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A University Teaching Trust

Stewart House
The Rise
Narborough
Leicestershire
LE19 4SL

Tel: 0116 225 5750
www.leicspart.nhs.uk

Dear Carer, Relative or Friend,

I would like to welcome you to Stewart House.

As a carer, relative or friend, you will be acutely aware of the impact mental illness has not only on the life of the person you care for, but can also have an impact on you .

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 during their stay with us.

Stewart House is a rehabilitation inpatient unit providing care for people who have severe and enduring mental illness, providing an alternative approach to prolonged stays on acute inpatient wards.

We aim to help patients to enhance their quality of life and improve their abilities to cope with day-to-day living whilst living with an illness that may be life-long.

Care is provided in a friendly, homely, relaxed and supportive therapeutic environment where service users are encouraged to be fully involved in their care and focus on their personal strengths. Stewart House has 30 beds and aims to monitor mental and physical health, and to assist and support the residents in all aspects of daily life such as self-care, diet, maintaining activities and interests etc. A plan of care is developed which includes agreed rehabilitation goals to work towards and regular activities both on the unit and in the community as part of that rehabilitation.

Recovery takes time and residents may need to stay in the unit for up to 15 months in order to develop coping strategies and to understand themselves and their illness better before being well enough to be discharged, with the right support, to the community.

The unit is staffed by a team of nurses, medical staff, occupational therapists, psychologists, administration and housekeeping staff who all work together as a multidisciplinary team. A range of facilities support resident rehabilitation for example our occupational therapy suite with kitchen, activity and sensory rooms.

If you are a carer for the person admitted to our ward, we value the work you do in that capacity and appreciate the challenges this can make on your time, independence and emotional wellbeing and we know that it is important to keep you informed as much as possible. We have a duty of confidentiality to our residents and sometimes this can be difficult if a resident would rather we not share information with their carers. As a result we will introduce a simple form which allows a resident 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 resident 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.

As a team we value your support 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 promise 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 – please speak to the 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'

Hopefully, the carers pack, together with the information displayed on 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.

Matron.