

# Supporting you when a person you care for is returning from hospital.

Your pocket guide to the discharge process from **hospital to home.**



**Carers**  
**First**



## Preparing for leaving hospital.

It can be a scary and confusing time when the person you care for goes into hospital, but we're here to support you. This pocket guide was created with the support of others looking after someone and has everything you need to prepare your family member or friend for a safe and comfortable return home. It's also full of tips for taking care of yourself and managing your emotions during this complex time, as well as where you can access support to make coming home as smooth as possible for both you and the person you care for.

### **Discharge procedure: Your voice matters**

No one knows the person you care for better than you, which is why it is important for you to be involved when planning the discharge process and their return home. Your family member or friend's needs may have increased or changed, and you may find yourself needing to do more things for them than before. Remember, whether you're a new carer or you've been looking after someone for a while, support is available. We're here to help you navigate the discharge process and beyond, so you can provide the best possible care for the person you care for.

# The discharge process from start to finish.

Our discharge flow chart breaks down what you can expect from the discharge process, from start to finish, so you can prepare! This process might vary depending on the needs of the person you care for, and may include additional support, such as residential care.

## 1. Prepare your home

Before your family member or friend returns home, it's a good idea to tidy away any trip hazards and make sure the things they need or use often are easy to access.



## 2. Contact your discharge team

Make sure you know the date and time the person you care for is going to be discharged. A discharge assessment will be made to ensure you understand your friend or family member's needs.



## 4. Prepare your trip to and from the hospital

Once you know the date and time for discharge, prepare how you will get there and back, plan your route early and ensure you have everything you need to collect the person you care for, such as a change of clothes.



## 3. Prepare support

Once the assessments are complete, the appropriate support for you and your friend or family member will be put in place, so you are ready for their return.



## 5. On the day

When you arrive at the hospital, you will be given a lot of information (more info on page 6), but the hospital team will ensure you understand your support plan prior to you leaving.



## 6. Being back at home

Once the person you care for is home, you will have a care and support plan to help you in caring for them. You also need to look after yourself, the Carers First website can support you here:

[www.carersfirst.org.uk/lookingafteryourself](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/lookingafteryourself)



# What if I struggle to have my voice heard?

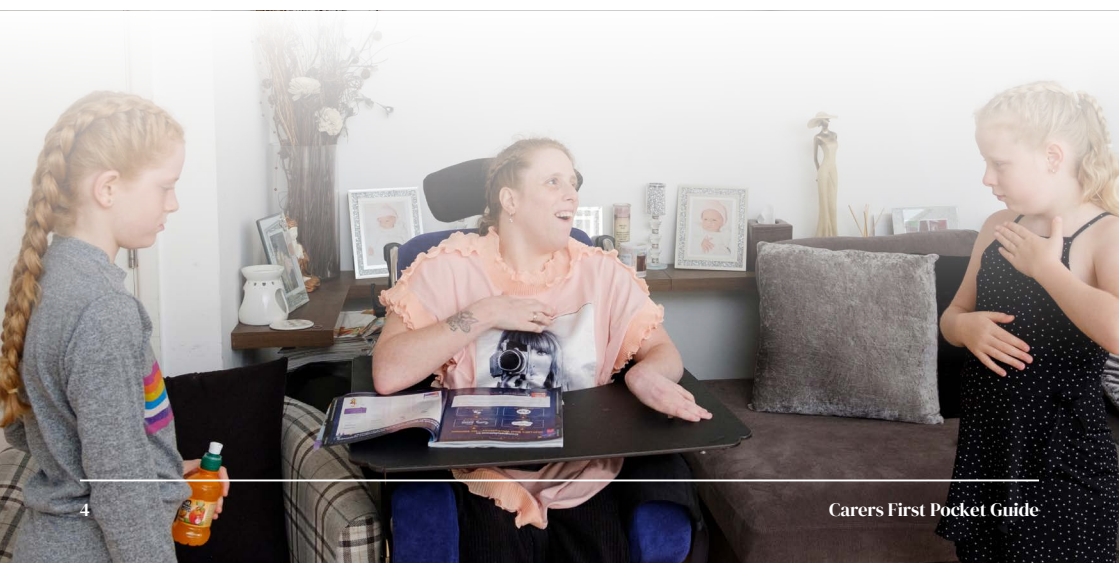
Worried that you don't have the right words to use to help the doctor understand your questions or concerns? Whether you're a new carer or this is the first time your family member or friend has had a stay in hospital, our helpline and local community team can help you to better understand the discharge process and make sure you have everything you need from the medical professionals treating the person you care for. We're also here to provide advice and support as you navigate the discharge process, so please don't hesitate to get in touch:

[www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries)



## Some questions you may wish to ask the team include:

- When will they be coming home?
- If they do need further support, when and how do I put this in place?
- Who do I can contact if we need additional support?
- Will I need a risk assessment of my house before they come home?
- Are there any adjustments I can ensure are in place myself before they return home?
- What do I need to bring with me on the day?
- Please can you send me my care plan in an email so I know I can understand and retain this information?
- If I need a follow-up appointment, when and how should this be arranged?



# Discharge and carer's assessments

## – what you need to know.

### What is in a discharge assessment?

A discharge assessment will help medical professionals to understand your family member or friend's needs and what support is the best fit for them. Some things they might look at include:

- The person you care for's eligibility for intermediate or reablement care
- NHS continuing healthcare or NHS funded nursing care
- Community care or other forms of support from your local authority

Once a discharge assessment has been conducted, the discharge team will work with you to create a care and support plan for the person you care for, as well as answer any questions to help you prepare for their return home.

### What is a carer's assessment?

Your family member or friend isn't the only one who can receive support after a stay in hospital. You could also be eligible for support as you both adapt to your new routine. In a carer's assessment, you will usually discuss:

- Your caring role
- The impact it has on your life and wellbeing
- Your mental and physical health
- How it affects your relationships
- How it affects your hobbies and goals
- Housing
- Planning for emergencies

A Carer's assessment is here to help identify the support you need so you can manage better in your caring role. If you would like more information or advice on carer's assessments and the support you're entitled to, we're here to offer you personalised advice and support.

Get in touch using our contact form: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries) or call our helpline on: 0300 303 1555.



## What to expect on the day.

A few things will happen on the day your family member or friend is discharged. Here's what you can expect:

### **You'll be given important information**

On the day the person you care for leaves hospital, the discharge team will share verbal and written information about their future treatment and care. It's ok if you don't remember or understand all of the information given to you – it's a lot to take in at once – so don't be afraid to ask for anything to be explained or repeated. You'll also be given a support plan for both you and the person you care for, to help you both settle back into a routine once they return home.

### **Arrangements will be made:**

These could include:

- Handing over medication and equipment, as well as instructions about how to use them
- Transport arrangements
- Any necessary support that is needed to begin on the day the person you care for is discharged

A discharge letter will be sent to your family member or friend's GP within 24 hours. The letter will include their reason for admission and any changes to their medication. You will also receive a copy of the discharge letter for your records. If you have any questions about your family member or friend's care and support plan, or the discharge process, the discharge team will be able to help. Remember, we're also here to provide advice and support, so please get in touch: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries)



## What's next?

There are a few discharge options with different support packages available for you and the person you care for. Once a discharge assessment has been conducted, the discharge team will work with you to find the right support for your family member or friend as they settle back at home. This could include short-term or intermediate care, as well as longer-term care.

Would you like some support navigating your discharge pathways? You can speak to the discharge team, or, you can get in touch for our personalised advice and support: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries)

# Support to settle back at home.

## 1. Will I know how to manage the person I care for's condition?

It's understandable if you're concerned about caring for your family member or friend if their needs have changed, but the care and support plan created by the discharge team will include information on how to manage their condition, along with where to access support for both you and the person you care for. We can also support you as you learn to manage the person you care for's condition or additional needs with our personalised help and advice.

The care and support plan should include:

- Details about medication
- Any medical or health signs they should look out for
- Next steps, such as appointments

## 2. What if I have questions or concerns?

If you have any questions about your family member or friend's post-hospital care, contact their GP or the District Nursing team. Carers First can also help you with caring for them.

## 3. What if I need further support?

If you need further support, then we're here for you. As well as a listening ear, we offer help and advice that's tailored to you, whether you need information or guidance, emotional and wellbeing support. Get in touch: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries)





# How we can support you.

Whether this is your first time caring for a family member or friend, or you've been looking after someone for a while and need some advice, we can support you to prepare for their return from hospital and beyond.

## **Caring Confidently Programme**

Developed with, and for, carers, this four-week programme is full of knowledge and strategies to support you in your caring role, as well as to improve your wellbeing and resilience. This programme is also your chance to meet other carers and share your experiences of caring for a family member or friend.

Visit: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/caring-confidently-course](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/caring-confidently-course)

## **Appointment funding**

Have an important medical or legal appointment that you need to attend? If the person you're caring for cannot be left alone, we can arrange funding support for a care worker to look after the person you care for during that time. We can get in touch with your preferred care agency, or you can book the appointment yourself once the funding is approved. The care worker will make sure your family member or friend is safe and well, so you can attend your appointment with peace of mind.

Call: 0300 303 1555

Visit: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries)

## **Carer Break Grants**

Looking after a family member or friend can be incredibly rewarding, but it's natural to need a break from your caring responsibilities. Our Carer Break Grants can support you to have some much-needed time for yourself or to attend a special occasion, such as a wedding or birthday.

Visit: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/southend-on-sea/how-we-help](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/southend-on-sea/how-we-help)

For more information on the benefits and financial support available to you, visit: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/topic/financial-support](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/topic/financial-support)

\*Appointment funding and Carer Break Grants are only available to carers living in Southend.

## Benefits and grants

Taking on caring responsibilities may sometimes have an adverse effect on your finances. Having the right information and knowing where to find information can make a huge difference. The person you care for may be entitled to benefits as well. We have provided a quick summary of the key financial support available for carers:

- Carers Allowance: For carers aged over 16 years, looking after a person for more than 35 hours a week.
- Universal credit: For carers who are of working age on a lower income, to support housing costs and basic needs whether you're in or out of work.
- Pension credit: For carers who are of pension age, on a lower income.

There are also several grants and discount schemes available to you as a carer, such as funding for items to help you in your caring role or for respite breaks. For more information, call 0300 303 1555 or visit: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/topic/financial-support](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/topic/financial-support)

## Community Facebook Group

Sometimes, it can be helpful to talk to someone who understands what you're going through. Our Carers First Community Facebook group is available whenever you need it and gives you the opportunity to share experiences with others who are caring for someone.

Join here: [www.facebook.com/groups/2825469370894999](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2825469370894999)

# How to register with Carers First.

We are here to provide carers like you with information and guidance, emotional and wellbeing support. We're a commissioned service within Southend, and our local community team can support you with regular drop-ins, surgeries and events. To access our help and advice, we recommend registering on our website. Just fill out the short form and we'll be in touch: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/get-support](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/get-support) Remember, we're here to care for you while you're caring for someone else.

# Welcome home.

Have the needs of the person you care for changed? You may be excited to have them home, but some changes might need to be made to help them settle back in. There is plenty you can do to adapt their home to help them live more comfortably or independently, and these changes can make their home safer too.

Some examples include:

- Fitting a stairlift or bannister
- Installing a bath lift, walk-in shower, or grab rail
- Widening doorways
- Lowering kitchen countertops
- Adding an outdoor ramp or step rail
- Installing security, such as outdoor lights or an intercom

## Ask your local authority for a hand

Your local authority could help out with equipment or home adaptations. Whether big or small, your local council can assess the home of the person you care for (it's free) and recommend changes to make their life easier. The Occupational Therapist carrying out the assessment can suggest useful gadgets or household items that can be a big help, such as clothing hooks, reclining chairs and cups with two handles. You can contact your local council directly, or visit our website for more information and guidance:

[www.carersfirst.org.uk/topics/occupational-therapist-assessments](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/topics/occupational-therapist-assessments)

## Can I get funding to help make changes?

Your local council may pay for adaptations that cost less than £1,000, but grants are also available to help out with bigger or urgent adaptations:

- Disabled Facilities Grant: Available through your local council, this grant can help with larger changes such as installing ramps or lighting controls.
- Independence at Home: Independence at Home offers grants for disabled people or those with a long-term illness who need financial support.
- Discretionary funds: Some councils also have discretionary funds that they can award, and the amount can vary. You might also be able to access this funding if you've already received a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Want to know more about the funding support available to help adapt the person you care for's home? Visit our website:

[www.carersfirst.org.uk/topics/home-aids-and-adaptions](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/topics/home-aids-and-adaptions) or call us on 0300 303 1555.



## Staying safe.

After returning home from hospital, your family member or friend might also need some changes made to keep them safe. There is technology available to help protect the person you care for from falls, prevent them from getting lost, and even let you know if the room is too hot or cold.

Here are some helpful tools for keeping the person you care for safe:

- Personal alarms: These alarms can call you for help if needed.
- Basic alarms: Like personal alarms, these are small devices that can alert you or someone else if your family member or friend needs help.
- Home security: These systems can help to keep the person you care for safe at home. There are many options available for this.

### **How do I know what device is right for the person I care for?**

A few things to think about when choosing tools to keep the person you care for safe are:

- Will my family member or friend be comfortable with this option?
- Will I need to change batteries and am I able to do this?
- Do I need to hire a professional to fit it or know someone with good DIY skills who can help?
- Do they have pets that might accidentally trigger the sensors?

Don't worry if you're finding the number of choices overwhelming. We can advise you on the best option or options for the person you care for, so you can rest easy knowing they're safe and well.

Get in touch: [www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk/general-enquiries)

# Support from your local community.

As well as support from the hospital and the team at Carers First, you also have the support of your local community. Here are just a few of the services available in Southend-on-Sea that can lend a hand when you need a little extra help.

## Age Concern Southend

General advice and support including telephone befriending services, equipment hire, social groups and fitness classes.

Website: [www.acsos.co.uk](http://www.acsos.co.uk)

Email: [enquiries@acsos.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@acsos.co.uk)

Telephone: 01702 345373

## Carers Choices

Support for those living with dementia, with activity led day centres and respite.

Website: [www.carerschoices.org](http://www.carerschoices.org)

Email: [angela.allum@carerschoices.org](mailto:angela.allum@carerschoices.org)

Telephone: 01268 881136

## Carers Emergency Respite Service (CERS)

CERS is to help carers plan for situations when an emergency stops them from being able to carry out their caring role. This includes free support to carers in Southend to manage at home safely over a period of 48 hours.

Email: [info@ashleycare.com](mailto:info@ashleycare.com)

Telephone: 01702 343789

## Southend Carers

Free services for carers including information and advice, support groups and counselling. Also provide a Young Carers Service.

Telephone: 01702 393 933 (including 24 hour answerphone)

## Southend Council Young Carers service

Support for young carers to get a break and meet other young carers.

Telephone: 01702 534000

## Livewell Southend

Local health information contacts for Adults, Children and Families.

Website: [www.livewellsouthend.com](http://www.livewellsouthend.com)

## South Essex Community Health Services (EPUT)

South Essex Community Health Services provide a range of NHS services. Here's a quick summary of the many services available to help care for your family member or friend:

- Community Coordination Service
- Community Stroke Service
- Continence Service
- Foot Health
- Occupational Therapy
- Rapid Response
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Southend Wheelchair Service
- Specialist Seating and Mobility Needs

Website: [www.eput.nhs.uk/our-services/essex/south-east-essex-community-health-services](http://www.eput.nhs.uk/our-services/essex/south-east-essex-community-health-services)

### **The Haven Community Hub**

A safe and friendly space for anyone to socialise, take part in groups and activities, stay fit, and have fun!

Website: [www.acsos.co.uk/the-haven-community-hub](http://www.acsos.co.uk/the-haven-community-hub)

### **Young Carers and Young Adult Carers service**

If you're a young or young adult carer, Southend Carers and Southend Council can support you.

Website: [www.southendcarers.co.uk](http://www.southendcarers.co.uk)

Email: [info@southendcarers.co.uk](mailto:info@southendcarers.co.uk)

Telephone: 01702 393933

## **Directory.**

Here is our list of useful services that can lend a hand both now and in the future.

### **Advocacy Help**

#### **Action for Family Carers**

Action for Family Carers is an Essex charity that provides information and support to unpaid carers of all ages.

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

Telephone: 0300 7 70 80 90

#### **Urgent Care Response Team**

Providing specialist, nurse-led care in the community during an acute episode of ill health. (Please ask your GP or Healthcare Professional to make a referral to a SWIFT Coordinator. Referrals are also received from paramedics).

#### **South Essex Advocacy Services (SEAAFOP)**

Supporting isolated and vulnerable adults with their health and wellbeing.

Telephone: 01702 340566

Email: [advocacy@seeafop.org](mailto:advocacy@seeafop.org)

#### **Citizens Advice Southend**

Free, impartial advice on issues including money, benefit, housing and employment.

Telephone: 01702 456 366

#### **Independent Mental Health**

#### **Advocacy (IMHA) Citizen Advocacy**

Supporting people to understand their rights and decisions about their care and treatment.

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Email: [pohwer@pohwer.net](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net)

#### **Adult Community Mental Health Teams**

Providing support with mental health.

Telephone: 01702 456800 for Southend.

Telephone: 01268 686730 for Castle Point.

#### **Trust Links**

Local mental health and wellbeing charity that supports people experiencing mental health difficulties and their families.

Website: [www.trustlinks.org](http://www.trustlinks.org)

Telephone: 01702 213134

### **Transport**

#### **Hippo Cabs**

Disability transportation services.

Telephone: 0800 860 6727

## Legal Help

### Solicitors and legal advice

Advice for those seeking expert legal advice.

Website:

[www.solicitorsfortheelderly.com](http://www.solicitorsfortheelderly.com)

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

### Vision and Hearing Tests

Eye care services at home for those who cannot visit a high street optician unaccompanied due to physical or mental disability.

### Specsavers Healthcall

Telephone: 0800 198 1132

Website:

[www.specsavers.co.uk/home-eye-tests](http://www.specsavers.co.uk/home-eye-tests)

### Visioncall

Telephone: 0845 050 1831

Website: [www.vision-call.co.uk](http://www.vision-call.co.uk)

### RNID

Inclusive support for those living with hearing loss or tinnitus.

Helpline: 0808 808 0123

For Products: 03330 144525

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

## Specialised Help

### Hospice at Home

Referral via Community/District Nurse or self-referral.

Telephone: 01702 220350

## Support Teams

### Community Dementia Nurses & Dementia Intensive Support Team

Providing post-diagnostic review and advice to individuals and carers in the community.

Telephone: 01702 226190

Dementia Intensive Support Team

Telephone: 01268 739183

### Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Free home safety checks, advice on action to be taken in the event of a fire and fitting smoke alarms.

Telephone: 0300 303 0088

Website: [www.essex-fire.gov.uk](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

### Dementia Community Support Team

Provide information and support to people living with dementia and those that care for them.

Telephone: 01702 534 772 weekdays

Email: [dementiacommunitysupport@southend.gov.uk](mailto:dementiacommunitysupport@southend.gov.uk)

### Southend Council Social Care Team

Support with carer assessments.

Telephone: 01702 215 008 (option 5) if you care for an adult.

Telephone: 01702 215 007 if you care for a child.

### Essex Council Social Care

Support with carer assessments.

For those who live in Castlepoint and Rochford.

Telephone: 0345 603 7630

## Help for you

### Mind South East and Central Essex

Supporting mental health across Southend.

Telephone: 01702 601123

Email: [hello@secemind.org.uk](mailto:hello@secemind.org.uk)

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

### **Care Co-ordination service**

Holistic assessment by an experienced professional to help you remain independent for as long as possible.

Telephone: 01702 372060 if your GP is in Southend, Westcliff, Shoeburyness or Leigh-on-Sea.

Telephone: 01702 538241 If your GP is in Castle Point, Rayleigh, Rochford or Benfleet.

## **Equipment Hire.**

If you only need an assistive aid for a short while, it can be a good idea to hire one instead of buying new. There are plenty of services across Southend-on-Sea that hire out equipment, supporting you and the person you care for as they settle back into life after a hospital stay.

### **Wheelchair Hire from Age Concern**

Age Concern has a range of wheelchairs to hire from their office at 134 Hamlet Court Road. Short and long-term hire start from £5 a day.

Website: [www.acsos.co.uk/about-us/wheelchair-hire](http://www.acsos.co.uk/about-us/wheelchair-hire)

[www.carersfirst.org.uk](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk)  
0300 303 1555  
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