

Getting ready to leave hospital

A guide for patients who may need support when they leave hospital



This guide is to help patients who may need some support to leave hospital. It suggests some questions that you and your family may like to ask the ward team caring for you, so that you can work together to plan any support you need.

It also explains some of the assessments available to patients and carers, and how these can help you access any extra support you might need.

Please share this leaflet with any family, friends or others supporting you during your hospital stay or recovery at home.

Planning for discharge

People recover better at home, so we want your hospital stay to be as short as possible. Planning for discharge can begin as soon as you enter the hospital (or, in some cases, before you come).

If you are planning to stay with a relative, friend or anywhere other than your usual home, please let your medical and nursing staff know as soon as possible as this may affect the plan.



The medical team will check you to see how you are recovering. They will encourage you to get up, sit out of bed and participate in usual everyday tasks and this will help them decide whether you're well enough to leave hospital.

If you are taking a little longer to recover, you may also be assessed by other specialist staff, such as specialist nursing, therapists, or the social work team, to identify any specific needs you may have.

Questions you could ask:

- When do you think I might be ready to be discharged?
- Who should I speak to if I have questions about going home?
- Can you help arrange for a friend or relative to be with me when we talk about my discharge?
- Will I manage at home or will I need some temporary help?
- What kind of help could I get with daily tasks?
- What might that help look like and who would provide it?
- Is there support that I will need to organise?
- Is there anything I need to do to get the support I need?
- Is someone available to take me home or can hospital transport be arranged?
- What time of day will I get home?
- Do I need to take any medical equipment home with me?
- How do I take my medicines at home?
- What assessments and support will I get when I leave hospital and where?
- Will I get a written care and support plan at home? What will be the process for this?
- How can I contact my GP or healthcare team once I'm home?

Checklist - Planning for discharge

- ☐ I have thought about family and friends who may be able to offer help and support when I leave the hospital.
- ☐ I have spoken to those people about how they might be able to support me and told the ward staff about them.
- ☐ The ward staff know if I need any extra support to discuss my discharge plans.
- ☐ I know where I will go when I leave the hospital, and I am confident that it is appropriate and safe.
- ☐ I have confirmed the address I will go to with the ward staff and have confirmed I have access to the property.
- ☐ I have my house keys or know how to get into my accommodation after discharge.
- ☐ I have discussed my treatment and ongoing care.
- ☐ I know who to contact if I have any concerns or issues.
- ☐ My relatives or carers know what support I need when I leave the hospital and what help they will provide.
- ☐ I know what transport I will be using to leave the hospital
- ☐ My relatives, friend or carer know what time and where to collect me, or when I am due back home.
- ☐ I have asked about the assessments or care support I might get once I am back at my accommodation.
- ☐ My relatives, friends, or carers know they may be entitled to a carer's assessment for the support they provide to me.

Advice for relatives and carers

Let the hospital know as soon as possible if you are the patient's carer or plan to care for them in the future. This ensures you are involved in any discussions about their care when they return home. If the patient consents, your views will be considered, and you will be closely involved with the discharge process.



If the person you care for lacks the mental capacity to make some decisions for themselves, you may be able to make certain decisions for them if you have a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or Deputyship Order. If you have Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), you will be asked to produce this as the hospital will need to check this and place a copy on the electronic notes. If you do not have the legal authority to make these decisions, staff may still consult with you for decisions.

It is important to be honest with hospital staff and others about what you can manage as a carer. Plans made for life after hospital need to be realistic and sustainable.

If you are providing necessary support to a family member or friend in the home as an unpaid carer, you are entitled to a carer's assessment to see what help could be put in place to support you. You can contact the adult social care department of your local council to request one.

Even if you don't ask for support when the person first comes home, you can still do this later if you change your mind. You can contact your local council's adult social care department in the first instance.

Getting ready to leave hospital

There can be a lot to think about if you need extra support when leaving hospital, so it's best to be as well prepared as possible early on. Once the medical team says you are well enough to leave, your hospital bed will be needed for another patient, so it's important to be ready to go home. Your hospital team will help you get ready to go home. They will explain your medicines, discharge notes, and any equipment you'll need.

Checklist - Day of discharge

- ☐ I have my discharge letter and I understand it.
- ☐ I have been given written information about my condition and/or treatment (or I've been told this won't be necessary).
- ☐ I have information to help with my recovery (diet, exercises, moving around, going to the toilet) or I've been told this won't be necessary.
- ☐ I know who is responsible for authorising my discharge
- ☐ I have had a conversation about how to look after myself when I am home and feel confident that I know what to do.
- ☐ I have discussed with the medical team if there are any physical signs or symptoms that I should be looking out for, and what to do if I experience them
- ☐ I have any medication I need, and I know what it is and how to take it.
- ☐ I know about any side effects of my medicines and what to do about them.
- ☐ I know how I am getting home or to another hospital or care home.
- ☐ I have the essential equipment I need (as recommended by the multidisciplinary team).
- ☐ I have all my clothes, valuables and keys.

Support and assessments in the community

Support after hospital

Most people are still recovering when they first get home. If something feels confusing or worrying, please contact your GP, or call 999 in an emergency. The sooner you speak to someone, the easier it can be to resolve. If you haven't heard about any outpatient appointments you were expecting, you can contact the GP to find out what is happening.



Care needs assessment

If you think you might need some more care or support at home, you can ask for a care needs assessment. These assessments are done by your local council's adult social care team. The assessment looks at what you need help with now that you're home. It considers how you're coping day to day, what support you already have, and what matters most to you.

You can apply on the gov.uk website here:
www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services

If the assessment finds that you are eligible for support, you will get a care and support plan, setting out what you can receive to help meet your needs. The council will also check your finances to see if you need to pay towards your care, and how much.

You can find out more on the NHS website here:
www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/help-from-social-services-and-charities/getting-a-needs-assessment

A few people who have very complex health needs may also be able to have a continuing healthcare assessment. Continuing healthcare - often known as CHC - is care that's paid for by the NHS for people with serious long-term health needs.

Continuing healthcare (CHC)

Not everyone can get this, and decisions about who gets it are based on their medical needs, as assessed by healthcare professionals. Being assessed for CHC usually happens once you've returned home, but you can ask any questions about it before then.

Visit this NHS page for more information about CHC:
www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare

Carer's assessment

If you care for someone, you can have a carer's assessment to see what might help make your life easier. The assessment is usually done by adult social services and might recommend things like having someone else help with the caring, so that you get a break.

You can find out more on the NHS website here:
www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments

Key contacts

- If you are in a serious or life-threatening emergency, call 999.
- If you need urgent care, contact your GP. If it can't wait, or you're having a mental health crisis, call 111. For British Sign Language visit **www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs111**
- If your district nurse hasn't visited you as expected, contact your GP.
- If you are uncertain about anything related to your social care needs, contact your local council (see details on the back of this leaflet).

Organisations and resources

For patients

British Red Cross (0208 944 0246): providing support getting home and after returning home - www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/find-home-care-services-near-you

Age UK (0800 678 1602): information and advice on health, benefits, care and support - www.ageuk.org.uk

Meals on Wheels: meals and social contact to adults who cannot leave their home to shop for food, or prepare their own meals - www.mealsonwheelsuk.org

Independent Age (0800 319 6789): information and advice on advocacy - www.independentage.org/get-advice/care/taking-action/independent-advocacy

The Patients Association (0800 345 7115): information on health and social care - www.patients-association.org.uk

Citizens Advice (0800 144 8848): information and advice about healthcare, social care and money - www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Living Made Easy (DLF): fact sheets and advice on purchasing equipment, alarms, monitors or adapting your home - www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk/dlf-factsheets

Wheelfreedom (0800 025 8005): wheelchair hire and purchase - www.wheelfreedom.com

London Wheelchair hire (0800 368 8770): wheelchairs, powerchairs and walking aids - www.wheelchair-mobility-scooter-rental-london.com

Manage at Home (0808 281 2576): various mobility equipment - www.manageathome.co.uk

Direct Mobility (0208 370 7888): various mobility equipment - www.directmobility.co.uk

Age Co Personal Alarms (0808 588 0173): personal alarms - www.personalalarms.ageuk.org.uk

Argos Mobility Aids: mobility aids - www.argos.co.uk/browse/health-and-beauty/mobility-aids/c:29212/

Boots Living Aids: mobility and daily living aids - www.boots.com/homeware/livingaids

For carers

Carers UK (0808 808 7777): key information and frequently asked questions about a carer's assessment - www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carers-assessment

Carers UK (0808 808 7777): coming out of hospital checklist - www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/coming-out-of-hospital/coming-out-of-hospital-checklist

Carers Trust (0300 772 9600): support, advice and resources for unpaid carers, including a services finder for locating local support - www.carers.org

Mobilise: information, advice and support for unpaid carers - www.mobiliseonline.co.uk

The Carents Room: information, community and support for people caring for their elderly parents - www.carents.co.uk

Notes

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We wish you all the best with leaving hospital and hope that the information and advice here helps everything go as smoothly as possible.

This resource was developed in partnership with patients and NHS, social care and local authority professionals across South East London. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed their time, insight and expertise to help make this leaflet possible.



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www.bromley.gov.uk



020 8314 6000
www.lewisham.gov.uk



020 7926 1000
www.lambeth.gov.uk



020 8854 8888
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk



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