

Frailty Virtual Ward

Information for patients



This leaflet aims to provide supportive information about the next step after your stay in hospital.

What is a virtual ward?

You have been unwell and had a stay in hospital, however, the medical team in the hospital feel that your condition is stable and that you can safely recover at home, providing you have the right support and monitoring. The NHS can offer this support and monitoring at home; this is called a virtual ward.

The virtual ward means that you can stay in the comfort of your own home and healthcare staff will remotely monitor your condition or visit you where you normally live to deliver treatment until you get better. Monitoring your condition means that if you become unwell, this will be picked up early and you can access treatment in hospital quickly if you need it.

The virtual ward team

You will receive input from a multiagency team that consists of:

- A senior hospital doctor
- A senior hospital pharmacist
- A community matron
- A community advanced clinical practitioner (ACP)
- Other community staff will be involved with your care; this will be individual to your needs.

What happens on the virtual ward?

Before you leave hospital, a clear medical plan with your ongoing acute medical needs will be communicated to all the people involved in your ongoing care. This is a shared plan which is updated daily with clear actions to be communicated to everyone involved. You will be medically reviewed daily by a member of the community team.

When you are ready to be discharged from the virtual ward the team will discuss this with you. A discharge letter will be sent to your GP.

Recovering from your illness

There are some simple steps you can take to keep well and aid your recovery. As these will be different for everyone, you should adjust them according to your symptoms and how you feel:

- Increase your activities gradually as your condition improves.
- Eating regularly will help you regain strength and aid your recovery. You may find that large meals make your breathing feel more difficult, so eating little and often is advised. If you need further advice on nutrition, please talk to a healthcare professional
- Unless you have been advised to restrict your fluid intake, drink plenty of fluids to keep yourself well hydrated.
- Take your medications as prescribed by your GP, or new medications on your discharge summary.

What should I do if I feel unwell?

You will be given instructions on what to do if you feel unwell, which includes telephoning (and asking for) a member of the virtual ward team between the hours of 8am and 5pm on the relevant number below:

Virtual Ward Team: 0115 883842

After 5pm, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:
01623 781891

If you feel unwell outside of these hours, as per the information in red on the next page, **please call 111 / 999.**

Signs that show that you are probably recovering may include:

- ✓ Gradual improvement
- ✓ Fully mobile, able to manage stairs, not acutely confused
- ✓ Normal eating and drinking
- ✓ No signs of fever (raised temperature).

At higher risk. Call the virtual ward team in hours or out of hours, or for urgent medical attention ring NHS 111 if you have any of the following signs / symptoms:

- ✓ Feeling more unwell
- ✓ Reduced mobility or too weak to get out of bed
- ✓ Not eating or drinking adequately
- ✓ Unable to speak full sentences due to breathlessness
- ✓ Consistent fever and not responding to cooling down or paracetamol
- ✓ New or worsening swelling to lower limbs.

Call 999 for an urgent assessment if you have any of the following signs / symptoms:

- ✓ Your health is rapidly worsening over a period of hours
- ✓ Short of breath sitting quietly
- ✓ Severe or sudden onset of chest pain
- ✓ Cold, clammy or mottled skin
- ✓ New confusion or feeling drowsy, accompanied with tremor / shaking.

Frequently asked questions

How long will I stay on the virtual ward?

The maximum length of stay on the virtual ward is two weeks. If you are still unwell or need on-going treatment, you will be referred to another team who will continue to deliver your care.

Who will be in charge of my care?

A senior doctor from Sherwood Forest Hospital will oversee your care, alongside other health / social care professionals which may include advanced clinical practitioners, nurses, physiotherapy, dieticians, social care workers, voluntary services and other professionals as needed.

If I need be admitted into hospital, can I be discharged back on the virtual ward?

If you have been on the virtual ward but have to be admitted to hospital for treatment, then, if appropriate, you can be transferred back onto the virtual ward.

What if I don't want to be transferred to and cared for on the virtual ward?

A nurse or doctor will discuss any concerns that you may have. Please be aware that the longer you stay in hospital, the more likely you are to suffer

from deconditioning (which means you are less able to do your everyday activities such as washing, dressing, walking etc), loss of independence and hospital acquired infections.



Further information

Our Patient Experience / Advisory / Customer Care teams are available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints and will ensure a prompt and efficient service. Please call or email the relevant team below:

Sherwood Forest Hospitals

Telephone: 01623 672222

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

Nottingham University Hospitals

Telephone: 0800 1830204

Email: PALS@nuh.nhs.uk

Bassetlaw Hospital

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 01302 642767

Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Telephone: 0115 993 4542

Email: PALSandComplaints@nottshc.nhs.uk

Nottingham CityCare Partnership

Telephone: 0115 883 9654

Email: ncp.customercare@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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