



Manchester University
NHS Foundation Trust

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

Carers' Strategy 2025-2029



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Foreword

Setting the Carers' Strategy in the context of our Patient Experience framework, "*What Matters to Me*", goes to the heart of our vision and describes our commitments to the Communities we serve.

Our vision is to improve the health and quality of life of our diverse population by building an organisation that aims to:

- Work with partners to help people live longer, healthier lives
- Provide high quality, safe care with excellent outcomes and experience
- Be the place where people enjoy working, learning and building a career
- Ensure value for our patients and communities by making the best use of our resources
- Deliver world-class research and innovation that improves people's lives.

It is only through seeing our services through the eyes of those receiving care and those who provide care, that we will truly achieve our vision.

Thank you on behalf of the Board of Directors for your leadership, professionalism, strength, compassion and care.

Mark Cubbon, Trust Chief Executive



Introduction

I'm pleased to share Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust's (MFT) Carers' Strategy 2025–2029, developed in collaboration with carers (unpaid and paid), colleagues, and professionals across health, care, and the wider community.

The NHS recognises the vital role of paid carers as expert partners in care and is committed to supporting and including them at every stage¹.

This strategy builds on our existing work and outlines our commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred care, while improving the experience and support available to carers, ensuring they receive the care and recognition they deserve.

Carers of all ages play a crucial role in the communities we serve, yet their own experiences, health, and wellbeing are often overlooked.

1. NHS England (2019) The NHS Long Term Plan



Through this strategy, MFT is committed to:

- Improving the experience of all unpaid carers.
- Supporting their health and wellbeing.
- Enabling them to continue in their caring roles sustainably.

We all share the responsibility of supporting carers. At MFT, we are committed to raising awareness, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring every carer receives the recognition, respect, and support they rightly deserve.

Kimberley Salmon-Jamieson, Trust Chief Nursing Officer

Background

Who Is a Carer?

A carer is someone, adult or child, who provides care and support to a family member, partner, or friend who, due to illness, frailty, disability, a mental health condition, or addiction, is unable to cope without their help. This support is often provided informally and without pay, distinguishing carers from paid care workers or professionals².

According to Carers UK (2025), there are an estimated 5.8 million carers across the UK, including 3.5 million women and 2.4 million men. The number of older carers (aged 65 and over) has nearly doubled since the pandemic, now exceeding 4 million³.

Carers of all ages play a crucial role in the communities served by MFT. However, their experiences are often overlooked, and their health and wellbeing needs are not consistently supported.

Our Commitment

The development of this strategy demonstrates MFT’s commitment to improving the experience of all carers and playing an active role in supporting their health, wellbeing, and sustainability in their caring roles.

Legislative Context

Our work is grounded in key legislation that recognises and protects carers’:

The Care Act 2014⁴ and the Children and Families Act 2014⁵ entitle adult and young carers to a carers’ assessment through their local authority, placing a clear emphasis on addressing their individual needs.

The Health and Care Act 2022⁶ integrates elements of previous legislation and introduces new measures to improve coordination between health and care services, especially for individuals supported by multiple organisations. It also places a legal duty on the NHS to have regard to carers and promote their health and wellbeing.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) now requires organisations to provide evidence of how they support carers and improve their experiences across health and care services⁷.

Beyond Legal Obligation: A Values-Driven Approach

While legislation sets out clear responsibilities, MFT’s commitment to carers extends beyond compliance. Our values guide our actions and approach:



- 2. NHS England (2014) Commissioning for carers – who is considered a carer?
- 3. Carers UK (2025)
- 4. Care Act 2014
- 5. Children and Families Act (2014)
- 6. Health and Care Act 2022
- 7. Local Government Association (2023) Unpaid carers and Care Quality Commission Assurance

How Our Strategy Was Produced

This strategy outlines MFT’s commitments to improving the experiences of all our carers, playing an active role in their health and wellbeing, and ensuring their individual experiences are not overlooked by 2029.

Building on the commitments outlined in MFT Patient Experience & Involvement Strategy: Our Commitment to Patients, Families and Carers 2020-2023 and to ensure MFT’s Carers’ Strategy development is inclusive and co-produced, a series of engagement activities were undertaken.

This included holding a Key Stakeholder Event to ensure that all views and voices were captured relating to ‘What Matters’ to carers. The event involved a wide range of individuals, from carers themselves, to clinical and clerical colleagues both internally and from our external partners such as charitable organisations.

The MFT Carers’ Strategy will align with other Trust strategies and guidance (see below) that may impact carers.

- MFT Strategy 2024-2029
- MFT Patient Participation & Involvement Strategy: 2025-2029
- MFT Adult Supportive Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy 2021-2026
- MFT Dementia Strategy 2023-2026
- MFT Visiting Policy 2025
- 2022 Care Quality Commission (CQC) Expectations (Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive, Well-led)

The Trust is also developing a Carers’ Policy to underpin this strategy.

How we have produced and plan to deliver on our commitments and strategic ambitions:



Our Commitments

Identification and Recognition

To ensure appropriate identification and recognition of carers is well documented – both when an individual has a carer or an individual themselves has caring responsibilities.

To do this, we will:

- Ensure colleagues are approachable, kind, and empathetic. This will make carers feel welcome and are treated with respect and dignity across our Trust and Clinical Groups. Colleagues should acknowledge, carers may be young.
- Provide a positive carer experience through offering support and, where possible, provision of facilities for carers to support / visit their loved ones.
- Encourage patients to identify all those involved in their care, and for carers to come forward to identify themselves as such to allow them to seek extra support if necessary.
- Support the delivery of person-centred care by encouraging carers to be involved in the completion of 'Getting To Know Me' documentation to support individual carers.
- Recognise that the carers are the 'expert' on how their loved one feels and recognise the needs of a carer.
- Ask carers 'What Matters' to them about the care of their significant other / loved one at all times, and particularly during Palliative Care of their loved one.
- Ensure that patients with their carers are as involved in discussions and decisions about their care as they wish to be – "No decision about me, without me".

- Provide choice for carers regarding where the care of their loved one will be delivered, where this is clinically appropriate.
- Support colleagues to continue to treat carers as individuals. They will respect the protected characteristics of age, physical or learning disabilities, cultural and religious needs.

Quote from a carer:



"I came feeling extremely anxious and depressed. Over the weeks I have made changes to address my own needs and this has resulted in a significant shift in my mindset and feelings of being able to cope as a carer for my partner with cancer and also in dealing with work and life. For this I am so very grateful. I feel happier and stronger. Thank you."



Our Commitments

Communication

We are committed to communicating with carers in an accessible, friendly and respectful manner.

To do this, we will:

- Provide carers with full consistent information about the care of their loved one, that is clear and presented in their preferred or required manner.
- Ensure that carers have an opportunity to speak to a doctor, nurse, other healthcare professional or member of the chaplaincy team for practical, spiritual and emotional support.
- Maintain patient and carer confidentiality at all points of care, unless policy indicates a need to share information.
- Improve information sharing across the Trust, so that carers will not need to answer the same questions repeatedly.
- Provide access to interpretation and translation services for all carers who may need it.
- Be responsive to carers' questions in a timely and effective manner and inform them of the reasons for any delays in answering their questions.
- Be responsive to carers' needs, when booking appointments / accessing treatment for themselves as well as for whom they care for, for example, use of the "Flagging" system in HIVE.



Quotes from carers:

"Very prompt arrival following phone call with doctor. Health care practitioner was very polite and respectful to my very elderly mum. Answered any questions I may have had. I felt like I was being listened to which is very important when you are a carer."

"Poor communication and really long wait. Waiting for over 6 hours now, I am a carer for my wife so has caused lots of anxiety."

Our Commitments

Signposting and Partnership Working

We commit to working in partnership with health, social care and third sector services to best coordinate care.

To do this, we will:

- Establish an MFT web page for carers. This will have links to other related websites, such as support groups, patient and carer forums, Carers' Manchester.
- Provide or signpost carers to appropriate information and or support groups when the patient is discharged.
- Keep the Trust website up to date with correct contact information, useful information about the Trust's services, and links to local and national support.
- Promote care at home by ensuring that carers and their loved ones are provided with support necessary to enable them to continue care at home.

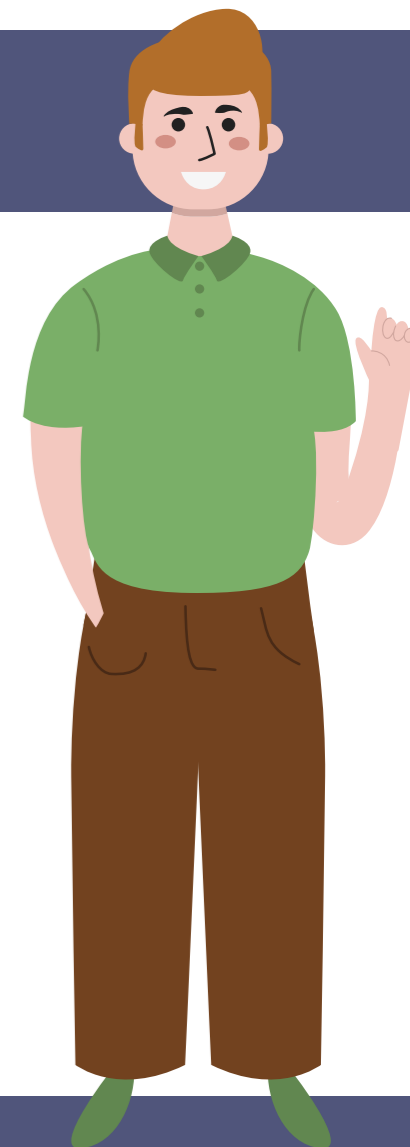


Quotes from carers:

"...There were no wheelchairs available at any of the entrances. Finally found one abandoned outside St Mary's. Eventually found cardiology, ...I was told I couldn't stay with her in the waiting room... Other hospitals in the trust allow me to stay. Mum is 89, completely deaf, non-mobile and very confused. She needs a carer...."

"Better signage, Send a map of hospital out with appointment letter. Wheelchairs available at all entrances. Use some common sense when applying the no family to accompany rule. A patient with an essential carer needs a carer to stay with her."

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Our Commitments

Education

We are committed to developing carers' awareness across all areas of the organisation and to develop training to ensure all colleagues feel equipped and skilled to work in partnership with carers.

To do this, we will:

- Provide colleagues with the right training, skills and support to best respond to the individual needs of carers and their loved ones. This includes mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.
- Encourage carers to raise any questions or concerns, so they may be resolved in a timely manner, either by speaking directly with colleagues or by seeking advice from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) or by making a complaint should they wish to.
- Listen to, act on and learn from feedback from carers across the Trust to develop service improvements alongside coproduction frameworks. Triangulate Patient Feedback, PALS and Complaints data to facilitate this learning.
- Ensure all carers are given the chance to provide feedback through asking *What Matters* to them and offering the Friends and Family Test (FFT) to be completed.
- Review the WMTM Patient Experience Surveys. Develop a specific Carer / Family member survey, to gather feedback on their experiences.
- Regularly review how we obtain and use feedback, and assess its validity and effectiveness.
- Participate in national patient surveys and use the feedback to inform continuous improvement.



- Implement a Trust Carers' Policy which supports the implementation of the Carers' Strategy and acknowledges that colleagues may also be carers.
- Include carers' experience in the annual Board "Patient Story" programme.
- Review the Trust's monthly Quality Care Round (QCR) audit, to include specific questions to carers are included.

Our Commitments

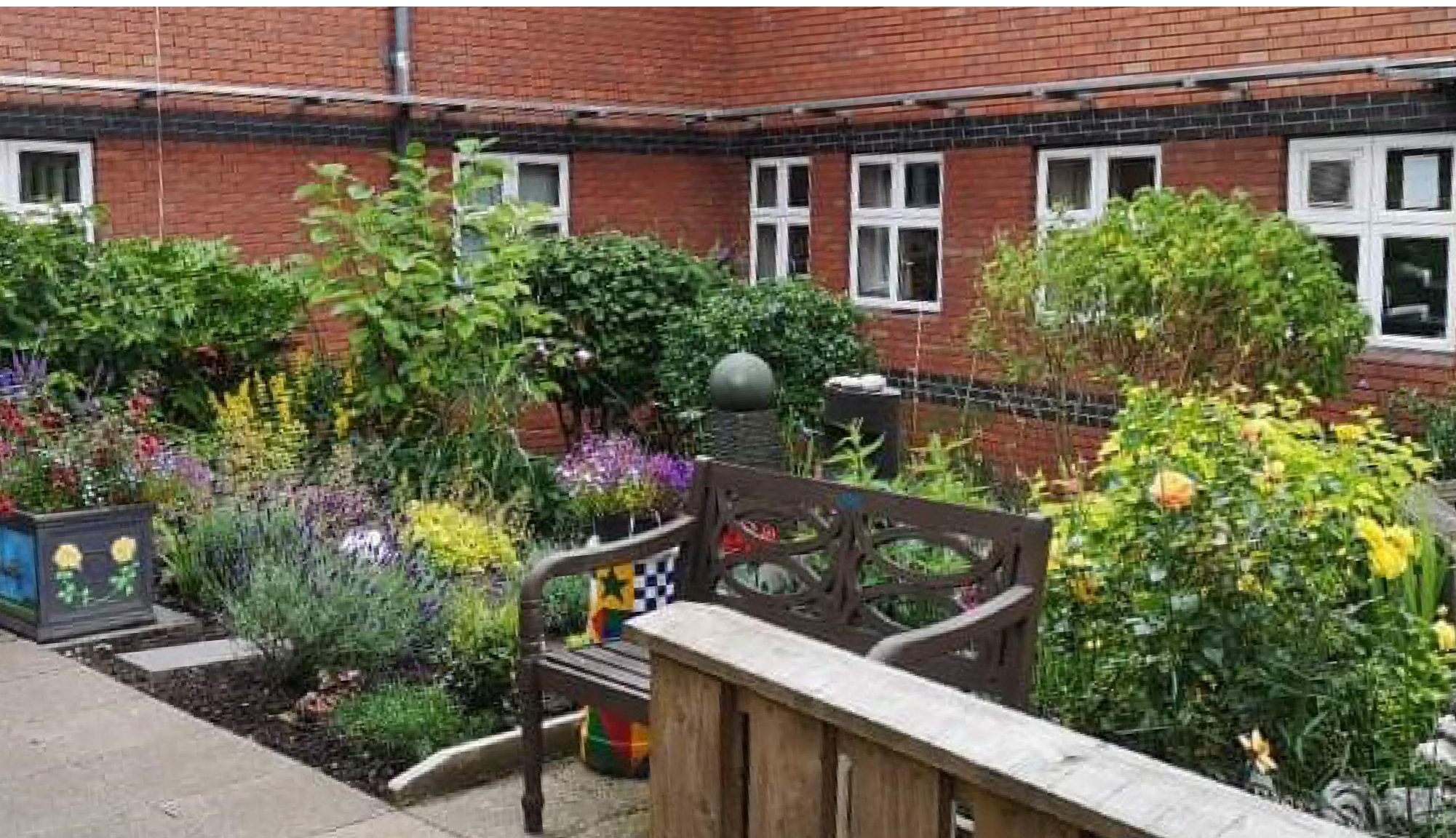
Reasonable Adjustments

We commit to ensuring reasonable adjustments are made to meet the carers and their loved ones needs.

To do this, we will:

- Provide clear information on how to find the way round our Hospitals / Clinical Groups, including public transport and car parking. We will offer wayfinding maps in each reception area in accordance with our MFT Wayfinding Policy.
- Provide up-to-date accessible Access Guides on our Trust website.
- Be responsive to the needs of carers and make reasonable adjustments with for example visiting times.
- Establish agreed ward “boundaries of care” for carers during an inpatient stay, such as when carers can support mealtimes; identifying what patient care, a carer would like to be involved with, through development of a carers’ contract.
- Be aware of all carers’ needs regardless of age. Acknowledge carers themselves may require reasonable adjustments for, e.g. autism; dyslexia. Development of a “Carers’ Passport”.





Implementation

Each Clinical Group within MFT will define its own priorities and develop bespoke action plans aligned with the overarching commitments and ambitions of this strategy.

The strategy places strong emphasis on amplifying the voices of patients, parents, carers, and individuals with lived experience, ensuring they play a central role in shaping our initiatives and contributing to improved health outcomes and quality of life across our diverse communities.

Oversight of implementation will be provided by the Trust's Quality and Patient Experience Forum, facilitating the sharing of best practice and enabling services across MFT to report on their progress.

Delivery against these commitments will be monitored and reviewed by the Trust's Quality and Scrutiny Committee and progress will be publicly reported through the MFT Board of Directors Annual Patient Experience Report.



Thanks

This Strategy was co-produced with thanks to:

- Parents
- Carers
- Manchester Local Care Organisation
- Governors
- Colleagues from Patients Services
- Corporate Director of Nursing, Quality and Patient Experience
- Corporate Head of Nursing, Quality
- Patient Services Manager
- Quality Leads from each of the Clinical Groups
- Alzheimer’s Society
- Carers’ Manchester
- Stroke Association
- Allied Health Professionals
- Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Team
- Volunteers
- Safeguarding team
- Patient Experience Manager
- Dementia Specialist
- Patient Safety
- Customer Service Manager
- Estates and Facilities
- Patient Experience team
- Gaddum Centre
- Manchester City Council
- Dementia Nurse
- Quality and Patient Experience Matron
- Matron for Professional Practice
- Manchester Carer Forum
- Together Dementia Support
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead

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Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require alternative formats (large print, easy read) or this information in other languages.



There are lots of ways you can **BEE INVOLVED** at MFT and opportunities will be advertised on our **BEE INVOLVED HUB** where you will be able to get involved in Research, Specialist Interest Groups, Patient Stories, Volunteering and lots more.

In the meantime, should you wish to become a member please email the Group Patient Experience team at beeinvolved@mft.nhs.uk



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