

# THE TRIANGLE OF CARE: CARERS INCLUDED

## A Guide to Best Practice in Health Care

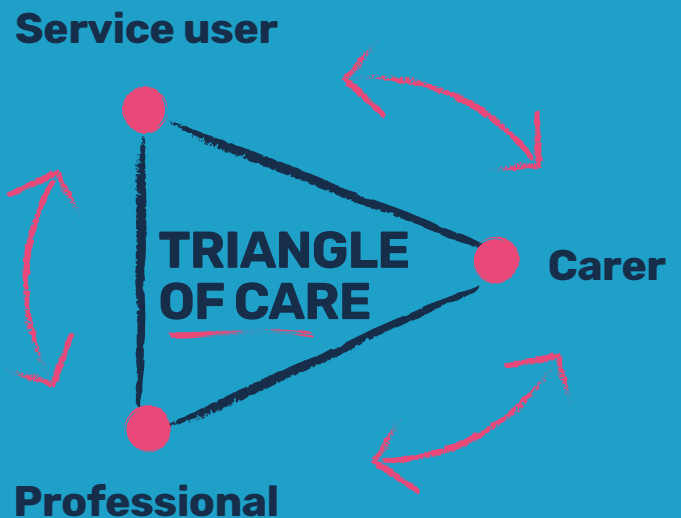
### What is the Triangle of Care?

The Triangle of Care is a therapeutic alliance between carers, service users and health professionals.

It aims to promote safety and recovery and to sustain wellbeing in mental health by including and supporting carers.

The Triangle of Care is based on six principles that healthcare providers can use to include and support carers:

1. Carers and the essential role they play are identified at first contact or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. Staff are 'carer aware' and trained in carer engagement strategies.
3. Policy and practice protocols regarding confidentiality and sharing information are in place.
4. Defined post(s) responsible for carers are in place.
5. A carer introduction to the service is available, with a relevant range of information across the care pathway.
6. A range of carer support services is available.



**"The Triangle of Care transformed the care of our carers...our ongoing commitment to the Triangle of Care ensures this continues to develop and evolve going forward, keeping carers at the heart of our delivery."**  
**Head of Carer and Relative Experience,  
Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust.**

## How can the Triangle of Care help health professionals?

- Creating a more helpful, supportive relationship with carers.
- Giving carers and service users realistic expectations and information to support their caring role.
- Ensuring staff have information about the service users from the unique expertise of the carer.
- Partnership working – building stronger relationships between staff, carers and service users. Carers and families are better advocates when they have knowledge about what services they are entitled to and how to access them.
- Reduced admissions – a carer can often recognise signs that a service user is becoming unwell. By listening to carers, steps can be taken to help reduce the need for a service user to be admitted.

## How can the Triangle of Care help unpaid carers?

Unpaid carers are often the only constant in a service user's mental health care journey. They are there when crisis occurs, when the person is well and when that person needs support with day-to-day activities. They often have an in-depth understanding of the service user's needs and condition and are a vital partner in care.

**“The Triangle of Care makes sense, you can tell that carers designed it.”**

**Unpaid carer**

If professionals can recognise the support that unpaid carers give service users and acknowledge them as a key partner in care, then service users will receive better care and support on their journey to recovery.

## Why should you join the Triangle of Care?

Better recognition of unpaid carers as key partners in the planning and provision of mental health care also makes sound economic sense.

Both commissioners and providers of mental health services need to recognise that supporting unpaid carers through initiatives such as the Triangle of Care is a sound investment in safety, quality and continuity of care at relatively little financial cost.

The Triangle of Care is recognised by the Care Quality Commission inspectors ([Brief Guide: Assessing how well mental health services support carers](#)) and supports the [NICE recommendations for 'Supporting Adult Carers'](#).

## The benefits of becoming a Triangle of Care member

- A programme of **events, workshops** and **conferences** and a **regular newsletter**.
- Regular **regional forums** where Triangle of Care leads meet with other providers and a Carers Trust representative to share best practice, innovation and support on the continued Triangle of Care journey.
- The right to use the Triangle of Care trademarks and Carers Trust **materials**.
- Access to **advice and support** from Carers Trust in implementing the Triangle of Care Programme.

**Join the Triangle of Care Community – email:**

**[TriangleofCare@carers.org](mailto:TriangleofCare@carers.org)**