

Including family carers as partners in care

This factsheet has been designed to accompany this webinar, which you can view [here](#).

Families and friends of people who live in care homes have an essential part to play as partners in care, fulfilling a variety of roles which support people's wellbeing and personhood, and going far beyond "just being a visitor". They have been described as "guardians of the identity and dignity of their loved ones".

Enabling people to maintain their important relationships supports their health and wellbeing and is part of their human right to respect for private and family life. The [Health and Social Care Standards](#) set out expectations that people will be able to maintain relationships in the ways that suit them best and will always have the right to see and, where appropriate, receive support from people important to them.

[Research](#) tells us that positive family involvement is associated with better physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing outcomes for people. Family carers can provide emotional and social support; act as advocates; provide vital information to support person-centred care; provide continuity with life outside the care home; and be involved in direct care when that's what people want.

When people have legal powers (Guardianship or Power of Attorney) to act on someone's behalf, this must be clearly documented in the notes. Decisions must be made in accordance with the [principles of the Adults with Incapacity \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#).

Services can foster family inclusion and help make visiting meaningful in various ways. Some of the things families have said they value are: feeling welcome (for example, being given the door entry code); being kept well informed; being included (for instance, being invited to join in activities, being able to stay for a meal); having a choice of where to spend time during visits; positive and constructive relationships with staff who are friendly and approachable; being able to freely raise any concerns and have them addressed.

Family inclusion is supported by a person-centred and relationship-centred approach and clear, transparent, jargon-free communication. Including people in planning and decision-making where it is appropriate to do so is integral to a human-rights based approach. An organisational culture which actively values and welcomes inclusion and collaboration is an important contributor to partnership. Identifying and addressing any barriers, challenges and potential conflicts supports collaborative working and keeps every relationship at the centre.

More resources on meaningful connection are available [here](#).