

# Looking after someone when they come out of hospital



A guide for carers



This document was written by **Carers Wales**. It is an easy read version of the factsheet '**Coming out of the hospital**'.

**May 2023**

# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. The meaning of the word is explained below the word.

Where the document says **we**, this means **Carers Wales**. For more information contact:



**Website:** [www.carerswales.org](http://www.carerswales.org)

**E-mail:** [info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)

**Phone:** 029 2081 1370



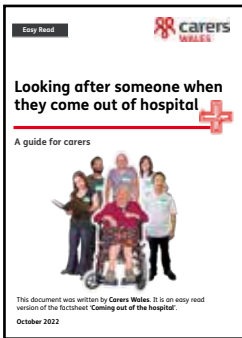
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# Introduction



This guide is for **carers** in Wales.



A **carer** is a person who looks after someone and does not get paid for it. A carer can be a family member, friend or other helper who looks after a child or a sick, older person or disabled person.

This guide explains:



- Your rights as a **carer**.
- What to do when someone you care for is coming out of the hospital.
- What to do if things go wrong.



You can find out about what to do when someone is coming out of hospital during coronavirus here [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/a-z-of-changes-to-benefits-assessments-and-support-covid-19](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/a-z-of-changes-to-benefits-assessments-and-support-covid-19)

# Things to think about if the person you care for is in hospital



If the person you care for is in hospital, you may have some important decisions to make.



You may be thinking about taking on a caring role for the first time.



Or you may already be caring for the person, but now their needs have changed or increased.



It is **your** choice whether you want to care for the person or not.



If you feel you cannot look after the person, you have the right to say **no**.



If you cannot care for the person, social services will provide the support they need.



You could decide to provide some care and help.



For example, you may be able to help with shopping and meals. But you want someone else to help with personal care like washing, dressing, and using the toilet.

It is important to think about how caring affects your life. For example, does it:



- Affect your health?
- Take up a lot of time?
- Make your life hard?
- Get in the way of other things you want to do?  
Like work and studies.

# Benefits



If you and or the person you care for get benefits, you must tell the benefits office that they are in hospital. Because this may affect the benefits you get.



Disability benefits will stop if:

- the person you care for was over 18 years old when they went into hospital
- and they have been in hospital for more than 28 days.



If the person you care for was under 18 when they went into hospital, they will keep getting disability benefits.



You will keep getting Carer's Allowance until their disability benefit stops.



When the person you care for is ready to leave hospital, you must tell the benefits office to make sure that payments start again.



The person you care for may get more money in benefits if their care needs have changed.



If the person is part of a mobility scheme

<https://www.motability.co.uk/>

then you may need to contact the charity if those benefits stop.



For further advice and information, contact **Carers Wales** or the **Carers UK Helpline**. See contact details on **page 36**.

## Help at work



If you are in paid work, you may need to make some changes to help you with your caring role, like:

- being able to make phone calls to check on the person you care for during work
- or taking some time off from work.



## Most working carers have the right to:



- ask for flexible working hours



- take time off in emergencies



- not to be treated unfairly or pressured.



For more information about your rights in work visit <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/working-carers-hub>.

# Carers assessments



If you need support, your local council should **assess** you and the people you care for. This is the law.



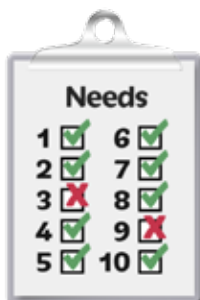
An **assessment** is a check to see what extra help you might need. An **assessment** does not check to see how or why you are caring.



The council can offer you an **assessment** while the person you care for is still in hospital.



If 2 carers are looking after the same person, both carers can choose to get an **assessment**.



An **assessment** will look at things like your wants and needs, your health and your other responsibilities. Like children, or work.



To find out more about assessments, go to our website: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/factsheets-carers-wales/getting-an-assessment-in-wales>

# Before the person leaves hospital



It is important to let hospital staff know that you are a carer. Or that you are thinking about caring for the person.



Each hospital will have its own **discharge rules**. Their rules must follow guidance from Welsh Government called Hospital Discharge Planning Guidance: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/document/41840/info>



The guidance says how important it is to involve the patient and their carers at all stages of planning for hospital discharge.



The ward manager or your local **Community Health Council (Citizen Voice Body)** should be able to give you a copy of the hospital's **discharge rules**.



From April 2023, **Community Health Council** will be called **Citizen Voice Body (CVB)**.



You can find your local **Community Health Council (Citizen Voice Body)** here: <https://boardchc.nhs.wales/your-local-chc>

## What is hospital discharge?



**Hospital discharge** is the process of leaving hospital. A plan is made to make sure all the care and support you need is in place for when you leave hospital.



Patients and their carers must be involved at all stages of **discharge planning**.



Some people may not be able to make their own decisions. If you have been appointed by law to make decisions for the person you care for, you may be able to make decisions for them.



For more information about taking decision on someone's behalf go to our website: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/managing-someone-s-affairs/different-ways-of-managing-someone-s-affairs-in-england-and-wales>.



If you cannot make decisions on their behalf, professionals will have to make decisions on their behalf.



But it is still important for you to be involved in the decisions.

## Discharge assessments



A **discharge assessment** is done to find out if the person you care for needs support after they leave hospital.



The **assessment** is done by a team of people who are trained and qualified.



The **assessment** will look at whether the person you care for is able to get NHS services or community care services from the local council.

## Things you need to check before the person leaves the hospital:



- The person should be **assessed** to make sure they are fit to leave the hospital.



- Check what support the person will need when they return home.



- Carers should be **assessed** to find out whether they need support.



- A **care plan** is put in place if they need services. You should get a copy of the care plan.



- There should be a **support plan** for the person being cared for and for the carer.



- There should be an **assessment** to check if the person needs **Continuing NHS Healthcare**.



- The patient should be **assessed** to check if they can afford to pay for services.



The law says that there is a charge for social services provided outside the home in Wales.



To find out more about the charge, contact **Carers Wales** <https://www.carersuk.org/wales> or the **Carers UK Helpline** 020 7378 4999.

# The day the person you care for leaves hospital

On the day of **discharge**, you, and the person you care for should:



- Have details about any services that would be involved.
- Have information about future treatment and care. Information should be given to you in the language and a way that you understand.
- Ask any questions if you are worried about anything.

## Things you need to check on the day:



- Make sure you have transport to get home from hospital.



- You should both have copies of the **care and support plan**.





- A **hospital discharge letter** should be sent to the patient's GP within 1 day.



- Make sure you have all the medicines you need. And you have the information on how to use it.



- Make sure you have all the support you need on the first day.



- You should have a place in the hospital to wait for transport or medicines.



- You should get at least 6 weeks of free care until the care plan is in place.

# Care and support for people after hospital

## Intermediate care



**Intermediate care** is temporary care and support to help you get better faster. This could be things like physiotherapy.



It could take place in the patient's home, a day care or in a care home.



**Intermediate care** is free for the first 6 weeks.

## Reablement services



**Reablement services** help people to get their skills and confidence back. So they can learn to manage again after an illness.



For example, helping people to relearn things like cooking or washing. It is free for the first 6 weeks.



After the first 6 weeks, you may have to pay for home care services. But if you need medical equipment, this will be provided for free by the NHS.

## Palliative care



**Palliative care** is care given to improve the quality of life of patients who have a serious illness which cannot be cured.



This care is free on the NHS.



It may take place in a hospital, care home or in patient's own home.

# Continuing NHS Healthcare



If you have long term care and support needs, you may be able to get your care organised and paid for by the NHS. This is called **Continuing NHS Healthcare**.

This is for people who have care needs which are mostly health related. This might be because:



- you are disabled
- you have a long-term illness
- you have had an accident.

**Continuing NHS Healthcare** can be provided wherever you live, like:



- your own home
- a care home
- a hospice – a place where people get specialist care and support when they are close to the end of their life.



- in prison.



There is only 1 condition you need to meet to be eligible for **Continuing NHS Healthcare**. You must have a primary health need.



A primary health need means you mainly need care and support to manage your health.



Your Local Health Board is responsible for checking if you are eligible for **Continuing NHS Healthcare**.



They do this through the **Continuing NHS Healthcare assessment**.



**Continuing NHS Healthcare** can be provided by a range of health and care workers. For example, a nurse, therapist, or personal assistant.

If you are eligible:



**If you live at home:** NHS will pay for services from a nurse, therapist or personal assistant. For example, help with washing and dressing.



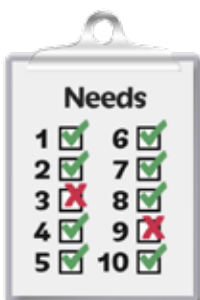
This does not include house rent or food.



**If you live in a care home:** The NHS will make a contract with the care home to pay for your housing fees and health and personal care needs.



For more information you can check the public information booklet about Continuing NHS Healthcare that was published in April 2022 by NHS Wales and the Welsh Government here: <https://gov.wales/continuing-nhs-healthcare-chc-information-booklet-individuals-families-and-carers>.



You may be able to get extra support through a carer's needs **assessment**.



This extra support is separate from **Continuing NHS Healthcare**. It is provided by your council not the NHS.

## Community care services from the local council



Patients who do not need **Continuing NHS Healthcare** should have an **assessment** from the local council to decide whether they can get any help or support.

This could include things like:



- changes made to the home to make it easier to do things at home



- a care worker to help with **personal care**.



**If you are responsible for caring for a person, you have the legal right to be involved in making decision about their care and support.**



The council might **assess** your needs and the person you care for at the same time.



# Support for people with mental health conditions



The law says that people with **mental health conditions** have the right to get treatment and **assessment**.



**Mental health conditions** are when you are not feeling well in your mind and thoughts. Mental health problems are things like:

- Depression – feeling full of self-doubt and sadness.
- Anxiety – feeling worried or nervous.
- Dementia - a condition that affects the brain. People have problems with memory and can be confused. It mostly affects older people



The law supports people to have their voice heard. They should have the right support for them and their needs.

## About care and treatment planning



When patients get treatment through hospitals, they should be given a care co-ordinator.



The care co-ordinator is responsible for working with the patient, their carers and service providers. And making sure everyone knows what is going on.



Health services must also make a care and treatment plan.

### The care co-ordinator should:

- involve you in the care and treatment plan
- check and change the plan when needed. They must make sure the patient is involved as much as possible
- focus on the needs of the patients. And not on using what services are available
- make sure the care and treatment plan is helping the patient to get better
- think about other services like leisure, education, employment, and training.



The care co-ordinator must get permission from the person you care for to involve you in the care plan.



Care co-ordinators will decide how much they want to tell you about the care plan.



They must make a note of why they did not want to tell you about some parts of the care plan.

## Secondary Mental Health Services



People who feel their **mental health condition** is getting worse can ask for an **assessment** again after they leave hospital.



This can only be done by the person who was a patient with **secondary mental health services**.



**Secondary mental health services** are teams of health professionals who specialise in mental health.



You can ask for an **assessment** anytime within 3 years of leaving **secondary mental health services**.



If you have been discharged from **secondary mental health services** for over 3 years, you need to go back to **primary care** for an **assessment**.



**Primary care** includes things like your GP. They're called **primary services** because they are usually the first place people go with any health problems.

# Mental Health Advocacy



Mental Health advocacy helps patients to know their rights. And have the information they need to make their own choice about their care and treatment.



Sometimes a person is kept in hospital under the Mental Health Act for their own safety.



A family member of a patient can ask for the patient to be discharged. This must be done in writing to the Mental Health Act manager in the hospital.



If the doctor feels the patient is at risk of harming themselves or others, they can say **no**.



Most mental health services will have a **Mental Health Advocate** available for supporting people.



You can also contact **Mind** or **Adferiad Recovery** for advice.

## Community Mental Health Services



If the person you care for is being discharged, they will usually be under the care of a **Community Mental Health Team**.



The **Community Mental Health Team** includes professionals like specialist nurses, social workers, support workers and day services.

## Section 117 Aftercare



**Aftercare** is the help you will get in the community after you leave hospital.



Some people who have been kept in hospital under the **Mental Health Act** can get free help and support after they leave hospital.



**Aftercare** is given to lower the risk of your **mental health condition** getting worse. And people having to go back to hospital again.



For more information on what kind of services can be offered, please check **Mind's** website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/leaving-hospital/section-117-aftercare/#WhatKindsOfServicesAreCovered>

# Making a complaint



If you are unhappy about something, you can make a complaint. For example, if you think support was not put in place before the person left hospital.



You should complain as soon as you can.



You must say in your complaint what went wrong. And what you would like to happen next.

## Informal complaint



You can talk to the **hospital discharge coordinator** or a **social care professional**. They should be able to solve your problem.



If you are still not happy, you can use the **NHS formal complaint process**.



# NHS formal complaint process



Either you or the patient can make the complaint about how you have been treated or the care provided.



The complaint should be made within 12 months of the thing you are complaining about happening. There are 2 stages of the complaint.



## First stage complaint:

You can ask for a copy of a leaflet called **‘Putting things Right’** from the hospital. This tells you how to make a complaint.

## Second stage complaint:

If you are still not happy with the response, you can take the complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales:



**Address:** 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae  
Pencoed  
CF45 5LJ

**Phone:** 0845 601 0987

**Email:** [ask@ombudsman-wales-org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales-org.uk)

**Website:** [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

# Complaints about the assessment for Continuing NHS Healthcare



If you are unhappy about an **assessment** for **Continuing NHS Healthcare**, you can complain to NHS professionals involved in making the decision.



If the Health Board decides not to change its decision, you can challenge the decision by making a complaint through the NHS complaints procedure. <https://www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices/contactus/nhscomplaints>

## Complaints about social services



If you want to make a complaint about social services, you can complain to your local authority.



You can ask your local authority for a copy of their complaint's procedure. You can find your local authorities contact details online here:

<https://gov.wales/find-your-local-authority>



You can ask **local carers' centre**, **citizen's advice service** or **advocacy service** for advice. You can also speak to your local Assembly Member or local councillor.

## Going to the court



If you think social services or NHS have broken the law, you could take them to court.



This should be done within 3 months, so it is important to get legal advice as quickly as possible.



If you want to make a complaint you can check our guide for carers. Go to our **website**: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/making-a-complaint>

# More help

For information and advice contact

## **Carers UK**

**Website:** [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

**Email:** [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)

**Phone:** 0808 808 7777

(Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

## **Board of Community Health Councils (Citizen Voice Body) in Wales**

If you have a problem with NHS services, your local **Community Health Council (Citizen Voice Body)** can help.

**Website:** <https://boardchc.nhs.wales/your-local-chc/>

**Email:** [enquiries@waleschc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@waleschc.org.uk)

**Phone:** 029 2023 5558

## **Carers Wales**

**Website:** [www.carersuk.org/wales](http://www.carersuk.org/wales)

**E-mail:** [info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)

**Phone:** 029 2081 1370

Carers Wales can also help you to find support groups and organisations local to you:

**Website:** [www.carersuk.org/localsupport](http://www.carersuk.org/localsupport)

## **Equality Advisory Support Service**

If you want advice about equality and human rights, the Equality Advisory Support Service can help.

**Website:** [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

**Phone:** 0808 800 0082

## **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**

If you have a complaint about public services in Wales, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales can help.

**Website:** [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

**Email:** [ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

**Phone:** 01656 641150 / 0300 790 0203

## **Age Cymru**

Age Cymru can offer help and advice for older people:

**Website:** [www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru)

**Phone:** 0300 303 44 98/ 029 2043 1555

## **Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

Older People's Commissioner for Wales can provide help and support for older people:

**Website:** [www.olderpeoplewales.com](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com)

**Email:** [ask@olderpeoplewales.com](mailto:ask@olderpeoplewales.com)

**Phone:** 08442 640670 or 029 20445030

## **The Children's Commissioner for Wales**

The Children's Commissioner for Wales can offer support to children and young people:

**Website:** [www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)

**Email:** [post@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:post@childcomwales.org.uk)

**Phone:** 01792 765600 / 01492 523333 /

0808 801 1000 (number for children & young people)

## **Children in Wales**

Children in Wales is a charity that supports children, young people and their families:

**Website:** [www.childreninwales.org.uk](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk)

**Email:** [info@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:info@childreninwales.org.uk)

**Phone:** 029 2034 2434

## **Contact a Family**

Contact a Family is a charity that supports families of disabled children:

**Website:** [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

**Email:** [cymru@contact.org.uk](mailto:cymru@contact.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0808 808 3555 / 029 2039 6624

## **Citizen's Advice Cymru**

Citizen's Advice Cymru gives free legal advice:

**Website:** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/)

**Advicelink:** 0800 702 2020

**Phone:** 03444 772020

## **Mind Cymru**

Mind Cymru gives advice and support to people with mental health problems:

**Website:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Email:** [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0300 123 3393 or 029 2039 5123

## **Adferiad**

Adferiad Recovery helps people recovering from serious mental health issues. And their families:

**Website:** [www.adferiad.org.uk](http://www.adferiad.org.uk)

**Email:** [info@adferiad.org.uk](mailto:info@adferiad.org.uk)

**Phone:** 01792 816600

## **Benefit Helplines Attendance Allowance**

**Phone:** 0800 731 0122

**Textphone:** 0800 731 0317 Carer's Allowance

**Phone:** 0800 731 0297

**Textphone:** 0800 731 0317

## **Disability Living Allowance**

If you were born on or before 8 April 1948:

**Phone:** 0800 731 0122

**Textphone:** 0800 731 0317

If you were born after 8 April 1948:

**Phone:** 0800 121 4600

**Textphone:** 0800 121 4523

## **Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance Jobcentre Plus**

**New Claims Phone:** 0800 055 6688

**Textphone:** 0800 731 7339

**Existing Claims Phone:** 0800 169 0310

**Textphone:** 0800 169 0314

## **Pension Credit**

**Phone:** 0800 731 7898

**Textphone:** 0800 169 0133

## **Personal Independence Payment**

**New Claims Phone:** 0800 917 2222

**Textphone:** 0800 917 7777

**Enquiry Line:** 0800 121 4433

**Textphone:** 0800 121 4493

## **Tax Credits**

**Phone:** 0345 300 3900

**Textphone:** 0345 300 3909



## **Carer's Wales Contact Information**

This guide was written to give you useful information and advice.

This guide was written in September 2021. But information changes all the time.

To make sure you have the most up to date information, please contact us.

### **Carers UK Helpline**

**Phone:** 0808 808 7777

Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm

**E-mail:** [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)

### **Carers UK**

**Address:** 20 Great Dover Street London SE1 4LX

**Phone:** 020 7378 4999

**Email:** [info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)

### **Carers Wales**

**Phone:** 029 2081 1370

**Email:** [info@carerswales.org](mailto:info@carerswales.org)

### **Carers Scotland**

**Email:** [info@carerscotland.org](mailto:info@carerscotland.org)

## **Carers Northern Ireland**

**Phone:** 028 9043 9843

**Email:** [advice@carersni.org](mailto:advice@carersni.org)

We are the UK's only national membership charity for carers. Join us at:

**Website:** [www.carersuk.org/northernireland](http://www.carersuk.org/northernireland)