

The person you care for is being discharged from hospital



Do you provide care for someone?



You may be a parent, a partner, a son or daughter, a sister or brother or friend to someone who needs support as a result of their illness (physical or mental illness and substance misuse), condition or disability. If you provide them with help and support to manage their life – you are a carer.

Why is it important to be involved in discharge planning?

Being involved means you can get information about when and how the discharge from hospital will happen. This lets you prepare and helps ensure the person you care for has support to help them at home after discharge. It also means you can inform staff about how things are at home and gives you the chance to ask any questions e.g. about medication or plans for follow up.

When should I be involved?

As early as possible. When the person you care for is admitted to hospital, speak to staff on the ward and make them aware you are the carer. Tell them how they can contact you, this is especially important if you are not the next of kin. Staff may not realise that you are the carer, so it can really help them if you let them know.

The Carers Act

Local health boards have a duty to involve carers, including young carers in discharge from hospital when:

- The person being discharged is likely to require care following discharge
- The carer can be identified without delay

The Act also means that carers have the right to an adult carer support plan or young carer statement.

An adult carer support plan or young carer statement starts with a conversation where you discuss your caring role and what is important to you in your life. It helps plan what could help you work towards your goals.



What can I do?

You need to talk to the person you care for and check they are happy for you to discuss their care and discharge planning with hospital staff. This is important because staff must respect individual confidentiality and cannot discuss their patient with you, if they don't have permission. Without permission, it can still be helpful to speak with staff about the condition they have in general terms.

If there are significant changes for the person you care for, they may need additional support to manage at home when they leave hospital. You need to think about how this will impact on you as a carer.

Who will be involved in hospital discharge?

The hospital has a duty to involve you in the discharge of the person you care for. If their needs have changed there will be a conversation with you, in person or over the telephone, about what help and support your relative needs to help them live safely and to get your views about the discharge. Let staff know what you are able and willing to do.

Occasionally a discharge planning meeting may be arranged. This is also known as a multi-disciplinary meeting. A variety of staff involved in the person you care for may attend the meeting; as the carer the hospital has a duty to involve you in hospital discharge which may include attendance at this meeting.

Even if care needs have not changed, as their carer, you should still be involved. Hospital staff have a duty for you to be involved in discharge planning. This may be a discussion in person or over the telephone to arrange the details of when and how the discharge will take place.

Where can I find out more?

You can ask ward staff about local arrangements for hospital discharge. If the person you care for has a social worker or care manager you can discuss hospital discharge with them. If you are not in touch with services you can contact your local carer centre or council for information and support.

Hospital discharge checklist for carers

- Speak to hospital staff and let them know you are the carer and how they can contact you
- Speak to the person you care for to get consent to discuss their care with staff
- Ask questions at discussions about hospital discharge and let staff know what caring you are able and willing to do when your relative comes home
- Think about how you will cope with any changes in your caring role and if you need an adult carer support plan or a young carer statement.



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