

# Patient guide to discharge – think home first

## Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net).

## Discharge planning

Our top priority is to help you get better and support you to leave hospital when the time is right. You will only leave hospital when you no longer need hospital care and it is safe to do so.

Our staff will work with you to start planning right away to ensure you leave the hospital in a safe and timely manner.

In most cases you will return home. You might need some additional care to help you in your recovery, or practical support such as help with shopping.

You may need to be discharged to a short-term care home bed and our staff can explain these to you. If you are a care home resident, you will most likely return to your care home.

## What you can expect

**Early conversations** – soon after you are admitted to hospital, either through the emergency department or via planned admission routes, we will discuss and plan how you will be able to leave. We will involve your family, carers and/or friends in conversations if you wish.

**Expected date of discharge (EDD)** – soon after you arrive in hospital you will be given an EDD, the expected date you will leave hospital, this will be reviewed throughout your stay.

## Questions you should ask us during your hospital stay

- What is the matter with me?
- What is going to happen to me today and tomorrow?
- What extra help might I need when I leave hospital?
- When am I going home?

## The discharge lounge (RD&E)

Patients at RD&E Wonford may be discharged to our discharge lounge, making things more convenient and comfortable for them. Situated close to the RD&E Wondford's main entrance in a tranquil space with an outdoor area, the discharge lounge offers a restful environment for patients who are waiting to go home. There's comfortable seating, snacks and drinks, and support available.

Staffed by registered nurses, the discharge lounge team care for patients as they wait to be discharged, checking that they receive their medication, ordering transport and contacting their family, friends or carer.

## Getting you home for lunch

No one wants to be in hospital for longer than they need to be and we want to ensure you can leave hospital in a timely, comfortable and well-planned way.

Once you are well enough, the best place for you to recover is in the comfort of your own home.

We will always try to get you home or transferred to our discharge lounge before lunchtime.

Getting you home for lunch:

- improves your experience and means you feel more awake at the time of discharge
- reduces unnecessary delays
- is safer and more convenient for patients/families/carers
- improves your access to other services if required (e.g. pharmacies / shops)
- helps us accommodate new patients who need to be admitted

## Checklist for discharge

- Will someone pick you up or meet you at home?
- Are your ongoing care arrangements in place?
- Do you have suitable outdoor clothing and shoes to wear?
- Do you have any medical certificates you may need?
- Do you have your hospital discharge letter for your GP?
- Do you have your medication ready to take home?
- Do you understand how and when to take your medication?
- Do you have your house keys and personal belongings?

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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