Leaving hospital

When you leave our care we want you to be confident about what has happened in hospital and what should happen next.

These are our five pledges to you:

1. You are clear about what has happened whilst you have been in hospital - this includes having a copy of the discharge letter which will have been sent to your GP.

2. You have written information about what to do after leaving hospital.

3. You are aware of any possible danger signals to look out for when you have been discharged.

4. You know how to take your medication and about any possible side effects.

5. You know who to contact if you are worried about your condition.

Name of the healthcare professional who has discussed the five pledges with you:

Planning to leave hospital - where will I go?

Shortly after your admission to hospital, you will be informed of your estimated date of discharge or EDD. This is the date by which the clinical team delivering your care feel you will be ready to leave the acute hospital.

Although on occasion this date may be changed due to alterations in your clinical pathway, it provides a goal for the clinical team and guidance for you and your relatives as to when you are likely to be ready to go home.

Blood Clots - A hospital acquired blood clot can occur in patients while in hospital or up to 90 days after you go home. There are two kinds of blood clot:

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) - DVT is a blood clot (also known as thrombosis) that forms in a deep vein, most commonly in your leg or pelvis. It may also cause no symptoms at all or it may cause swelling, redness or pain.

Pulmonary Embolism (PE) - PE is when a clot becomes dislodged, passes through your blood vessels and enters your lungs. Symptoms include coughing (with blood stained phlegm), chest pain and breathlessness.

If you develop any of these symptoms in hospital or after you go home, please get medical advice immediately.

Useful Contacts

- Out of Hours GP - 111
- Red Cross - 01992 586 609
- District Nurses One Call - 0845 602 4064
- Bedford Hospital Patient Advice and Liaison Service - 01234 795814
- Bedford Borough Council (main switchboard) - 01234 267422 or 01234 276665
- Central Bedfordshire Council (main switchboard) - 01234 276168 or 01234 276094
- Bedford Citizens Advice Line - 0844 245 1290
- Luton Citizens Advice Line - 0844 245 1285
- Milton Keynes Citizens Advice Line - 01908 604475
What happens on the day I am discharged?

On the day of discharge we will:

- Help you pack your belongings
- Provide you with the medications the doctor has prescribed for you and explain to you (and your relative if needed) what they are for and how to take them.
- Provide you with a copy of your electronic discharge letter. This is your copy of discharge letter from hospital and should be kept safe. A copy will have been sent to your GP directly from the hospital giving details of your treatment.
- Discuss with you (and your relative if needed) the details of any follow-up appointments or tests you may require. Some appointments will be sent to you directly after you return home.
- Provide you with any equipment you require. This may be a walking aid, or items which will help you with your personal care. Any training in this equipment will be completed before you leave the hospital. If needed, your relative, representative or carer will also be trained in how to use the equipment safely.

Signs of feeling unwell after being discharged from hospital

When you leave hospital it is important to know the signs and symptoms of the following:

**Sepsis** - Sepsis is the body’s reaction to an infection (previously known as septicaemia or blood poisoning). Please seek medical advice if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- Feeling cold and shivery
- Feeling very hot and flushed
- High temperature
- Aching muscles
- Feeling very tired
- Sickness/diarrhoea
- Not feeling like eating
- Feeling confused or having slurred speech

Although on occasion this date may be changed due to alterations in your clinical pathway, it provides a goal for the clinical team and guidance for you and your relatives as to when you are likely to be ready to go home.

The clinical team (with you and your relatives involvement) will be considering where you should continue with your recuperation or rehabilitation following your acute hospital stay and any additional support you may require.

**Going home**

When you leave hospital to return to your home, it is important that you will be safe and able to manage. Although some people need no extra help, we will assess your needs and if necessary, organise support from a variety of services:

- Intermediate care team (nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists)
- Rehabilitation and enablement team (provided by health)
- Reablement team (provided by social care)
- A package of care from a care agency
- District nurses
- Community matrons
- Voluntary agencies (for example the Red Cross).

**Inpatient rehabilitation**

If we feel you require an intensive period of rehabilitation following your acute stay in hospital we may refer you to an inpatient rehabilitation facility.
Care homes

It is sometimes necessary to arrange for you to be cared for in a care home setting directly from the hospital. This may happen if your illness has caused a significant change in your ability to do things for yourself, your mobility levels, or you need care from somebody to remain safe. An assessment may be carried out by the team of professionals who have been looking after you, and this will be discussed with you and your family.
A care home may be a 24 hour Residential Care facility or a Nursing Home.

Funding

If you require some support whether this be at home or in an inpatient rehabilitation or care environment then a financial assessment may be completed for you, depending on what support is required. This assessment is usually done by social worker and will determine how care will be funded:

- Self-funding (where you will be required to pay for the support)
- Social care funding (with financially assessed contributions made by you or your family).

If the team of professionals looking after you feel that the need for ongoing complex healthcare and support on discharge is required then you may be assessed for continuing health care funding (CHC). This is provided only when the patient is considered to have challenging and complex needs which cannot be safely provided by a standard level of nursing care.

Do I need to arrange my own transport when leaving hospital?

We expect you and your relative or representative to arrange for somebody to collect you from hospital on your day of discharge. We ask that you are collected in the morning, often from the Discharge Lounge, which is likely to be in a different area of the hospital from where you have been staying.

Please check with your ward to see where you will be discharged from so that you can inform your relatives.

Hospital transport is only available for patients who have a clinical need and meet specified criteria. If you are having difficulty in arranging for someone to collect you from the hospital, please discuss this with the nursing staff at the earliest opportunity.

Discharge Lounge

On the day you are leaving hospital, you will usually be moved from the ward in which you have been staying to the Discharge Lounge early in the morning. This is an area which has comfortable chairs with refreshment and bathroom facilities.

What happens on the day before I am discharged?

You or your relative or representative will need to have arranged for:

- Transport home
- Some outdoor clothes in which you can travel home, please make sure they are appropriate for the weather outside of the hospital and that you also have appropriate footwear
- Your door key or someone at home to meet you
- Any heating turned on at your home during the colder months
- Any food you require at home to have been organised.

It may be nice to ask a friend or relative to visit you after you get home to ensure you have everything you need and that you are comfortable. It can be daunting to return home after a hospital visit, so a friendly visit may be helpful.