



A Carers Guide - When someone you care for is in hospital



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Carers Support Services



Who is the guide for?

This guide is for anyone looking after a family member or friend who needs help because of their illness or disability.

Your knowledge of the patient and your experience of caring for them should be recognised by clinical staff.

With the patients consent and if you require, you will be fully informed at all stages of their treatment and discharge planning.

You have a choice about caring, there should be no assumptions made by staff that you will continue the role post discharge.

Please discuss with staff how we recognise you as a carer.

Are you already a carer or is this a new situation for you?
Have you been asked by a member of staff if you provided help and support to the patient before admission?

Have you been asked about your willingness and ability to provide care at home for the patient following discharge?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, please speak to a member of staff to discuss your caring role and concerns you may have. You can also speak to the Health Board Carers coordinator whose contact is included in this pack.



Coming into hospital

When someone comes into hospital, as a matter of good practice we ask if there is a family member or friend who they rely on for support, now, or when they leave hospital.

Sometimes it is not possible for the patient to give us this information, so it is important to let the staff know as early as possible if you have, or expect to take on, a caring role; the support you provide can be physical or emotional and can range from a few hours a week to around the clock care.

If there is more than one person in the family providing support, we will ask the patient or family, to agree who is the main carer so that we can communicate with one person to help us manage nursing time efficiently.

When someone you care for is in hospital, it can be a very worrying and stressful time. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns to ward staff.

To talk to, there are a number of people who may be able to help. Speak to the nursing staff or clinical team managing the person's care, the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS), the hospital chaplain, or call the Carers Coordinator.



Carer checklist
Have you informed somebody, family or friend that you have accompanied someone to hospital?

If the person you care for has a learning disability you can ask to speak to the hospital learning disability liaison nurse.

Contact numbers are listed at the back of this leaflet.



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The main concern for both you and the hospital will be that the person you care for receives the best available treatment and that their stay in hospital is as relaxed as possible. This will be achieved by you and the hospital staff working in partnership, and respecting each other's roles.



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What can I expect from hospital staff?

- Recognition and respect of your role, experience and knowledge in caring for the person, whatever your age.
- To be listened to, and involved in decisions about the person you care for (with consent or if decisions impact on you).
- An opportunity to express your views separately.
- Enough time for you to think about the care you may need to provide, agree the type of care tasks and amount of support you are able to offer.
- To be given the information and advice you need to help you care safely and effectively.
- A response to your own needs and help to access information about support available to you as a carer.
- Courtesy at all times, understanding that the situation is stressful for you and for the person you care for.



What will hospital staff expect from me?

- A willingness to introduce yourself to staff because it helps them to put a name to a face.
- Ward staff to be made aware of relevant information about the person to help them to provide individualised care.
- Help in communicating with the person if they have communication or memory difficulties.
- A contact telephone number for you as a carer.
- Polite and courteous behaviour, however stressed you are.
- Understanding that the person you need to speak to may not always be available.
- That you do not visit if you are unwell or have an infection, for example symptoms of Covid-19, a heavy cold or diarrhoea.
- Understanding that personal information about the person will only be discussed with their prior consent.
- If you don't understand something, don't be afraid to ask for it to be repeated, explained or written down.

Can I offer support outside visiting hours?

Carers often feel compelled to stay with the person they support to comfort and reassure them, but also to ensure their safety and needs are understood and met.

If you wish to participate in the care of the person in hospital because they have special needs, discuss with the nursing staff on the ward whether it would be appropriate for you to do that.

Do I have the authority to speak on behalf of the person I care for?

If the person you care for is an adult and is capable of understanding what is happening, they can expect to make their own decisions about the care they receive.

They can also expect that information about them will be treated as confidential by hospital staff.

If you feel there is uncertainty over their mental capacity, explain your concerns to the hospital staff as soon as possible.

The person should only be asked to sign consent forms for treatment if they are capable of understanding the implications.

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) is a process of what to do when someone lacks capacity to make decisions.



It covers anyone over the age of 16 and sets out who can make decisions in which situations, and how they should go about it.

Tell the ward staff if the person you care for has made an advance plan or directive, so that this information can be used to inform decisions about care and treatment, especially if the person is reaching the end of their life.

If you have lasting power of attorney (health) you will be consulted about future and best interest decisions if the person has lost capacity.

Even without formal authority, if you are the main carer or next of kin and you have any concerns about care or treatment, these should be raised initially with the ward manager/nurse in charge at the earliest possible opportunity.

What about decisions that affect me and the information I may need?

We will ensure you receive as much information as possible to help you in your caring role. If you are the main carer, you will generally be given factual information such as ward details, name of consultant and updates.

If you need to take on a caring task, for instance helping with medication or rehabilitation at home, we will give you the advice you need to care safely.

You do have to remember, however, that hospitals are bound by very strict patient confidentiality and we can decline to give information if we believe that it is in the best interest of the patient to do so or if they have indicated that they do not want information passed on.



We will, however, explain to the person you care for the reasons why sharing information with you is important and agree any particular information they wish to withhold.

As a carer you should also expect that information you disclose will also be treated as confidential by hospital staff and may not be shared without your consent.



Carers checklist

- ✓ **Is your home secure, doors/windows locked/kitchen appliances turned off?**
- ✓ **Is there someone you can ask to check?**
- ✓ **In case you become unwell is there a backup plan of who staff can contact? If yes, please let the staff know name and contact number of person/s**
- ✓ **Are there any pets at either your or the patient's home that need looking after?**
- ✓ **Do you need to cancel any services, meals on wheels/district nurse/papers/hospital appointment?**
- ✓ **Do you need to inform your employers/school/college?**



Leaving hospital

Will I be consulted before the person I care for is moved to another ward, hospital, or discharged home?

Yes you will be contacted as early as possible to inform you of a change of ward

We will talk to you in advance of any proposed change of hospital.

You should always be involved in the assessment for discharge if you are intending to provide care or support.

It may be difficult for you to talk about the level of care you can provide or to share your concerns in the presence of the person you care for so we will try to speak to you separately.

What if I feel I could not cope if the person I care for comes back home?

Don't keep your concerns to yourself. If you think that professionals are making mistaken assumptions about what you can cope with, let them know.

You should be given the opportunity to explain what difficulties you might face and what you will and won't be able to do.

Before the person is discharged from hospital, there will be an assessment of their needs and sometimes a home visit to see how they cope with everyday tasks.



If the person needs to be supported for the first time it is important to make sure the right support and services are put in place.

Professionals from health and social care will work with you to ease the move in a planned way including arranging rehabilitation support if appropriate.

If community support services are already in place for the person you care for, the main issue for discharge planning is to make sure those services and support will continue as before or are adapted if needs have changed.

The care manager or social worker will be involved in plans for leaving hospital.

What is a carer's assessment?

This is an opportunity to discuss with social care the help you need to maintain your own health and wellbeing and to balance caring with other aspects of your life, like work and family.

If caring is having a significant impact on your wellbeing, the assessment may suggest you are entitled to social care support.

Even if you refuse a carer's assessment, your ability to manage your caring role must be taken into account when planning support for the person you care for.

You don't have to have a carer's assessment to get advice about available support. Your local carers' service is a good place to start.

To request a carer's assessment speak to social services. Or you can ask the care manager or social worker, if you have one.



Financial Support

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can advise if you are eligible for financial support.

What should I expect to be given upon discharge?

A person may be discharged with medication, prescriptions, discharge/aftercare information leaflets, and often a copy of a letter for the doctor.

It is a good idea to check with the nurse if any of these things are needed before the person you care for leaves the ward.

Finally, your health is important too, so don't forget to look after yourself. Should you require any support with your own emotional wellbeing or mental health please make contact with the relevant organisation for support (see contact list).

If you need to come into hospital for treatment yourself please remember to tell the staff that you are a carer and they will help to signpost you to the appropriate people to arrange community support if necessary.



When to ring 999

Please only ring 999 in a genuine life-threatening emergency e.g. chest pain; breathing difficulties; loss of consciousness; severe blood loss; choking; fitting/ convulsions; drowning; severe allergic reactions.

There are also other options for less seriously ill or injured people, including:

- Visiting your local pharmacy
- Ringing NHS 111 Wales on 111
- Visiting 111.wales.nhs.uk
- Visiting your local GP

When you ring 999

It is useful to know if there is a Carer and any details about them. If you are the Carer ring us from the patient's side if possible so we can get an accurate picture of their condition at the time of the call. In an emergency stay with the patient or arrange for someone else to stay with them.

To enable the emergency medical dispatcher to offer advice and ensure the most appropriate assistance is provided you will be asked;

- the patient's age, sex and medical history
- whether the patient is breathing and conscious, severe bleeding or chest pain
- the address of the emergency and the phone number you're calling from



While you are waiting for the ambulance to arrive

- stay with the patient and call 999 back if their condition or location changes
- get someone to open the doors and signal where the ambulance crew is needed
- lock away any family pets
- write down the patient's GP details and collect any medications that they are taking
- You will also be told how to help the patient whilst we are on the way.

Getting to Hospital for Non-Emergency Appointments

If you care for someone who is eligible for Non-emergency Patient Transport you can book transport by phoning **0300 123 2303**, Monday to Friday 0800-1800.



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Community/District Nursing

Things I need to know if being cared for at home please ensure you complete this sheet

Name of community nurse

Contact number

What **team** is the cared for person under?

Contact number

Who do I contact out of hours?.....

Contact number.....

Who supplied your equipment? (bed, hoist, etc.) Health Board,
Local Authority, bought by service user from company

Name of
supplier/company.....

.....

Contact number.....

In case of breakdown, if you have bought equipment yourself
please be sure you have an emergency contact number you are
able to contact out of normal working hours/weekends

Who do I contact in case of equipment failure?.....

Contact number.....

Out of hours number.....



Useful contact information

Carers Coordinator – Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	Tel: 07557930676 Email: ctm_carers@wales.nhs.uk
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	01685 725000
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	01443 425003
Bridgend County Borough Council	01656 643643
PALS	Email: CTM.MerthyrCynonILG.Governance@wales.nhs.uk CTM.BridgendILGPALS@wales.nhs.uk CTM.RhonddaTaffElyILG.Governance@wales.nhs.uk
CTM Concerns Team	01443 443796
Crisis Team	Crisis Royal Glamorgan Hospital - 01443443443 Ext 74388 Crisis Prince Charles Hospital - 01685 726952 & 01685 726953 Single Point of Access Princess of Wales Hospital - 01656 752449

