

Patient information

Leaving hospital – discharge information

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about leaving the hospital (being discharged) and why it is important to plan ahead.

Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

When will I leave the hospital?

You will only leave the hospital when the team involved with your care confirm that you no longer need acute hospital treatment and it is safe for your care and other investigations that may be required to continue a community care setting.

Your care team will also let you know your expected date of discharge (when you can leave the hospital).

If your care team feel that you are too poorly to go home on your estimated discharge date, they will let you know and a further care and discharge plan will be put in place.



What to expect before leaving the hospital

Early conversations

Soon after you are admitted to stay in hospital, we will discuss your care plan and arrangements for leaving once you are well enough. These discussions will involve your carers, family and/or friends, if you would like them to be included.

Returning to your home/previous place of care

For many people, returning to a familiar environment after a hospital admission is the best option and we will support you as best we can to achieve this. If this is not the best option for you, we will help you to explore alternative options (detailed below).

Why do I need to be discharged from hospital as soon as I no longer need hospital treatment?

Hospital beds are for people who are very unwell and require acute treatment that can only be provided in the hospital.

It is important that when the teams involved with your care confirm that you are well enough to leave the hospital, that we facilitate your discharge as soon as possible, in order to provide care to another patient who requires hospital care.



People who may be approaching their last days of life may wish to remain in hospital and this can be discussed with the wider clinical teams.

What may happen if I stay in hospital longer than clinically needed?

Although hospitals are a place to receive treatment, if you stay in hospital longer than you need, you might:

- Become less mobile, which increases your risk of a blood clot
- Need more help from others to do basic tasks (become dependent)
- Acquire a hospital infection
- Develop low mood
- Experience a lower quality of sleep, which will impact your recovery
- Incur higher costs on discharge if you if you privately fund your own care

What if I cannot return to the place I normally live?

If you, your carer, family or friends have concerns about you returning home, please contact the transfer of care team on **01279 82 7927** and explain your concerns. Please contact the team at least three days before your estimated discharge date. Please note that the day of your discharge is too late to raise concerns.



What if I am medically ready to be discharged, but I need care support, equipment, other services and adaptations organised?

We will start your discharge planning early on in your hospital stay, before you are ready to leave the hospital. This is completely normal and is done so that you can leave hospital as soon as you are clinically ready to do so.

We will always try to support your discharge to your own home. However, if you are waiting for care support, equipment, other services or adaptations to be organised, you may be discharged to an alternative care provider within the local community, such as a community hospital bed, a discharge to assess bed, or referred to a local hospice if appropriate.



If you are only waiting for care support, a bridging service may be asked to care for you at home until a care agency is identified.

What is a community hospital bed?

A community hospital bed offers a rehabilitation environment for people who do not need to remain in hospital, but are unable to go home.

What is a discharge to assess bed?

A discharge to assess bed is a short-term placement in a 24-hour care setting, such as a care home. These placements are only used when someone's care needs cannot be met at home.

A person's long-term plans can't be made in hospital, so these short-term placements are so that assessments can be carried out and long-term plans put in place. This may be a package of care at home, or long-term placement in a care home or nursing home.

Can I choose to have a placement?

It isn't possible to choose to go to one of these placements. If there are concerns about you going home, a discharge facilitator will come to see you and they will ask you questions about where you live and how you have been managing at home.

They will ask about your carers and what support you might get from your family and friends. They will also involve your carer and family in the discussions if you wish. After this assessment, if you are eligible for a discharge to assess bed, the discharge facilitator will work with social care partners and to find a suitable placement.

Can I choose which care home I go to?

If a care home is a suitable option for you, there isn't an option to choose which care home you will be transferred to. A placement will be offered to you in a care home that has a social care bed available and can meet your care needs.

What happens if I do not want to go to a care home?

If you decide that you don't want to go to that care home, arrangements will be made for you to return home with a care support package.

I wish to go to a care home, but have been told I am not eligible, what are my options?

If your care needs can be met at home with support, a package of care will be organised for you. You cannot choose to go to a care home instead.

If you have been offered a package of care at home, but still feel that you would like to go to a care home, you would need to organise this privately.

You will not be able to wait in hospital until you move to your chosen care home and will need to return home with the package of care offered in the meantime.

Medication to take away with you

Your care team will inform you of any changes to your medication and will guide you through how to take the prescribed medication before you are discharged.

You will also find written instructions on the packaging, which tells you how to take your medication, including frequency and time.

If you have been discharged with anticoagulation or antibiotic medication, remember to keep taking your medication and complete the course prescribed. If you need a further supply of any medications, please speak to your GP.



Our hospital discharge lounge

When you are medically ready to leave the hospital, and your next care steps have been agreed, you will be transferred from the ward to our discharge lounge.

The discharge lounge is a dedicated space for patients to wait for collection and transport. The discharge lounge helps to free up hospital beds as early as possible for patients waiting in the emergency department and those who are waiting for emergency surgery.



A dedicated discharge lounge care team are on hand to support you and ensure you have a safe and seamless discharge from hospital, this includes:

- Explaining how to take prescribed medications
- Administering any medications as needed and indicated
- Liaising with with care providers, transport services and the pharmacy department

- Contacting your carer, relative, friend, or next of kin
- Performing health check observations when required
- Providing health education and knowledge
- Any further support needed relating to your discharge

The space can accommodate 19 patients, with comfortable chairs and five beds if you are unable to sit. There are also toilet facilities and snacks and refreshments provided.

The discharge lounge is open from **8am-8pm, Monday to Friday**, and from **10am-6pm, on Saturday and Sunday**.

The lounge is located on level one, next to the main entrance, opposite Costa Coffee. There are volunteers situated at the main entrance who can assist **your carer, relative or friend** with directions.

The discharge lounge team can be contacted during the opening hours listed above on **01279 96 2288**.

Transport when leaving the hospital to go home

If you are able to, we ask that you arrange to be picked up from hospital. This could be by a carer, relative or friend, or by arranging a taxi.

Your carer, relative or friend, can collect you from the discharge lounge (details above). They can park in the 30-minute pick up and drop off bay in front of the discharge lounge, next to the emergency department.



If you are unable to organise your own transport, please speak to your care team who will be able to support you with this.

Transport when moving to another care setting

If you are moving to another care setting, transport will be arranged by the discharge team. An ambulance will be arranged for patients who have high-level care needs or specific medical needs.

The transport provider or ambulance crew will collect you from the discharge lounge.

A summary of your care

Your care team will complete a summary of your care (called a discharge summary) once you are medically ready to be discharged from the hospital.

This includes information about your stay in hospital, investigation results, diagnoses, the care and treatment you have received, any ongoing care and treatment you may require, and follow-up appointment details.

You will receive a copy of your discharge summary on the day you leave the hospital and a copy will be automatically sent to your GP.



If you have further questions or wish to raise concerns about your discharge please contact the transfer of care team on **01279827927** or email tpa-tr.dischargeteam@nhs.net.

Version one | Claire Eyre | Discharge information leaflet | Date ratified: 08/2024 | Review date: 08/2027



modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration

Staying mobile once you leave the hospital

If you are mobile when you leave the hospital, it is very important to keep active in order to reduce the risk of developing blood clots and to aid your recovery.

If you develop painful, swollen legs, or have a sudden shortness of breath, please seek urgent medical advice by calling NHS 111.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.