

Early identification can mean that carers are able to continue caring for longer, with better outcomes for them and the person they care for. A key time to identify carers is when the person they care for is admitted to or discharged from hospital.

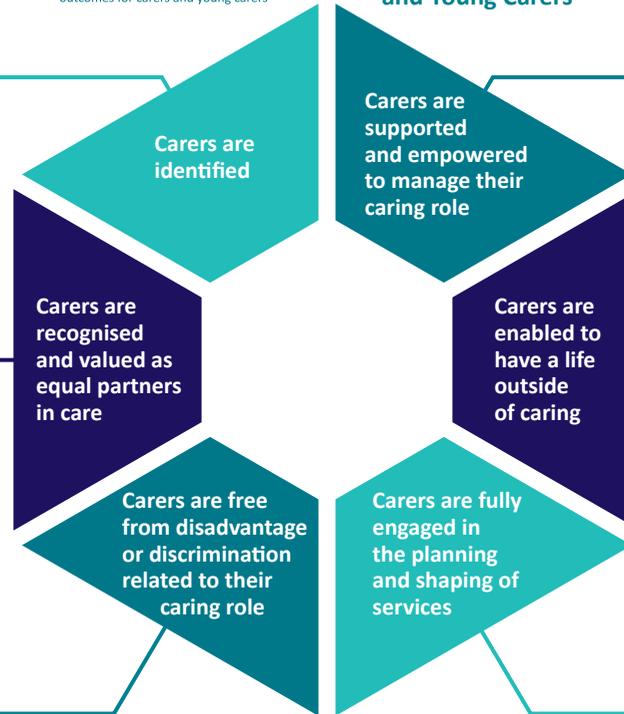
- Carer awareness training was delivered to staff as part of a joint project between NHS Tayside and a local carers centre. The number of carers identified in hospital and referred to carers centres in Tayside increased by 720% in two years.

A young person may be the main carer with valuable knowledge of the person's condition. Young carers often report that they are ignored by the health and social workers involved with the person they care for. They may not be asked to contribute to care planning.

- In Fife, a Young Carer's Authorisation Card is being piloted which will help workers to identify young carers and involve them in discussions and decisions about the person they care for.

Carers may experience disadvantage as a result of their caring role. This can have an impact on their health, finances, work and education. They may have difficulty accessing support from services. Carers from minority ethnic communities may face barriers relating to language, communication and culture.

- MECOPP has developed an audit tool called On the Margins which can help you assess your service and improve understanding of 'cultural competence'. You can download the tool from:  
[www.mecopp.org.uk/files/documents/research/mecopp\\_on\\_the\\_margins\\_audit\\_tool\\_r.pdf](http://www.mecopp.org.uk/files/documents/research/mecopp_on_the_margins_audit_tool_r.pdf)



**Carer:** someone of any age who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend. They may care for an older person, someone who is disabled, has a long-term illness, mental health problems or is affected by alcohol or drug misuse.

For more practice examples, core principles for working with carers and young carers, and links to relevant resources, go to [www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/equalpartnersincare](http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/equalpartnersincare)

Carers assessments (also called Carer Support Plans) are a way for carers to access the support they need to continue caring. Carers have the right to request an assessment and local authorities have a duty to inform carers of this right.

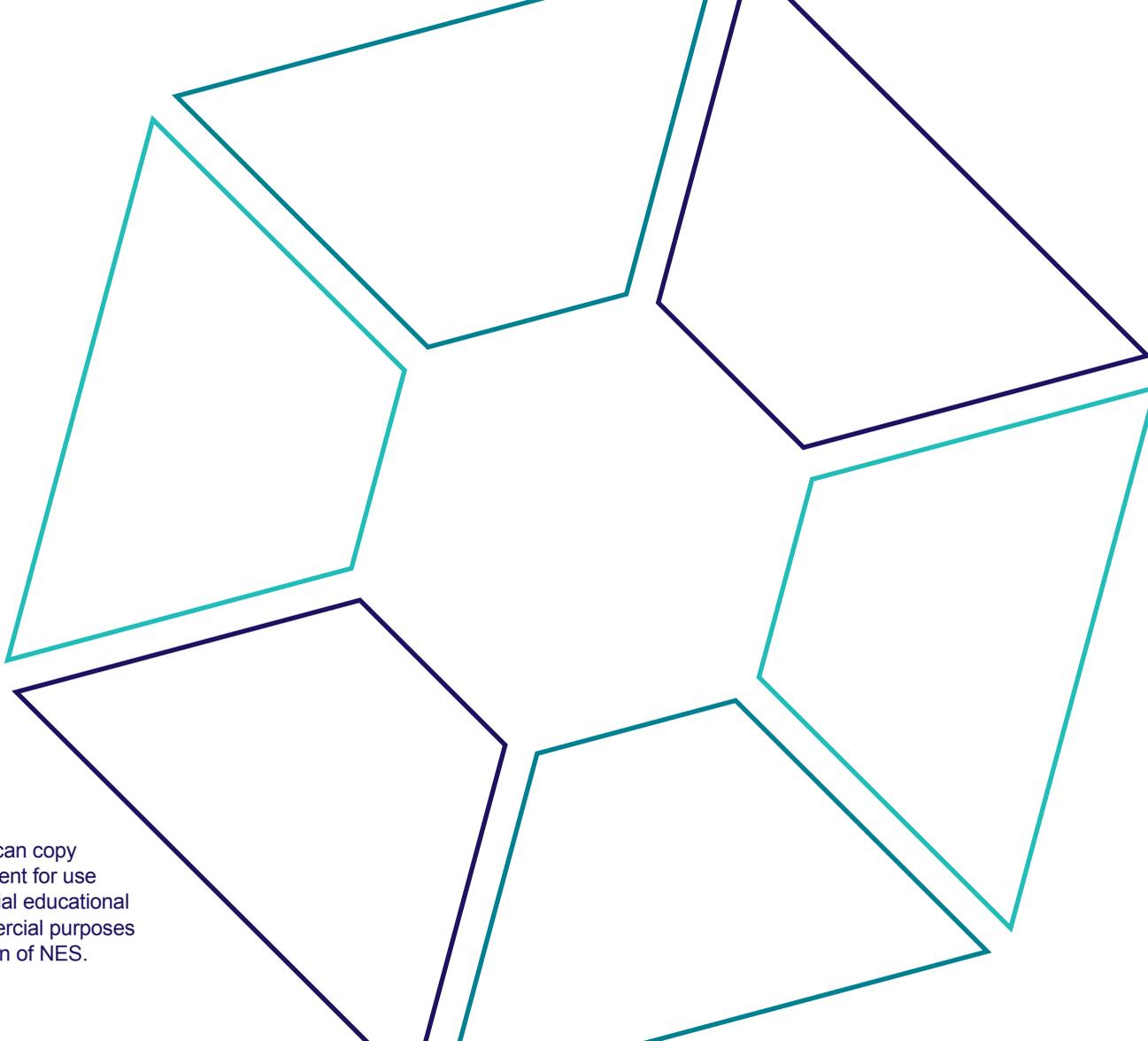
- The Scottish Government is producing a practice guide to support staff to improve the quality and uptake of carers' assessments.
- NHS Lothian has produced guidance on balancing patient confidentiality with the carer's need for information.

Short breaks or respite care means a carer and the person they care for are supported to have a break from their caring situation. This is an essential part of the support that families and carers need to continue caring. Short breaks should deliver positive outcomes for all involved in the caring relationship.

- Shared Care Scotland has produced a Short Break Planner to help carers, the people they care for and care managers to plan short breaks which meet their needs.  
[www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/resources/tools/short-break-planner.html](http://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/resources/tools/short-break-planner.html)

Engaging carers and the people they care for in planning and shaping services can result in better services and better outcomes for all involved. Involvement should be meaningful and not tokenistic.

- In Dumfries and Galloway, a carers reference group was set up to inform the development of the Carers Strategy.
- Young carers have created a set of 'Golden Rules' for adults who want to involve them in consultation.
- The Coalition of Carers in Scotland is developing best practice standards for involving carers.



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