Carers’ Hub Toolkit for Commissioners

Supporting you to map and plan local services with and for carers

www.carershub.org
Introduction

This toolkit has been designed by Carers Trust in consultation with local authorities and a clinical commissioning group. The step-by-step process outlined below can be used by commissioners in partnership with carers and the third sector to provide a snapshot of carers services in a local area. It is one of the tools which can help shape your consultation, audit and monitoring processes.

Although the terminology and legislation referred to in this guide apply to England, the rationale and process are applicable across the whole of the UK.

How was this tool developed?

This toolkit was developed in consultation with:

- John Bangs, Commissioning Manager (Carers), Surrey County Council.
- Anne Barrett, Carers Lead, Health and Social Care Partnership (South East).
- Frances Perry, Carers and Strategic Policy Manager, City of York Council.
- Jane Thornton, Chief Executive, Action for Carers (Surrey).

And piloted by:

- North East Lincolnshire Care Trust Plus.
- Plymouth City Council.

The Department of Health has provided funding to Carers Trust, assisting the provision of the Carers’ Hub website and this toolkit.

About carers and Carers Trust

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

Carers Trust is the UK’s largest charity for carers. With local Network Partners we work to improve support, services and recognition for carers in communities across the UK. We offer practical help, both in and outside the home, desperately needed breaks, information and advice. Together with Network Partners we work as one organisation united by a shared vision for carers.
Contents

What is the Carers’ Hub? ................................................................. 2

Why use the Carers’ Hub? ............................................................... 3

How to use the Carers’ Hub ........................................................... 4

What support can Carers Trust offer you? ..................................... 9
**What is the Carers’ Hub?**

The Carers’ Hub is a model of comprehensive carers support, developed by Carers Trust with assistance from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and funding from the Department of Health. The Hub diagram centres on the **outcomes of the refreshed National Carers Strategy for England** and includes the complete range of interventions that every area will need in order to deliver the outcomes, along with a three-pronged approach that can be used to inform strategic planning.
Why use the Carers’ Hub?

The whole-area approach of the Carers’ Hub can help you to identify the strengths, gaps and priorities in service provision for local carers and their families in relation to the outcomes of the National Carers Strategy for England, and will help you to prepare for the potential implications of the recently drafted Care and Support Bill. For clinical commissioning groups, the process detailed below can help to fulfil the duty relating to public involvement and consultation outlined in Section 26 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The results of the Carers’ Hub consultation process can be used to inform your Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies and other audit and planning processes, and to maximise your resources through the development of more efficient services and partnerships. The results can also be used to monitor local progress on strategy implementation.

Using the Carers’ Hub will help you to identify:

- Strengths, gaps and priorities.
- Which groups and communities are being served.
- Areas of overlap or duplication between organisations or services.
- Which of the National Carers Strategy for England outcomes are being met.
- Areas for potential partnership working.

The work will also lead to:

- Better communication with local carers.
- New and strengthened partnerships with other organisations in the third sector and health and social care.
- Clear ideas about how to realise the intended outcomes of the refreshed National Carers Strategy for England in your area.
How to use the Carers’ Hub

Step 1: Gather your tools.

The Carers’ Hub is available in a variety of downloadable formats including a high-resolution version ideal for printing in large sizes so that handwritten notes can be added …

or as a version with editable text boxes which can be used to make notes electronically.
We also have laminated flipchart-sized versions of the Hub, ideal for use in consultation meetings. Copies of this can be requested from carershub@carers.org.
Step 2: Consult with carers.

Use the Carers’ Hub diagram as a basis for discussion with carers. You may wish to start with the 17 interventions on the outside of the Hub and find out from carers if/how they think these services are being provided and where they are getting them from, as well as which services they would prioritise.

One of the ways this can be done is by using a flipchart sized version of the Hub and asking carers to attach post-it notes under the interventions that are well provided locally. Then use another copy of the Hub (or different colour post-it notes) to repeat the process asking carers to indicate where there are gaps in services. You may wish to ask carers to make notes on their post-its about the quality of services and who is providing them. Your results may look like something like this:
As a separate exercise, you may wish to ask carers how well each of the five outcomes at the centre of the Hub are being met. Again, this can be done through a verbal discussion or an exercise using post-it notes. You may also wish to ask carers to use post-it notes on the Hub to indicate areas they feel are of the highest priority when considering how to target limited resources.

**Issues to consider:**

- It is important to ensure that your consultation process includes all the carer groups you want to cover such as young carers, elderly carers, mental health carers, learning disability carers, parents of young children, black, Asian and minority ethnic carers, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans carers. You will want to pursue different avenues to reach carers from all local communities in line with your equalities strategy, including carers who have not received any services, as well as those who have. (For more information about identifying particular groups of carers, see section 6 of Commissioning Better Outcomes for Carers.)

- Carers Trust Network Partners, other carers organisations and condition-specific organisations (for example, MS Society, Macmillan or Stroke Association) will be in touch with a network of carers locally, so they can advise and support you in the consultation process. If you are not already in touch with these groups, you can use this interactive map to find local carers organisations that are Carers Trust Network Partners.

- Have you considered all the practicalities of carer involvement (for example, venue, timing, replacement care costs, online consultation options, involvement of social care workers)? For more on carer involvement, contact Carers Trust or visit SCIE’s carer participation website.

**Step 3: Involve health professionals, the third sector and other partners.**

Remember to include in your consultation process professionals from health services, the third sector and any other organisations that deal with carers. Professionals’ views about services may differ from those of carers, so the inclusion of both groups in the consultation process will help gather a more complete picture of services in your area, while encouraging partnership working which can help to make the most of limited resources.
**Step 4: Analyse the results.**

Use the information you have gathered to identify strengths, gaps and overlaps in local service provision, as well as areas where partnership working may help to make better use of resources. Ideally, carer representatives and professionals should sit down together to analyse the messages and identify priorities, so it may be best to carry out this process at meetings (for example, of carer strategy groups or multi-disciplinary agency groups).

It may be useful to compile an in-depth report mapping local services against the Carers’ Hub (as in this extensive report produced by the London Borough of Merton), or you may find it more helpful to create a visual write-up of your findings (like these PowerPoint presentations of strengths and gaps by Surrey County Council). However you choose to present your findings, the data from the Carers’ Hub consultation process can be used to inform your Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and other local audit work, as well as Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies and other local strategy documents (like the York Strategy for Carers or the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Carers in Halton and St Helens).

When analysing your results, bear in mind that the quantity of services needs to be taken into account. In some areas, services may exist but only be available to a tiny percentage of carers. For example, if you have only one carer support worker to provide information to carers county-wide, the service would not produce very good outcomes overall, even though the small number of carers who have access to the service might have very positive feedback about it.

**Step 5: Act on your findings.**

The consultation process will have given you a clear idea of what services are available in your area, any gaps that need filling, which groups and communities are being served, what carers’ priorities are, and areas of overlap. This information can be used to identify ways to extend existing services to reach more local carers and to maximise limited resources through the development of more efficient services and partnerships.

The practice examples on the Carers’ Hub website can help inspire ideas about how to implement cost-effective, personalised services to fill any identified gaps, and the three-pronged approach to local strategic planning can be applied in order to inform the development and implementation of the most appropriate mix of interventions.

**Step 6: Repeat.**

It is important to feed back the results to everyone involved, let them know what is being done and then repeat the consultation process to see how things have improved. This will establish a virtuous circle which will help services continue to grow and improve to meet the changing needs in your area.
What support can Carers Trust offer you?

In addition to the resources available on the Carers’ Hub website, we can also provide you with access to:

- Links with your local Carers Trust Network Partner.
- Ideas about how to adapt the Carers’ Hub process for your local area.
- Flipchart-sized, laminated images of the Hub for use in your consultation process.
- Promotion of your work through inclusion on the Carers’ Hub website.

Please contact us if you have used or are planning to use the Carers’ Hub to map services in your area.