



South London  
and Maudsley  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Families and Carers Handbook

[www.slam.nhs.uk/carers](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/carers)

This handbook is for you if you are supporting a relative or friend with a mental illness or addiction.

It will help you contribute to their care, and to look after your own health.

## About us

We are South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. We provide:

- mental health services for adults and children in Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark,
- substance misuse services for people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, and
- specialist services for people from across the UK. These include mother and baby services, and services for people with eating disorders, psychosis and autism.

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## Are you a carer?

Many people don't see themselves as carers. You might see the emotional and practical support that you provide as part of being someone's partner, parent, child, friend or neighbour.

No matter how you see yourself, you are a carer if you provide or arrange care for someone who can't care for themselves.

If you care for someone you could be entitled to help and support as a result of the Care Act.

## Our promise to you

Whatever help you need, we will always do our best to support you. We promise to:

- listen to you, respect your views and treat you with dignity at all times
- recognise you as an important source of information about the person you care for
- respond to your questions and concerns
- support you and keep you informed

If you ever feel we are not doing any of these things well enough, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

call:	0800 731 2864 (Freephone)
email:	<a href="mailto:pals@slam.nhs.uk">pals@slam.nhs.uk</a>
website	<a href="http://www.slam.nhs.uk/pals">www.slam.nhs.uk/pals</a>

## The care coordinator

This is usually the first point of contact for you and the person you care for.

As a carer you should get the name and contact details of the care coordinator and the team that is providing a service to your relative or friend.

The care coordinator will generally support you in three ways. They will:

- make sure you get the support you need (pages 7-9). This usually includes a **carer's engagement and support plan** and a **carer's assessment**
- give you as much **information** (page 10) as they can about the person you care for and how you can support them
- involve you in the **care plan** (page 11) for the person you look after as much as possible.

## Get in touch

Sometimes the care coordinator does not know that a carer is involved. If you have not heard from us, contact the team looking after the person you care for, or ask PALS for help (see page 5).

# Support for you as a carer

We can provide and arrange support to help make caring easier.

This could include:

- training – we run courses for carers
- information and advice – and putting you in touch with helpful people and services
- breaks – arranging for someone to step in when you need a short break
- arranging talking therapies for you.

## Working out what you need:

We work with you to make a **carer's engagement and support plan**. This means all the carers in patient's lives are identified, and their needs are recorded on our information systems. It can also trigger a **carer's assessment**.

If you are caring for someone who is using our services you are legally entitled to a carer's assessment, under the Care Act 2014.

## Get in touch

If you are a carer and have not had a carer's engagement and support plan or a carer's needs assessment, tell the **care coordinator**, or the team that is looking after the person you care for.

## If things change

You might find that things change for yourself or the person you care for.

You might have concerns about your health, work, money, or other family members.

Or the health or mobility of the person you care for might have deteriorated, or they might have issues with their housing.

Tell your care coordinator if things have changed. They can look at your situation again and see what further help or support may be available.

## Other sources of support

Ask the care coordinator if there is a carers' support group for the service that you are in contact with.

For more information about carer's assessments, call Carers UK 0808 808 7777 or visit [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org).

**NHS England, Mind and Rethink Mental Illness all produce excellent guides for carers.** Ask your care coordinator or contact them direct. Their details, and other useful contacts, are on pages 19-23.



## If only I'd known...

This advice is from carers who have attended our course 'If only I'd known' for carers of older people and people with dementia.

- Take time out. "This is a MUST! Not a choice!" You have to get out and give yourself some space and time out. Do not drop regular activities. If you have hobbies try and keep them up.
- Stay healthy. Get check-ups from your GP, dentist and optician. Tell your GP that you are a carer.
- Develop coping strategies. Do something different and take yourself away from the situation if it is becoming too overwhelming. Divert yourself if possible.
- Always try and keep your temper. Losing it makes you feel bad and it can have a negative effect on the person you care for. Take yourself away and cool down. Phone a friend!
- You have to face the fact you are not invincible or irreplaceable. It only seems that way!
- Get support from other carers. Join a carers' group if possible as you will be connected and engaged and they will help you look after yourself.

# Sharing information

We will give you as much information as we can about the person you care for. We also welcome any information that you can share with us.

We have a duty of care to both yourself and the person you care for. The way we share information between service users, carers and staff takes into account:

- service user wishes
- privacy and confidentiality of both carers and service users
- best interest of service users.

The person you care for has a right to have private information they share with us kept confidential. At the same time, sharing information is an important part of you being involved in their care. We need to get the balance right.

## Questions to ask

- How much can you tell me about their problem, care and treatment?
- Will I be involved in discussions about their care and treatment?
- Which aspects of their care and treatment will I be involved in?

You can also ask for the booklet “Confidentiality and sharing information with carers”, or find it on our website: [www.slam.nhs.uk](http://www.slam.nhs.uk).

# Care plans

A care plan is a written agreement which describes the support we provide to someone who uses our services, including what to do in a crisis.

A care plan should make sense, be helpful and reflect what the person receiving services thinks and feels.

We involve families and carers as much as possible in the development of a care plan.

We need to know what experience you have of the individual's mental health problems and what has helped in the past.

As a carer or family member you should be given a copy of the plan and should be invited to regular meetings to discuss the plan, unless the person you care for has not given his or her consent.

If you are concerned that the care plan is not being followed, you have not been invited to any meetings or you are not being involved as much as you would like, you should tell your care coordinator or care team.

Both you and the person you care for can ask for the care plan to be reviewed at any time.

# Getting help in a crisis

The care plan will include what to do if the person you care for suddenly becomes unwell. Within mental health, this is often called a crisis.

The care coordinator will talk to you about what to include in the plan. It should include:

- what might increase the risk of a crisis (triggers)
- possible warning signs of a crisis
- details of who will do what
- contact information for support.

The people that you or the person you care for should contact are below.

## During office hours

Call the care coordinator or the team duty number. Add the numbers to your phone.

## At other times

Call **0800 731 2864** to speak to the South London and Maudsley 24 hour mental health support line.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, you can also call the police or ambulance service on 999, or go to your nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency (A&E). They have an emergency mental health team.

**More information:** [www.slam.nhs.uk/crisis](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/crisis)

# Types of treatment

This can include talking therapies, occupational therapy, medication and work to improve physical health. Here are some brief descriptions of treatments.

## Talking therapies

These involve talking in groups, one to one or with families and partners, and sometimes include trying things out between meetings.

Talking therapies can help people cope with anxiety, stress, depression, obsessions, traumatic life experiences, long term emotional problems and psychosis.

## Medication

Medication can help people with mental health issues to cope better and to benefit from other treatment.

Ask us if you have any general questions or concerns about benefits and risks, side-effects or anything else.

You can also:

- speak to a pharmacist or your GP
- check the patient information leaflet that comes with the medication
- visit the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or call 111.

**In an emergency** (see next page):

## **If you think the person you care for is having a severe reaction to their medication:**

- call the team who is caring for them and ask to speak to the duty doctor, or
- call the NHS helpline on 111, or
- go direct to A&E at your local hospital.

## **Occupational therapy**

Occupational therapists provide practical support so people can do activities (or occupations) that matter to them, and manage daily life in their own homes.

Activities take place on wards and at home, both individually and in groups. They might include cooking, art, creative writing, music or gardening. Occupational therapists can also support people who want to work, volunteer or find suitable leisure activities.

## **More information**

Ask us if you have any questions about the aims of the treatment, who and what will be involved, or anything else. You can also:

- visit [www.slam.nhs.uk/carers](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/carers) or
- contact PALS (see back page)
- check the useful contacts on pages 22-23

# Hospital admissions

Most people are looked after in the community or at home. Some people need a stay in hospital.

People are admitted to hospital either informally or on a section of the Mental Health Act. An informal patient can leave the hospital at any time and is not obliged to take medication or accept treatment.

If a person is in hospital under a section of the act they need medical permission to leave the ward (called section 17 leave) and may be expected to take medication and treatment.

See the next pages for more information about the Mental Health Act.

## Leaving hospital

Before leaving hospital, family and carers should be involved with the care team in drawing up a discharge plan. The plan should include a relapse prevention plan which makes sure everyone knows what to do if the person's mental health deteriorates again.

A small number of sectioned patients leave hospital under community treatment orders. These are part of the Mental Health Act and allow someone to be taken back to hospital if necessary.

# The Mental Health Act

The Mental Health Act is a law. If someone is unwilling to go to hospital and considered a risk to themselves or others, it might be necessary to use sections of this law to detain them in hospital. This is known as being sectioned.

## Nearest relative

The 'nearest relative' is a legal term. It is not the same as next of kin. If you are the nearest relative you have certain rights under the Mental Health Act.

For example, you can ask that the person you care for has a Mental Health Act assessment which may lead to their admission to hospital. You can also ask that they be discharged from hospital and you have the right to information about their discharge from hospital (unless the patient requests otherwise).

## Main sections

People are usually detained in hospital under one of the following sections of the Mental Health Act.

### Section 2

The main purpose of a Section 2 is to assess someone. It lasts for up to 28 days. Two doctors and an approved mental health professional decide when someone is put on Section 2. A senior doctor known as a responsible clinician will be in charge of their care and treatment.



## **Section 3**

The main purpose of a Section 3 is to allow more time to effectively treat someone for their mental health problem. It lasts for up to six months. Two doctors and an approved mental health professional decide when someone is put on a Section 3. A responsible clinician will be in charge of their care and treatment. In a small number of cases a Section 3 will be extended.

## **Section 4**

If someone comes to hospital under a Section 4 it means the approved mental health professional assessing them was very concerned about them and needed to act quickly. Section 4 means only one doctor saw them and it only lasts for up to 72 hours. A Section 4 is usually followed by a Section 2 or a Section 3.

## **Section 5(2)**

If someone comes into hospital without being on a section, they are an informal or voluntary patient. If they want to leave and this is not considered safe or appropriate, Section 5(2) can be used by the doctor. It lasts for 72 hours and allows for a decision on further care for example under a Section 2 or 3. Section 5(2) is sometimes called a 'doctor's holding power'.

## **Section 5(4)**

If a doctor was not available to use Section 5(2) a nurse may stop a patient leaving by placing them under a Section 5(4). This power lasts for up to 6 hours ending when a doctor assesses the patient. This is sometimes called a 'nurse's holding power'.

## **Section 136**

A small number of people are brought to hospital under Section 136. This is a power that can be used by a police officer if they are concerned about the way someone is behaving in a public place.

Locally, people detained under a Section 136 are taken to the place of safety suite at the Maudsley Hospital. Once there, they are assessed by a doctor and an approved mental health professional.

## **Community Treatment Orders**

Some patients under Section 3 can leave hospital and carry on receiving treatment in the community. A patient on a Community Treatment Order needs to keep to particular conditions and can be recalled to hospital if there are concerns about them. A Community Treatment Order lasts for up to six months and might be renewed.

## **Further information**

There is a more detailed leaflet available for each section of the Mental Health Act. These explain the detained person's rights including their rights of appeal and advocacy services.

# Useful contacts

Local and national sources of information, advice and support for carers.

## Local contacts

The care coordinator will be able to tell you if there is a carers' support group you can use. They can also put you in touch with other organisations.

### **Recovery College**

Training and support for people with mental health difficulties and their supporters (carers, family and friends).

call: 020 3228 3643

email: [hello@slamrecoverycollege.co.uk](mailto:hello@slamrecoverycollege.co.uk)

[www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk](http://www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk)

## Croydon

### **Croydon Council**

call: 020 8726 6000

[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)

### **Carers Support Centre**

call: 020 8649 9339

email: [info@carersinfo.org.uk](mailto:info@carersinfo.org.uk)

[www.carersinfo.org.uk](http://www.carersinfo.org.uk)

Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm

### **Mind in Croydon**

call: 020 8668 2210

email: [admin@mindincroydon.org.uk](mailto:admin@mindincroydon.org.uk)

[www.mindincroydon.org.uk](http://www.mindincroydon.org.uk)

## Lambeth

### **Lambeth Council**

call: 020 7926 1000

email: [infoservice@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:infoservice@lambeth.gov.uk)

[www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk)

### **Lambeth Carers Hub**

call: 020 7346 6800

email: [connect@carershub.org.uk](mailto:connect@carershub.org.uk)

[www.carershub.org.uk](http://www.carershub.org.uk)

### **Lambeth and Southwark Mind**

call: 020 7501 9203

email: [info@lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk](mailto:info@lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk)

[www.lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk](http://www.lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk)

## Lewisham

### **Lewisham Council**

call: 020 8314 6000

[www.lewisham.gov.uk](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk)

### **Carers Lewisham**

call: 020 8699 8686

email: [info@carerslewisham.org.uk](mailto:info@carerslewisham.org.uk)

[www.carerslewisham.org.uk](http://www.carerslewisham.org.uk)

### **Family Health ISIS**

Supports people of African and African-Caribbean descent who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

call: 020 8695 1955

email: [centre@familyhealthisis.org.uk](mailto:centre@familyhealthisis.org.uk)

[www.familyhealthisis.org.uk](http://www.familyhealthisis.org.uk)

## **Southwark**

### **Southwark Council**

call: 020 7525 5000

[www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk)

### **Southwark MIND**

call: 020 7358 7030

email: [info@lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk](mailto:info@lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk)

[www.lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk](http://www.lambethandsouthwarkmind.org.uk)

### **Southwark Carers**

call: 020 7708 4497

email: [info@southwarkcarers.org.uk](mailto:info@southwarkcarers.org.uk)

[www.southwarkcarers.org.uk](http://www.southwarkcarers.org.uk)

### **Southwark Wellbeing Hub**

“Taking the stress out of finding support”

call: 020 3751 9684

text: ‘HUB1’ and your query to 82727

email: [southwarkhub@together-uk.org](mailto:southwarkhub@together-uk.org)

[www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub](http://www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub)

## National contacts

Information, advice and support for carers.

### **Alzheimer's Society**

Dementia charity  
call: 0300 222 11 22  
[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

### **Carers Trust**

call: 0300 772 9600  
[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

### **Carers UK**

call: 0808 808 7777  
[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

### **Child Line**

call: 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **The Mix**

For people aged under 25, including young carers.  
call: 0808 808 4994  
[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

### **NHS**

24 hour support and advice  
call: 111  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Mind**

Mental health charity  
call: 0300 123 3393  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Rethink Mental Illness**

call: 0300 5000 927

[www.rethink.org.uk](http://www.rethink.org.uk)

**Royal College of Psychiatrists**

Professional body for psychiatrists

[www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

**Samaritans**

24 hour helpline

call: 116 123

email: [jo@samaritans.org.uk](mailto:jo@samaritans.org.uk)

text: 07725 90 90 90

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**SANE**

Mental health charity

Call: 0300 304 7000

[www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

# Get involved

Help us improve and deliver our services.

You can do this in a number of ways:

- fill out a survey – ask for a friends and family test if you are not given one
- share your concerns, complaints and compliments (see next page)
- volunteer – opportunities include helping with gardening, reception, peer support and befriending projects
- join the involvement register – this might mean you help to deliver training, sit on interview panels or offer your views at committees and groups
- become a member of our organisation – South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. Members support us on a voluntary basis and provide us with feedback, local knowledge and support.
- stand for election as a carer representative on our Council of Governors.

To find out more about ways to get involved, visit [www.slam.nhs.uk/getinvolved](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/getinvolved) or contact PALS (see back page).



## Concerns or complaints

Please tell us if you have any concerns or complaints. We want you and the person you care for to get what you need.

- **Speak to your care coordinator**, or someone in the team that is looking after the person you care for. This is usually the quickest and easiest way to resolve any issues.
- **Contact PALS** (our Patient Advice and Liaison Service) for an informal discussion. They provide advice and information and can help to improve the quality of care.
  - phone: **0800 731 2864** (Freephone)
  - email: [pals@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@slam.nhs.uk)
  - website: [www.slam.nhs.uk/pals](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/pals)
- **Contact our complaints team**, if you want to make a formal complaint.
  - phone: **020 3228 2444**
  - email: [complaints@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@slam.nhs.uk)
  - website: [www.slam.nhs.uk/complaints](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/complaints)

## Compliments

We also want to hear if something has gone well. This can help us spread good practice in the trust. Please tell us if you are pleased with the care that we have provided.

**Notes:**

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Please ask your care coordinator if you need this information in large print or another format or language

## **Main trust contacts:**

### **Switchboard:**

020 3228 6000

[www.slam.nhs.uk](http://www.slam.nhs.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service:**

0800 731 2864 (Freephone)

[pals@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@slam.nhs.uk)

[www.slam.nhs.uk/pals](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/pals)

### **24 hour Mental Health Support Line:**

0800 731 2864 (choose option 1)

[www.slam.nhs.uk/crisis](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/crisis)

[www.slam.nhs.uk/carers](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/carers)