

# Transition between inpatient mental health settings and community or care home settings

Information for the public

Published: 30 August 2016

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## Moving between hospital and home when you have a mental health problem – the care you should expect

This information explains the care that NICE has said works best for people of any age who need to go into hospital because of a mental health problem. It looks especially at what care and support a person should have when they come into hospital and when they leave.

It will help you, your family and carers know what to expect from health and care services.

## Why is this important for you?

NICE aims to help people get the best possible care no matter who they are or where they live. The NICE advice seeks to:

- help doctors and other healthcare staff give you the right support when you come into hospital
- make sure staff involve you in decisions about your treatment and care
- make sure you (and anyone who cares for you) get the right support when you leave.

For further information see [where can I find out more?](#)

Your healthcare team should know what NICE has said. Talk to them if you don't think you are getting the care NICE has said you should have.

## Before you go into hospital

If you have a mental health problem your GP, or someone else in your care team, should arrange an assessment as soon as possible. They should ask you some questions about your mental health problems, your medical history and your general health. They should also ask your family or carers, if you've said this is OK. This information will help your care team to find out what care and support you may need.

Your GP, the hospital and any other services that support you should work together with you to plan the treatment and care that you will have in hospital.

Your care team should involve you in decisions. They should also involve your family or carers, if you've agreed to this.

## Questions you or your carer could ask

- Who can I speak to if I'm worried or need help?
- Why do I need to go into hospital?
- How long will I be in hospital?

- What kind of treatment and care will I have?
- How can I be involved in decisions about my treatment and care?
- How can I stay in touch with my family and friends?
- How do I arrange for my family or friends to visit?
- What can and can't I do (for example, use my mobile phone)?
- What support is available after I leave?

## Arriving at hospital

When you arrive, the hospital staff should be welcoming and help you feel safe. They should explain how to get independent support from someone who can represent your interests, if you want (this is known as advocacy). If you didn't choose to come into hospital they should explain your legal rights and how to appeal against the decision that you need to be there.

The hospital staff should tell you about the ward where you'll be staying, and who to talk to if you're worried or need extra help. They should talk with you about your physical as well as your mental health needs. They should discuss your treatment, care and support including medicines.

Staff should check with you about anything that needs taking care of while you're in hospital, for example how your children will be looked after, or what happens about benefits and rent.

The hospital should give your family or carers the name of someone in your care team who will be their main contact while you're in hospital.

## While you're in hospital

The staff should work with you in planning your care and recovery. They should talk with you about how to cope with your symptoms and recognise signs that your mental health needs might be changing. A member of your care team should update your care plan with you frequently to make sure it's still right.

## Keeping in touch with life outside

Your care team should help you to keep links with your life outside hospital so you can pick things up again when you're feeling better. This includes any work, training or learning you were doing. If you're under 18, staff should arrange with someone from your school or college to help you keep up with your studies while you're in hospital.

If the hospital is a long way from where you normally live, you might need extra help to keep in touch with life back home. The hospital should make sure a practitioner from your ward works with one in your home area to support you.

## Sessions to help you cope better

While you're in hospital you may be offered specific support sessions to help you understand and cope with your mental health problems. This is known as psychoeducation. If you're offered these sessions, they should start while you're in hospital and keep running for a while after you've left. This will give you a chance to test out what you've learnt in everyday life. The hospital may offer your family or carers separate sessions to help them support you.

You might also be offered support from other people who have experienced mental health problems and are trained to help others. This is known as peer support.

## Leaving hospital

Your care team should plan your discharge with you well in advance. They should work closely with any services in the community that will be supporting you after you've left. Depending on your circumstances this might be your GP, community mental health services, social care, housing or staff at a care home.

Your care team should let your family or carers know the date you will be leaving hospital and involve them in planning for this. They should discuss how you are, and what support you might need, if you've said this is OK. They should check whether your family or carers will need any extra help.

Your care team should offer you a chance to spend some time out of hospital before you're discharged, if you want to. This may help you to get used to life outside hospital again. If

you were doing any work, training or learning before you went into hospital they should help you get back to this gradually, at a pace that feels right for you.

## A plan for staying as well as possible

When you're getting ready to leave hospital, a member of your care team should help you make a plan for staying as well as possible in future. They should send a copy to everyone who will be involved in supporting you, including your GP. The plan should include:

- your recovery goals
- how to cope with your symptoms
- what to do in a crisis
- your medicines and treatment
- any work, training, learning or social activities.

## At discharge

Your care team should send your GP information about your discharge date, why you were admitted and how you are now (if you have agreed to this). They should give you a copy. They may book a follow-up appointment for you to see your GP in the first 2 weeks after you leave hospital.

Your care team should talk to you in detail about what other support you may need after you've left hospital. They should make sure you know who to talk to if you feel worried or scared, including out-of-hours.

Your care team should get in touch with you a few days after your discharge to check things are OK. They should be in touch sooner if they are worried you may not be coping well or if they think you may harm yourself.

**There are also some organisations that could help – see [where can I find out more?](#)**

## Making decisions together

You should be part of all decisions about your care so you can agree which treatments are likely to suit you best. Your healthcare team should involve you by:

- talking to you so that they understand what matters to you
- giving you all the information you need so that you can make your mind up
- explaining why they think something that is mentioned here won't work for you and explain any other ways of dealing with the issue
- giving you details for someone in your care team that you can contact if you have any questions.

There is more information about how you should be involved in your care on our [website](#).

## Questions you or your carer could ask

- Where can I get advice about financial support or benefits?
- How can I continue to get the medicine I need?
- Who should I talk to if I start to feel unwell?
- Where can I get ongoing support in my local area?
- What services and support are available to help families or carers?

## Where can I find out more?

- Carers Trust 0844 800 4361  
[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)
- MIND 0300 123 3393  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Rethink Mental Illness 0300 500 0927  
[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

- SANE 0300 304 7000  
[www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)
- Young Minds 0808 802 5544 (parent helpline)  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

You can also go to [NHS Choices](#) for more information.

NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

You may also like to read NICE's information for the public on [service user experience in adult mental health](#). This sets out what adults should be able to expect when they use the NHS.

## What are NICE guidelines?

NICE gives advice to staff working in health and social care. Our guidelines help them to give the best care to people with different conditions and needs. We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by mental health problems and staff who treat or support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available. You can read the [guideline written for people who work in health and care services](#).

ISBN: 978-1-4731-2024-2

## Accreditation

