

Supporting patients' choices to avoid long hospital stays

This leaflet provides a summary of what this means for patients.



**PATIENT
LEAFLET**

Introduction

Following a hospital admission, most people are able to return home. Sometimes this can be with a care package of services, aids or adaptations made to their home. However, some people are unable to return home. They need the added support which is only available in a care home.

Once people no longer need hospital care, it is best to get home or to another community setting as quickly as possible because:

- Nobody wants to stay in hospital any longer than is necessary;
- Being at home or in a community setting (such as a care home) is the best place to continue recovery once an illness requiring hospital care is over;
- Once people are aged 80 years and over, 10 days spent in a hospital bed equates to 10 years of muscle wasting;
- Severely ill patients may be unable to access services, if hospital beds are occupied with patients who no longer need them.

What can you expect as a patient?

1. A named person to coordinate your discharge

You should be provided with a named person (can be described as a 'discharge coordinator') who will support you throughout your time at hospital and make sure that things happen when they are supposed to.

2. Right to high quality information and support

Wherever you need to go following hospital, the NHS and local authority will do all that they can to help you. They should give you all the information you need to make the best decision.

- You should be involved in all decisions about your care and treatment.
- You should be informed of where you can access detailed support, advice and advocacy about making a decision, should you wish this support.
- You should be provided with high quality information to make a decision about your ongoing care, including:
 - an understanding of your care needs;
 - the process and outcome of the assessment of needs;
 - offers of care and options available;
 - costs of any care.
- You have the right to complain at any point of the process if you are not happy with the information and support provided, or with the options being made available to you. You should be informed by the hospital about how you can complain and your [local Healthwatch organisation](#) can also help.

3. Timescales for decisions

- You should know when your treatment is due to end and when you would be considered well enough to leave hospital (this is called an estimated discharge date) - you should know this within 48 hours of you being admitted.
- Once you have received information about the choices that are available to you, we will request that you make a decision within 7 days. You may wish to arrange for yourself or a family member to meet with the care providers during this time. NHS and local authorities are responsible for supporting as many people as possible to achieve this and can extend the time limit when 7 days is just not possible.

4. Interim placements

Once you are well enough to leave hospital but you are unable to return home, you will be offered an alternative option temporarily in the following situations:

- Your preferred choice is not currently available
- You have not yet made a decision
- You are waiting for assessments to be carried out
- You are waiting for funding agreements to be made.

In these circumstances, it is not possible for people to wait in hospital. However people do have the right to refuse the interim offer made and make a complaint.

Please click [here](#) if you would like to read the full policy document.

This information can be made available in formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact england.ohuc@nhs.net