

Going home – preparing for your child's discharge from hospital



Discharge planning is important so that you are well prepared for going home from hospital, and to reduce the chance of re-admission.

This booklet has been designed to help you prepare for going home. It explains:

- how your child's discharge will be planned
- who may help your child in the community.

How will discharge be planned?

You will be encouraged to take an active part in discharge planning.

On admission a treatment plan will be agreed and you may be given an estimated date of discharge. This date may change depending on your child's progress, as your child will only be discharged when medically well enough to leave hospital and when any discharge follow up arrangements are in place.

Don't forget to let the ward staff know about any professionals you may already see when you are at home.

Please discuss any concerns that you have about discharge with the ward staff, and let them know if you are not comfortable with the discharge arrangements.

The ward should have a private room available for you to have confidential conversations regarding treatment/discharge. If you wish to use a private room to discuss your discharge arrangements, please ask.

Who will help when I go home?

There are a number of health professionals or services that may be involved in the discharge plans for your child, depending on their care needs. These may include:

Community Paediatrician – who work specifically with children's individual needs. They are trained and experienced in working with children who have physical disabilities, learning disabilities, social communication disorders (such as autism), and other long-term disabilities, and they work closely with families and other agencies.

Health Visitor – every child under the age of 5 can access a health visitor, whose aim is to improve the health of families and children in the crucial first few years of life. Health visitors work with parents to assess the care needed and develop appropriate support programmes.

School Nurses – provide confidential advice and health information to young people, their parents, carers and teachers. School nurses help ensure children and young people stay fit and healthy.

There are also Special School Nurses who are based in the special schools and work with children with disabilities.

Children's Community Nurses – support children at home or in another setting in the local community with short term nursing needs. They will provide nursing care, information, resources and support to help you, your family and your child be as independent as possible. They will work with you and other health staff and organisations who support your child's health and wellbeing.

They also provide palliative and end-of-life care, where this can be safely carried out in the community, supporting your child at home, or in another setting in the local community.

Outreach Nurses – there are many different types of outreach nurses, providing specialist support in the community to children/young people with specific needs.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – helps children and young people deal with emotional, behavioural or mental health issues.

Community Therapy Services – provide therapeutic interventions depending on the needs of your child. These may include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and dietetic support.

Homecare service – delivers healthcare to children with complex health needs who have been assessed as requiring additional support within their home. To access this service, your child will also be supported by a community nurse.

Dietitians – assess nutritional requirements and offer advice about special diets and specialist feeding programmes.

Children's Social Care – help children and young people with physical or learning difficulties, and vulnerable children and families.

Speech & Language Therapist (SALT) – assess any speech, language and swallowing difficulties and give advice on the management of these problems.

Pharmacist – the hospital pharmacist will ensure, as far as possible, that any medications your child was taking at home are available in hospital, and will supply medicines to take home with you. They will regularly review any medications and are available to explain what any new medicines are for, how to take them, and any common side effects. If you want to find out more about the medication your child has been prescribed you can ask to speak to the ward pharmacist.

Community pharmacists are a good source of information and help after discharge.

What medicines will my child need when we go home?

Any medication that you brought into hospital will be returned, if your child is still prescribed this. You will also be given a limited supply of any new medication that has been prescribed for your child.

You will be given directions on how and when your child should have their medication, and any side effects to be aware of. This should be explained to you and given to you in writing, usually by means of the patient information leaflet in the packaging. Please do read it.

Following discharge you will need to contact your GP to arrange for further prescriptions, if needed.

If you have any concerns or questions about the medication after you leave hospital you can get advice from the hospital's Medicines Information service on 01872 252587 between 9am and 4pm.

Further information on the administration of your child's medicines is also available from www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

What about any treatment my child may need following discharge?

If your child needs to attend a follow up appointment, this may be given to you prior to discharge, or it will be sent in the post to you.

A discharge summary will be sent to your GP, and to any community healthcare professionals that are involved. You may request a copy of this.

The summary will explain:

- the treatment your child received
- any medication your child has been prescribed, and
- any recommendations for future care.

How will we get home?

You will need to make your own transport arrangements unless your child needs to be transported by ambulance. If you are in receipt of benefits you will be able to get a form from the general office at the hospital so that you can apply to claim back your cost of travel.

What if I have problems with transport to get home?

If you need transport, TAP (Transport Access Patients) co-ordinate a fleet of car drivers across Cornwall who can organise transport for you. TAP provide cars and accessible mini buses and can accommodate wheelchair and walking frame users. There is a charge for this service, payable per mile and you may travel alone or with friends. You can contact TAP on 01872 223388.

Volunteer Cornwall provide a similar car service, again a charge per mile is payable and they can be contacted on 01872 265300.

If you need help to pay for travel, please contact the General Office.

What if I live on the Isles of Scilly?

Please refer to RCHT guidelines for transfers and discharges to the Isles of Scilly. These are available on our website, or please ask a member of staff for a copy.

What if I have any questions?

If you have a question, comment or suggestion, or an issue you would like to resolve, please speak to the nurse looking after your child, or the Sister of the ward or department concerned as soon as possible.

If you still have any unresolved questions after speaking to the ward staff, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service available for patients, families, carers and staff, offering on the spot information, support and advice. PALS can be contacted on 01872 252793.

Open doors

Your child may be given an 'open door' when they are discharged. Your nurse or doctor will tell you if this is the case. An open door means you can come directly back to the ward or PAU if your child becomes more unwell, or you are concerned.

Please contact the ward directly if you wish to use your open door. Open doors can be issued for 24 hours, a few days, or permanently if your child has complex or continuing health care needs. If you have any questions about open doors please ask one of the team.

Useful contact numbers

Family Information Service

Information for children, young people, parents/carers and practitioners.

Tel: 0800 587 8191

Tel: 01872 323 535

Website: <http://cornwall.childrensservicedirectory.org.uk>

Email: fis@cornwall.gov.uk

SHARE

Information, advice, counselling and mentoring for young people

Tel: 0800 181033

Savvy Kernow (formerly EEFO)

Information about young person friendly services in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Website: www.savvykernow.org.uk

Children and Family Services (formerly Children's Early Help, Psychology and Social Care)

Tel: 0300 1234 101

Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust

Royal Cornwall Hospital

Tel: 01872 250000

Going home checklist

Please tick

Have you made transport arrangements?	
Do you have details of any outpatient/follow up appointments?	
Do you have medications that are required for your child, and clear, written instructions on their use and how to administer?	
Do you have information about any special dietary needs?	
Do you have any relevant information/advice sheets in relation to this admission?	
Do you have any dressings/medical devices that you need to take home and/or have arrangements been made for any equipment you may need when you get home?	
Do you have written details of contact names, and numbers for the services that will be providing aftercare for your child?	
Do you know who to contact if you have any questions, or in case there are any problems?	
Do you have all of your belongings and any items stored safely by the ward?	
Do you have a copy of your child's discharge summary?	

Developed for RCHT children's wards by Caroline Amukusana.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

