

## Who can I contact?

If you need to speak to someone about your care needs after you have left hospital, please contact:

For more information about social care and support in your area, go to: [www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/home-first](http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/home-first)

If you don't have access to a computer, please speak to a member of hospital staff and they will provide details in paper form.

We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print or have it translated for you. Please contact Dorset HealthCare on 01202 277000.

Our Dorset is a partnership of local health and social care organisations. For more information, visit <https://ourdorset.nhs.uk/>

## Getting ready to leave hospital:

### returning home or moving to another place of care



## Introduction

This leaflet explains how we will help you to prepare to leave hospital, and what support you might expect after you have left.

## When will I leave hospital?

The team caring for you will advise you when you no longer need hospital care. It will be in your best interest to return home or to another place of care to continue your recovery.

## Why can't I stay in hospital?

When you no longer need hospital care, it is better for you to continue your recovery elsewhere. Staying in hospital for longer than necessary could result in you losing muscle strength, reduce your ability to remain independent and possibly expose you to infection. Leaving hospital when you are ready is best for you, and will also free up a bed for someone who is very unwell and needs hospital care.

## Planning your recovery out of hospital

We will always try to ensure you are in the right place at the right time for the best recovery possible. Throughout your stay, we will be planning with you and your family/carers for what will happen when you no longer need hospital care.

The best place for you to recover is usually your own home, with the support of your family, friends and local community if you need some extra support at first. There may also be equipment that can help you achieve tasks independently, too.

You may have to wait for a package of care, so we encourage you to talk to family, friends, neighbours and local community groups about any support they can give when you return home. People are often very willing to help if they are asked, and our staff can help you get in touch with anyone who could assist you.

## What can I expect if I need any further help with my recovery out of hospital?

If you need more care and support than your family, friends and local community can provide, we will explain the support options that might be available when you leave hospital. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our community health and social care teams are under exceptional pressure and need to focus care and support on those in greatest need.

As a result, you may experience waits for home care and we may not be able to provide choice of care provision. We will need you to be flexible about how we continue to meet your recovery needs – for example, you might need to have a wash at lunchtime instead of early morning, or get changed for bed earlier than normal.

If you have an urgent need for care and support on leaving hospital, we will talk to you about what short-term arrangements can be put in place to help you recover at home. If you need more care than before you came into hospital, these arrangements will be provided free of charge for a period of time to support your recovery. The team caring for you will advise how long this period might be. If you need care and support for a longer period, you may be required to contribute towards or pay the full cost of this care.

## What happens if I need more care and support than can be provided in my own home?

If your needs are greater than we can provide for within your own home, or if we do not have the care and support available for you at home when you leave hospital, we may need to place you in a care home or alternative place of care for a short period. Our teams will work with you to help you return home or move to an on-going place of care as soon as possible.

Due to exceptional demands at the current time, there are restricted options available, so we can give only one offer of care to meet your needs on leaving hospital. We appreciate your understanding of the difficulties our teams face in trying to put the best care and support in place for those who need it.

