

King's Fund

The Carers Compass

Directions for improving
support to carers



Carers Impact

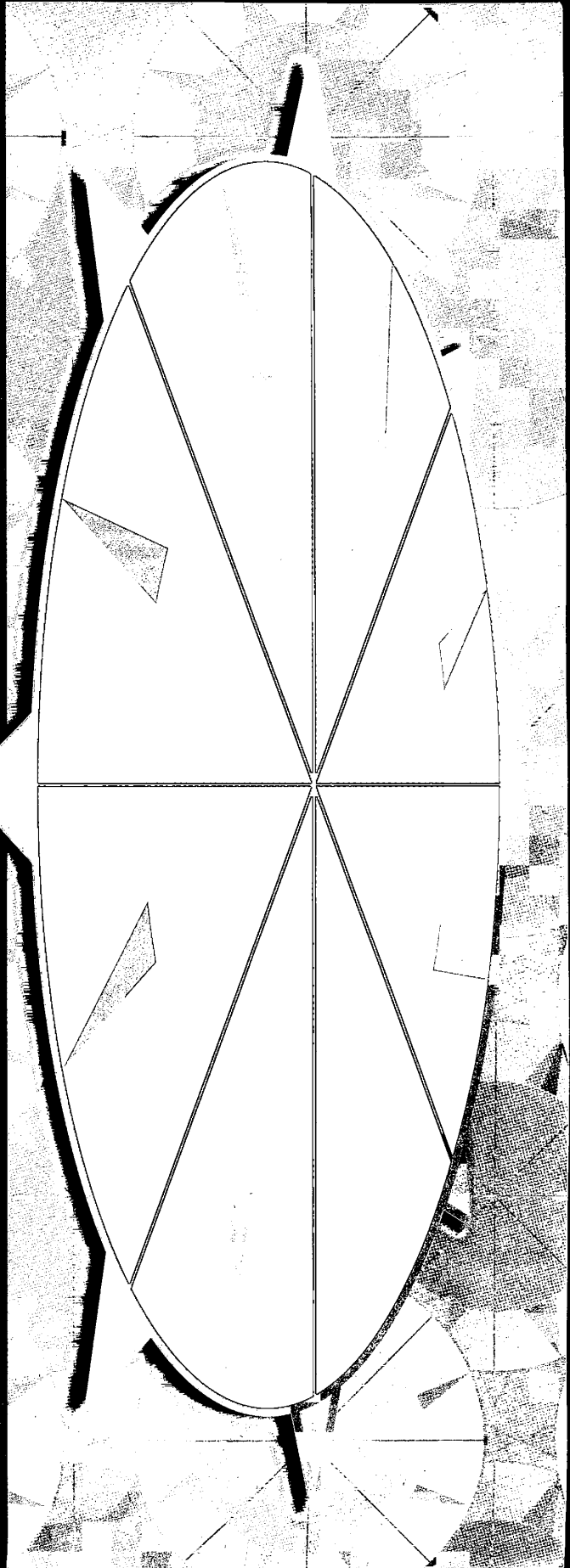
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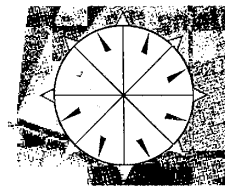
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The Carers Compass

Directions for improving support to carers



Who is this for?

The Carers Compass is for NHS commissioners and managers, working in partnership with local authorities, voluntary organisations, independent providers and carers.

What are its aims?

Carers Impact has found examples of good work across the country by the NHS to support carers but the evidence from carers shows this is often patchy and uncoordinated. In many areas carer support is seen as the responsibility of social services alone or an issue for the voluntary sector.

The Carers Compass seeks to assist the NHS in taking a comprehensive approach to supporting carers which builds on their work to date and fits with the new NHS agenda by:

- addressing the key principles of the new NHS, particularly in putting users and carers 'at the centre of the care process' and in ensuring health services are shaped by their views
- developing Health Improvement Programmes which include the needs of carers
- developing primary care which is responsive to carers and the local community
- integrating health, social and community services to support carers
- ensuring local services offer Best Value to the public.

Key Principles

- Carers – family, partners and friends – provide the majority of care in the community, and they need to be recognised and account needs to be taken of what they say
- Not everyone will wish to have assistance through informal relationships, nor will family or friends always want, or be able, to be 'carers' or to provide every aspect of care needed
- Every situation is different and users and carers must be recognised as individuals and an integrated approach taken which does not see either the service user/patient or carer in isolation
- All local services should be equally accessible to people regardless of age, gender, disability or ethnicity

Using the Compass to achieve the outcomes carers want

The Carers Compass can be used both in audit and performance management.

▼ As an Audit Tool

The Compass sets out all the different policies and practices which need to be in place to support carers and to meet the **eight key outcomes which carers have identified as important to them** (illustrated below).

It includes both '**specialist**' services to carers, such as carer centres and carer support workers, and '**mainstream**' acute and primary health care, community care, education, housing, transport and leisure services.

The Compass is intended to be used by all parts of the NHS to take stock of their work to support carers.

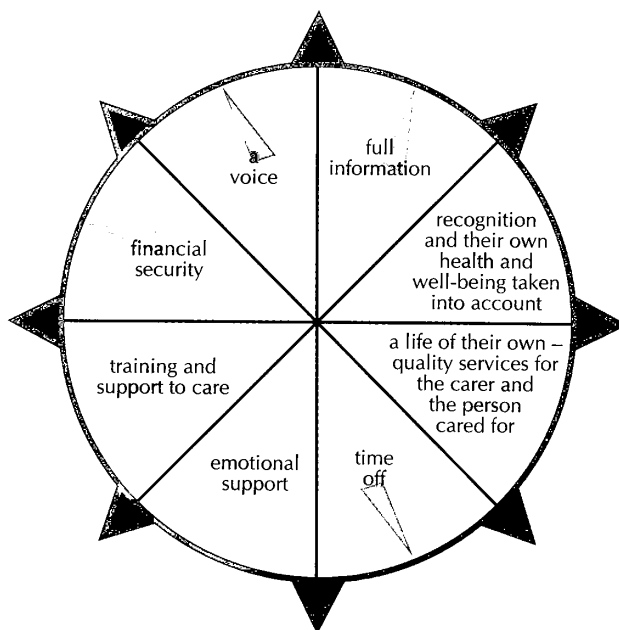
▼ As a Performance Tool

The following pages give suggestions on how to measure the success of these policies and practices

The Carers Compass is illustrated at the back of this leaflet

Carers want a good quality of life for the person they care for and control of their own life.

They want:

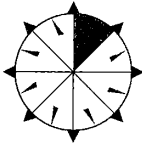


Are you heading in the right direction . . . ?

The Carers Compass in detail

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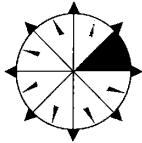
To be fully informed



- ✓ A joint health and social services information strategy, developed with carers, which:
 - ▼ recognises the importance of one-to-one information
 - ▼ emphasises a proactive approach by **all** staff in information-giving which is built into training strategies
 - ▼ ensures information is up-to-date
 - ▼ includes a dissemination strategy for all information
 - ▼ targets the right information at critical times (e.g. at hospital discharge)
 - ▼ provides easily accessible information at public venues (e.g. GP surgeries and hospital outpatients)
 - ▼ provides information in a range of formats and languages accessible to all carers
- ✓ Health services policy/guidelines on sensitive information-giving at the time of diagnosis
- ✓ A joint policy to support carer organisations, groups and centres and carer support workers to provide specialist information, advice and advocacy for carers of all ages and from all communities

Monitoring

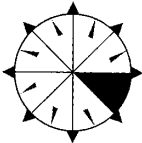
- *Identify carer issues in induction, training, supervision and job descriptions*
- *Identify 'triggers' within systems for information-giving at critical times*
- *Identify managers with responsibilities to ensure information is provided*
- *Carry out spot checks on carer information held in surgeries, outpatients, public venues, etc.*
- *Obtain regular carer feedback on quality of information-giving*

2**To be recognised and have my own needs, including health needs, taken into account**

- ✓ Policy/guidelines for primary care to address the needs of carers which includes:
 - ▼ recognition and identification of carers
 - ▼ information and signposting
 - ▼ liaison with other services
 - ▼ monitoring carer's own health
- ✓ All agencies to implement policy for all staff to be carer aware
- ✓ Discharge planning procedures which include carers and takes account of the Carers (Recognition & Services) Act 1995
- ✓ Policy, procedures and training to implement the Carers Act and carry out carer assessments, with health services involvement
- ✓ Multi-agency young carers strategy which links to the Children's Services Plan and Community Care Plan

Monitoring

- *Record number of carer assessments, including young carer assessments*
- *Use indicators of good practice in assessments (e.g. all carers are given a written record; all assessments are culturally sensitive) for file checks and supervision*
- *Obtain carer feedback on assessment practice*
- *Review ethnic monitoring information on uptake of assessments*
- *Audit hospital discharge practice, with carer involvement*
- *Record unmet needs on individual basis and collate and use for planning*

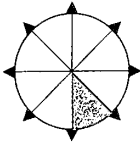
3**Appropriate services to ensure a good quality of life for the person cared for and for carers to have a life of their own**

- ✓ All agencies to adopt user and carer quality standards for all services including **five key carer quality standards**:
 - i) fair access to services
 - ii) sensitivity to all the interests involved and negotiated agreement
 - iii) services which give confidence and can be trusted
 - iv) services which carers feel share responsibility and do make a positive difference
 - v) services which can respond in emergencies
- ✓ Address carers' needs within Health Improvement Programmes, Community Care Plans, all care group strategies and corporate policies
- ✓ Funding and support to black and minority ethnic organisations to provide appropriate specialist services

Monitoring

- *Commissioners, providers and front-line staff to develop and monitor local carers quality standards for their services*
- *Involve carers in all quality improvement systems*
- *Address carers issues within contracts and monitor through spot checks, carer feedback, staff reports*
- *Develop self-assessment/practice audits by providers and staff*
- *Review ethnic monitoring information on uptake of services*

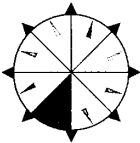
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4**Opportunities for a break**

- ✓ A joint strategy to provide residential, day and domiciliary options for time off suited to both the carer and user
- ✓ Joint commissioning of respite services

Monitoring

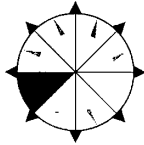
- *Establish and monitor user and carer quality standards as above*
- *Obtain carer and user feedback on the balance and availability of provision*

5**Emotional support**

- ✓ Financial and staff support to carer centres, carer support groups and carer networks
- ✓ Ensure general counselling services address carers' needs

Monitoring

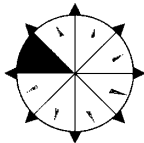
- *Monitor contracts/agreements with carer centres and organisations*
- *Obtain carer feedback on carer centres and organisations*
- *Audit professional practice in listening to carers and offering, or signposting to, emotional support*

6**Training and support to care**

- ✓ Policy for all staff to provide the expertise, training and advice needed by the carer to care
- ✓ Funding for courses for carers, for example, on physical and mental health problems and on lifting and handling

Monitoring

- *Sample file records/audit practice to check how carers are being prepared to undertake caring tasks, including those often performed by doctors, nurses or therapists*
- *Map local availability and take-up of courses for carers*

7**Financial security**

- ✓ All agencies to have a policy for employees who are carers
- ✓ Joint information strategy to include:
 - ▼ clear information for carers on local charging policy
 - ▼ comprehensive and accessible benefits advice for carers

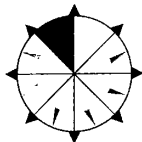
Monitoring

- *Audit the take-up of flexible working practices to ensure the success of the policy*
- *Obtain carer feedback on the charging policy*
- *Carry out regular benefits checks on a sample of carers to determine the success of the take-up*



8

Having a voice



- ✓ A joint health and social services strategy to involve carers in planning, commissioning, inspecting and evaluating services
- ✓ A joint health and social services training/carers awareness strategy, involving carers in its development and delivery

Monitoring

- *Audit carer involvement:*
 - ▼ *who – are carers from all communities involved?*
 - ▼ *how – do the processes suit carers?*
 - ▼ *outcomes – do carers influence decisions and are they kept informed of changes?*

Carer feedback for all monitoring

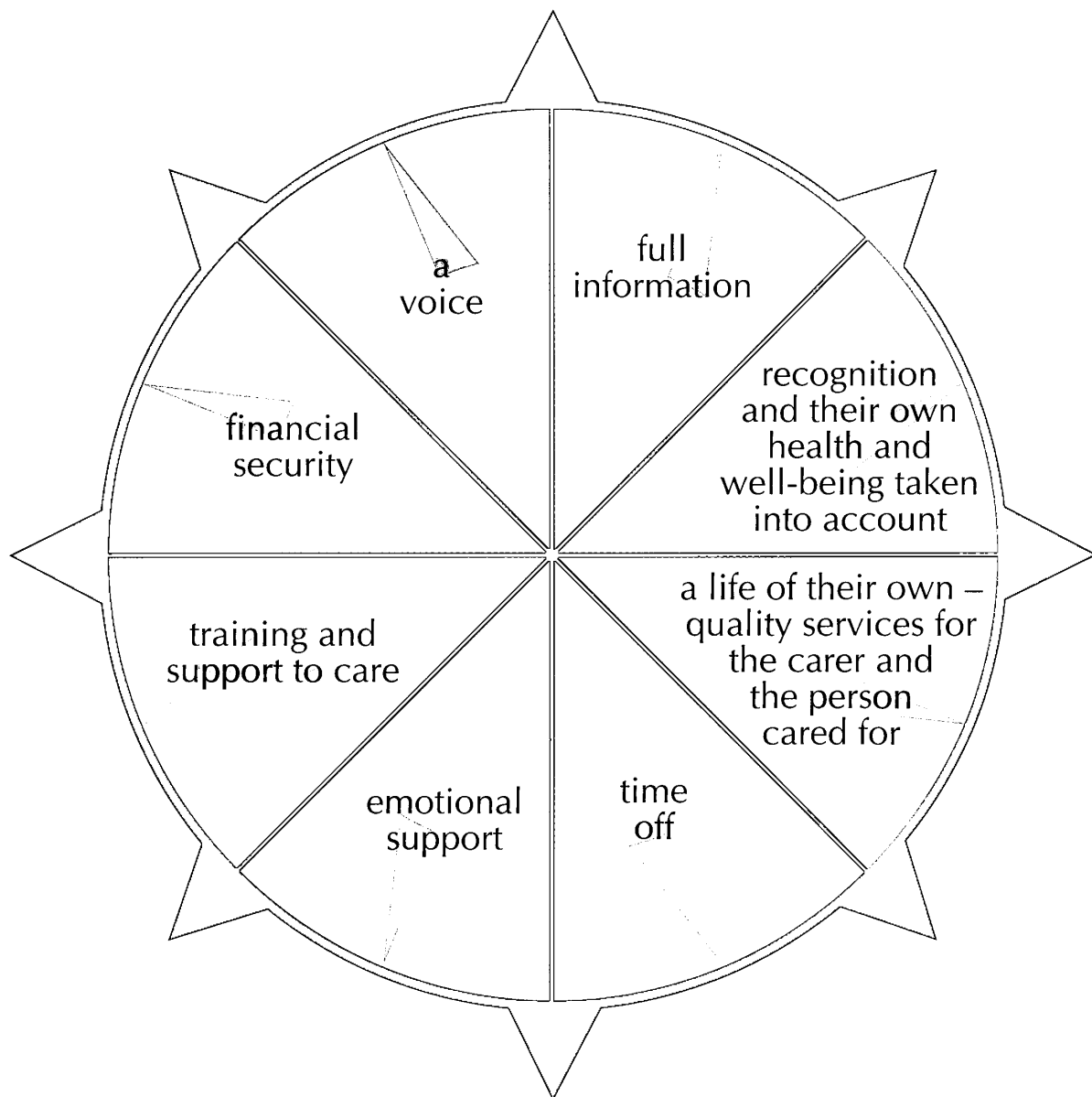
Obtain carer feedback through:

- *information collected from assessment and care management systems*
- *routine interviews with sample of carers*
- *going out to carer groups*
- *going out to community and minority groups*
- *information collated by carers centres and carer organisations*
- *facilitated carer panels, focus groups and carer juries*
- *telephone surveys*
- *open feedback phonelines*
- *questionnaires mailed out through shared carer registers*
- *analysis of complaints*



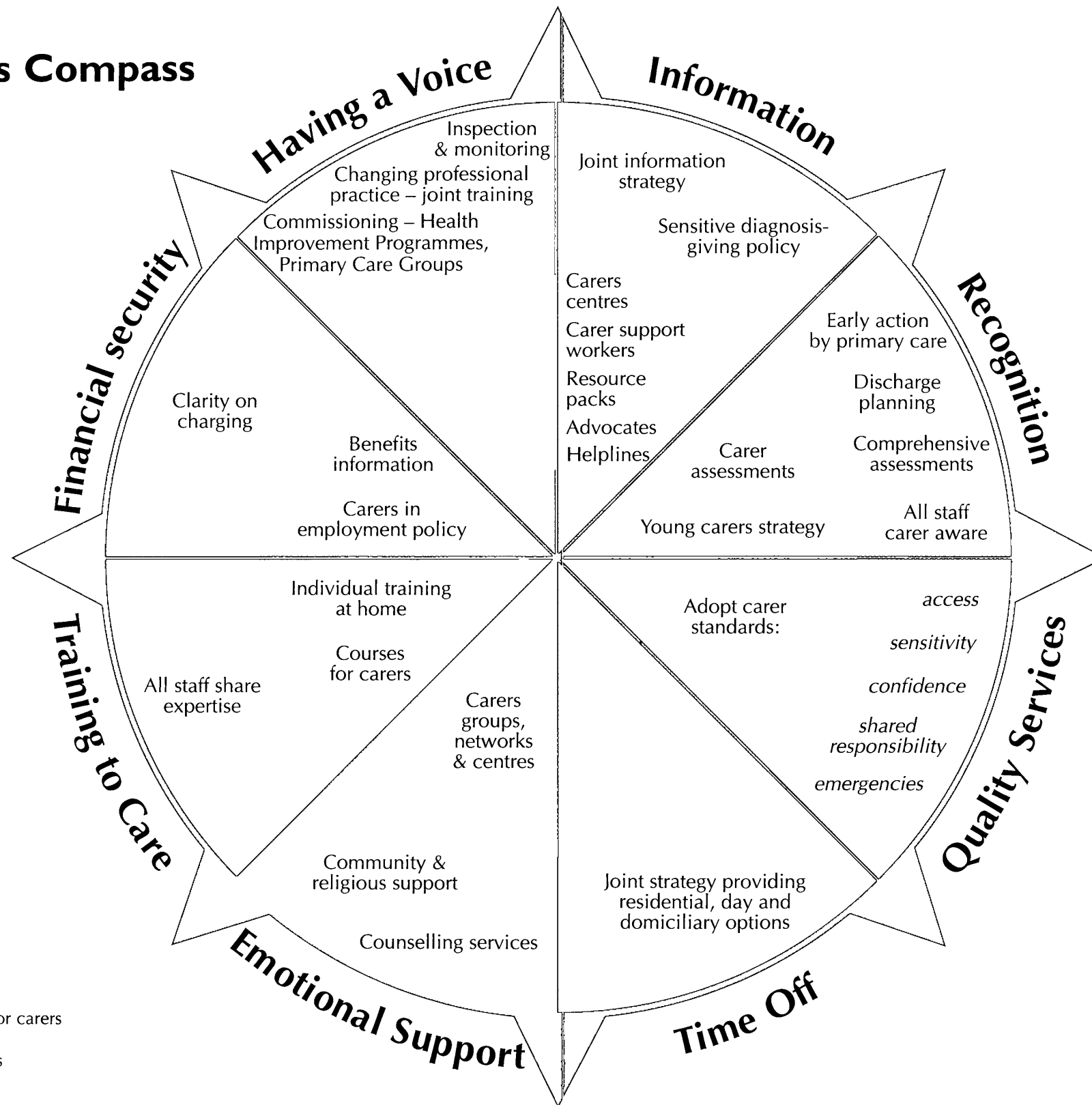
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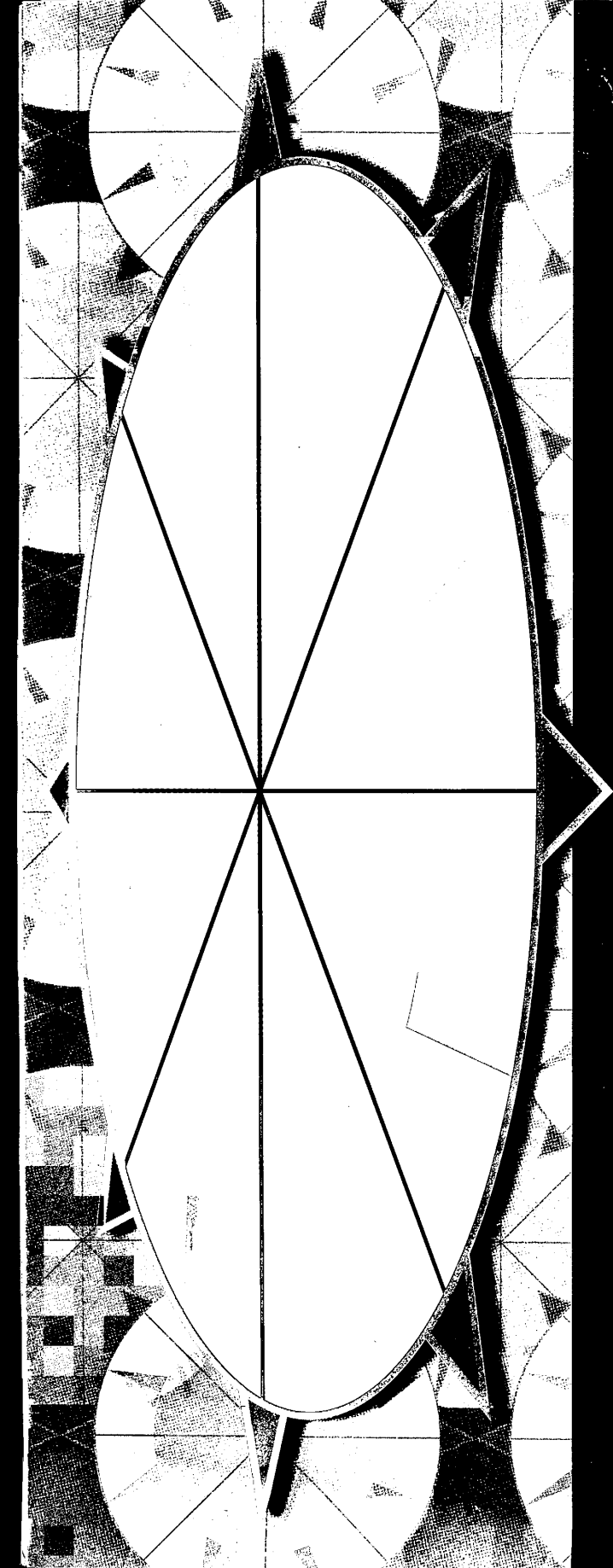
They want:



Are you heading in the right direction . . . ?

The Carers Compass





Carers Impact 1996–1999 is a national development programme working to improve support to carers.

Funded by the Department of Health and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, the programme is backed by an alliance of national statutory and voluntary organisations.

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