

Carers Hospital Booklet

A guide for unpaid Carers in Norfolk and Waveney, supporting those they care for, from admission through to discharge and beyond.



You have identified that you are looking after someone who has been admitted into hospital. Hospital staff will include you whenever possible and will always listen to your views although they may not be able to share information depending on consent.

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Introduction

This booklet will give you and the person you are looking after information, guidance and suggestions to help you both to prepare for admission to hospital and eventual discharge. The guidance covers returning home after a hospital stay, as well as discharge to another care setting. The purpose of the booklet is to empower you to ask questions and make sure you receive the information you need. The booklet is not intended as a strict checklist requiring every item to be completed. Instead, you are encouraged to read through the guide and use it as a prompt, to consider issues that perhaps you had not thought about.

This booklet has been co-produced with Carers, Carers Voice and practitioners working across health and social care in Norfolk and Waveney. A huge thanks to Graham Goodwin (Carers Ambassador) and Carolyn Fowler (Executive Sponsor for Carers within the Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care System 2025) for chairing the co-production of this booklet.

“Unpaid Carers play a vital role in ensuring continuity of care and emotional support. This booklet was co-produced with Carers to help guide through the hospital journey.” - Sharon Brooks, Chief Officer, Carers Voice.

Are you looking after someone?

A Carer is anyone, including children and adults, who look after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid (NHS England). This includes whether they receive Carers Allowance or any other benefits.

You are a Carer if you help someone in their day-to-day life and they would struggle to cope without your support.

As a Carer, you might:

- help the person you are looking after to get washed and dressed, or use the toilet
- make sure the person you are looking after has enough to eat and drink and/or help them to feed themselves
- take the person you are looking after to GP and hospital appointments
- help the person you are looking after to move around their home, for example, to use stairs safely or carry out household chores
- help the person you are looking after to see their family or friends or take part in social activities
- help the person you are looking after with their budgeting and finances
- make sure the person you are looking after takes their medication at the right time and/or help them to take their medication
- provide emotional and/or practical support

The person you are looking after could be your partner, friend, neighbour or family member and you might 'just' think of the support you give to the person you are looking after as part of your relationship. Everyone has different circumstances. For example, you may be a couple who are caring for each other, or you might not live with the person you are looking after.

Section 1: Support for Carers

Q1. Do you look after the person who is being admitted? Are there other members of the family who also support this person?

There is support available for you and any other members of the family who support the person being admitted to hospital. All Carers have a right to a Carer's Assessment, which gives a Carer the opportunity to discuss how caring affects their life and what is important to them.

Information about support available to Carers of all ages, including Parent Carers and Young Carers, can be found on page 24 and by visiting carersvoice.org/support-for-carers



I have been in touch with the Carers Support Service/ have their contact details

Q2. Have you let the Ward Team know you are a Carer?

It is important that you let the Ward Team know that you are a Carer for the person who has been admitted to hospital. Under the Health and Care Act 2022, NHS bodies have a duty to involve unpaid Carers (including Young Carers) as soon as feasible in discharge planning for adult patients who are likely to need care and support after their discharge, where they consider it appropriate to do so.

You should share essential information about the person you look after when they are admitted to hospital, including about their medications, allergies, cognitive and communication needs and daily routines.

Q3. Do you have a Carers Identity Passport?

Carers Voice have worked with Carers and practitioners across health and social care to co-produce the Carers Identity Passport to ensure Carers are recognised, valued, and respected in healthcare settings. The Carers Identity Passport is available for Carers of all ages, including Young Carers and Parent Carers, in Norfolk and Waveney.

Carers Voice has worked with Young Carers, the Young Carers Service and Children's Services to co-produce a tailored version of the Carers Identity Passport for Young Carers which contains four symbols on the back of the card to help discreetly ask for support from staff at school or college and outline reasonable need.

You can apply for a Carers Identity Passport online at carersvoice.org/carers-identity-passport or by calling **07932 095312**. The hospital might be able to provide additional support for Carers; please speak to a member of the Hospital Ward Team to find out.



I have made the Ward Team aware that I am a Carer, and I have / have requested a Carers Identity Passport.

Section 2: Supporting the person you look after during their hospital stay

The Hospital Ward Team will be your first point of contact for information and if you have any questions. More information on what to expect when the person you look after is going into hospital can be found by following this link: nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/going-into-hospital/staying-in-hospital-as-an-inpatient



Q4. Have you been told what the plans are for admission and treatment while the person you look after is in hospital? Do you know what will happen today and tomorrow, and when the person you look after might be going home? Who is involved in the care of the person you are looking after?

Speak to the Ward Team if you have any questions. Practitioners involved in the care of the person you look after could include:

- Ward Nursing Staff
- Specialist Nurses
- Social Services
- Therapists (including Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Nutrition & Dietetics)
- Voluntary organisations (including Red Cross, Age UK)
- Community-based services (local NHS healthcare teams)
- Home First Hubs



I have spoken to the Ward Team about plans. (You can use the notes section on page 26 & 27 to write down any information).

Q5. Do you want to continue to provide care and support for the person you're looking after while they are in hospital?

Carers have the right to choose. There is no expectation that you would need to provide care while the person you look after is in hospital.

If you would like to continue caring while the person you look after is in hospital, speak to the Ward Team about arrangements that can be made with you.



I have spoken to the Ward Team about arrangements while the person I look after is in hospital.



I have told the Ward Team about what I think I can/cannot do.



I have made a note of who I've discussed this with, what they do and the date.

Q6. Does the person you care for have a Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment (ReSPECT form)?

In a crisis, healthcare professionals may have to make rapid decisions about a person's treatment; that person may not be well enough to participate in making decisions. The ReSPECT process empowers the person to guide health and care professionals on what treatments they would or would not want to be considered for. Many life-sustaining treatments involve risks of causing harm, discomfort and loss of dignity, or the risk of dying in hospital when they may have wanted to be at home.

The ReSPECT form records a person's wishes and preferences for emergency care. It is created through discussions with the person, their family, Carers, and healthcare professionals, ensuring that treatment decisions reflect their choices if they cannot communicate. The healthcare professionals will make every effort to come to a joint agreement with all parties, but it is important to understand that the ReSPECT form cannot be used to demand treatments that are not likely to be of benefit. The ReSPECT plan can also contain information about any Advance Decision To Refuse Treatment statement which may have been put in place. More information can be found on the Resuscitation Council UK's website: resus.org.uk/respect/respect-patients-and-carers



I have spoken to the Ward Team about the ReSPECT Form/ReSPECT process for the person I care for.

Q7. Have you made everyone that you need to aware that the person you look after is in hospital?

Employers

If you have a job, tell your employer that you are caring for someone. The Carers Leave Act means that employees are entitled to up to five days of unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than three months
- a disability (as [defined in the Equality Act 2010](#))
- care needs because of their age

Care provider

If the person you look after has a Care Package in place and this needs to be placed on hold, speak to the Ward Team. However, if you are able to, you can ask the care agency currently providing support if they are able to keep the care on hold for a certain time.

School

If you are at school, college or university, tell them you are caring for someone.

Family and friends

Speak to your family and friends. They might be able to help.

Department of Work and Pensions

Ask the person you look after if they have contacted the Department for Work and Pensions, because a stay in hospital may affect any benefits. You may also wish to contact them directly, if you have the authority to do so.



I have made everyone aware that I need to that the person I look after is in hospital.

Q8. Do you know where to find facilities within the hospital e.g. toilets, car parking, refreshments etc?

It could be useful to have a map of the hospital. This will be available on the hospital website. Speak to the Ward Team for more information. Some settings have a café, quiet gardens to sit in and wards with day rooms.

Hospitals may have information about their premises and access available on the AccessAble website [accessable.co.uk](https://www.accessable.co.uk)



I know where the facilities I might need are located.

Q9. Is there a pet that requires care when the person you look after is in hospital?

You can contact the Cinnamon Trust for support at cinnamon.org.uk/cinnamon-trust or call **01736 757 900**. This is a National Charity for older people, the terminally ill and their pets. They have a national network of fostering volunteers who can provide care for pets whose owners face a spell in hospital.



RSPCA have a guide to having someone else look after the pet, when their owner is away

rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/general/holiday/leavingyourpet.



I have arranged for someone to care for the pet of the person I look after while they are in hospital.

Q10. Do you have a concern about the care the person you look after is receiving?

If you have a concern about the care the person you are looking after is receiving, you can ask to speak to a doctor, nurse or manager at the service. The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) in each of the hospitals will be able to support you to ensure the person you look after is receiving the right care. The contact details for PALS teams at each hospital are on page 23.

Martha's Rule is a patient safety initiative to support the early detection of deterioration by ensuring the concerns of patients, families, Carers and staff are listened to and acted upon. If you or a person you care for are admitted to hospital, you can check whether Martha's Rule is available by:

- visiting the trust's website
- asking staff on the ward

Section 3: Preparing for discharge

When the person you look after is expected to go home or to another care setting, they will be provided with a discharge letter/plan. Their GP will be responsible for their future care, treatment, and medicines. After the person you are looking after leaves hospital, they may be visited by other health professionals such as a community nurse. The involvement of these professionals will depend on the specific needs of the person you look after.

The Home First Hub may be involved if the person you look after has additional care needs following their admission to hospital. HomeFirst Hub (HFH) is a collaborative, integrated service, delivered by Norfolk County Council and East of England Community Health and Care NHS Trust. They work closely with other health and care providers across Norfolk to help people leave hospital sooner and continue their recovery.

Discharge to Assess supports people to leave hospital when safe and appropriate to do so, continuing their care and assessment out of hospital. This enables people to be assessed for their longer-term needs in the right place. A HomeFirst approach supports people to return home from hospital, access reablement opportunities and plan their ongoing care and support needs with a joined up, multi-agency approach. They work directly with the person who uses services and their family to ensure they are discharged to the correct place for their needs.

Q11. Would you like to be involved in plans for when the person you are looking after leaves hospital?

After the person you care for is admitted to hospital, the hospital team involved in their care will discuss and plan with them arrangements for when they will be going home or to another care setting. They will work with the person who uses

services and you; with their permission. If the person you care for agrees to it, you should be involved in the discharge planning process.



I have been involved in plans for when the person I look after leaves hospital (with permission from the person I care for). You can use the notes section at the end of the booklet to write down any information.

Q12. Have you thought about the extra help you might need when the person you are looking after leaves hospital?

You might want to think about asking family and friends to support wherever possible. If you have any questions, speak to the Ward Team.

You can contact the Carers Support services (page 24)



Support is in place for when the person I look after leaves hospital.

Q13. Do you have any concerns or questions about the expected date of discharge?

If so, speak to the Ward Team.



I have spoken to the Ward Team about the expected date of discharge.

Q14. If the needs and support of the person you are looking after have changed during the stay in hospital, are you still willing and able to care?

If you don't think you'll be able to cope at home, even with support that has been organised, raise this as soon as possible with the Ward Team who will be able to complete a transfer of care (description of care) to ask for care and support.



I have spoken to the Ward Team about my caring role after the person I look after has been discharged.

Q15. Does the person you look after need transport?

There are criteria the patient has to meet before being eligible for hospital provided transport. If you are concerned about making travel arrangements or settling in at home, please raise the matter with the Ward Team.



I have arranged/ transport has been arranged for the person I care for to leave hospital.

Q16. Would you like to have somewhere quiet to wait until you and the person you are looking after goes home?

Please ask a member of staff if they have a discharge lounge or somewhere quiet to wait. They might be able to offer alternative options.

Q17. Has the person you are looking after received a discharge summary letter?

If they haven't, speak to the Ward Team about the plan and time of the discharge and request a copy of the summary letter if the person you care for has given permission for the letter to be shared with you.

Hospital discharge letters are usually written by one of the Ward Doctors. The discharge letter will usually include:

- admission date
- date of discharge from hospital
- the reason for the admission
- treatment received while in hospital.
- changes to medicines, if appropriate
- details about future medical care

When the person you are looking after receives a copy of the discharge letter, it is important that they read this carefully. They may wish to keep this for personal records.



The person I look after has received a copy of their discharge summary letter.

Q18. Is the person you are looking after taking any medication home? Do you understand how and/or when the medication should be taken?

On discharge, if the person you are looking after is given any medicine to take home, they will usually be given enough for the following 7 days. The letter to their GP will include information about their medicine.

If you are unsure about how and when the medications should be administered, refer to the discharge letter or speak to the GP.

Write any notes here:.....
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I have the information I need, about the medication the person I look after has been given.

Q19. Is the person you are looking after taking home any equipment?

If the person you are looking after is sent home with a medical device/aids or equipment for the home, they will be offered training on how to set it up and how to use it. If you require training, speak to a member of the inpatient therapy team. Make sure you know where to get any supplies needed for the device, who to contact if you need help, and where the device should be returned.

Write any notes here:.....
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I have the information about the equipment that the person I look after is taking home or equipment that is being delivered.



I know how to use this equipment and how to return this should it no longer be required.

Q20. Do you or the person you are looking after have details of any follow up appointments and who to contact if you have any questions following discharge?

If you haven't received these, speak to the Ward Team or the Discharge Co-ordinator/Team(if the person you look after has been assigned one) about the plan and time of the discharge. You can request a copy of the summary letter if the person you care for has given permission for the letter to be shared with you.

Write any notes here:

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I have details of the follow up appointments and who to contact if I have any questions.

Section 4: Other things to consider

Q21. Do you have Lasting Power of Attorney for the person you look after?

A Lasting Power of Attorney can be a helpful document when someone you look after goes into hospital. A Health and Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney allows a trusted person to make decisions about daily living and medical care if someone loses mental capacity. A Property and Financial Affairs Lasting Power of Attorney covers financial matters. To make and register a Lasting Power of Attorney visit: gov.uk/power-of-attorney



A Mental Capacity Assessment may be carried out with the person you are looking after to assess if they have the capacity to make a decision relating to their discharge. As part of this process, they will be asked if they have appointed a Lasting Power of Attorney. Please make the Hospital Ward Team aware if you have a Lasting Power of Attorney for the person you look after who is in hospital.

More information can be found at
Age UK Norfolk- ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal
Age UK telephone number: **01603 787111**



I have made the Ward Team aware that I have a Lasting Power of Attorney (if applicable)

It is always a priority to discharge people to the best possible place to support with their recovery. In most cases this will be their home. The questions below are a prompt to support you with getting ready to go home.

Q22.



Does the person you are looking after have suitable clothes to go home in?

Q23.



Do you have the house keys or a way of accessing the property/home?

Q24.



Is the house a comfortable temperature? Have you put the heating on if needed?

Q25.



Have you organised essential food for when you and the person you are looking after go home?

Q26.



Arrangements have been made for the bills.

Q27.



Have you thought about anything you might need to make the home suitable for the return of the person you are looking after?

Section 5: Settling back at home after a hospital stay

Q28. Have you been provided with a named contact and contact number to call if you have any concerns post-discharge and does this cover out of hours services?

Please speak to the Ward Team or the Discharge Co-ordinator/Team if the person you look after has been assigned one, about the plan and request a copy of the summary letter, if the person you are looking after has given permission for the letter to be shared with you.

Write the contact details here:

.....
.....
.....
.....



I have a contact number to call if I have any concerns post discharge

Q29. Do you need to support the person you are looking after to apply for, reinstate, or adjust the benefits they were receiving before their hospital stay?

During the hospital stay, the benefits of the person you look after may have been reduced or withdrawn. As part of this, the person you are looking after may need support with letting the Department of Work and Pensions know that they have been discharged. Consider having a benefits check to ensure you and the person you are looking after are receiving the support you are eligible for.

A benefits check can be completed online by visiting benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk or by contacting **Citizens Advice** on **0800 144 8848**



Please see page 24 for details of the Carers Support Services in Norfolk and Waveney.



I/ the person I care for has contacted the Department of Work and Pensions (if applicable) and we have completed a benefits check.

Q30. Do you have an emergency plan in place if you are not able to care at short notice or in an emergency?

An emergency plan contains important information about the person you look after. It explains what needs to happen in an emergency if something happens to you.

Emergency planning for Carers

If you are an adult Carer in Norfolk, find out how to make an emergency plan if you are not able to provide care: norfolk.gov.uk/article/42042/Create-an-emergency-plan - **0344 800 8020**

If you are a Young Carer in Norfolk, youngcarersmatternorfolk.org/advice-for-young-carers/making-an-emergency-plan/ - **0800 083 1148**

If you are adult in Suffolk the support available and link to emergency planning can be found here: suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/caring-for-someone - **0800 917 1109**

If you are a Young Carers in Suffolk, visit <https://suffolkfamilycarers.org/young-carer-young-adult-carer-emergency-action-plan/> or call **01473 835477**



I have completed a Carers Emergency Plan

Section 6: Going to another place of care

It is a priority to discharge people to the best possible place to support with their recovery. In most cases this will be their home. However, they might continue to need care after a stay in hospital. This is called reablement, intermediate care or aftercare.

Q31. If the person you are looking after is being discharged to a residential care setting, have you been given information of the options available to them and sufficient time to investigate these?

If the person you are looking after has ongoing care needs, Social Services will assess long-term health and care needs and help put a plan in place. If the care is deemed complex, a detailed care plan specifying the health and social care needs will be put in place to include:

- details of the treatment and support they will receive when discharged
- who will be responsible for providing support and how to contact them
- when and how often support will be provided
- how the support will be monitored and reviewed
- the name of the person co-ordinating the care plan
- who to contact if there is an emergency or things do not work as they should
- information about eligibility for funding care will be discussed

Section 7: Additional Information

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers confidential advice, support, and information on health-related matters to hospital patients, their families and Carers. PALS can help in many ways including:

- Help with health-related questions
- Help to resolve concerns or problems when you're using the NHS including how to make a complaint
- Help on how to get more involved in the health of the person you look after
- Information about support groups outside the NHS

Each provider has their own Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), contact details are below:

Providers	Telephone	Email
East Coast Community Healthcare C.I.C	01502 445447	ecch.patientliaison@nhs.net
James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	01493 453240	PALS@jpaget.nhs.uk
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	01603 289036	palsandcomplaints@nnuh.nhs.uk
Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust	0300 123 1334	customer.service@nsft.nhs.uk carersQAservice@nsft.nhs.uk
East of England Community Health and Care NHS Trust	0800 088 4449	eec.pals@nhs.net
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust	01553 613351 or 01553 613343	pals@qehkl.nhs.uk

If you wish to make a complaint, Healthwatch Norfolk have information on how to do so. Call **0808 168 9669** or visit healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/making-a-complaint/



Or for Healthwatch Suffolk, call **0800 448 8234** or visit healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk/signposting/complaints/



You can also get support from the NHS Complaints Advocacy service provided by POhWER- pohwer.net/nhs-complaints-advocacy or **0300 456 2370**.



Carers support organisations:

If you are looking after someone there is support available to you.

For Carers in Norfolk:

Carers Matter Norfolk:
0800 083 1148

Adults: carersmatternorfolk.org.uk/

Young Carers: youngcarersmatternorfolk.org/

Parent Carers: youngcarersmatternorfolk.org/parent-carers/

For Carers in Suffolk :

Suffolk Family Carers:
01473 835477

suffolkfamilycarers.org/

For more information about the support available to Carers of all ages in Norfolk and Waveney, please visit carersvoice.org/support-for-carers



All Age Carers Handbook:

The handbook provides unpaid Carers, looking after someone in Norfolk, the information they need to help in their caring role. Understanding Carers rights, practical help, Carers health and wellbeing, planning ahead and much more. The handbook also includes specific sections for Parent Carers and Young Carers. Visit carersvoice.org for more information.



Section 8: Final Summary



I am aware of the support services available to me as a Carer.



I have been included in the plans for discharge and have things in order for when the person I look after leaves hospital



I know who to contact if I have a question after the person I look after has been discharged

This booklet has been co-produced by **Carers Voice**, an independent charity working to make sure the voices of Carers of all ages are heard and listened to. The mission of Carers Voice is to improve the health and wellbeing of all age Carers and ensure Carers are able to influence change regarding the services, policies and decisions that affect them and the people they care for. If you would like to keep updated with the latest local and national news and events for Carers and/or be involved in future co-production projects to improve support for Carers, sign up to become a member of Carers Voice for FREE by visiting carersvoice.org/carer-voice-membership/ or calling **07932 095312**.



A huge thanks to all Carers who have contributed to this booklet. Particular thanks to Graham Goodwin (Carers Ambassador) and Carolyn Fowler (Executive Sponsor for Carers within the Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care System 2025) for chairing the co-production project.

Section 9: Notes

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DO YOU LOOK AFTER SOMEONE?

Apply for a **FREE Carers Identity Passport** for
unpaid Carers of all ages in Norfolk & Waveney.



Scan the QR code for more information and to
get your **FREE Carers Identity Passport** or visit
carersvoice.org/carers-identity-passport

**Be recognised, valued and respected
in your caring role.**