



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Information for Carers



We welcome the carers of patients on our wards and we would like to work in partnership with you.

Not everyone realises that “in looking after somebody” they have become a carer.

A carer is someone who, informally and without payment, cares for a friend, family member, neighbour, or in fact anybody who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental health issues, substance misuse or disability.

In this context, being a carer does not refer to professional carers who are paid to care and who may, as part of their job, accompany someone to hospital, as for example, agency workers or care home staff may do.

Carers come from all walks of life, can be all ages and are in different caring situations; often they have other commitments such as work, family and study. We value the important role that carers play and know that being a carer can sometimes be difficult, demanding, both physically and emotionally, and isolating. We also appreciate and understand that carers have a lot of knowledge about the uniqueness of the person they care for and their condition, and that it is important to listen to carers and involve them in decisions about the patient's care.

This leaflet provides information which we hope will be useful for you to know if you are a family member or carer of a patient in one of our hospitals and wish to stay with them to support their care; it also provides information on the ways in which we can support carers and contains links to other organisations and useful resources which you may find useful.

Our Carers' Charter

We have developed a Carers' Charter that outlines our commitment to work closely with families and carers.

The Charter identifies you as the nominated carer of a patient and aims to help us understand the needs of patients and carers better. It has been created by healthcare professionals, family members, carers and patients working collaboratively together to help us achieve this ambition.

We will do our best to...

- Learn from you how best to support and care for the patient you care for.
- Welcome you to be present on our wards as long as you would like to be.
- Ask how we can create a better environment for the patient you care for.
- Ask how we can create a better environment for you.
- Welcome you to be present during protected mealtimes if you would like to be.
- Explain how you can support us in helping all patients to maintain their privacy and dignity while you are staying with us.
- Let you know in good time when we need your support in leaving the ward area so we can provide clinical care.
- Ask you what you might need help with.
- Keep you informed of the patient's care plan.

We would be glad if you could...

- Help us to understand how to make care more personal.
- Help us to get to know the person we are caring for better.
- Talk to us about any concerns you have with the care and treatment we are providing.
- Suggest improvements to make the experience of the person you are caring for better.
- Tell us how to make your experience better.
- Recognise there are occasions when we may ask you to leave the ward area so that we can provide care, with privacy and dignity, to all patients on the ward.
- Look after yourself – your support is appreciated, but in no way expected.
- Be patient with us if we sometimes get things wrong, we will do all we can, with your support, to put things right.

John's Campaign

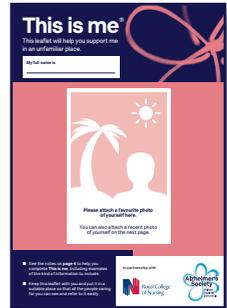
The Trust supports John's Campaign which is a national campaign that asks for the families and carers of patients to be invited to stay with them in hospital for as many hours as needed and as they are able to give.

John's Campaign supports care for people who have conditions, such as dementia, where families and carers have the knowledge and skill to work in partnership with ward staff to ensure patients receive care that works best for them.



This is Me

This is Me is a document designed by the Alzheimer's Society and Royal College of Nursing to support people with Dementia or Alzheimer's who are in an unfamiliar place. Please ask a member of ward staff who can support you with completing this for your loved one.



Carers Leeds

Carers Leeds offers support to carers in the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

Carer Support Workers (CSWs) supporting carers in hospitals have a small base at St James's University Hospital on level 8, Gledhow Wing. These CSWs cover all the sites in the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust including:

- Leeds General Infirmary
- St. James's University Hospital
- Chapel Allerton Hospital
- Seacroft Hospital
- Wharfedale Hospital



Much of the work focuses on involving carers in discharge planning and ensuring carers are informed about services available to them in the community.

Carers Leeds Advice Line:



Tel: 0113 380 4300 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm)



Email: advice@carersleeds.org.uk

Carers Passport

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS is working collaboratively with the West Yorkshire Association of Acute Trusts to ensure we recognise and support Carers visiting the people they care for when they are inpatients.

Please let a member of staff on the ward know you are a Carer and you may be entitled to a Passport following a documented conversation around the level of support you are able to offer your loved one in hospital.



The passport is our way of saying Thank You for your help and support, which can often relieve ward staff to tend to other patients. A separate information leaflet is available with more details about the benefits of this initiative.

Our website

We have lots of information on the Trust's Carers internet page about how we support Carers across our hospital sites as well as across Leeds:



www.leedsth.nhs.uk Hover over **Patients and Visitors** and select **Carer information**.

We also have many useful website links available on our website for various organisations that we work with to help Carers.

Frequently Asked Questions

We get asked lots of questions about being a carer; here are just a few of them with some brief answers.

What does working in partnership with ward staff mean?

Working closely with carers helps staff to understand the needs of individual patients better and can improve the care we offer. Working in partnership involves staff listening and responding to people like you who often know our patients and their needs better than we do.

Will I still give medication?

Your knowledge of the patient's medication is important, and ward staff will welcome your contribution in deciding the best and most appropriate way for the patient to receive medication whilst on the ward. Your level of support for giving medication will be agreed on the Carers Conversation sheet.

As a family member or carer, will I be expected to stay on the ward to provide care?

No, as supporters of John's Campaign we are offering you an opportunity to have a discussion with nursing staff if you would like to stay with a patient in hospital. We invite you to ask us about arrangements that would work well for you and improve the care for a patient. Please be aware we may not be able to achieve everything you ask for; however we promise to consider your requests and to let you know why if we are not able to fulfil them. You will not be expected or asked to provide care at any point.

Is there anything I need to think about if I stay on the ward?

The Carers Charter describes what we would like you to consider if you stay with us and this includes being sensitive to the privacy and dignity needs of other patients on the ward. We would also ask you to be aware of the need for ward staff to deliver care and to work with them to understand when they will need you to leave the bedside to allow this to happen.

Will I be able to stay at mealtimes if the wards prefer these times to be free of visitors?

Mealtimes are protected on our wards to make sure that patients are supported in receiving the nutrition they need without distraction. Whilst visitors are usually discouraged at these times, as a carer we would welcome you to be present during mealtimes as we recognise the contribution you make in assisting our staff with this important aspect of care.

Will I be able to stay overnight?

It may be possible for you to stay overnight and staff on the ward will be able to advise you on this. Where it is possible for you to stay, it will be necessary for staff to review this arrangement on a day by day basis. This is because changes in ward circumstances can affect what is manageable. These changes may include taking account of other patients on the ward and their needs.

Will there be somewhere to sleep if I stay overnight?

Ward staff will do what is possible to make you as comfortable as they can, however they will not be able to provide an empty bed overnight on the ward as these can be needed at any time for patients.

The ward staff will discuss what they are able to offer. In some situations, it may be possible to offer a camp bed or a

comfortable chair and a blanket may be provided. It may be necessary for sleeping arrangements to be offered in a nearby room on the ward away from the bedside, to ensure privacy and dignity can be maintained for our patients.

Will I be able to have food if I stay?

We are unable to provide food for relatives and carers of our patients who wish to stay with us. Ward staff will be very happy to direct you to the closest catering facilities available, which include 24/7 vending facilities on all our hospital sites. If you stay, you are likely to be given a Carers Passport which entitles you to discounts in our on site restaurants. You will also be offered free drinks from the tea trolley on the ward.

Will I be able to use bathroom facilities if I stay?

Depending on the layout of the ward, in some cases it may be possible for staff to offer you this option. The ward staff will be able to discuss what is possible with you. Due to the risk of infection and to maintain the safety of our patients and yourself, if no separate facility is available on the ward for you to use, we ask that you use the nearest public facilities. The ward staff will direct you towards these. We ask for your consideration in not using patient facilities.

Will I be able to request free parking?

Unfortunately, the Trust is not able to accommodate free parking for carers and family members due to the demand for parking spaces on hospital sites. With a Carer Passport, you will only pay the lowest tariff.



Information on up to date hospital parking charges may be found at: <https://bit.ly/3vVaLrM>

The Trust supports free parking for relatives visiting patients who are approaching the end of life. Please approach ward staff if it would be helpful to have this support made available to you.

Will other family members or carers be able to stay as well?

We are happy for family and carers to spend time with our patients to support better care, however, we ask that this is limited to one person at a time outside open visiting hours. During visiting times, we ask that our usual practices are followed, which limit visitors to two per bedside at any one time.

This helps to reduce the infection risk to our patients, prevents them over tiring and allows our staff to continue to deliver care when the environment is busier. We ask that if there are more visitors who wish to attend that visiting is rotated between you to keep within these limits. Your understanding, which will contribute greatly to the smooth running of the ward, is very much appreciated.

Where can I smoke?

Leeds Teaching Hospitals is completely smoke-free. This means you will not be able to smoke (or vape) anywhere on our hospital grounds.

Cigarette smoke is harmful and can delay recovery for patients. We want to maintain an environment that is supportive of everyone's health.

What should I do if I have any concerns whilst I am on the ward?

We know that coming into hospital can be a stressful time for patients and carers. We welcome you talking to us to help deliver the best care and support for you and the patient. We ask that you discuss any concerns you have with the nursing staff. If the nurse in charge or ward sister are unavailable to resolve your concerns, it is possible to raise concerns via our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

They can be contacted on:



(0113) 206 6261



patientexperience.leadsth@nhs.net

Sit Up, Get Dressed, Keep Moving Campaign

We encourage patients to get out of bed, wear their own clothes and be as mobile as possible as part of the 'Sit Up, Get Dressed, Keep Moving' Campaign. Carers can help by bringing comfortable daytime clothing and shoes for their relative or friend.

When patients are up, dressed and moving about they feel more positive and are less likely to lose muscle strength. We know that for every 10 days of bed rest in hospital, the equivalent of 10 years of muscle ageing occurs in people over 80 years old, and building this muscle strength back up takes twice as long it does to deteriorate. This can lead to people having to stay in hospital longer or losing their independence. And it's not just older people who lose muscle strength, it can happen to all age groups albeit at different levels.

Looking after yourself

It is important that you take care of your own wellbeing, especially when you are busy looking after someone else's health. Being healthy is not only important for you, but it also helps the person you care for too.

Finding time for yourself can be difficult when you are a carer, but just finding a few minutes to look at some of the information available from a variety of organisations could help make a difference to you.

Coronavirus restrictions

This leaflet was produced with no restrictions in mind and it is important to note that some guidance in this leaflet may have changed due to the pandemic. Always check with ward staff what can be achieved during this time, as we need to keep everyone safe but also support you as best we can.



What did you think of your care?
Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft
Your views matter



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