Talking treatments and social interventions

- ☐ What talking treatments or social interventions could be helpful?
- ☐ Are they available locally?
- ☐ If so, what are the waiting times?

Hospital treatment

- ☐ Will hospital admission be necessary? And if so, for how long?
- ☐ If it is necessary, which hospital?
- ☐ Will admission under the provisions of relevant mental health legislation be necessary? If so, what does this involve?
- ☐ What level of security is needed?

If not admitted to hospital

- ☐ What alternatives are there to hospital admission?
- ☐ Is the carer willing to have the discharged patient living with them?
- ☐ What arrangements will be made for care and monitoring after discharge from hospital – and what should the carer do in an emergency?
- ☐ Do you know of any self-help techniques which could help recovery?

Carers needs

- ☐ Does the carer have any specific needs?
- ☐ Does the carer know that they are entitled to an assessment and a care plan of their own?
- ☐ Is there any financial assistance available for the carer?
- ☐ Who will support the carer?
- ☐ Do you know of any self-help/support organisations for the carer?

Information sharing

- ☐ Have you asked the client/service user how much information they are willing/not willing to share with their carer?
- ☐ Will you be able to review confidentiality agreements between yourself and the patient as circumstances change?

Any other questions

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With grateful thanks to Dr Philip Timms for producing this checklist.

The third edition of this checklist has been produced to coincide with 'Partners in Care: Working together to make a real difference', a joint campaign of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

There are 3 checklists available in the Partners in Care series:

- *A checklist for psychiatrists*
- *A checklist for carers with mental health problems*
- *A checklist for people with mental health problems*

All the Partners in Care checklists and leaflets can be downloaded from www.partnersincare.co.uk

For hard copies of any of these checklists, contact Leaflets Department, The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG. Tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 259 or email: leaflets@rcpsych.ac.uk

NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH

RC PSYCH
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is a charity. Registered in England and Wales (228636) and in Scotland (SC038369)

The Princess Royal Trust *for Carers*

Charity registration number SCO15975

August 2008
Due for review: August 2011

A checklist for psychiatrists

working in partnership with service users and carers

Partners in Care

Working together to make a real difference

Talking with carers

- **This checklist is an aide memoire for the psychiatrist meeting carers. By making sure that we have the information at our fingertips, we can help carers get the information they need about the diagnosis, treatment and support of the person they care for.**

- **Not every carer will need all the answers to all the questions, but the checklist can provide a helpful framework.**

- **If the client/service user does not want their carer to be involved, the information you can provide may be limited by medical confidentiality.**

- **Questions may cover practical matters and information about local resources, as well as those concerning diagnosis and treatment.**

- **Our experience is that the use of these checklists can help to reduce the anxiety felt by carers. To allow carers to prepare themselves, these checklists could be sent a week or so before any meeting with the psychiatrist.**

- **You are not expected to have to deal with all the questions personally, as many of them can be answered by other members of the care team – but you need to know who will be able to answer them.**

- **This checkist has been designed to complement the RCPsych *Checklist for carers – questions to ask the psychiatrist*. Our hope is that taken together, these will improve communication between psychiatrists and carers and thereby the quality of care offered to our patients.**

Questions that carers may need answered

About the illness

- ☐ Is there a diagnosis – and, if so, what is it?
- ☐ If not, what are the possibilities?
- ☐ What are the signs and symptoms that suggest the diagnosis?
- ☐ What is known about the causes of this disorder?
- ☐ What is likely to happen in the future?
- ☐ Do you have any written information about this disorder?

About assessment

- ☐ Are there any additional tests or investigations that might be needed?
- ☐ Has a physical examination been done?
- ☐ What specific investigations have been done?
- ☐ Are there any physical problems that have been discovered?
- ☐ Have I considered the client/service user's background and culture?

About care and treatment

- ☐ What has been planned?
- ☐ What are the aims of the care plan?
- ☐ Who else is, or will be, involved in the treatment?
- ☐ Who is the care co-ordinator/keyworker?
- ☐ What exactly will they do?
- ☐ How often will I see the client/service user?
- ☐ How long will the treatment take?
- ☐ What happens if the client/service user refuses treatment?

Care Programme Approach (CPA)

- ☐ What is the CPA?
- ☐ Is the client/service user on the CPA? If not, why not?
  If so, what level are they on?
- ☐ What part does the client/service user play in the CPA meeting?
- ☐ Who else will be at the CPA meeting?
- ☐ What difference does the CPA make?
- ☐ Can the carer be involved in the CPA?

The carer and the treatment

- ☐ Will the carer be involved in discussions concerning the management of the client/service user's illness?
- ☐ What do you see as the carer's role in the provision of treatment?
- ☐ How can the carer get in touch with you?
- ☐ Who does the carer contact if they are concerned about something?
- ☐ Who does the carer contact in an emergency?
- ☐ If the carer is not satisfied with the treatment the patient is receiving, can they ask for a second opinion?
- ☐ How do confidentiality issues affect what you can discuss with the carer?

Medication

- ☐ What medication is to be used?
- ☐ Why have you chosen this particular medication?
- ☐ What should be the benefit of this medication?
- ☐ Is the lowest effective dose being prescribed?
- ☐ Can the client/service user take a low dose at first and increase it when necessary?
- ☐ How often will the medication be reviewed?
- ☐ For how long will the medication need to be taken?
- ☐ Are there any other medications that could be used if this one is unsuitable?
- ☐ Do you have any written information about this medication?
- ☐ Are there any alternatives to medication?
- ☐ Can complementary medicines be taken with the medication?

What are the possible side-effects of the medication(s) involved?

- ☐ Short-term
- ☐ Long-term