

This leaflet has been developed with the help and support of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

When you are ready to leave hospital

A guide for adult patients, family and carers



When the hospital team caring for you considers that you are well enough to leave hospital they will help you make plans to leave.

The hospital team will talk to you about your 'discharge' from hospital. It is good practice to start planning your discharge from hospital within 24 hours of your admission. Before you are ready to leave hospital you will be able to talk to the hospital team and you will be given a choice about the best place for you to go once you are well enough to leave. This may be to your own home (with care or additional equipment, if needed), a rehabilitation ward, an interim bed, a care home, a nursing home or somewhere else. The hospital team will be able to advise you about the best place for you based on your health and care needs.

Once you are ready to leave hospital you will be given a choice about which follow-up care setting you go to, providing they have the right availability and are able to meet your care needs. You won't usually be able to stay in hospital once a care placement has been agreed for you. This is because we know it is not good for patients to remain in hospital for too long and it can make your recovery slower.

This leaflet will help you to understand what should happen up to the time when you are ready to leave hospital.

This document is available in other languages and formats, on request.
Please ask the hospital team if you would like an alternative format.

While you are in hospital:

The hospital team caring for you will review your care daily and they will ensure that your care plan is updated. Where possible, you and your family, friends or carers, will be involved in these reviews. It is helpful to have just one person nominated to talk with the hospital staff, even if more people are involved in decisions.

The following questions might be helpful to ask during your hospital stay. They will help you to understand more about your treatment and when you are expected to be able to go home:

- What is wrong with me? What treatments and care are being considered?
- What is going to happen to me today and tomorrow?
- If all goes to plan, and there are no complications or delays, when can I leave hospital?
- What needs to happen for me to leave hospital?

When you are ready to leave hospital:

Most people leave hospital without any delays, as soon as they are well enough to do so. They are usually discharged in the morning. If you need any care after your hospital stay the hospital staff will make sure that it is ready to start when you are discharged. If there is a delay in the start of this care, you may be moved to an 'interim placement' as a short-term measure. This might be to another hospital or a residential home that can provide the right level of care for your needs.

A member of the hospital team (as well as social workers, if appropriate) will talk to you, your family and carers about your care needs when you leave hospital.

Before you go home, you might need some new equipment installed in your home. This will be arranged before you leave hospital but you won't usually be able to wait in hospital while the work is carried out. If there is a delay in the equipment being installed, you might be discharged to an 'interim placement' as a short-term measure.

You might have ongoing health needs when you leave hospital, such as new medicines, nursing care, or you might need other health appointments. Some of these will be managed by your GP or district nursing team. If you have a long-term health need and will need a lot of help you might be eligible for something called 'NHS Continuing Healthcare', which is a free package of care arranged and funded by the NHS. You can apply for this, and it might pay for some types of residential nursing care, for example.

You might also need help to do everyday things like washing, dressing and eating, even if it is for a short period of time. The adult social care service at your county council has a duty to make sure your social care needs are met. You might need to make financial contributions for some or all of these services and this will be explained to you. The team looking after you will explain the options available to you for funding any ongoing healthcare needs you might have.

Your family or carers can be involved in any assessment of your care needs; they can be very useful to the hospital team. It is very helpful if the hospital team can contact them easily so your discharge isn't held up by delays in making decisions.

Some people will be eligible for a carer's assessment to ensure that those who are caring for you are getting the right support. The hospital team can discuss this with you and give you the contact details for an assessment.

The adult social care service at the county council can also help with information about arranging personal care after leaving hospital. The following questions might be useful for you to ask:

- How can I arrange to get the personal care I need?
- Will I be able to manage without making changes to where I live? Are there people I can contact to help make any changes?
- If there is additional equipment that I would like that would make things easier for me when I leave hospital, who can help and advise me on this?
- What arrangements will the social services team make for my care after I leave hospital?

Leaving the hospital:

When you are ready to leave the hospital please arrange your own transport home if possible, as it is usually faster. Options include having someone collect you, or travelling either on your own or with someone else in a taxi. The hospital staff can give you contact details of local taxi companies.

Some people will need to leave hospital in an ambulance or 'hospital transport' but the hospital team will decide if this is necessary and will make the arrangements.

Checklist for leaving hospital:

- Make sure you collect all your belongings from around your bed – it is really easy to leave small items like glasses behind.
- Make sure you collect anything valuable you have stored in the hospital safe.

Before you leave make sure you are given the following from the hospital team:

- A letter about your stay in hospital – your GP will also get a copy.
- Your medicines and any supplies like dressings that you might need after you have left hospital. The hospital team will explain these to you so that you (or your family) can understand what they are for, when you should take medicines and when you should use the supplies. They will also explain how long you will need them for and how you can re-order supplies, if necessary.

Before you leave the hospital, you might be transferred to a waiting area called a 'discharge lounge', especially if you are waiting for hospital transport. You will be kept comfortable and offered meals and snacks until you leave.

When you get home from hospital:

It will make a real difference to your comfort and health to have some food, other supplies and warmth ready for when you return home, especially if you are returning to an empty house. If you have friends and family, they will often be very happy to help. If you need it, there is a free service called 'Welcome Home from Hospital' which can also help and visit you at home after you leave hospital. The hospital staff can give you information about this.

Any questions:

If you have any questions about this leaflet, please ask someone from the hospital team for help. And we hope your recovery after leaving the hospital goes very smoothly.

Comment or concern?

The hospital Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters. They provide a point of contact for patients, their families and their carers.

Useful contacts:

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- Patients' Medicines Helpline
Tel: 01223 274 502 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)
Email: medinfo@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Web: www.cuh.nhs.uk/services/pharmacy
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Tel: 01223 216 756. Email: pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Web: www.cuh.nhs.uk/have-your-say/patient-advice-and-liaison-service-pals

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

- Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Tel: 01733 673 405 (Monday to Friday 8.30am-4.30pm)
Email: pals@pbh-tr.nhs.uk
- Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Tel: 01480 428 964 (Monday to Friday 9am-4.30pm)
Email: Hch-tr.pals@nhs.net
Web: www.nwangliaft.nhs.uk

Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

- Tel: 01480 830 541 (Switchboard)
Email: papworth.pals@nhs.net
Web: www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk

Cambridgeshire County Council

- Adult Social Care
Tel: 0345 0455 202
Email: careinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Web: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Peterborough City Council

- Adult Social Care
Tel: 01733 747474
Email: adultsocialcare@peterborough.gcsx.gov.uk
Web: www.peterborough.gov.uk

Care Network Cambridgeshire

- Tel: 01954 211 919
Web: www.care-network.org.uk

Carers Trust Cambridgeshire

- Tel: 0345 241 0954 or 01480 499 090
Email: care@carerstrustcambridgeshire.org
Web: www.carerstrustcambridgeshire.org

Carers Trust Peterborough

- Tel: 01733 645 234
Email: carers@carerstrustpeterborough.org
Web: www.carerstrustcambridgeshire.org

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

- Tel: 0330 355 1285
Email: enquiries@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Web: www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
- Tel: 0330 355 1285
Email: info@healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk
Web: www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk

