

# Case Study

## Carer Identification Scheme

Across the UK the majority of our unpaid family carer remains unidentified.

Recently social media and advertising campaigns have been used to identify carers with positive results, **however the best and most trusted** approach remains through Primary Care and specifically GP engagement with the carer.

For decades we've struggled in primary care to identify carers. We've trained our care navigators, included ads on screens, and included posters in waiting rooms. Despite all this effort the majority of our carers remain unidentified / and un-coded in our GP systems / records.

Working in North Lincolnshire, Social Enterprise Bridgit Care have developed and proved a process that can be used by GPs and their existing systems to code carers automatically.

The process is simple. The existing system used within practices for sending text messages (SMS) is configured to send two messages.

1. The first text message automatically codes patients as carers.
2. The second optional message provides identified carers with access to both online support and the local carers support team phone number.

This process takes hours to set up and can be fully automated by the practice. There is no additional cost as it just uses the existing text system (e.g. Mjog) and automatically codes the carer into SystemOne or EMIS.

For the practice we trialled this process at we saw an additional 100 carers instantly coded. If the same approach was taken across our 9000 GP surgeries that would be an extra 900,000 carers identified and signposted for support.

This case study includes the approach document that can be adapted and used locally to engage GPs, explain the approach, and quickly set up your local campaigns.

## Automating Carer Identification Within Primary Care



**Last updated** Darren Crombie 14 Oct 2022

### The need - An automated approach to identify carers via Primary Care

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Across the UK the majority of our unpaid family carer remains unidentified, with roughly 10 - 20% of carers identified in each region.

Recently social media and advertising campaigns have been used to identify carers with positive results, **however the best and most trusted** approach remains through Primary Care and GP engagement with the carer.

For decades we've struggled in primary care to identify carers. We've trained our care navigators, included ads on screens, and included posters in waiting rooms. Despite all this effort the majority of our carers remain unidentified/ and un-coded in our GP systems / records.

We need a simple approach to identify carers at scale from within Primary Care. The approach needs to also reduce costs and efforts, as primary care teams continue to be stretched.

### The solution - How existing GP Systems can be used to quickly identify and code carers

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Below provides an overview of the communications that can be sent to GPs explaining how to set up the system needed to automatically code family carers.

It's a simple process and is something that the admin team can set up within a few hours, with

no dependency on the clinical teams.

**START OF TEMPLATE**

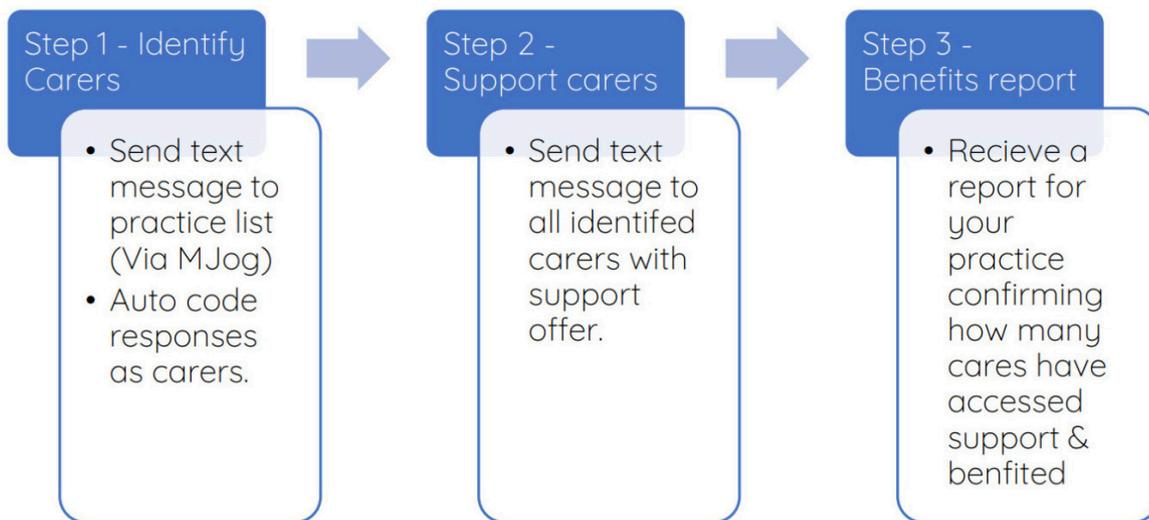
Primary Care Involvement

To support the rollout of carer support and also increase the number of carers registered within each practice the next phase for carer support identification within our region is for each GP Practice to send a set of text messages to their patients.

The text messages will help to:

1. Identify and code patients as carers, and
2. Provide identified carers with access to both online support and the carers support team phone number.

**What is the process, and what does each GP Practice need to do?**



**Step 1 – Identify Carers**

1. Create a new MJog campaign for **Carer Identification**.
2. Include below text message that helps them to identify if they are a carer via mjog.

*“Insert Practice Name is helping our patients with caring responsibilities.*

*Do you have a friend or family member that relies on you for some of their care (like shopping, or helping around the house)?*

*If so, please reply with the word CARE”*

3. When patients respond with CARE, then patient should be coded as a Family Carer onto your system (SystemOne or EMIS) as a carer by Mjog

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## **Step 2 – Support Carers**

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1. Create a new MJog campaign for **Carer Support**, to run after the Carer Identification campaign.
2. For all patients coded as a Family Carer the following text message should be sent (Including both online and offline support via phone)

*“You’re registered with our practice as a Family Carer. We have an online support plan in **XXREGIONXX** for you to get free & quick advice, support and information on local events and services. Try it today. <https://bridgit.care/support?t=gpc> Alternatively you can call the Carer Support Service directly on **XXX** to register.”*

3. The MJog campaign should continue to run on a weekly basis with text messages sent to any patients that have been newly coded. (this is to help provide support on an ongoing basis)

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## **Step 3 – Benefits Report**

Following the completion of the campaign our team will send a completed declaration template and summary of the number of carers that have accessed support.

After the text message has been sent, each practice will receive a completed declaration which can retained for your CQC evidence.



**Appendix B**

**Declaration template**

At **[NAME OF MEDICAL PRACTICE]** we are committed to identifying and supporting carers and meeting the requirements of the Care Quality Commission and as evidenced against the NHS England quality markers for general practice

Quality marker	How achieved
identification and registration	
holistic support	
in-practice support	
appointments and access	
information, involvement and communication	
awareness and culture	
<b>How did the practice involve carers in this declaration?</b>	



NAME:..... DATE:.....

This report will be up issued on an annual basis with updates on number of carers supported to support the practice to remain compliant with CQC guidelines.

**FAQs**

- What is the benefit in doing this?

Encourages identification and support to carers within their practice, also promotes a commitment to creating a carer friendly GP practice, as identified in the Framework of Quality Markers.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/supporting-carers-in-general-practice-a-framework-of-quality-markers/>

- Will this take a lot of time and work to complete?

This process can be managed easily by the practice administrator via an MJog campaign and doesn't require any support from the wider practice team.

**END OF TEMPLATE**

## Costs - No technology costs and minimal admin time needed

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**Technology Costs** - The IT systems used for this are already commissioned within Primary Care so there is no additional capital or operational investment needed.

(The existing systems will likely be MJog but this is subject to change and will differ locally.)

**Resource Costs** - As the systems are existing and the admin teams within Primary Care will be used to setting the system up for other text campaigns there should be minimal additional cost within the practice. The campaign should require hours to set up and administer and will provide a cost saving to the practice as it's a much more efficient way to identify and code carers.

**Management Costs** - To role this out across the region will require someone to engage GPs, provide access to the approach, and then track completion. This could tie into existing primary care engagement to reduce any additional over head (e.g. the primary care carer pack stream being run by NHS England carer leads)

## Challenges - Prioritising Carer Identification

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Demands on Primary Care continue to increase and there are a number of initiatives that are prioritised as we move into winter pressures.

In this environment it may be difficult to engage the GP community and prioritise activities like increasing carer identification. There will be a worry that this could increase the burden on the surgery.

To overcome this :

1. Be clear in initial communications that this will actually result in time saving within the practice.
2. Highlight how the involvement in this stream can contribute to the practices CQC review.
3. Produce a simple score card across all surgeries within a region to compare how many carers are coded, then use this to prioritise support.

## Impact - An extra 900k carers identified across the UK?

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### For carers

This process takes hours to set up and can be fully automated by the practice. There is no additional cost as it just uses the existing text system (e.g. MJog) and automatically codes the carer into SystemOne or EMIS.

For the practice we trialled this service at we saw an additional 100 carers instantly coded. If the same approach was taken across our 9000 GP surgeries that would be an extra 900,000 carers identified and signposted for support.

(This process also helps identify carers which may not often engage with Primary Care. A group that are not engaged currently.)

### **For primary care**

This process requires less time from GP teams to identify carers and can be set up to run automatically on an ongoing basis.

### **For the system**

The number of carers that burnout continues to increase and it's estimated by Carers UK that every 'burn out' of a carer costs the system £19k to fill the gap. (an impossible task!). Identifying carers is the first step to getting them into the support they need and deserve in order to be supported in their role.

## **Lessons**

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We had great support from the practice but it still took a while to complete the initial trial as time is limited. Ideally we would like to provide a step by step manual with screenshots which can be used to step through and set up their SMS primary care system.

## **Next steps, sustainability and scaling**

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This approach can be adopted anywhere at minimal cost.

We could set up a group on Future Forums to share ideas / feedback and engagement templates.

Some detailed set up guides and potentially walk through videos would help with roll out.

## **Find out more**

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We will produce a simple video explaining how to complete the process and also can provide a comms pack that can be used for GP engagement.

Please contact [d.crombie@nhs.net](mailto:d.crombie@nhs.net) for more information or call 07816 905471.

## Resources

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Type	Name	Last Modified
Document	<a href="#">Carers Identification Text Message Scheme_FINAL</a> Example document we used to communicate approach. Can be adapted locally.	13 Oct 2022



The **digital version of this document** is available on FutureNHS, the national sharing platform for the health and social care community.

**<https://future.nhs.uk>**