



Discharge Information

Information for patients

This leaflet is intended to help you, your carer, relatives and friends understand and prepare for your discharge or transfer from hospital. Healthcare professionals will work with you and your relatives/carer to ensure that your discharge is at the right time and to a safe, clinically appropriate environment. You will be able to discuss your needs and how they will be met after leaving hospital.

When you are ready to leave hospital, the nurse looking after you will complete the form inside the back page of this booklet which details the services that have been arranged for you. If you have any questions about the discharge process, please do not hesitate to contact the ward sister or the nurse assigned to your care ('named nurse').

Being discharged

Your consultant or doctor in charge will decide when you are ready to leave our care. Hospitals are the right place to be when you need specific medical or surgical treatment, but when your treatment has been completed it is important that your discharge is not delayed.

As soon as you are admitted to hospital a treatment plan is developed which takes your needs for discharge into account, e.g. you may have ongoing health and social care needs that require further support after your care in hospital.

Transfer of care

The Trust offers a range of emergency and acute services and works closely in partnership with several NHS, social care and private providers. As your condition improves during your stay in the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust, you may be moved to the care of one of our partners in a less acute area within the community, or sent home with organised support from Community Services. For example, you may be transferred to the care of a community hospital for further assessment and rehabilitation (your name may need to be put on a waiting list until an appropriate bed becomes available). We try to transfer you to a community hospital as near as possible to your home but cannot always guarantee this.

To help plan your appropriate transfer of care you may be seen and assessed by the Community Liaison Team. Please see the **Community support upon discharge** section for further details surrounding transfer of care.

Discharge date

If your treatment or surgery is planned you may be given an expected length of stay before you are admitted. However, all patients will be given an expected date for discharge within 48 hours of admission. This may change during your hospital stay and the staff will keep you informed. It is important that everyone involved is aware of this date so we can all work towards it. Your discharge date will be affected by how quickly your health improves while you are in hospital and what support you will need after leaving our care.

Discharges can take place on any day of the week including weekends and bank holidays, and where possible we will aim to discharge you by 11.00am. You may be asked to leave your bed space and wait either in the discharge lounge or the ward dayroom. This is to allow us to clean the bed and make it ready for the next patient.

Planning your discharge or transfer from hospital

As recognised good practice, we start planning your discharge as soon as you come into hospital, or even before you arrive if it is a planned admission.

Leaving hospital can be a difficult experience, particularly if you have been in hospital for a long time or cannot manage everyday activities/ the same activities you did before. You should consider making some of the following arrangements before 11.00am on your planned discharge date:

- Suitable transport to collect you on the discharge date
- Suitable clothing and footwear to leave hospital
- Access to your property (keys etc)
- Adequate food supplies and heating at the property

Please tell us as soon as possible if you have any concerns about being discharged, so we can discuss your practical support needs on leaving hospital with our healthcare professionals.

Our healthcare professionals will keep you fully informed about what to expect when you leave hospital. Your discharge needs will be assessed and you will be told about what will happen during your recovery and about arrangements for additional support that may be needed, such as:

- Home adaptations
- Equipment
- Support with personal care
- Support with recovery
- Support for carer or family members
- Discharge advice and contact numbers

A range of staff may be involved in the process of helping to meet your needs, such as case managers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists or district nurses.

Discharge lounge (Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells hospitals)

On the day of your discharge, if you are ready to leave and no longer require a hospital bed, you can wait in the discharge lounge while the details of your discharge are completed (e.g. you may be waiting for medication to take home or for suitable transport to collect you).

Discharge lounge staff will collect you and your belongings from the ward and take you to our comfortable lounge, which is equipped with television, books and magazines, free coffee and tea making facilities, plus safe and secure luggage storage.

Our lounge is always fully staffed. The team can help with:

- Arranging personal transport such as taxis, if needed.
- Liaising with the Patient Transport Service (if booked by the ward) and informing you of any possible delays. Please note: although you should be ready for collection by your booked transport time, this is not a guaranteed collection time.
- Collecting medication from the pharmacy. It can take up to four hours from when the prescription is written for your medication to be dispensed and sent to the discharge lounge. Our staff will liaise with the pharmacy and advise you when your medication will be ready. If you are unable to wait for your medication the discharge lounge staff can arrange to phone you when it is available for collection.
- Ordering sandwiches or hot meals from our hospital menu while you wait.
- Assisting with any outstanding discharge issues or concerns e.g. arrangements for district nurses.

If you are being collected by car, this can be from the main entrance which has a ten minute waiting slot. Our staff can promptly escort you from the discharge lounge to your waiting relative/ friend if needed.

If you have not been offered the use of the discharge lounge on your day of discharge and you no longer have a medical need for the bed, please let the staff nurse know so that we can arrange for you to be collected.

Please note: Tunbridge Wells Hospital discharge lounge - if possible please wear day clothing, rather than night or hospital gowns, while waiting in the lounge. This is to promote privacy and dignity, as the lounge is in a public area.

Maidstone hospital discharge lounge: Located on the ground floor, past reception, the gift shop and PALS. Open from 8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday. ☎ 01622 225299

Tunbridge Wells Hospital arrivals and discharge lounge: Located in the main entrance. Open 8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday. ☎ 01892 635564

Transport

If possible please make arrangements for a relative or friend to collect you by 11.00am on your day of discharge. Please let staff know if you have problems arranging this.

Ambulance/ hospital patient transport is only provided for those with a medical need. The hospital patient transport service need notice in advance if they are required and can only transport the patient and one bag of personal effects.

The Voluntary Car Bureau may be able to provide transport to and from hospital. A mileage fee is payable for these services and details can be obtained by contacting the bureau directly:

Maidstone ☎ 01622 756662

West Malling ☎ 01732 843346

Tunbridge Wells ☎ 01892 540131

Information for your GP - discharge notification

Unless your GP was directly involved in your admission to hospital, she /he may not know that you have been a patient in hospital. It is important that your GP is provided with information about your hospital stay, operation/ treatment, medication, details of any further investigations required and follow-up appointments. The Electronic Discharge Notification process will pass all this information to your GP automatically.

This notification will be followed up with a full summary from the hospital doctor within three weeks of your discharge.

Wards will provide their patients with a copy of the Electronic Discharge Notification to keep.

If you are given a letter for your community (district) nurse, please pass it to them when they visit you at home. If you are given a letter for the practice nurse at your GP surgery, please make an appointment and take this letter with you.


Medicines

The pharmacy will ensure you go home with at least two weeks supply of your regular medication. Further supplies should be obtained from your GP. Your hospital doctor will inform your GP of any changes made to your medicines (see the discharge notification section above). Before you leave hospital, you or your carer should understand:

- Which medicines you should be taking and any additions or changes to your regular prescription
- When and how you should take your medicines (e.g. if they need to be taken on an empty stomach or with food, etc)

All medication provided by the pharmacy is supplied with a patient information leaflet giving details about dosage and instructions. However, if you have any questions please ask your named nurse to contact the pharmacy team. Please note:

- If you suffer any side effects speak to your GP or pharmacist
- Dispose of all unwanted medicines safely via your pharmacy

If you have any questions about your medication after you have been discharged from hospital please call the Medicines Helpline:  01892 634216

Outpatient appointment

If you need an outpatient appointment it will either be made for you before you leave the hospital or details will be sent to you through the post. All patients wishing to use the Trust's patient transport services for further appointments are subject to a strict

medical assessment and transport is allocated on medical need only. Please ask ward staff for details. If you do not have a follow-up appointment and have questions and concerns about your diagnosis, treatment or future medical care, please make an appointment to see your GP.

Sickness benefit and certificates

If you are employed you may need to give a 'statement of sickness' certificate to your employer. If you have been off work sick for seven days or less your employer can ask you to confirm you have been ill. You can do this by filling in a self-certification form yourself when you return to work. A self-certification form can be obtained from ward staff on request.

After one week your employer will require an 'in-patient' certificate. Please ask your named nurse to complete this for you. This certificate only covers you whilst you are an in-patient. If you need further sickness certificates after discharge you will need to obtain these from your GP.

Returning to work

We advise you not to return to work until you are completely fit and well (recovery times vary from patient to patient) and we advise some patients not to return to work until they have attended their outpatient appointment; you will be told before you leave hospital. If you need more information about returning to work please ask your named nurse or your GP.

Driving

You must not drive for 24 hours after a general anaesthetic or sedation as the medication will affect you. Some car insurance policies do not cover you if a doctor has advised you not to drive. Please contact your insurance company for details.

Your nurse will be able to give advice, but the time it takes to recover sufficiently to safely start driving varies from patient to patient. The key factor is that your movement and strength must be enough to cope with an emergency stop, as well as normal driving.

Returning hospital equipment

If we lend you equipment to take home, please arrange for it to be returned to the issuing department as soon as you no longer need it.

Lost property

- **Maidstone Hospital:** If you have left property on the ward it will be sent to the General Office from where it can be collected (Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm). Please phone before visiting: ☎ 01622 224462
- **Tunbridge Wells Hospital:** If you have left property on the ward it will be kept by that ward. Please contact the ward to arrange collection.

The Trust does not accept liability for any loss or damage to property.

Community support upon discharge

When you are discharged from hospital, **Kent Community Health NHS Trust** has a variety of community services available to support you. The Community Liaison Team will advise you which the most appropriate service for you is. The services offered by Kent Community Health NHS Trust include:

- **Rapid response/ Intermediate care:** The Nursing and Therapy team operates a fast response service, treating and supporting patients with a short term need who can be safely managed in their own home or care environment.
 - **Community hospital:** Community hospitals are led by matrons and supported by therapists, care managers and a visiting medical officer. This service is appropriate for patients who need a period of rehabilitation and ongoing health care before returning home.
 - **Community Nursing Service:** Provides nursing care for a wide range of health needs such as ongoing wound care after planned or emergency surgery, management of long term conditions, or end of life care.
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- **Community Stroke Service:** This is a specialist team of nurses, therapists and a care manager who support rehabilitation following a stroke, either in the patient's home, residential care, or within Kent Community Health NHS Trust's specialist neuro inpatient units.

The Community Liaison Team can be contacted on the following numbers (8am - 5pm, seven days a week):

Maidstone Community Liaison Team ☎ 01622 226020

Tunbridge Wells Community Liaison Team ☎ 01892 635394

Social Services care after leaving hospital

Case managers are employed by Social Services and based at the hospitals. They offer advice, practical help and support to patients and their families in order to aid the transfer from hospital. They also provide information and support regarding residential and nursing homes.

If you need help or information your named nurse will ask the case manager to visit you on the ward and assess which services can be provided to help you when you leave hospital. The main type of support offered is provided by care staff, who will visit you at home and help with personal care, including washing, bathing, dressing and meals.

Care is often only needed for a short period of time but if, after reassessment, help is required for longer the care package will be continued. Responsibility for your care will be transferred from the hospital case manager to the community case manager the day after you leave hospital.

Your case manager will explain the cost of any care you receive. This will be based on an agreed charging policy.

Most people want to return home and are supported in this, but in some situations placement in a care home may need to be considered and you will be offered advice and information. If placement in a care home is agreed, you will be asked to choose a minimum of three suitable care homes that can meet your needs (this choice needs to be made within one week of

funding agreement). If none of your chosen homes have vacancies we will ask you to consider a temporary move to another care home.

Voluntary services

There are many local volunteer agencies that may be able to help you when you are at home, some are listed below. For other specialised organisations please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) (see back page).

- **Age UK**

Maidstone ☎ 01622 753618

Tunbridge Wells ☎ 01892 522591

Information, advice and access to services.

- **British Red Cross**

Maidstone ☎ 01622 690011 (general enquiries)

☎ 01622 625106 (home from hospital)

Tunbridge Wells ☎ 01892 524020

Can help settle people back into their homes after hospital treatment, help with shopping or light housework or lend equipment.

- **Carers Support**

Carers Forum ☎ 01622 685276

Carers First ☎ 01732 357555

Information and support for any person caring for a friend or relative. Free support and information groups. Help with planning benefits and a confidential listening ear.

Letter for GP	
Letter for district nurse	
Letter to practice nurse	
Medicines to take home	
Outpatients appointment	
Transport for appointments	
Anti-coagulation clinic	
Case manager - name	
- contact number	
Physiotherapy clinic	
Day centre appointment	
Date equipment to be delivered	
Community occupational therapist	
District nurse	
Palliative nurse	
Other - please state:	

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells website:

<http://www.mtw.nhs.uk/discharged/>

NHS Direct

 0845 46 47

NHS Direct online

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk


The telephone service is staffed by trained nurses 24 hours a day seven days a week, giving confidential health care advice and information.

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.


Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

PALS Maidstone Hospital

 01622 224960

PALS Tunbridge Wells

 01892 632953


PALS Email

mtwpals@nhs.net


PALS SMS

 07747 782317

PALS Maidstone Fax

 01622 224843

PALS Tunbridge Wells Fax

 01892 632954

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