of a *Registration Form* and 'Appendix 2' for *Standard letter*.

- f. **Mailing:** When possible a carer identification form could be included in mailings to patients.
- g. **Alertness about carer issues:** All health professionals in the Practice being alert to any direct or indirect indication that a patient might be a carer or have an unpaid carer. Once identified, the patient should be provided with the appropriate referral form and any other relevant information and directed to the SPOC.
- h. **Supporting carers with form completion:** All Health Professionals in the surgery being able to complete or issue self-referral forms, where they have ascertained that a patient is a carer. The carer should then be informed that referral to SPOC means further support, services, signposting or assistance for the caring role, where necessary. Practices will aim to discuss the benefits of carer-identification and referral to the SPOC three times a year as part of the regular discussion at multi-disciplinary team meetings to explore carers' personal knowledge.