



NHS England Commitment to Carers End of Year Progress Summary 2014/2015

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Description	Carers are a hugely important asset to the NHS and to the people whom they provide care. The document is update report on the progress made against the 37 commitments that NHS England made to support carers, reflecting on what they were told following consultation with carers at a number of engagement events.
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Document Status

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The National Health Service Commissioning Board was established on 1 October 2012 as an executive non-departmental public body. Since 1 April 2013, the National Health Service Commissioning Board has used the name NHS England for operational purposes.

Promoting equality and addressing health inequalities are at the heart of NHS England's values. Throughout the development of the policies and processes cited in this document, we have:

- *Given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as cited under the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not share it; and*
- *Given regard to the need to reduce inequalities between patients in access to, and outcomes from healthcare services and to ensure services are provided in an integrated way where this might reduce health inequalities.*

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1 Introduction

The five and a half million carers in England make a critical and underappreciated contribution not only to loved ones, neighbours and friends, but to the very sustainability of the NHS itself. In May 2014, NHS England published its Commitment to Carers to give them the recognition and support they need to provide invaluable care for loved ones.

This brief summary provides a review of the progress achieved against the commitments to carers that NHS England made last year. It will demonstrate that we have made a good start to our journey, but we also recognise that there is still more work to be done. NHS England remains committed to continuing this work to support carers with our partners in 2015/16. We would like to thank all the carers and carer organisations who have contributed their valuable knowledge and experience to this process and our achievements so far and we look forward to their continued support going forward.

There are [37 commitments](#) spread across eight key priorities - which include raising the profile of carers, education and training, person-centered coordinated care and primary care - which have been developed in partnership with carers, patients, partner organisations and care professionals over the past few months.

This document sets out a series of commitments to carers. It reflects what NHS England has heard from carers over the past three months during a number of engagement events. Whilst the commitments have been well-received by carers organisations, we are clear that this document and the commitments within, simply represent the start of a journey and a step in the right direction. We will keep listening and refining our commitments. Ultimately, we want to improve the quality of life for carers and the people for whom they care by supporting what carers have told us is important to them.

The summary table at the end of this commentary show that 32 of the commitments have either been completed and will be continued to be monitored or the initial action is complete and further work will be required in 2015/16 and 5 commitments are still ongoing into work streams for 2015/16.

Carers are hugely important to the NHS, their importance and value is recognised in NHS England's Five Year Forward View which commits the NHS to find new ways to support carers. The Commitment to Carers document was published in May 2014 and sets out NHS England's commitment to carers and is based on what carers have said is important to them. Carers are also a directorate priority for the Nursing and Medical Directorates for 2015/16.

The commitments have been overseen by a delivery group comprising of carers organisations and they have agreed the content of this report. In line with transparency, this document provides an end of year report where progress has been made and what further action is needed.

2 Priorities

2.1 Priority 1: Raising the profile of carers

Carers are often referred to as a 'hidden army'. Raising the profile of carers is the first step to better support by encouraging carers to identify themselves and avoid taking their contribution for granted. This year, NHS England has undertaken a number of activities to raise the profile of carers in general and for specific groups of carers. For example: the NHS Five Year Forward View, published in October 2014, sets out the vision for the future NHS and notes that the five and a half million carers in England make a critical and underappreciated contribution not only to loved ones, neighbours and friends, but to the very sustainability of the NHS itself; The importance of carers has been embedded in Better Care Fund and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) planning guidance. Jane Cummings, Chief Nursing Officer for England has taken on the role as Carer Champion on NHS England's Board and will be responsible for carers work this year in NHS England; NHS Improving Quality (IQ) and NHS England held a young carers event on 30 October 2014 to support how young carers can be better supported and their wellbeing better promoted. Pledges made on the day have led to on-going action in relation to supporting the mental health of young carers, a social media awareness campaign and a feature on young carers within the NHS Change Day Changeathon webcast.

2.2 Priority 2: Education, training and information

Clearly, raising the profile of carers is not sufficient on its own and needs to be underpinned by education, training and information to support health and care professionals to better support carers.

NHS England has engaged with Carers Trust, Carer UK Children's Society, Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), Standing Commission for Carers and The Queen's Nursing Institute during 2014/15 to promote the use of packages for health care staff that increases the awareness of carers.

Further connections have been built with relevant bodies such as Health Education England to support a more integrated approach on delivering commitments in 2015/16. NHS England has improved the content of carers information on the NHS Choices website. Four regional evidence summits were held in 2014 which captured 50 case studies of best practice which are housed on the NHS IQ website. These are available for commissioners, patients, carers and health care professionals.

2.3 Priority 3: Service development

NHS England is well placed to ensure that the needs of carers are included in service development and ensure that identifying and supporting carers is embedded within all work to improve service development. Progress has been made to identify and measure skills, confidence and knowledge of carers through the Patient Activation Measure. Early outputs from this evaluation will be available from in November 2015. NHS England's ambitions relating to end of life care will be launched in autumn 2015 which will provide information on support for carers of bereaved parents. Enhanced

services now include a revised dementia and delirium care guide that ensures providers include an offer of a health check for carers and will include signposting for further information and support.

2.4 Priority 4: Person centred, well-co-ordinated care

Person centred care is a holistic integrated approach that places the individual and/or the carer at the heart of the decision making and planning of their care. It is identified in the Five Year Forward View as being key to addressing the growing healthcare challenges of supporting people with long term conditions (LTC). NHS England promotes the development of personalised care for carers and patients to ensure that they are in control and at the centre of their care. Progress in this area is evidenced through the launch of [LTC handbooks](#) in January 2015. These are a set of handbooks that help commissioners and health care practitioners better understand their roles around person centred planning. Carers have contributed to this and have been integral to the process as part of the task and finish groups working on these handbooks. The parity of esteem programme has established strong relationships with a number of strategic partners and will be encouraging clinical services to take into account caring commitments as part of their approach to improving service access for carers.

Further work in 2015/6 is required to ensure that carers are supported to engage with personal health budgets.

2.5 Priority 5: Primary care

Primary care is vital to proactively support carers themselves and the people for whom they care. As part of this priority, NHS England supported the RCGP on their programme for carers in 2014/15 and has started to embed carers in the unplanned admissions enhanced service. This aims to support primary care to provide more effective proactive care. In 2015/16 we are exploring opportunities to improve this through surveying patients, carers and GPs.

NHS England are exploring with partners ways to improve and incentivise work to identify carers, this will be a major piece of work for 2015/16.

2.6 Priority 6: Commissioning support

Commissioning is the process of planning, agreeing and monitoring services and by supporting this NHS England can promote improved outcomes for carers as well as patients. Progress has been achieved through the carers regional summits in July 2014 which resulted in 50 case studies of good practice hosted on the [NHS IQ website](#) and making this accessible to commissioners. The NHS IQ LTC improvement programme is working with approximately 40 local health economies to support their commissioning and provision of support for people with LTC and their carers.

NHS England Commissioning for Carers principles using evidence gathered from the regional summits was published in December 2014. Further work in 2015/16 is needed to understand the impact of current commissioning incentives and system

drivers in supporting carers. NHS England are sponsoring an award for CCGs Commissioning for Carers at the HSJ 2015 Awards.

2.7 Priority 6: Partnership links

It is important to support the work of carers by developing partnership links between health, social services and other organisations including the voluntary sector. This will continue to be the focus of NHS England's work on carers throughout 2015/16 and NHS England are keen to continue the work with partners including carers organisations and the Standing Commission on Carers.

NHS England remains a member of the cross government carers strategy board and in 2015/16 will continue to encourage and support carer organisations to play an active role within in the Coalition for Collaborative Care. The first annual meeting with key partners including carer organisations was held December 2014 to review progress on the commitments and resources; it links into the board level Carer Champion role mentioned in priority 1. The event also launched the Commissioning for Carers Principles.

2.8 Priority 6: The role of NHS England as an employer

NHS England is a registered and active member of Carers UK/Employers for Carers UK. NHS England staff have access to specialised advice and support and guidance related to their carer responsibilities. As part of this, we have developed a specific intranet page for staff who are carers to easily access this information.

3 Commitment to Carers progress table

Commitment	Progress Status
1. NHS England to raise the profile of what a carer does and how they can be supported with health care staff.	Completed
2. NHS England signed up and supports and promotes annual Carers Week campaign. Contributes to raising the profile and awareness of carers and the role they play in society.	Completed
3. Establish a NHS England board level 'Carer Champion' and support NHS England board level members to shadow a carer.	Completed
4. A senior NHS England Carers Group to take ownership of the Commitment to Carers document and NHS England's support for carers.	Completed
5. Collaborate with carers organisations to establish how carers award schemes might be extended to	Initial action complete - work

commissioners to support improving the experience of carers across England.	on going
6. NHS England in partnership with NHS IQ to hold a national NHS Young Carers event to support how young carers can be better supported and the wellbeing of young carers promoted by NHS England	Completed
7. NHS England to support a Carers Champions Network bringing together the healthcare and carers groups.	Initial action complete - work on going
8. NHS England will continue to implement the Equality Delivery System (EDS) for the NHS, involving staff, patients, carers and the community to ensure equality is embedded within all of its core business including workforce development.	Initial action complete work on going
9. NHS England is committed to supporting innovation in the NHS and will ensure that innovative ways of engaging with and providing care for carers are considered through the national innovation fund schemes.	Initial action complete work on going
10. NHS England to support the relevant bodies, including Health Education England, to support the use of packages for health care staff that increase the awareness of carers and support staff to identify, involve and recognise carers as experts, and as individuals with their own needs, choices and aspirations.	Initial action complete work on going
11. NHS England to support the relevant bodies in signposting carers to information and advice about support available.	Initial action complete - work on going
12. NHS England to contribute to increasing awareness within the NHS of the duties and functions of local authorities with regards to carers.	Initial action complete work on going
13. NHS England and NHS IQ to liaise with carers organisations and the RCGP in order to support their work on identification, implementation and sharing of best practice models.	Complete
14. NHS England to investigate approaches to measure the skills, confidence and knowledge of carers and the potential benefits on care and carers.	Work carried over
15. Data sharing: as part of the Patient Online programme NHS England to scope the potential for carers to access the GP medical records of the patients they care for, where applicable and where the patient has given their consent.	Complete
16. NHS England's new ambitions for end of life care, to be published in June 2014, will include the intentions for support for carers and bereaved relatives.	Initial action complete to be published autumn 2015

17. NHS England to support timely dementia diagnosis and the best available treatment for everyone who needs it, including support for their carers. For example, the revised Dementia Enhanced Service (DES) will include an offer of a health check for carers and signposting for information and support.	Initial action complete work on going
18. Develop a programme of work to support the health and wellbeing of carers through the community nursing strategy.	Work carried over
19. NHS England's Widening Digital Participation Programme to reduce inequalities: '100,000 citizens trained in basic online skills to boost health literacy' will apply to carers as well as patients.	Work carried over
20. NHS England will promote and work towards parity of esteem for carers so that mental health and wellbeing is considered and supported alongside physical health needs.	Initial action complete work on going
21. Through work on developing the House of Care toolkit, NHS England will work to bring together all the relevant national guidance, published evidence, local case studies and information to support carers to be informed and engaged in care.	Initial action complete work on going
22. NHS England to include carers in work around developing standards and service components for personalised care planning to help ensure carers are integral to the care and support planning process and are consistent with the National Voices principles of care and support planning.	Completed
23. Patients who can benefit will have the option to hold their own personal health budget, resulting in direct benefits to carers such as feeling more in control and perceived health improvements.	Initial action complete - work on going
24. Scope how NHS England can most effectively support the RCGP and other partners in the work they are scoping around carers.	Initial action complete – work on going
25. NHS England will consider how carers can be supported through commissioning of primary care including through future developments to the GP contract and enhanced services.	Initial action complete- work on going
26. NHS England will work with The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and other partners to develop measurement and best practice guidance in order to increase identification of carers.	Initial action complete- work on going
27. NHS England to undertake a series of regional evidence summits for carers to establish an independent assessment of the evidence in order to capture, disseminate and encourage good practice.	Completed

28. NHS England to maximise opportunities to capture feedback and incorporate into discussions and work to improve quality and inform best practice.	Completed
29. NHS England to undertake a piece of work to understand the impact of current commissioning incentives and system drivers in supporting carers. For example, through the GP contract, revisions to enhanced services for unplanned admissions and dementia.	Work carried over
30. NHS England to review current national processes in place to gather bereaved carers views on the quality of care in the last three months of life in order to address gaps in evidence.	Work carried over
31. Where commissioners identify the need for support, co-produce practical tools and a support programme of implementation with NHS IQ.	Completed
32. NHS England to coordinate effective ways of working by developing partnership links between health, social services and other organisations, including the voluntary sector to establish how carers can be supported as effectively as possible.	Initial action complete – work on going
33. NHS England to continue to work with the Standing Commission on Carers.	Initial action complete- work on going
34. NHS England to remain a member of the cross government carers strategy board and will encourage and support carers organisations to play an active role in the collaboration for coordinated care.	Initial action complete – work on going
35. Establish an annual meeting with key partners including carers organisations to monitor progress and review objectives.	Initial action complete – work on going
36. NHS England to continue as a corporate member of Employers for Carers.	Completed
37. NHS England to continue to implement and support established policies on flexible working, leave and employment breaks and agile working that support staff that are carers.	Completed

Key Coding for Status of Commitments

	Action Completed
	Initial Action Complete but on-going/ monitoring/updates required
	Work In Progress

