



**Cheshire and
Wirral Partnership**
NHS Foundation Trust



We want to hear your views about Health & Social Care in Wirral - Listen. Connect. Share.

Carers of people with Mental Health Forum – Wednesday 29th April 2026

Welcome and Introductions

Jacqui Canning, Healthwatch Wirral Lived Experience Lead, and Nicola Connor, CWP - Participation and Engagement Lead, introduced themselves and explained the reasons behind today's Forum.

Topics discussed

- Jacqui told us how Healthwatch Wirral gathers people's experiences, and Nicola in her role as Engagement Lead with CWP, came together after recognising that many carers regularly share concerns about the challenges they face in supporting the people they care for. In response, it was agreed to take joint action by listening directly to carers and exploring these issues together.
- Working in partnership with each other, the aim is to listen to unpaid Carers who care for someone with Mental Health issues and feeding back the information to help those who are vulnerable.
- We want to hear from carers, including those attending as representatives of organisations who may also be carers themselves. This includes working carers and "sandwich carers" who support more than one person, for example caring for both a parent and a child. It is important that all carers' voices are heard, as well as organisations that support people caring for someone with mental health needs.
- The importance that we all recognise that we need to work together and work in partnership as much as we possibly can for the benefit of those who are vulnerable, we may need some additional help and support and getting the message across, to the decision makers.
- David Maguire from Wired stated that data shows that caring relationships involving mental health needs, whether for the cared-for person, the carer, or both, are among the most fragile and changeable. Situations can change very quickly, sometimes resulting in carers being unable to continue and alternative care and support needing to be put in place. This is an important area for further exploration and support.
- Nicola talked about questions that need to be asked in order to help, and how they would vary as each person's experience will be very different, what do we have in place if the Carer has their own mental health issues and they're looking after the mental health of the person they care for too?

Do they have family members or friends that can help to support them? Have they got a social worker? Most will be at risk of crisis or breakdown.

- David Maguire also talked about how Carers can carry an emergency contact card, linked to a contingency plan. If a carer is taken ill or admitted to hospital, the card alerts professionals that they are a carer and enables the emergency contact to be notified, triggering the contingency plan. A key-fob version is also available to keep with house keys.
- The Carers Partnership Board, on which both Jacqui and David sit, will be refreshing the Carers strategy very soon, the notes will be shared with the board.

What is working well, and what can be improved.

- A Carer experience shared; The person they cared for had stopped taking their medication, which had a direct impact on the carer. When the carer tried to raise concerns with professionals, they were unable to discuss the situation due to data protection, highlighting the need to apply common sense and better communication when working with carers.
- Digital and AI support can be helpful but was also noted as a source of misinformation for carers.
- Clear pathways for young Carers are required, alongside support to increase awareness of their rights and to facilitate access to needs assessments following the age of eighteen.
- Improvements to the support offered for Neurodivergent Parent Carers and their families are needed, as the pathways for assessments can be very difficult, a better process is needed to remove the barriers for the families.
- Additional information and guidance are needed for people from multicultural communities, as many do not identify as unpaid carers and instead view caring as a familial responsibility. Nicola will pass on the Mental Health information that has been translated to other languages to anyone requiring it.

How to access support

- Nicola can provide Mental Health Information booklets which contain a list of where people can access support. There is also a new booklet about how people can access support when caring for someone with dementia and information around the Memory clinic. Hub of Hope training which is app based with information and agencies that can help. Whats App group which is a channel run by Nicola available for anyone to join which shares posts about what is on in the local community. There are other resources available too if anyone would like more information then please contact nicola.connor6@nhs.net

What is next.

- Discussions about having more of these meetings and if anyone would like to be involved in future meetings then contact Jacqui or Nicola.

AOB.

- Wirral Carers Alliance have their Carers Conference coming up on 8th June at Eureka in Seacombe CH44 6NR. The event starts at 10am- 7pm and the aim is to connect Carers with support services in the area. If any organisations would like to get involved contact

info@wirralcarersalliance.org.uk

Wirral Carers Alliance also hold a weekly drop-in session called CoLLaB, for Care, connection, and collaboration for those with caring responsibilities. Held on a Wednesday at Greasby library, CH49 3AT. 10am-3pm. <https://www.wirralcarersalliance.com/collab-carer-connection>

- Lynda Appleton from the Clatterbridge Cancer has asked us to share details of a study they are conducting. They are looking for 3-4 unpaid carers to complete the study.

The study is exploring how care to a person with cancer is managed, when the person providing support has a pre-existing health condition/s?

See the poster below which enables unpaid carers to self-refer if they are interested.



Study advert v.1.1
24 April 2025.pdf

12.30pm- Close

