

# Leaving hospital

A guide to discharge planning  
for relatives and carers

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## Introduction

This booklet can help you think about the arrangements and support a patient may need when they leave hospital. This is called 'discharge planning'.

You may be a husband, wife, partner, child, other relative, friend or neighbour of a patient. You may also be called a 'carer' by professionals. This booklet will help you:

- Understand how staff will plan support for leaving hospital
- Know your rights and become involved in discharge planning
- Find useful organisations and information.

## What is discharge planning?

For most people, leaving hospital is simple, but for some it can be more complicated.

Planning for leaving hospital should begin as early as possible because arrangements for care and support will take a while to put into place.

Information should be collected before a patient goes into hospital, if their admission is planned and if other services are already involved.

Often though, people go to hospital as an emergency. If this happens, discharge planning usually starts at the time of admission. The patient should be asked who their main carer is.

A 'discharge plan' will be made about support a patient may need when they leave hospital. You can help inform this plan. Staff should ask you about issues or problems that might affect you once the patient leaves hospital.

By the time the patient leaves hospital you should both know:

- How to contact relevant services
- How to use any equipment
- What treatment will be provided
- What, and how, medication will be given.

Once a patient is out of hospital the type and amount of help they need might change, perhaps for a short time but sometimes for a long time, or forever.

## Why should I be involved?

If someone you care about is in hospital, it is likely to be a worrying time for you. You may feel you have enough to do right now without thinking about what will happen later.

However, if you get involved in arrangements for discharge, it is more likely that any suggested 'support package' will work well. A 'support package' means services provided in the community that professionals think will help the patient.

Remember, patients can be quite weak and need a lot of help when they leave hospital. Support can take a while to arrange and may not start straight away. You might want to think about how other people could help, if necessary, especially for the first few weeks.

### Your rights as a relative or carer

As a relative or carer you have the following rights:

- To be valued for the care you give, and be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated as an equal partner in providing care
- To receive an assessment of your own needs if you provide 'substantial and regular' care to the patient
- To be supported by staff so that you can continue to care as much and as long as you wish to, and are able to, where appropriate

- To be given information and training you need to help the patient
- To be given general information about the patient's condition and medication, even if they do not agree to personal information being shared.

### Discharge planning in Lothian

A team of professionals in the hospital, called a 'multi-disciplinary' team, will work together to discuss discharge arrangements for the patient, and a named person on the team will be in charge of this plan. You will be given this person's name.

Once the patient is fit enough to leave hospital, other professionals may become more involved, for example, social workers, occupational therapists or district nurses.

Between one and two days before discharge, you should know roughly what time the patient will leave the hospital. On the day of discharge, the patient may be taken from the ward to a discharge lounge to wait for medication or transport. You may be asked if you can provide transport home.

By the time the patient leaves hospital you should both have been given information about any changes

in medication or how to use equipment at home, and who to contact if there is a problem with the equipment.

If the patient has any difficulties once they have left hospital, you should get help at once, from your GP, NHS 24 or social services. If you feel their life is in danger, you should immediately call an ambulance on 999.

### Staff responsibilities in discharge planning

The named person has lead responsibility for discharge arrangements. They also make sure referrals to other services are made at the right time and for the right reasons. This is the best person to speak to about discharge planning.

A charge nurse is the main nurse in charge of the ward. They will tell you who the 'named person' is for the patient's discharge planning, and give you information about local organisations and services.

A lead consultant has responsibility for checking if a patient is clinically fit to leave hospital. The decision for setting a discharge date is usually taken by the multi-disciplinary team as a whole, not just one member of staff.

The primary care team of GPs, district nurses and health visitors, help people to be healthy and independent in their home and community.

Social work services work out a person's social care needs and plan the care needed. They may also work out what your needs are, as a carer.

### Services available in the community

There are many types of community-based services that may help you and the patient once they leave hospital. There may be a charge for some of these services, which your local council can tell you about.

The following list gives examples of the kind of help likely to be available to patients or to you as a 'carer'.

- Help with practical and personal care, e.g. care at home, meal services, short breaks
- Help with nursing care, treatment and support, e.g. district and community nurses, information services, training courses
- Help with living independently, e.g. to get back skills or live independently – such as therapy, telecare, social support or financial advice

- Help with mental health or psychological problems, e.g. counselling, stress management courses, dealing with challenging behaviour.

You can find out more about these and other services in the ‘useful resources’ section of this booklet (page 6-7).

### A note about housing

In most situations the patient will be able to go back to their home once they leave hospital. However, occasionally, they may need a higher level of care than can be provided in their own home. In such cases, a move may be necessary. Options for this type of care can include:

- Your house or that of a relative
- Another health facility
- Housing with support, e.g. sheltered housing
- A care home.

If a move to a care home is being considered, you can get information from your local council, DirectGov, or Age Scotland helpline – 0845 125 9732 <http://www.agescotland.org.uk>

### Getting involved in discharge planning

There are a number of different things you can do to help with discharge planning. You could:

- Take time to think about any help you are able and willing to give. For example, you could help with housework, shopping, giving medication, driving or personal care tasks such as dressing, washing or toileting.
- Ask the consultant or charge nurse for the name and contact details of the named person with responsibility for making discharge arrangements. Ask what type of needs the patient might have when they leave hospital and for how long.
- Find out what services are being suggested for the patient and check these services are being put in place. Ask if referrals have been made to other services, who to contact, and when services are likely to begin.
- Speak to the named person and let them know how you could assist. Tell the named person if your ability to provide help changes during the hospital stay.

- If the care you provide is ‘substantial and regular’ you have the right to request a ‘carer’s assessment’ from your local council. In other words, if you give a lot of care to someone, you can get help to work out what your needs are. This may help you access more support.

### Representing the patient’s views

If a patient is aged 16 or over and is unable to make their own decisions, you could consider applying for legal powers to represent them.

For example, if you become their legal guardian or Power of Attorney, you have rights to make certain decisions on their behalf. Find out more about these and other options by contacting your local council’s social services department.

A short guide to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 is available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/217194/0058194.pdf> and Carers Scotland also has information on this topic.

### If you are a young person

If you are under 18 years of age and help an adult who is in hospital, tell the charge nurse. They will understand that you are a ‘young carer’ and can help make sure you get enough support to have time to enjoy your own life too.

### Raising concerns

If you are not happy with the way you are being involved in discharge planning, you should raise your concerns with the named person or the charge nurse. After this, if you are still concerned, you can contact the NHS Lothian Complaints Team.

NHS Lothian Complaints Team,  
2nd Floor, Waverley Gate,  
2-4 Waterloo Place,  
Edinburgh EH1 3EG.

Tel: 0131 465 5708

## Useful resources

There are many services that can help carers and relatives throughout Lothian and the UK. Other local services exist that are not included here, and you will be able to find out about these from one of the centres below:

### Local Carer Centres

#### EDINBURGH

#### Community Health Partnership Carer Support Team

Tel: 0131 536 3371

Email: [carersupport@luht.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:carersupport@luht.scot.nhs.uk)

#### VOCAL Carers Centre

8-13 Johnston Terrace,  
Edinburgh EH1 2PW

Tel: 0131 622 6666

Email: [centre@vocal.org.uk](mailto:centre@vocal.org.uk)

Web: [www.vocal.org.uk](http://www.vocal.org.uk)

#### Care for Carers

Lochend House, 33-35 Lochend Road  
South, Edinburgh EH7 6BR

Tel: 0131 661 2077

Email: [admin@care4carers.org.uk](mailto:admin@care4carers.org.uk)

Web: [www.care4carers.org.uk](http://www.care4carers.org.uk)

#### Edinburgh Carers Council

For those supporting someone with mental health difficulties, personality disorder or learning disabilities.

The Canon Mill, 1 – 3 Canon Street,  
Edinburgh EH3 5HE

Tel: 0131 270 6087

Email: [info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk](mailto:info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk)

Web: [www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk](http://www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk)

#### Edinburgh Young Carers Project

Norton Park, 57 Albion Road,  
Edinburgh EH7 5QY

Tel: 0131 475 2322

Email: [info@youngcarers.org.uk](mailto:info@youngcarers.org.uk)

Web: [www.youngcarers.org.uk](http://www.youngcarers.org.uk)

#### MECOPP

Supporting black and minority ethnic carers.

172 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 5EA

Tel: 0131 467 2994

Email: [info@mecopp.org.uk](mailto:info@mecopp.org.uk)

Web: [www.mecopp.org.uk](http://www.mecopp.org.uk)

#### EAST LOTHIAN

##### Carers of East Lothian

94 High Street, Musselburgh EH21 7EA

Tel: 0131 665 0135

Web: [www.coel.org.uk](http://www.coel.org.uk)

##### East Lothian Young Carers

Suite 14, Cockenzie Business Park,  
Edinburgh Road

Cockenzie EH33 0XL

Tel: 01875 818600

Email: [eastlothianyc@aol.com](mailto:eastlothianyc@aol.com)

#### WEST LOTHIAN

##### Carers of West Lothian

Strathbrock Partnership Centre  
189a West Main Street,  
Broxburn EH52 5LH

Tel: 01506 771750

E-mail: [office@carers-westlothian.com](mailto:office@carers-westlothian.com)

Web: [www.carers-westlothian.com](http://www.carers-westlothian.com)

##### Carer Support Worker (hospital based)

St John's Hospital, Livingston

Tel: 07525 157358

E-mail: [keith@carers-westlothian.com](mailto:keith@carers-westlothian.com)

##### West Lothian Young Carers Partnership

(same address as above)

Tel: 01506 771761

Email: [wilma@carers-westlothian.com](mailto:wilma@carers-westlothian.com)

Web: [www.wl-yc.com](http://www.wl-yc.com)

#### MIDLOTHIAN

##### Vocal Midlothian

Grannies Park  
Dalkeith  
EH22 0BR

Tel: 0131 663 6865

Email: [midlothian@vocal.org.uk](mailto:midlothian@vocal.org.uk)

##### Midlothian Young Carers Service

Units 9-10  
40 Hardengreen Business Park  
Dalhousie Road  
Dalkeith  
EH22 3NU

Tel: 0131 654 9540

Email: [midlothian@children1st.org.uk](mailto:midlothian@children1st.org.uk)

### NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

#### DirectGov

This website provides a wide range of resources about caring, including information on finances, assessments, employment and services.

Web: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone)

#### NHS 24

If your GP surgery is closed and the patient is too ill to wait until they open, contact NHS 24. It is a telephone-based service and can answer questions about health and offer advice and get you the right help.

08454 24 24 24

<http://www.nhs24.com>

#### NHS Inform

This is a new national health information service. It runs a helpline and web based resource containing a wide range of health and carer information in various languages.

Tel: 0800 22 44 88

Open 7 days 8am – 10pm

Web: [www.nhsinfom.co.uk](http://www.nhsinfom.co.uk)

#### Health Rights Information Scotland

This organisation offers information about patients' rights. It has a section for carers and a leaflet called 'Caring and Consent' that explains your right to be involved in decisions about the health care of the patient.

Tel: 0141 226 5261

Email: [hris@consumerfocus.org.uk](mailto:hris@consumerfocus.org.uk)

Web: [www.hris.org.uk](http://www.hris.org.uk)

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欲查詢本文件的中文翻譯，請致電愛丁堡市議會傳譯及翻譯服務部(ITS)，電話 0131 242 8181 並說明檔案編號 11017。

Aby uzyskać informacje na temat tłumaczenia tego dokumentu w Państwa języku ojczystym, prosimy zadzwonić do Biura Tłumaczeń Ustnych i Pisemnych (ang. ITS) pod nr tel. 0131 242 8181 i podać numer referencyjny 11017.

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