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**Admission to
Discharge**



Patient information

Admission to Discharge: Planning for your stay and discharge from hospital

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Excellent patient care, together

Welcome to West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital NHS Trust.

We run three hospitals: Watford General Hospital, Hemel Hempstead Hospital and St Albans City Hospital, as well as an outpatient facility in Abbots Langley. During your time with us, our staff will be working hard to ensure you have a positive experience. Our aim is excellent patient care, together.

We have four trust values that we work by: Empowered, Compassionate, Professional and Inclusive.

This booklet provides information to patients and carers on planning for admission and discharge from hospital.

It is very important to keep this booklet with you and read it carefully as it will contain your plan of care for when you are ready to leave.

Your details	
Name	
Ward Name	
Phone number	
Expected discharge date	

Why have I been admitted?

A patient is admitted to hospital because they need acute medical care which cannot be provided in the community. Hospital beds are for people who are very unwell.

For how long will I be admitted?

Following any planned investigations, treatment and/or procedures, your doctor will declare that you are medically fit for discharge. That indicates you no longer need acute hospital care. Then the aim will be to discharge you to your home or transfer you from the hospital to a more appropriate setting.

The length of time you spend in hospital will depend on your condition and on the discharge arrangements. An expected discharge date will be discussed with you when you are admitted to hospital, and we will let you know if there is any change. We know how important it is for your recovery to get home as soon as possible.

We place a lot of importance on planning your care after you leave the hospital. This is known as discharge planning. We will involve you and your relatives/carers in planning your safe discharge, so please feel free to ask any questions.

Next of kin welcome call

Your next of kin will receive a call when you arrive at the ward. With your consent, a member of the administration staff will inform your next-of-kin where you are and provide details about the ward and hospital procedures. During the call they will also make sure that they have all the correct information about your next-of-kin and allow them to share anything they feel is important to you, giving them the opportunity to ask any initial questions.

Visiting times

Family members, carers and friends can visit adult inpatients between **10am and 8pm, seven days a week**, with a maximum of **two visitors** at a time. There are some exceptions to these visiting hours, so please keep in close contact with the ward before visiting.

More flexible visiting will be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances:

- The patient is receiving end of life care,
- The patient is in our Intensive Care Unit (ICU),
- The patient has a mental health issue, where not having a family member present would cause distress,
- The patient needs support from an unpaid carer who helps with communication, their mental health or wellbeing, personal care and feeding,
- The patient has dementia, delirium, a learning disability or autism where not having a family member present would cause distress.

Visiting arrangements will be subject to discussion and agreement with the nurse in charge taking in to account the safety of others.

Infection control

During your stay in hospital, good hand hygiene by patients and visitors is actively encouraged. Patients are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water after using the toilet and use sanitiser or hand wipes before touching devices or eating. Hand wipes are available with each meal.

Food and drink

Meals are provided three times a day, generally at the following times:

- Breakfast: 7am-8am
- Lunch: 12pm-1pm
- Supper: 5pm-6pm

Hot drinks are served at breakfast, mid-morning, afternoon and early evening. You will be given a menu in the morning to order your evening meal for the day and your lunch for the following day.

Please let the staff know If you have any special dietary, cultural or religious food requirements.

Mobilisation and “Get Up, Get dressed, Get Moving”

Studies show that continuing to get up and move around when you are in hospital, is key to maintaining independence and strength. Unless there is a medical reason to stop you doing so, you will be advised to get out of bed as much as possible, sit in a chair to eat your meals and walk to the toilet if safe to do so.

Walking around helps keep your body healthier and stronger, reduces the risk of infections and falls, and helps with your mental health and emotions. If you need a walking aid, other equipment or help to get out of bed or walk around then please let us know.

Property and valuables

Whilst we will do our best to keep you comfortable during your stay, there are a few things which you can bring with you, or ask for a friend/relative to bring in for you:

1. Spare changes of clothes – this is important to help you feel well in yourself and maintain independence.
2. Spare nightwear – this is more comfortable and can offer more dignity than wearing a hospital gown,
3. Slippers or shoes – to help you stay safe when walking,
4. Mobile phone and charger – to help you keep in contact with loved ones. Please be considerate of others and keep your phone on silent.

It is recommended that you only bring property (including money) that is essential for your stay in hospital. If you have any articles that you would like us to keep safe these can be placed into the ward safe. If you place an item in the safe you will be given a wrist band that corresponds to your patient property bag. You are responsible for property (including cash) not handed over to safe custody.

The Trust accepts no responsibility for loss of, or damage to, personal property of any kind, in whatever way the loss or damage may occur, unless deposited for safe custody.

Request for urgent second opinion

We are early adopters of Martha's Rule, a major patient safety initiative providing patients and families with a way to seek an urgent review if their or their loved one's condition deteriorates, and they are concerned this is not being responded to. If you have serious concerns about deterioration and want to escalate this for a second medical opinion, please let the ward staff know and they will arrange it.

Smoking

We are a non-smoking site and ask all patients and visitors to refrain from smoking (including vaping) anywhere on our hospital grounds.

Violence

We understand that emotions can be high if you are feeling unwell or worried, however, we ask that you and your visitors treat our staff with respect at all times. We will not tolerate any violence or aggression.

Car parking

Parking charges apply on all our sites at all times. Free parking is available for:

- Next of kin of patients who are receiving end of life care or critical care,
- Parents/carers of children who are inpatients,
- Long-term patients who have three or more planned appointments per month, over a 90-day period,
- Carers who undertake extended visiting to assist patients with meals or other personal care.

There are disabled parking spaces on all our sites and blue badges need to display it in the usual way. If using the multi-storey car park at Watford General Hospital, take a ticket when arriving at the barrier. When leaving, insert your ticket into a payment machine and then scan the barcode from your blue badge. You can also do this at the exit barrier.

What do we need to know?

As soon as possible during your hospital stay, please let us know the following:

- Please tell us if you were already receiving a package of care prior to your admission. If appropriate this will allow us to make arrangements to reinstate your package of care for when you are ready to leave hospital.
- If you are not returning to your own address, please tell the team where you will be staying. This is important as there may be adjustments that need to be made.
- Please let us know if you have any special medication requirements, for example you use a dosset box or blister pack.
- If there are any safety issues that may prevent you from returning to your home address.
- If you are being supported by a family member or friend, or if you are supporting a person outside of hospital (unpaid carer), please tell a member of the healthcare team at the earliest opportunity. We can offer support and ensure that the person who cares/supports you is involved in discharge planning, or we can ensure we offer you support if you are caring for someone during your hospital stay, as we understand this may be an anxious time for you. For further support, please contact our Caring for Carers service on westherts.caringforcarers@nhs.net or Tel: 07977 069888.
- Please show our clinical teams any relevant documentation you may hold. This may include:
 - A purple folder if you have a diagnosed learning disability,
 - A ReSPECT form, which details a summary of personalised preferences for a person's clinical care to be used if they are unable to make decisions or express wishes,
 - Lasting Power of Attorney for health and welfare documentation.

Why do we try to make your stay as short as possible?

- Patients who remain in hospital for a long time are more likely to develop infections or complications,
- People waiting for procedures may have to have this cancelled if there is no bed available,
- It is not appropriate for you to remain in hospital once your doctor has decided that you are medically fit for discharge and no longer need acute hospital care.

Spiritual and Pastoral Care

We have a team of pastoral and spiritual healthcare specialists and caregivers, who bring together a range of multi-faith and humanist approaches, ensuring that patients and their families receive support tailored to their individual needs. Please speak to ward staff for a referral, or contact them directly on westherts.spiritualcare@nhs.net or tel: 01923 217994 or 07776 598704 (Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm).

Discharge assessment

- People will generally be discharged back to their own home or returned to their care home.
- You may need support when you leave hospital to regain confidence and independence in your own home. The hospital Social Care Team will speak to you and your family to discuss this and you may receive help through a process called 'Discharge to Assess', which provides 28 days of support after discharge.
- You may need intermediate care on discharge, where you will continue to receive nursing and therapy support to enable you to return home, or you may need a placement in a residential or nursing home. This will be at another provider, within the community, and can be some distance from your home address. This placement is facilitated by the Integrated Care System (ICS), not the hospital trust and we do not have the option of changing the proposed location.

If you wish to decline a planned discharge destination, under the ICS Choice policy you have 24 hours to identify an alternative location which will accept you. If after 24 hours have elapsed no suitable alternative has been identified, arrangements will be made for discharge to the planned location. Under the ICS Choice policy, patients do not have a right to reside in hospital to wait for their preferred option to be available.

- Equipment for discharge – if any equipment is necessary for you to return home, it will be arranged. Walking aids will be provided by the hospital, together with some other items of equipment. Other necessary equipment will either be delivered to your property so we would ask that a relative or friend is available to receive the delivery as a priority. This will be discussed with you or your carer as necessary.

What will happen on the day of discharge?

We will aim to get you home for lunch. If possible, this will be via our Discharge Lounge. The team will support you in making sure you have all your belongings, including any valuables from the hospital safe. Have your bag, your keys and suitable outdoor wear ready to go home. If possible, ask a family member or friend to make your home ready: to put the heating on if the weather is cold and to have some food available.

Please arrange for someone to pick you up from the hospital. If this is not possible, we can arrange hospital transport, but this will be later in the day, shared with other patients, and will not necessarily be a direct transfer back to your home, and so will take much longer.

If you still require hospital transport, arrangements will be made for you to wait in the patient lounge where you will be looked after by nurses until they are ready to transport you.

Medicines

We will confirm whether you need any medications to take home and supply you with these if required. We will explain your medications to you and identify any side effects and discuss how to obtain further supplies. You will be provided with a discharge summary, and an electronic copy will be sent directly to your GP to inform them of any medication changes, any new medications, and the treatment you have received as an inpatient.

Once home

We hope you continue to recover well once you are back in the comfort of your own home. Please contact the ward (ward name and contact number on front page) within 24 hours of your discharge if you have any problems. If you feel unwell, please contact your GP or call 111 for advice.

Most patients who go home don't need any follow up care straight away. If you need a further appointment, we will try and arrange this before you leave hospital. Otherwise, we will contact you as soon as we can after you get home.

Friends and Family Test

You can provide feedback about your stay in hospital by scanning the QR code on a smartphone and scrolling down to 'Inpatient Questionnaire'. This feedback is shared with all staff and will enable us to improve patient experience.



Sources of community support



Adult Care Services help people to live full, active, and independent lives. Ask us about an assessment or a carer's assessment

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/adults

0300 123 4042



Age UK Hertfordshire is an independent charity which offers help and service for older people in Hertfordshire

www.ageuk.org.uk/hertfordshire

0300 345 3446



Herts Help provides a free independent service to support Hertfordshire residents

www.hertshelp.net

0300 123 4044 / info@hertshelp.net

How to contact us

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire WD18 0HB

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

[Hemel Hempstead Hospital](#)

Hillfield Road

Hemel Hempstead

Hertfordshire HP2 4AD

Hospital switchboard: 01442 213141

[St Albans City Hospital](#)

Waverley Road

St Albans

Hertfordshire AL3 5PN

Hospital switchboard: 01727 866122

PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net.



Language



Large Print



Braille



Audio

Concerns, complaints or suggestions

If you are unhappy with your experience or would like to give feedback, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is available to patients, relatives, carers and friends to raise concerns.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

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Patient and relative communication sheet

This page is for you or your team to document details of the reason of your admission and discharge arrangements.

Why was I admitted to hospital?	
What is my medical plan?	
What criteria do I need to meet before I can go home?	
When can I expect to go home?	
Will I need to take home any special equipment? Such as a walking aid or a catheter? How do I return it?	
Will I need visits from any healthcare professionals when I am home? Such as a carer or a community nurse / therapist?	
Space for any other questions you want to ask:	