Top tips in carer identification

What carer-friendly practices do to find out which of their patients look after someone who relies on their support.

- They ask patients if they ‘look after someone’ instead of asking them if they are ‘a carer’ because they know carers don’t always identify with the label.
- They know which services are available to carers in their locality, use examples to encourage carers to self-identify and have carers packs available to give to carers.
- They know that posters and leaflets are not enough on their own to encourage carers to self-identify; that staff need to talk to carers as well.
- They have a carers notice board, but instead of calling it a carers notice board they fix a banner above it saying “If you look after someone, this is for you.”
- They always have leaflets on display for carers at flu clinics and encourage staff to give them out to people accompanying patients to the clinic.
- They make use of their electronic message board to encourage carers to come forward.
- They include a question on their new patient registration and health screening forms which asks the patient if they look after someone or if someone looks after them.
- They include a section about carers in their practice newsletter or bulletin and encourage carers to make themselves known to the practice.
- They have sections aimed at adult carers as well as young carers on their practice website.
- They encourage carers to join their patient participation group and ask them for ideas on how to identify carers and involve them in the group.
- They include a note on annual flu reminders that if the patient has a carer they can also request a free flu vaccination from the practice.
- They’re in regular contact with their local carers service and welcome any advice and additional support they can provide.
- They make sure the whole practice is aware of the relevant read codes for carers and that staff use them.
- They make the most of opportunities to ask the question “Do you look after someone?” when someone makes an appointment for another patient, arranges or collects someone else’s repeat prescriptions or provides transport or accompanies another patient to the practice.
- They encourage their own staff to identify themselves as carers and offer them support.

For more details about supporting carers in primary care, email Carers Trust at primarycare@carers.org