

Menu of Questions for Carers supporting people with mental health problems

Working in Partnership with Mental Health Teams and Carers



It's okay to ask.....

Questions to ask

This leaflet is designed to help you get all the information you need about the diagnosis and treatment of the person you care for.

You may be able to get some of this information from most members of the clinical team involved, not just the psychiatrist, or from written information that they can provide.

If the person gives permission, the psychiatrist, or members of care team, will be able to give you information about their condition and care. Even where the person being cared for does not give permission for information to be shared with the carer, you can still have your views listened to and you can share information with the psychiatrist or clinical team.

Although you may not want to ask all the questions listed, you may find that they help you in preparing to meet the psychiatrist or members of the team. Not everyone will need all the answers to all these questions at the same time. You may have questions that are not covered in this leaflet. Even so, it should provide a helpful framework for deciding what you do need to know.

Chair of Royal College of Psychiatrist, Professor Crichton stated:

“In supporting people with mental health problems, carers play a vital role. This menu of topics provides an easily accessible aid to help form conversations about how recovery can be achieved and sustained.”

We thank Professor Crichton for continued support with our work with carers.

About the illness

- What is the diagnosis or problem?
- If a diagnosis has not yet been made, what are the possibilities?
- Why has this happened to them?
- Will the person I care for recover?

If diagnosis has been made

- What symptoms suggest this illness?
- What is known about the causes of this illness?
- What is likely to happen in the future? Will it get better or worse?
- Where can I get written information about this illness?

About the assessment

- Will I be involved in the assessment process, sharing information etc? If not, why not? If yes, how?
- What assessments have already been done?
- Are there any other assessments that might be needed?
- Are there any physical problems that have been discovered? If so, what will need to be done?
- Have culture and background of person I care for been considered?

Care Programme Approach (CPA)

- What is the CPA?
- What does the CPA mean?
- Is this person on the CPA? If not, why not?
- Will I be involved in the CPA?

About care and treatment

- What are the aims of the care and treatment?
- What is your plan for treatment?
- Will the person being cared for have a say in their plan? If not, why? Will I be involved, if so how?
- Who else will be involved in the treatment?
- What is the role of the named nurse/Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN)?
- For how long will the person I care for need treatment?
- Would talking treatments (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy, family therapy) be helpful? If so, are they available locally?
- Are there any alternative treatments to what has been decided upon in the plan?
- What happens if the person I care for refuse treatment?

Sharing of information

- Have you asked the person I care for about how much information they are happy for you to share with me?
- Will I be informed about important meetings concerning the person's care and treatment?
- Can I see you on my own?
- Would you like to ask me for any other information about the person I care for or the family?
- Can I tell you things that will not be shared with the person or other members of staff?
- Are the views on confidentiality of the person I care for clearly marked on their notes?

Advance Statement

- Have you asked the person being cared for if they have an Advance Statement?
- If the person has an Advance Statement, are you abiding by it? If not, can you explain why? What can I do to help?

Getting help

- How can I get in touch with you?
- How can I arrange to see you?
- Who do I contact if I am worried about the behaviour of the person I care for?
- What do I do if I am worried that the person is becoming ill again?
- Who do I contact in an emergency?
- What help might be available?
- How can I get a second opinion?

Carers

- What is the difference between a carer and a Named Person?
- I understand that as a carer, I am entitled to an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement (as part of Carers (Scotland) Act). Who should I speak to about getting one?
- If I have specific needs of my own, who should I ask?
- If I need help, to whom should I turn?
- Are there any local self-help or carers' groups that can help me understand the illness?
- How can I get advice and training on the day to day management of the illness?

Medication

- What medication is to be used and how?
- Is the lowest effective dose being prescribed?
Can a low dose be prescribed at first and increased if necessary?
- How often will the medication be reviewed?
- Will I be involved in future discussions about the dose or type of medication?

What should the benefits of the medication be?

- In the short term?
- In the long term?

What are the possible side-effects of this medication?

- In the short term?
- In the long term?

Medication continued on next page

Managing the medication continued

- Why have you chosen this particular medication?
- How long will the medication have to be taken for?
- Are there any medications that could be used if this one does not work?
- What symptoms might mean that the dose should be changed?
- What should I do if the person I care for experiences unpleasant side-effects?
- What will happen if the person I care for stops taking the medication?

Hospital treatment

- Does the person I care for need to be admitted to hospital? If so, how long for?
- If so which one will it be?
- Will the ward be locked ?
- Will the person be detained in hospital? If so, what is the process for detention and can I be involved? Do I have to give consent for the person to be detained? How can I be of help in this process?
- If they get short-term leave from hospital, when and how will I be informed?

Discharge from hospital

- Will I be involved in discharge planning?
- What arrangements will be made for the person I care for with regard to monitoring after discharge from hospital ?
- If I am not able to look after the person when they are discharged, what will happen?
- Am I expected to help with anything, especially medication?
- Do you know of any self-help techniques that will help their recovery?

If not admitted to hospital

- Who will oversee the person's care and treatment in the community?
- If placed on a community compulsory treatment order, what does that mean?



Yellow Card

Making medicines safer



A side effect to a medicine?

Anyone can report suspected side effects using the Yellow Card Scheme.

Visit:

[mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](https://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)

or use the free app. For paper forms call: 0808 100 3352.

If you are worried about your health speak to a healthcare professional.



Medicines & Healthcare products
Regulatory Agency

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Useful Contact Numbers

Carers Trust Scotland
Switchboard: 0300 772 7701

Support in Mind Scotland
Tel: 0131 662 4359

Breathing Space Tel: 0800 83 85 87

Samaritans Tel: 116 123

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
0131 313 8777 (professionals)
0800 389 6809 (service users & carers only)



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action for people affected by mental illness

