

Coming out of hospital checklist

If you're caring for someone who's had to go into hospital, it's vital that you are consulted, involved and given the right information and support by health and social care professionals, so you can look after the person safely when they leave hospital.

We have put together a checklist to help summarise what the discharge process is with prompts to help you know what to ask and expect. For more detail, it may be helpful to look at our nation-specific factsheets.

What should happen before the person I care for is discharged?

If the person you care for is going to need care when they leave hospital, the law says that, as a carer:

- you should be involved as early as possible in the process where appropriate
- you should be asked whether you are both willing and able to start or continue caring.

If you aren't able to start or continue caring, other arrangements may need to be made to help the person leaving hospital stay safe and well.

Remember - caring is a choice

You should not feel under pressure to start caring or continue caring for someone long term. It is important to consider whether you feel able to commit to the responsibilities involved.

When the person you care for is nearing their expected date of discharge, the following steps should be taken:

- ✍ An assessment should be carried out to see if they are medically fit to be discharged.
- ✍ A discharge assessment should be carried out to see if they need support once discharged.
- ✍ A carer's assessment should be carried out (or at least arranged) to see whether you as a carer need support once the person you care for is discharged.
- ✍ A written care and support plan should be given to the person you care for (and a support plan for yourself if you have had your own carer's assessment). This should outline the support required and how this will be provided.
- ✍ Support should be arranged, as outlined in the care and support plan (for the person being cared for) and the support plan (for you).

The discharge policy

Each hospital will have its own discharge policy based on guidance from the government. You can request a copy of their hospital's discharge policy.

What should happen on the day?

You and the person you care for should expect certain arrangements to be made for the day of discharge:

- ✍ Appropriate transport should be organised if required.
- ✍ If needed, some charities, such as British Red Cross and the Royal Voluntary Service, can offer escorted transport home from hospital.
- ✍ You should both be given copies of the care and support plan (for the person being cared for) and the support plan (for you).
- ✍ A discharge letter should be sent to the GP of the person you care for within 24 hours.
- ✍ Medication and any equipment needed at home should be dispensed to the person you care for, as well as instructions and information about its use.
- ✍ Any necessary support should be put in place to start on the day of discharge.
- ✍ You should be told about any follow-up medical appointments and referrals made to community-based services, such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, community mental health, etc.

And afterwards?

Think about the long-term needs of the person you care for and make sure you're requesting all the help you're entitled to:

- ✍ Consider if you have enough support in place to care for someone safely. You should not have to continue struggling alone.
- ✍ If you don't think you'll be able to cope at home, even with support that has been organised for you, raise this as soon as possible with the primary care team. You can also seek professional support via your local council or local trust.
- ✍ If your circumstances have changed, you might want to consider requesting a carer's assessment or following up if this didn't happen earlier on in the process.
- ✍ Contact relevant organisations – especially condition-specific charities for advice and support and local carers' centres, many of which offer fantastic support.
- ✍ Contact Carers UK for support with your caring concerns at advice@carersuk.org or visit www.carersuk.org/join to become a member for free.
- ✍ Consider requesting a benefits check. You could have one over the phone (Turn2us at 0808 802 2000), by email (advice@carersuk.org), online (www.turn2us.org.uk) or face to face (visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk to find your local Citizens Advice branch).
- ✍ If you're unhappy with the process you've been through, you can raise this and complain. See our guidance: carersuk.org/making-complaints