

Carers Information Sheet 19

Carers of People with Mental Health Problems

A Carer looks after or supports a relative or friend who has a disability, a mental or physical illness, or misuses alcohol or drugs. They do this unpaid, and do not necessarily live in the same household.

This leaflet contains specific additional information for carers of adults (aged 18-65) with mental health problems such as Bipolar, Clinical Depression, Schizophrenia etc.

INTRODUCTION

Caring for someone with mental health problems can be a very stressful experience. However you as the carer have a very important role to play, and this is increasingly recognised by statutory services. There is plenty of evidence that if someone with mental health problems has a family member or friend looking out for them, they cope much better than those who are on their own.

Carers are entitled to a **Carer's Assessment**. This is your opportunity to talk through the impact of looking after an ill person with a professional, who may be able to offer you and/or your cared for person support, or put you in touch with other services. If you are caring for someone who has a high level of need or who you can see is deteriorating but in denial, asking for a Carers Assessment is one way to get your voice heard - even if they are refusing help. It should cover any need you have for a break from caring; information you might



need about the illness of your cared for person; where to get help in an emergency; emotional support to help you cope etc.

Speak to your cared for person's Key Worker or Care Co-ordinator, or to your nearest Community Mental Health Team (see below for contact details).

If you feel you are not being supported enough, or would like more information about your rights as a carer, you can contact Carers Lewisham to support you. We have a quarterly newsletter, and provide other support services for carers, e.g. occasional sitters, help with breaks, workshops, skills courses, counselling. **Please do not hesitate to phone our Helpline on 0208 699 8686**

CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

Help is available for people with severe and enduring mental health problems at home/ in the community, or once they have been discharged from hospital:

CARE PROGRAMME APPROACH (CPA)

The CPA is a major part of the Government Mental Health policy. In 1990 the Government issued guidance introducing an approach to provide a network of care in the community for people with a severe mental illness, which would minimize the risk of them losing contact with services.

What is Care Programme Approach;

The service user and carer should be involved in determining the care plan, which should be jointly agreed. There is only one level of CPA.

All clinicians working for mental health use the process of CPA as a basic underpinning for all care delivered by the team.

There are 4 essential components for CPA

1. Assessment
2. Care plan
3. Review
4. Care co-ordinator

The CPA is a way of making sure you get best support and care for the person's recovery.

It includes;

A full assessment of the service user's health and social needs.

A care plan—a written agreement stating what help you can expect.

A care Coordinator or a clinician who will see the service user regularly and makes sure you get the help and support agreed in the care plan.

Joint working between health social services staff.

Involvement of GPs and keeping them informed.

Regular meetings with service users to check how the care plan is working and that it is helpful.

The three Community Mental Health Teams (CHMT) are based at:

Northover CMHT

(for the South and South West of the borough)
98 -102 Northover, Downham, Kent BR1 5JX

Tele: 020 3228 0600

Southbrook CMHT

(for the Central part of the borough)
1 Southbrook Road, SE12 8LH

Tele: 020 3228 9200

Speedwell CMHT

(for the North of the borough)
62 Speedwell Street, Deptford, SE8 4AT

Tele: 020 3228 1200

HOSPITAL BASED SERVICES

Ladywell Unit

Community Services Manger, 3rd Floor, Ladywell Unit, Lewisham Hospital, Lewisham High Street, SE13 6LH

Tele: 020 8333 3000 ext 8212

Liaison Team

With Lewisham Hospital:

Tele: as above, **extns: 8423 or 8438**, or **bleeper 330 (bleeper 346 during night time hours)**

NEAREST RELATIVE/ NEXT OF KIN

The rights of a carer can be quite different to those of a 'nearest relative' or 'next of kin'. A carer may be the next of kin or nearest relative, but they could be someone else entirely and legally have quite different meanings.

Nearest relative and next of kin are often confused. In the Mental Health Act 1983 'nearest relative' has a clearly defined criteria and a legally defined role. Below is the listing of blood relatives defined in the Act in their hierarchical order as follows:

- Husband or wife
- Son or daughter
- Father or mother
- Brother or sister
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Uncle or aunt
- Nephew or niece

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES for CARERS

INFORMATION DAYS

SLAM in partnership with Carers Lewisham run regular information/advice days on a range of topics to do with caring for someone with mental health problems. These days are **FREE** and are held at the Carers Centre in Forest Hill. Topics covered for example are: Caring for someone with Bipolar Disorder, or Schizophrenia; medication; talking therapies; coping with difficult behaviour; what to do in an emergency etc.

For more information see the Carers Lewisham regular Newsletter, which has details of everything that is going on at the Carers Centre or you can call Carers Lewisham on **020 8699 8686**.

MONTHLY DROP IN / ADVICE SESSIONS

In addition to our usual Help Line service Carers Lewisham run a monthly drop in/advice session for carers of people with mental health problems. This takes place on the **1st Wednesday of the month, 10.30am – 12.30pm** at the Carers Centre.

For more information call Carers Lewisham.

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CARERS

There are 2 support groups in Lewisham especially for carers of people with mental health problems. They are there to provide advice information and support to carers.

RESPIRE CARE

Carers Lewisham can also help with respite by providing small grants to help a carer and their cared for per-

son to have a break. We also offer an occasional sitter service, when a care worker can be with the cared-for person for a few hours a month. Please contact Carers Lewisham.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS:

Building Bridges Project – Family Welfare Association

Support for families with mental health issues. Provide activities and practical support for the whole family. They also run support groups and a women's drop-in; counselling; practical parent support; a summer scheme and activities for children.

219 Stanstead Road, Forest Hill, SE23 1HU

Tele: 020 8690 3636

Cassel Centre

An independent, free counselling service for those who live and work in Lewisham. Counselling is provided by a small experienced team whose backgrounds include social work, counselling, family therapy and psychotherapy. It offers counselling for couples, families, and individuals dealing with a broad range of problems which come under the heading of mental health.

4 Waldram Park Rd., Forest Hill, SE23 2PN

Tele: 020 8291 3436

Grove Centre Social Club, Sydenham

For people with mental health problems.
7-9 pm Thursdays.

Tele: 020 8291 1747, 020 8857 0671

Isis

Advice and information on mental health services for African and Caribbean people. Welfare rights and benefits advice.

Self-help group for users and carers. Counselling service. Breaks for carers.

183-185 Rushey Green, Catford. SE6 4BD

Tele: 020 8695 1955

Lewisham Reach

Support for vulnerable adults with mental health, substance misuse, accommodation etc. problems - not in contact with other services.

Freephone 0808 168 0710

SAMARITANS

A free and fully confidential befriending service to anyone who is suicidal or despairing.

Tele: 08457 909090

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org

Saneline

Offers emotional support, crisis care and detailed information to those experiencing mental health problems, their families and carers. Open every day of the year (12midday – 11pm weekdays and 12midday - 6pm at weekends).

Tele: 0845 767 8000

1st Floor Cityside House, 40 Adler Street, E1 1EE

Web: www.sane.org.uk

Useful Web Sites:

www.mentalhealthcare.org.uk

Website set up by SLAM, Rethink & the Royal College of Psychiatrists with lots of information for carers about mental health issues.

www.nmhct.nhs.uk/pharmacy

Excellent information about the drugs used to treat mental health problems.

Mental Health Emergency

Tele: 020 3228 6000



Lewisham Carers Centre, Waldram Place, Forest Hill, London SE23 2LB

Tel: 020 8699 8686 Fax: 020 8699 0634

Email: info@carerslewisham.org.uk Web: www.carerslewisham.org.uk

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