Carers are usually the first to be aware of a developing crisis and they often possess crucial information such as interests of the patient or what might be normal behaviour as a result of their close relationship and often almost constant contact. Talking to carers early on will help provide the most accurate assessment on which to plan treatment and assess risk. Services should engage with carers as equal partners within the treatment team - sharing information at all stages of care.

More information is available in the Carer Awareness leaflet for staff, which should be displayed in your staff area.
“I had lots of questions but didn’t know who to ask” - *Carer*

Ward and team carer champions should be appointed. They have the task of promoting carer engagement and overseeing the relationship with the carer. They will promote good practice amongst colleagues and make sure they are aware of new carers who might need information and support. They can be the main contact for carers on the wards or at staff meetings and reviews. There should be a carer ‘link’ for each shift/team to provide continuity in receiving and sharing information and to be a clear point of contact.

More information is available in the Carer Awareness leaflet for staff, which should be displayed in your staff area.
“I wanted to give something back and share my experience to help others” - Carer

Carers are experts in how it feels for them and have often been in a caring role for many years. This experience can be invaluable for staff when working with carers and patients. Their experience can be drawn upon to raise the awareness of staff to the needs and wants of carers to improve their experience in the future. Teams should encourage carer involvement ensuring that the carers voice is heard and has an influence on decision making. This, in turn, gives carers a positive role and confidence in their abilities.

More information is available in the Carer Awareness leaflet for staff, which should be displayed in your staff area.
“I remembered the information the nurse had given me on my first visit” - Carer

Carers should be provided with a pack of information they may need to understand the illness, the likely consequences, what they can do to help, what their rights are and what other services and support is available locally to them and the person they care for. Often carers can have very limited knowledge of what the illness might mean for both themselves and the patient and what resources are available, which can leave them feeling confused or anxious. Teams should always check that carers have received and understood this information taking into account the cultural and language needs of families or other carers.

More information is available in the Carer Awareness leaflet for staff, which should be displayed in your staff area.
“If only I had been asked what I wanted or needed” - Carer

If a carer provides a lot of care and support to a patient then the carer is entitled by law to a carer’s assessment. This is to ensure that the carer’s own needs are being met and that they are aware of their rights to support, financial and other help in carrying out their carer responsibilities. Staff should ensure that the carer is aware of the right to an assessment and if necessary refer them.

More information is available in the Carer Awareness leaflet for staff, which should be displayed in your staff area.
"My son told the staff he didn’t want them to talk to me but I didn’t understand what was happening or how I could help" - Carer

A carer may be the only constant support in a person’s life so it is important that they are given information that is relevant to the care that they provide. Carers should be given as much general information as possible about the illness being experienced. Check out what carers already know as any information they are already aware of is not to be treated as confidential.

More information about sharing information and confidentiality is available in the Carer Awareness leaflet for staff, which should be displayed in your staff area.