

# Information for Carers: Help if the person you care for goes into or comes out of hospital

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Information sheet E8

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## This information sheet is about:

- Going into hospital
- An emergency admission
- Preparing to leave hospital
- Leaving hospital
- Carers assessment
- Help back at home

## Going into hospital

Going into hospital can be an anxious time for the person concerned and for you as their carer, as well as family and friends. If the person you care for has to go into hospital, you should be involved and consulted about their care and treatment. You are the person who knows them best and what you know about their needs, likes and dislikes will be helpful to the hospital team caring for them. A named nurse will be responsible for managing and planning their care.

While they are in hospital, staff from our Social Care Team can help you with lots of advice and information about what is available to help when the person you care for leaves hospital.

These may include:

- Help with practical problems arising from their hospital admission
- Support if they (and you) are adjusting to illness, disability or loss
- Information and advice about services and support in the community
- Help to arrange care, or other practical support, if they need it when they leave hospital
- Information about the "Home from hospital service"
- Information about care homes and paying for care
- Help with contacting Financial Assessment and Benefit Officers

If you would like to speak to a social care worker, just ask one of the hospital staff to arrange this on your behalf, or phone Somerset Direct on **0300 123 2224**.

Each NHS Trust has a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) officer who is there to help if you need advice, have concerns or don't know where to turn. The PALS can help you sort out any problem or concern you have when you are using health services. They do this by:

- Offering advice and support to patients, their families and carers
- Providing information about NHS services
- Listening and responding to concerns, suggestions or queries
- Helping sort out problems quickly

The service is free and confidential. You can find out more about PALS, and how to contact them, by phoning 0800 0851067 or going to <http://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/contact-us/pals/>

## **An emergency admission**

If there is an emergency admission, for either you or the person you care for, it will have helped if you have already filled in a Carers Emergency Card. The card has space for your name, address, doctor and who to contact in an emergency. If you are taken ill or involved in an accident, the people who look after you will know you are a carer and that someone at home may be depending on you. You do not have to carry the card but if you do, it may give you peace of mind and make sure that the person you care for is looked after if something happens to you.

If you would like a Carers Emergency Card, phone the Somerset Carers on 0800 31 68 600.

## **Preparing to leave hospital**

If you, the person you care for, family or hospital staff feel that the person you care for will need extra support when they leave hospital, an assessment can be carried out. As their carer, you should be part of that assessment, as long as the person you care for agrees for you to be involved. The assessment will include things such as:

- What difficulties they have now
- What they can do for themselves, and what they think they need help with
- What things they can't manage at all
- Who helps them now
- What treatment they need
- The best way of meeting what they need

Other professionals, such as an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, or district nurse, may be part of the assessment. This will help us to have a full picture of their needs and work out the best way to meet them. A care and support plan will be written and if the person you care for gives their permission, you should be given a written copy. It should cover medication, aids and services, and be clear about who is going to make sure each part of the plan is followed.

There is a charge for some of the services that support people back at home, depending on the circumstances of the person you care for. This might involve completing a financial assessment to see if a contribution has to be paid. It can also include checking that you and the person you care for are receiving all the benefits that you are entitled to.

## **Leaving hospital**

As their carer you should be consulted before the person you care for is discharged, so that you have time to make sure things are in place for both your and their needs. You should have at least 24 hours notice and, where relevant, you should be offered:

- Information about the condition of the person you care for, such as their illness or disability
- Supplies of medication
- Equipment and advice about how to use it
- Assurance that their GP has been informed
- Assurance that all the services needed by the person and yourself have been arranged

- Transport if it is needed

The person should be discharged with all the personal things that they had in hospital with them.

If the person you care for is not well enough to go home or cannot return home safely, you will be told about other options.

## **Carers Assessment**

You may feel you will need extra support when the person you care for is discharged. Before discharge, you can ask for a Carer's Assessment and you can find more information about this on our website [www.somerset.gov.uk/carersassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/carersassessment)

Or, you may feel that you would prefer this once the person you care for is back at home, when it might be clearer to you what your own needs are. The decision about when to have a Carers Assessment is up to you. You can speak to one of the Social Care Team in the hospital or phone us on **0300 123 2224**.

There is more information about carers assessment in information sheet **E4 Carers assessments and eligibility**, and about your rights as a carer in information sheet **E10 Carers rights**.

## **Help back at home**

Someone from the Social Care Team will be in touch soon after the person you care for has returned home to check that the care and support plan is still right and, if needed, make adjustments. It could also be at this time that you decide you would like to have a Carers Assessment carried out for your own needs. For information about Carers Assessments go to [www.somerset.gov.uk/carersassessment](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/carersassessment)

The Home from Hospital service provides short-term practical and emotional support to people going back home after a stay in hospital. It is provided by trained Red Cross volunteers, and is available free of charge throughout Somerset. It can be arranged as part of the discharge or care plan, or you can ask a member of the hospital staff or Social Care Team.

The service can help by:

- Taking the person you care for, and you, home from hospital and helping with settling in
- Shopping
- Collecting prescriptions and pensions
- Sitting with the person you care for if you have to go out.

Volunteers will not be able to:

- Provide help with personal care, such as toileting
- Administer medication or change dressings
- Lift or move someone
- Give domestic help
- Witness legal documents
- Be an advocate for you or the person you care for
- Take money for what they do.

## **Your opportunity to feedback**

We welcome your comments about the services you receive. If you would like to tell us what you think, please either:

Contact us by going to our website, [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk), or

- Speak to your social care worker
- Phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224, or
- Contact the Adults and Health Customer Experience Officer  
Floor B2 East  
County Hall  
Taunton  
TA1 4DY  
Email: [customerexperience@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:customerexperience@somerset.gov.uk)

This document is also available on request in Braille, large print, tape, disc and can be translated into different languages.