

Planning for recovery

leaving hospital after
a mental health crisis

Leaving hospital after a mental health crisis

This booklet is to help you think about what support you might need when you leave hospital – so that your care plan reflects what is important to you and you can decide when it is right for you to go home.

There is space for you to write down things you want to say when you have meetings with staff to plan your care. It outlines what you should be able to expect and how to get help if you have any concerns. You'll also find some contact details at the end of the booklet to point you in the direction of more information and support.

We talk about 'going home', but if you don't have somewhere to go back to, or need to change your accommodation or to move into supported housing or residential care, this booklet could still help you think about what you might need.

Have you been sectioned?

If you are detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act (sectioned), there are rules about how your discharge is decided and how you can apply to leave hospital. Some people may have conditions imposed on them after leaving hospital, and some people will have additional rights to aftercare.

You can find out more from ward staff or an independent mental health advocate (IMHA). An IMHA is someone who helps you understand and exercise your rights. If you are detained in hospital in England, you are entitled to support from an IMHA; in Wales, you are entitled to an IMHA whether you have been detained or are a voluntary patient. Ward staff must tell you how you can get to see an IMHA.

You can call Mind's Legal Line for advice (0300 466 6463) or read more in Mind's 'Leaving hospital' rights guide available online at mind.org.uk. You can still use this booklet to think about what you need.

How will my return home be arranged?

As you start feeling well enough to leave hospital your care team should already be planning with you how this will happen and what care you can get after leaving. In fact, they should have begun to plan from the point you went into hospital. The care team might include nurses, psychiatrist, social worker, occupational therapists, and a psychologist.

The plan centres on you and your goals. It might involve your GP, community mental health services, social care, housing provider or staff at a care home (depending on your circumstances). It covers treatment and support that will help you stay as well as possible in future. Your care team should send a copy of this plan to everyone who will be involved in supporting you, including your GP. Here are some of the things that go in the plan and that it might help to think about, to make leaving hospital easier:

- 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.

When you meet with staff to plan your discharge and care, you might want someone with you, such as a friend, family member or advocate (someone who can help you express your views and wishes, and help make sure your voice is heard). Ask a member of ward staff or go to Mind's website to find out how to contact an advocate.

I find it helpful and reassuring to have a third person in the room willing to support my stance... [It] makes me feel far less worried about being misunderstood or having my concerns dismissed.

If you are in Wales, your care and treatment plan should be updated and this will involve your care co-ordinator working with you to record the outcomes you hope for in various aspects of your life.

What happens to my life outside while I am in hospital?

When you first came into hospital, staff should have checked with you about your home situation and anything that needed taking care of – for example, about how your children are looked after, your pets, or making sure there are no problems with benefits, rent or mortgage payments. If you are worried about any aspect of your life you can talk to your nurse or care co-ordinator.

While you are in hospital, staff should:

- help you keep in touch with life outside
- provide sessions to help you cope better.

Especially if you have been in hospital a long time, it can be helpful to have trial periods at home, maybe building up the length of time, before being discharged. Or you may want to make a quick visit home or to where you will be staying to make sure everything is OK.

How can I make sure I get the support I need?

You may find it helpful to prepare for a discharge planning meeting by writing down things you want support with. Think about what matters most to you. Are there things that need to change – for example, in your home life – so you can stay safe and recover? Do you have somewhere suitable to live?

You may find it helpful to think this through with a member of staff you trust, or a friend or family member, and make your own notes. The headings are there as prompts – everyone has their own needs and priorities.

People whose support is important to me



For example, a friend or family member or your GP, community mental health nurse or occupational therapist.

A place to stay

For example, getting help at home or support with finding somewhere to live.

Parenting and other caring relationships

For example, looking after the children.

Other family, friends and social contact

For example, getting on with family or meeting people.

Work, education and training

For example, a gradual return to work/college, or volunteering to structure the day.

Money and benefits

For example, advice about entitlements or help with forms.

Personal care and physical wellbeing, any issues with drugs or alcohol

For example, eye and dental checks or treatment for a long-term physical health problem.

Social, cultural and spiritual needs

For example, faith community, religion or places where I can be myself.

Treatment and self-care for mental health problems

For example, regular catch-ups and reviews, or peer support.

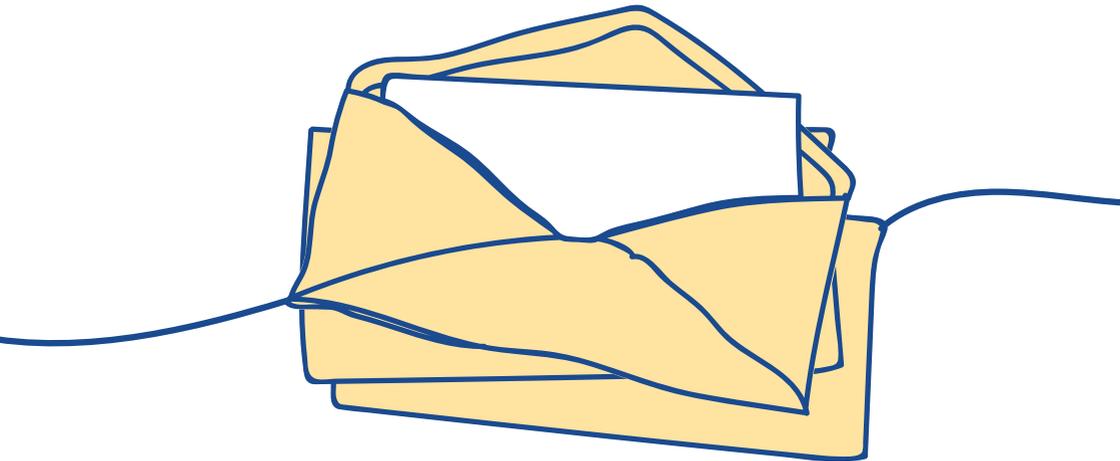
Other things that are important to me



What happens when I leave hospital?

Your care team should:

- send your GP information telling them you have been discharged.
- talk to you in detail about what other support you may need after you've left hospital and make sure you know who to talk to if you feel worried or scared, including out of hours.
- 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.



Getting the timing right to leave hospital was key... Bed space is under pressure so you may feel that you are being invited to think about leaving hospital before you are ready, but don't be rushed.

Before you leave hospital

If you are due to leave hospital but can answer 'no' to any of these questions, talk to a responsible member of staff about it; for example, the nurse in charge of your ward. Try to make sure you get the information or support you need before you leave.

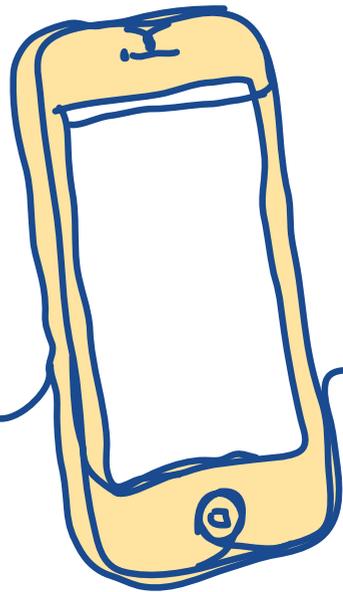
- Do you feel ready to leave hospital?
- Do you have a home to go to, or place to stay?
- Do you feel safe to be there?
- Do you feel safe to travel there?
- Have you got enough money to get home and to get food?
- If there is someone at home, do they know you are being discharged?
- Do you know who to contact about your mental health care and treatment; for example, your GP or care co-ordinator?
- Do you have a copy of your care plan (England) or care and treatment plan (Wales)?
- Do you have a follow-up appointment or know when to expect a follow-up call or visit?
- Do you know who to contact if you need urgent or emergency care?

What can I do if things aren't happening as they should?

If you have any concerns about your care and discharge there are things you can do – whether you are worried about your life outside hospital, the plans for your return home or aftercare, or how much say you have in the process. In the first instance talk to your care co-ordinator, named nurse in hospital, or someone else in your care team. If you are still concerned you can:

- ask to see an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) or other mental health advocate – this is someone who can help you to understand and exercise your rights, and help make sure your voice is heard. Ask a member of ward staff or visit Mind's website to find out about different kinds of advocacy and how to contact an advocate.
- talk to the PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) officer in the hospital.
- contact Mind Infoline or Legal Line (contact details on page 15).

If you think you need advice from a solicitor, ask an IMHA or ward staff to help you find one, or call the Law Society on 0202 7242 1222 (England), 029 2064 5254 (Wales).



How can I look after myself at home?

You may be very happy to be home and with more control over your life, but it may also feel a big change after being in hospital, especially if you're not fully well or you are living in a different place from before. Below are some pointers for taking care of yourself and there is much more information about coping with different mental health problems and everyday life on Mind's website (mind.org.uk) and in our booklets.

After you leave hospital

- It may help to write down what you have learned about ways to cope and keep it where you can see it.
- Take things gently and don't expect too much of yourself at first.
- Try and do things that help you feel well, for instance that involve being active and connecting with other people.
- Think about who you can turn to for support; for example, family, friends, peer support group, your local Mind, community mental health organisation, faith organisation, online community such as Elefriends, or mental health services.
- Keep your care plan and contact information where you can easily find it.
- If you are worried about your mental health, contact your care team or GP – don't wait for it to get worse.

Further information

Mind

Mind's website – mind.org.uk

Mind Infoline – 0300 123 3393 or text 86463 – information on a range of mental health topics including where to get help.

Legal Line – 0300 456 6463 – legal information and general advice related to mental health law.

Elefriends – elefriends.org.uk – a supportive online community where you can be yourself <http://mind.org.uk/elefriends>

'Leaving hospital', information about your legal rights – search for 'Leaving hospital' on mind.org.uk or request from Mind Infoline.

'Advocacy in mental health' – search for 'advocacy' on mind.org.uk or request from Mind Infoline.

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)

'Moving between hospital and home when you have a mental health problem – The care you should expect', available online at nice.org.uk or on request from 0300 323 0140

Healthwatch (England)

The consumer watchdog for healthcare in England. Find your local Healthwatch from Healthwatch England at Healthwatch.co.uk or call 03000 68 3000

Community Health Councils (Wales)

The consumer watchdog for healthcare in Wales. Find the community health council for your area at wales.nhs.uk or call 02920 235 558

Benefits and general advice

Citizensadvice.org.uk

Wales, 03444 77 2020; England, 03444 111 444

turn2us.org.uk

Help to understand more about the welfare benefits system and what might be available to you.

We're Mind, the mental health charity. We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We're here for you. Today. Now. We're on your doorstep, on the end of a phone or online. Whether you're stressed, depressed or in crisis. We'll listen, give you support and advice, and fight your corner. And we'll push for a better deal and respect for everyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Contact us

Mind Infoline: 0300 123 3393
(Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm) or text: 85453
email: info@mind.org.uk

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