

The Northumberland Carers Forum has produced this guide to help organisations who would like to become more carer-inclusive.

We think that Northumberland should be a place where carers are:

- **Recognised, valued and included**
- **Able to access the right opportunities, information and support at the right time for themselves and the person for whom they care.**

Reminder - Staff must obtain informed consent from the person receiving care before disclosing any information to their carer or involving the carer in care discussions. Consent should be clearly recorded and reviewed regularly in accordance with your own organisation's procedures. Staff should however be encouraged to listen to the carer.

☒ 1. Identifying and recognising carers

- **Actively identify carers:** Ask people directly if they have caring and / or support responsibilities.
- **Value their knowledge and experience:** Acknowledge that carers often know the person they care for better than anyone else.
- **Recognise carers as partners in care:** Involve carers in planning and decision-making.

☒ 2. Communicating with carers

- **Promote wellbeing:** Ask the carer how they are doing. Understand that an carer may benefit from having a calm and welcoming safe space to go to when needed.
- **Communicate clearly:** Use simple, clear language and provide information in a format that works for them.
- **Communicate regularly:** Keep carers updated on all relevant issues.
- **Seek and respect carers' input:** Ask carers for their views and invite them to meetings or discussions about the person they care for.

☒ 3. Giving support and signposting

- **Offer emotional and practical support:** Ask carers what kind of support they would find helpful, such as group sessions or one-to-one support if available.
- **Signpost to services available to carers in Northumberland:** Help carers to access support that is appropriate to them. Where possible, offer to make the referral on their behalf.
- **Raise awareness of carers' rights:** Information is available via the [Carers Northumberland](#), [Carers UK](#) and [The Carers Trust](#) websites.

☑ 4. Offer flexible services

- **Offer flexibility:** Try to arrange appointments and services at times that suit the carer. It might not be possible for the carer to leave the cared-for without other care provision.
- **Localised support:** Where possible, try to provide support close to the carers home to reduce travel and time pressures.

☑ 5. Improve staff skills and carer awareness

- **Provide carer awareness training:** Provide staff with basic training on carers and the challenges that they face.
- **Promote a positive culture:** Encourage a culture of respect, empathy and kindness towards carers.

☑ 6. Working with carers

- **Create opportunities for feedback:** Ask carers regularly for feedback and use the feedback to improve services.
- **Involve carers in service design:** Involve carers when developing or reviewing policies and procedures.

☑ 7. Create a carer-inclusive culture

- **Adopt a carer-inclusive policy:** Have a clear policy that explains how your organisation supports carers.
- **Champion carers at leadership level:** Nominate a Carers Lead or Advocate to champion carers within your organisation or service.
- **Engage with local carers' organisations:** Link up with local carer's organisations to share learning and strengthen support.

🔗 Practice Examples:

- Hold a **Carer Information Day** – you could link this in with national events such as Carers Right's Day or Carers Week.
- Provide a '**carer information pack**' with key contacts, resources and information for carers
- Implement a '**Tell us you're a carer**' campaign to help identify carers early

Further information about support for Carers in Northumberland is available on the following websites:

[Carers Northumberland](#)

[Northumberland County Council](#)

[Northumberland Frontline](#)