

Find out what is happening locally and how you can get involved or benefit from The Triangle of Care

Newcastle Carers

T: 0191 275 5060

E: info@newcastlecarers.org.uk

North Tyneside Carers Centre

T: 0191 643 2298

E: enquiries@ntcarers.co.uk

Carers Northumberland

T: 01760 320 025

E: info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Gateshead Carers Association

T: 0191 490 0121

E: enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com

Sunderland Carers Centre

T: 0191 549 3768

E: contactus@sunderlandcarers.co.uk

South Tyneside Adult Carers Service

T: 0191 406 1531

E: STACS@cgl.org.uk

Carlisle Carers

T: 01228 542 156

E: admin@carlislecarers.co.uk

Eden Carers

T: 01768 890 280

West Cumbria Carers

T: 01900 821 976

E: general@westcumbriacarers.co.uk

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust Patient and Carer Involvement Team

T: 01670 501 816



The Triangle of Care: Carers Included

A Guide to Best Practice in Mental Health Care

An introduction for carers, family and friends

“When I attended the meeting, I felt more confident in the care that was being provided to my partner. It gave me a good opportunity to voice my concerns directly with his care team and also pass on unique information about him and his interests which they wouldn’t have otherwise known.”

Carer



What is The Triangle of Care?

The Triangle of Care is a service which brings together carers, service users and professionals. It aims to promote safety and recovery for people with mental health issues and to encourage their wellbeing by including and supporting their carers.



The Triangle of Care is an initiative by Carers Trust. Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, **unpaid**, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

To find out more, tel: 0300 772 9600, email policy@carers.org or visit Carers.org.

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The Triangle of Care is based on six principles that mental health trusts can use to include and support carers:

- 1 Carers, and the essential role they play, are identified at first contact or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 2 Staff are carer aware and trained in carer engagement strategies.
- 3 Policy and practice protocols regarding confidentiality and sharing information are in place.
- 4 Defined post(s) responsible for carers are in place.
- 5 A carer introduction to the service and staff is available, with a relevant range of information across the acute care pathway.
- 6 A range of carer support services is available along with a self-assessment tool.

These principles can underpin a healthy and productive relationship between the carer, service user and professional.

How The Triangle of Care can help carers

As a carer you might be the only consistent form of support the person you care for has. You may well be there when crisis occurs, when the person you care for is well and when that person needs help with day-to-day activities. You are also likely to understand their needs and condition extremely well. This can make you a vital partner in their care.

When professionals recognise the support that you are giving and see you as a key partner in care, then the person you care for is more likely to receive better care and support on their journey to recovery.

The Triangle of Care can help you recognise your own needs as a carer and give you appropriate information and support. In turn this can help you feel less stressed and pressured and keep your own independence and interests, ensuring you have a better relationship with the person you care for. It can ensure mental health staff are carer aware so that you don't get forgotten and lost in the system.

It can help staff understand the principles of confidentiality so that they can share appropriate information with you about the person you care for.

A carers lead on a ward or team can ensure information for carers is available and promote an environment that is sensitive to carers' needs.

If you have the information you need it will mean you are less likely to ask staff questions.

Information about support services can also help you with your own mental and physical health, enabling you to continue caring in a more informed and positive way.

The Triangle of Care delivers many benefits including:

- Recognition for you as a carer. This can help you feel that you are taken seriously and that the sacrifices you make are acknowledged.
- An appreciation of your unique knowledge about the person you care for.
- Information about the person you care for including their illness, medication and prognosis.
- Emotional and practical support – enabling you to have a life of your own alongside your caring role.
- Assistance with care planning and knowing who to contact in a crisis or emergency.
- Helping you to feel part of a team and less isolated.
- Helping you feel stronger, more resilient and better able to cope with caring.