

Your rights as an informal/voluntary patient

Patient Information Leaflet



Name	
Ward	
Your Named Nurse is	
Your Hospital Doctor is	
Your Care Co-ordinator is	
Date of Admission	
Time	

You have been admitted to hospital because you have agreed with the healthcare professionals caring for you (or you were too poorly to agree) that you need to be in hospital so your mental health needs can be assessed fully and you can be offered the treatment you need.

What can I expect on admission?

Staff will respect your privacy and dignity at all times.

During the first 24 hours of your admission, you will be allocated a Ward Doctor/Psychiatrist and a qualified Named Nurse. With your permission, the Ward Doctor will give you a physical examination and arrange any necessary tests you may need. This is to make sure that if you have any physical health needs, you can be offered the appropriate treatment. You will be informed of the results of any tests and treatment options.

Your Named Nurse and Ward Doctor will speak with you to assess your mental health needs and any other specific needs you may have. They may also wish to speak with your carers or relatives and will discuss this with you. Your Named Nurse will use this information to devise a care plan with you. Your care plan will set out the care package you will receive whilst you are in hospital and who will provide this.

If you have a care co-ordinator in the community, they will be part of the care planning process and visit you on the ward.

You will be given a ward booklet which explains most of the things you will need to know about the ward such as visiting times, meal times and items you are not allowed to bring onto the ward etc. If there is anything you are unsure or concerned about, please speak with a member of staff.

How can I let others know I have been admitted?

If there is anyone you wish us to inform about your admission, please tell your Named Nurse or the Nurse in Charge and they can arrange for you to contact them or contact them on your behalf. Ward staff will inform other professionals involved in your care that you have been admitted.

Can I leave the ward?

As an informal/voluntary patient, you have the right to leave the ward at any time although we do ask that you stay on the ward for the first few days so you and staff can get to know each other. Please note that all external ward doors are locked in the interests of security.

If you would like to go on day leave or overnight leave, you can discuss this with your Doctor or Named Nurse as this should be an arrangement between yourself, ward staff and your carer (where appropriate).

Please be aware that staff have a duty of care towards you, and the Nurse-in-Charge is expected to know where you are at all times. Staff are also required to assess you before you leave the ward. If they have concerns about you leaving the ward, they must arrange a further assessment. The outcome of this assessment will be discussed with you (and your carer where appropriate) and may result in you not being allowed to leave the ward.

If you leave the ward without permission the police may be asked to find you and return you back to the ward.

What treatment will I be offered?

The treatment you are offered will depend upon your individual needs. You will be involved in deciding what treatment you receive with your Named Nurse and Doctor. This may include therapeutic group work, individual work or medication. As an informal patient, your consent is required before you can be given any treatment.

Can I discharge myself?

You have the right to discharge yourself from hospital at any time however we strongly recommend that you speak to your Named Nurse or Doctor before making the decision to leave. This is to ensure that you have any necessary treatment you may require and to enable staff to arrange any follow-up care you may need.

Please remember that staff have a duty of care towards you and are required to assess you before agreeing with your discharge. If they have concerns about you discharging yourself, they must arrange a further assessment. The outcome of this assessment will be discussed with you (and your carer where appropriate) and may result in you not being allowed to leave the ward.

If you wish to take your own discharge against the advice of the Doctor or Nurse, you may be asked to sign a 'Discharged against Medical Advice' form before you leave.

Smoking

From 2016 neither you nor your visitors are allowed to smoke while you are in the ward, or in any other building on the grounds of the hospital.

The Trust promotes and supports attempts to quit by providing support and advice and access to nicotine replacement therapies. Please talk to your named nurse to access these.

Searches

Staff may need to carry out personal and property searches of patients based on clinical need. Should the search be in relation to alcohol or illicit drugs then this may also involve the use of a sniffer dog. Staff can provide you with a leaflet about the Narcotics Search Dog.

People who can support you

- **An Advocate**

An advocate is someone who acts on your behalf to support you in making decisions whilst you are an informal/voluntary patient.

You may be able to have an advocate, contact the service that covers the area where you live.

- **Gateshead**

Advocacy Centre North Tel: 0191 235 7013
www.advocacycentrenorth.org.uk

- **North Tyneside**

Independent Advocacy Tel: 0191 259 6662
www.iant.org.uk

- **Northumberland**

Adapt (North East) Tel: 01434 600 599
www.adapt-ne.org.uk

- **South Tyneside and Newcastle**

Your Voice Counts Tel: 0191 478 6472
www.yvc.org.uk

- **Sunderland**

Total Voice Sunderland Tel: 0191 543 7890
www.totalvoicesunderland.org

- **Coram Voice - for young people**

Coram Voice Tel: 0808 800 5792
www.coramvoice.org.uk

- **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service is a confidential NHS service which acts independently to provide information and advice about all NHS services and help sort out any problems you may have quickly.

There are PALS Officers in most areas of the Trust. PALS Officers can be contacted in the following ways:

- **South of Tyne:** 0800 328 4397 or 0191 566 7074 (Sunderland/South Tyneside) or 0191 441 6616 (Gateshead) (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
- **North of Tyne:** 0800 032 0202 (Mon-Fri 9am-4.30pm)

You can also write to PALS at:

Sunderland/South Tyneside

Garden Lodge
Hopewood Park
Waterworks Road
Ryhope
Sunderland, SR2 0NB

Gateshead

Tranwell Unit
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Windy Nook Road
Gateshead, NE10 9RW

North of Tyne areas

North of Tyne PALS
Text us on: 01670 511 098
Email us on: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Or ask a member of staff to contact the PALS Officer on your behalf.

References

NTW(C)55pgn - MHA-PGN-04 - Informal/voluntary patient rights
– V04 – Oct 17



Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre. If you would like to tell us what you think about this leaflet please get in touch.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, easy read, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre
Tel: 0191 246 7288

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