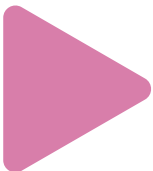




Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire Together



Caring Steps



Together

Planning your ongoing
care and support



Feeling baffled or unsure? We're here to help

We've created this leaflet for you and your family, friends and carers who make up your support network, to answer your questions about leaving hospital.



What happens when I leave hospital

Many patients can go home without needing any further support. However, there are three other possible outcomes, depending on your personal situation:

Return home

You can go home without needing additional support.

Return home with support

You can go home with new, additional or the same package of support from health and social care.

Further support/reablement before returning home

You need to go, in the short term, to a rehabilitation unit, community hospital, or care home before returning home.

Support in a care home

You need bed-based, 24-hour care or to return to a care home. This includes people discharged to a care home for the first time and existing care home residents returning to their care setting.



Planning what's next

When can I leave?

Your hospital team will talk to you and your support network about when you're likely to be medically well enough to leave, and they'll make sure you understand what's going to happen. Going home or into a care home is the best option for most patients over remaining in a hospital bed. We'll start talking about what's best for you as early on in your stay as possible.

Why can't I stay longer?

You may be worrying that you're being sent home too soon, but we know from experience that patients do better the sooner they leave hospital. Staying in hospital longer than necessary can delay the benefits of being in an alternative setting and can increase risks related to infection, loss of muscle strength and mobility as well as lower confidence.



Doing everyday tasks as often as possible will help you gain independence quicker and reduce the chance of complications.



Hello, I'm one of the hospital team

I'll talk with you about planning your care needs and helping you leave hospital when you're medically well enough.



Getting support

The hospital team will talk to you and your support network about the plans for when you leave hospital. The views of people in your support network are important, because they'll play an important role in your care when you leave.

What if I need help understanding and making decisions?

You will be supported by professionals, and the people in your support network to help you make decisions. You can discuss any concerns you may have with members of the team who are looking after you. This may mean that you need a mental capacity assessment, and everyone involved will work together to plan your discharge in your best interest.

What if I'm not yet able to go home?

If you're not able to go home, a short-term alternative might be an option. This could be a funded rehabilitation or assessment bed in a care home or community hospital. During your short stay there, your longer-term needs could be assessed whilst focussing on your recovery. In this situation, you will be offered a bed where our teams in the community work closely together on helping you reach your goals.



Can members of my support network get any help?

They may be entitled to assistance. If they would benefit from this in their role as a carer, they should talk to one of the hospital team about being referred to our Carer Support Service for an assessment.

This is an opportunity for them to speak to someone about their caring role, its impact on them and what might help them, either now or in the future. The Carer Support Service can also provide information, advice and signposting to further help.



Planning to leave

When you're ready to leave hospital, the hospital team will ensure that you and your support network are aware of the plans being made for you. Once plans are in place and agreed, things can move quite quickly. Staff will be able to give you advice about keeping well while in hospital, and they can refer you to any relevant voluntary or charitable organisations that they work with to help support people leaving hospital.

Sometimes, patients may – temporarily or otherwise – lack capacity to make decisions or to understand what is happening about their discharge plans. If this is the case, staff will work with you and your support network to determine the kind of help you need and to complete any necessary assessments.

How will I get home?

Your first option for transport home should be a family member, carer, voluntary sector organisation, or taxi. If none of these options are available and you meet hospital transport eligibility criteria, then the hospital will arrange transport.

We may need to access your property before you go home to check access and measure doorways.



After hospital

What support will I get when I leave?

Some patients who are medically well enough to leave hospital need some support from health and care services before going home. The hospital team will organise any support services for you, so that everything's ready when you need it. The sooner we can plan for these services, the better.

Equipment

The hospital teams and community services can order any free adaptive equipment needed for when you get home. After an assessment, this will be delivered to your home and ready for when you leave hospital.

Hello, I'm one of the Occupational Therapists.

I help patients adapt to living at home again and make sure they have all the care and support they need.

We'll assess and discuss your needs for when you return home and work together to put the right package together. There are lots of community services available to help you manage as independently as possible.



Help at home

There are a range of services available to help you manage as independently and safely as possible at home. Your hospital team and an Occupational Therapist usually help you decide what you need. This could include:

- ▶ Help with personal care, such as washing and dressing
- ▶ Rehabilitation or physiotherapy sessions
- ▶ Regular nurse visits (where appropriate) to help you change dressings or follow treatment or medication plans
- ▶ Having some equipment or minor home adaptations, such as a grab rail
- ▶ Temporary help with day-to-day activities like shopping or cleaning



Cost of services

You may be concerned about whether you will need to pay for your care and support.

Some services are free of charge and you may be eligible for a period of free support, either at home (for example if you'll be receiving support from the rehabilitation team) or in a community hospital or care home (if you'll be moving there for a short period of rehabilitation). It's likely that you'll need to contribute towards any support once your longer-term needs have been assessed.

If you were paying for support before you came into hospital which will continue once you leave, you will resume paying as you did before – including for any additional needs.

You can find more information about paying for your care in our other leaflets and videos, but please talk to your care team if you have any queries – they can offer you some guidance.





Get in touch

Hospital contact

Your hospital team can advise who can help you get ready to leave hospital and answer any questions you have. Before you leave hospital, you will be advised who to contact if you need support after you have left.

Help at home

Many people find that they need a little extra help in the first days and weeks after a stay in hospital. There are many voluntary sector groups that can offer support: for example, in the short term, they can help with things like getting you home from hospital, shopping,

arranging for your medicines to be delivered and making sure you have food in the fridge. There is advice available to ensure that you have enough money to live on, and that your home is warm enough. There's also practical guidance on adapting your house or moving furniture, or how to find child or pet care. In the longer term, these voluntary groups can help with your physical or emotional wellbeing, ongoing care provision, accessing transport or improving your digital skills. They can also offer legal advice or employment support – and if you're a carer, they can assist with advice and respite.



Your notes

Here are some questions you might want to keep in mind when talking to the hospital team and getting ready to leave hospital.

Make notes and write down any dates and useful information here.

- ▶ What's my plan?
- ▶ Is my home safe and ready for me to return to? Heating, food, cleanliness etc.
- ▶ Who do I contact if I need support or have concerns after I leave?
- ▶ When will I be discharged?
- ▶ What is keeping me in hospital?
- ▶ What do I need to do to be able to leave hospital?
- ▶ What do I need to arrange for when I leave hospital?
- ▶ How can my family/friends/carers help after I leave hospital?
- ▶ How can I stay as fit and mobile as possible whilst in hospital?



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You can find more information, videos and helpful links at:
www.bswtogether.org.uk/discharge
This information may also be available in other languages.