



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Quality Standards

There are five quality standards recommended for Carers Services (Kings Fund 2000). They do not all have to be provided by every service provider and some may already be available from another source, which can be accessed for the benefit of carers

- Information
- Providing a break
- Emotional Support
- Support to care and maintain carer's own health
- Having a voice

Essential requirements for quality local carers support service are:

1 Carers are involved in the organisation

- a Carers have an effective voice in the design of the services, its management, delivery, monitoring and continuous improvement
- b Carers have the opportunity to be involved whatever their age, gender, sexuality, disability or religion unless there are specific reasons for delivering a specialist service to one group

2 The service works in partnership with all local agencies

- a The service liaises with other voluntary, statutory and private agencies and is part of a joint approach to ensure carers obtain co-ordinated support services and are not passed from pillar to post

3 The service is clear about its principles, aims and how these will be delivered/monitored

a The service is based on the principles of

- i sensitive to individual needs
- ii treating people with courtesy and respect
- iii recognition of carers as partners
- iv making no assumption that carers wish to provide care
- v confidentiality
- vi promote self determination and not creating dependency

b The service has

- i Has clear aims and objectives
- ii Specific details of how these will be met
- iii Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, which includes obtaining regular feedback from carers
- iv A system to record any shortfall or preferences which cannot be met
- v A complaints procedure so that the service can respond promptly to any problems and take corrective action

4 All staff are appropriately trained and supported

- a All staff should be provided with training relevant to the service and tasks to be carried out, including what it is like to be a carer
- b Ongoing support and supervision is provided for all staff and volunteers.



CARERS TOGETHER - QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS

In setting its quality standards, Carers Together has taken note of a range of publications available and in particular has used:

- Quality Standards for Local Support Services 2000 - *Kings Fund*
- How good is your service for carers 2002 - *Kings Fund*
- Key Consultation Criteria - *Government*
- Smarter Partnerships 'Developing Skills for Smarter Partnerships - *Government*.
- Developing services for carers and families of people with mental illness - *Government*
- Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 - Practice Guidance - Carers and people with parental responsibility for disabled children - *Government*
- Carers Framework - a toolkit for Directors of Social Services to use in monitoring their progress in implementing the Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000 - *Government*

Carers Together Quality Standards

- Carers Together has established simple and straightforward day to day operating quality standards on dealing with and responding to enquiries at the office including face to face visits, telephone, written and email response times. These are available from the main office.
- Carers are at the heart of all policies and procedures of the organisation.
- The services provided by Carers Together are regularly monitored, evaluated and revised to meet the changing needs of carers in the county. There is continual monitoring by trustees, staff and volunteers and regular consultation with carers. The services are also monitored and evaluated formally on an annual basis.
- Carers Together believes that the needs of carers are as different as the number of people who are carers, and in order to meet their needs any service needs to be constantly developing and changing whilst providing some stability of service provision.
- All the services provided for carers are required to respond to individual needs and aspirations without assuming all carers want exactly the same support.
- Carers Together has a flexible and innovative approach to carers support, which is not based on existing service provision or buildings but on responding to the individual wishes of carers and the people they care for.
- Carers Together supports the recommendation by the Department of Health - Developing services for carers with mental health problems - that carers support workers must be seen, by carers, as having a degree of independence from statutory services. The consensus view of carers is that carers support workers will be more effectively managed by an organisation that is seen as being independent of the statutory services. Carers generally see this as freeing the carer support worker to offer independent advice and advocacy'.
- It is felt that as part of its quality standards Carers Together should strive to ensure the organisation is seen as independent of statutory organisations and able to give impartial support, information and advocacy to carers.