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West Hertfordshire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust



Patient information

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



Excellent patient care, together



Welcome to West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital NHS Trust

We run Watford General Hospital, Hemel Hempstead Hospital and St Albans City Hospital, as well as West Hertfordshire Therapy Unit, an outpatient facility in Abbots Langley.

Our trust values are Empowered, Compassionate, Professional and Inclusive. During your stay, our staff will work with you to provide excellent patient care, together.

This booklet provides important information for patients and carers about hospital admission, discharge planning and your plan of care. Please keep it with you and read it carefully.

Your details

Name	
Ward name	
Ward telephone number	
Expected discharge date	

Why have I been admitted?

You have been admitted because you require acute medical care that cannot be safely provided in the community.

How long will I stay?

Once investigations and treatment are complete, your doctor will confirm when you are medically fit for discharge. The aim is to discharge you home or to a more appropriate setting as soon as it is safe. An expected discharge date will be discussed on admission and updated if it changes. You and your relatives or carers will be involved in discharge planning. Please do feel free to ask any questions.

Next of kin welcome call

With your consent, ward staff will contact your next of kin on arrival to confirm your location and share ward information.



Visiting times

Adult inpatient visiting is 10am - 8pm, seven days a week, with a maximum of two visitors at a time. More flexible visiting may be agreed for:

- End of life care
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU)
- Mental health needs
- Patients requiring support from an unpaid carer
- Patients with dementia, delirium, learning disability or autism

All visiting arrangements are agreed with the nurse in charge, taking safety into account.

Infection control

Good hand hygiene is essential. Please wash hands after using the toilet and use hand sanitiser or wipes before eating. Hand wipes are available with each meal.

Food and drink

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

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

Hot drinks are served regularly throughout the day. You will be given a menu each morning to order your meals. Please inform staff of any special dietary, cultural or religious requirements.

Mobilisation - "Get Up, Get dressed, Get Moving"

Studies show that staying mobile helps maintain strength, independence and wellbeing. You will be encouraged to get out of bed and move around safely unless advised otherwise. Walking around helps keep your body healthier and stronger, reduces the risk of blood clots, 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. Our staff can provide further information on reducing the risk of blood clots in our leaflet 'Preventing blood clots in a hospital setting'.



Property and valuables

Please bring only essential items. If you have any articles that you would like us to keep safe these can be placed into the ward safe and you will be given a wrist band that corresponds to your patient property bag. The Trust is not responsible for loss or damage unless items are deposited for safe custody.

We would recommend you bring the following with you:

1. Spare changes of clothes – 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

Car parking

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

- End of life or critical care next of kin
- Parents/carers of child inpatients
- Long-term patients with frequent appointments
- Carers providing extended personal care
- Disabled parking is available with a valid blue badge.

Smoking

We are a non-smoking site, including vaping.

Violence

Violence or aggression towards staff will not be tolerated.

Spiritual and Pastoral Care

Multi-faith and humanist support is available for patients and families. Speak to ward staff for a referral, or contact our team of pastoral and spiritual healthcare specialists directly on westherts.spiritualcare@nhs.net, **01923 217994** or **07776 598704** (Monday - Friday, 9am-4pm).



What do we need to know?

Please tell us as soon as possible if:

- You had a care package before admission
- You will not be returning to your usual address
- You have special medication needs, for example you use a dosset box or blister pack.
- There are safety concerns at home that may prevent you from returning
- You are an unpaid carer or supported by one. We can offer support and ensure that the person who cares/supports you is involved in discharge planning. For further information, please contact our Caring for Carers service on westherts.caringforcarers@nhs.net or call **07977 069888**.

Please show staff any relevant documents, such as:

- A purple folder if you have a diagnosed learning disability
- A ReSPECT form, which records a summary of personalised preferences to be used if a patient is unable to make decisions or express wishes
- Lasting Power of Attorney for health and welfare documentation

Request for urgent second opinion – Martha’s Rule

We have introduced Martha’s Rule to help spot any unexpected signs of deterioration early and give you the right to request a rapid review if you’re worried that you or your loved one’s condition is getting worse. You may notice small changes before they show up in our routine measurements. These changes could be early warning signs of deterioration. You are not bothering us - we want to hear from you.

Martha’s Rule – What to do if you’re worried:

1. First, speak to the team caring for you or your loved one.
2. If, after speaking to the care team, you remain worried and feel your concerns are not being addressed, call for a rapid review on **07779 858763**

Your call will go to a different team in our hospital, who specialise in the care of critically ill patients. They will work with you and your care team to arrange any treatment needed or further review. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Discharge assessment

- Most patients are discharged home or return to their care home.
- Some people may need short-term support to regain confidence and independence. The hospital Social Care Team will discuss this with you and your family, and you may receive up to 28 days of support through the 'Discharge to Assess' process.
- You may require intermediate care or a temporary placement in a residential or nursing home to continue nursing or therapy support. These placements are arranged by the Integrated Care System (ICS) and may be some distance from your home. The hospital cannot change the proposed location.
- If you decline a planned discharge destination, the ICS Choice Policy allows 24 hours to find an alternative placement. If none is identified, discharge will proceed to the original location. Patients cannot remain in hospital to wait for a preferred option.
- Any equipment needed for discharge will be arranged. Walking aids are provided by the hospital; other equipment may be delivered to your home and will be discussed with you or your carer.

What will happen on the day of discharge?

We aim to discharge you before lunchtime, if possible, via the Discharge Lounge. Staff will help ensure you have all your belongings and valuables. Please have your bag, keys and suitable clothing ready, and ask someone to prepare your home if possible.

Please arrange for someone to collect you. If hospital transport is needed, it may be later in the day and shared with other patients; you will wait in the Discharge Lounge with nursing support.

Why we aim to keep stays short

- Longer stays increase infection and complication risks
- People waiting for procedures face cancellation if there is no bed available
- Once medically fit, hospital care is no longer appropriate



Medicines

We will provide any medicines you need to take home and explain how to use them, including possible side effects and how to obtain further supplies. You will receive a discharge summary, and a copy will be sent electronically to your GP detailing your treatment and any medication changes. If you have any questions regarding the medicines supplied by the hospital after you are discharged, please contact the **Pharmacy Patient Helpline: 01923 436237** (Monday-Friday 1pm - 5pm)

Once home

If you have concerns within 24 hours of discharge, please contact the ward. If you feel unwell, contact your GP or call 111. Most patients who go home don't need any follow up care straight away. If you need a further appointment, this will be arranged either before you leave or as soon as possible after.

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
0300 123 4042 / www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/adults



Age UK Hertfordshire is an independent charity which offers help and service for older people in Hertfordshire
0300 345 3446 / www.ageuk.org.uk/hertfordshire



Herts Help provides a free independent service to support Hertfordshire residents
0300 123 4044 / info@hertshelp.net / www.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



Friends and Family Feedback

You can share feedback about your hospital stay by scanning this QR code and selecting the **Inpatient Questionnaire**. Your feedback is shared with staff to help improve patient experience.

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, scan the QR code or visit our website.



Patient and relative communication

This page is for you or your team to document details 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:



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