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A University Teaching Trust

Mental Health Services for Older People

The Bennion Centre
Glenfield Hospital
Groby Road
Leicester
LE3 9EJ

Tel: 0116 225 2750
www.leicspart.nhs.uk

Dear Carer

I would like to welcome you to Mental Health Services for Older People at The Bennion Centre.

As a carer, you will be acutely aware of the impact mental illness has not only on the life of the person you care for, but your own.

The work you do as a carer is greatly appreciated and valued. By working together, we can maximise opportunities to benefit the person we are caring for.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain what the unit does and how we aim to involve you as much as we can.

The Bennion Centre consists of a female only ward and a mixed sex ward and caters for patients with a functional illness (decreased mental function which may also be due to a medical or physical condition).

We work closely with community mental health teams for older. The inpatient multidisciplinary team consists of doctors, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. A full assessment of mental and physical health needs will form the basis of a care plan in order to support discharge.

We value the work you do as a carer and appreciate the challenges this can make on your time, independence and emotional wellbeing. We appreciate your need for information and would like to make you aware of the steps we are taking to enhance your opportunities to be involved.

As part of our work to support and involve the primary (main) carer, we aim to:

- Make contact with you within 72 hours of admission.
- Provide information via our carers board which can be viewed during your visits to the unit. This will carry information about:

- our carers lead link nurse – please speak to the ward matron (or their deputy in their absence) if you have any questions or concerns or wish to make us aware of anything about the person you care for
- the carers forum which meets twice a year
- a range of relevant support services/agencies including advocacy

To strengthen our commitment to support carers we will:

- provide further training for our staff to make them more 'carer aware'
- introduce a consent form which allows patients who have capacity to specify exactly what information (if any) we can disclose to their named carer. A sample of this form is included in the carers information pack. We hope that by implementing this form, it will be easier for the patient to decide if and what information we can disclose to you to help you in your caring role. Please note that we are still bound by our legal duty to respect patient confidentiality unless the patient expressly gives us permission to disclose information to you.

Hopefully, the carers pack, together with the carers board will provide you with most of the information you need, but please don't hesitate to contact me if you are unsure of anything or need any further information.

Inpatient Matron

