

# “Let’s talk housing’ – information sheet on housing and hospital discharge

## Why is this important?

Most people admitted to hospital in Newcastle are not homeless and they can and do return to the address that they came in to hospital from. However there are some people for whom this is not possible, either because that home is no longer suitable or appropriate for them to return to or they were homeless before they came in to hospital

Delays in discharging patients can be distressing and costly to the health service; we aim to for people to be discharged from hospital as soon as they are well. The Council and it’s partners provide a range of accommodation and support to make this possible, infra-structure support is also provided to access these resources.. To help avoid delayed discharges it is important that hospital staff take into account patients’ accommodation circumstances as soon as possible to ensure that they are not discharged into unsuitable accommodation or homelessness or that they become homeless following a stay in hospital.

## What you should you do

**The most important step to preventing delayed discharges and homelessness is to identify any accommodation needs people have on admission. This will enable action to prevent or tackle homelessness to be started straightaway.**

Some patients become homeless whilst staying in hospital, either because they decide not to go back to the home they were in before, or because the person they were staying with decides not to allow them to return there or because the patient is at risk of losing of the accommodation they were living in prior to hospital. In a few cases, patients do not reveal that they have nowhere to go until discharge is imminent. By starting to ask questions early on about the accommodation of patients, ensures that early referrals can be made and increase the likelihood of suitable and sustainable accommodation being found for patients when they come to be discharged.

To help you we have summarised overleaf who you should contact if you have concerns about a patient’s accommodation or if that patient was homeless or of no fixed abode when they were admitted. Any of the people listed overleaf will be able to offer you advice and support regarding patients who have facing homelessness on discharge.

## General Hospital Admissions

1. On admission to the ward, ask every patient for their address and whether they think this is an address that they can return to when discharged, you may need to prompt the patient as to whether it is genuinely suitable for them to return, for example were they just staying informally with friends ?
2. If the patient has no accommodation, or is not confident that they can return to that address, ask the following questions before deciding what to do next:
  - Does the patient come from Newcastle? If not contact should be made with their own local authority.
  - If they had a home before coming into hospital, why are they not able to go back there?
3. If the patient is unable to return to their own home or they are at risk of losing their home then you should make a referral as soon as possible to the **YHN Hospital Discharge Advice and Support Workers on 277 1144** or [pathways.rehousing@yhn.org.uk](mailto:pathways.rehousing@yhn.org.uk) who will make arrangements to see the patient as soon as possible. The patient does not need to be an existing YHN tenant to be referred.
4. If the patient is **homeless** or of **no fixed abode** on admission and is ready for discharge then you should contact the **Housing Advice Centre** [housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk) as soon as possible. If you need to contact someone at weekends the **out –of-hours service should be contacted on 0191 278 7878 (speak to the operator and ask for the Emergency Homeless Officer)**

## Mental Health Hospital Admissions

1. On admission to the ward, ask every patient for their address and whether they think this is an address that they can return to when discharged, you may need to prompt the patient as to whether it is genuinely suitable for them to return, for example were they just staying informally with friends ?
2. If the patient has no accommodation, or is not confident that they can return to that address, ask the following questions before deciding what to do next:
  - Does the patient come from Newcastle? If not contact should be made with their own local authority.
  - If they had a home before coming into hospital, why are they not able to go back there?
3. If the patient is unable to return to their own home / is refusing to, or they are at risk of losing their home then you should make a referral as soon as possible to the **YHN Hospital Discharge Support and Progression Workers on 277 1144** or [pathways.rehousing@yhn.org.uk](mailto:pathways.rehousing@yhn.org.uk) as above who will make arrangements to see the patient as soon as possible The patient does not need to be an existing YHN tenant to be referred. If the patient has an existing tenancy no attempt should be made to terminate this tenancy without speaking to either the Housing Advice Centre or a Hospital Discharge Advice and Support Worker.
4. If the patient is **homeless** or of **no fixed abode** on admission or has no care co-ordinator then you should contact the **CNTW Gateshead/Newcastle Homeless Service on 0191 287 5060**. In an emergency you should contact the duty officer at the Housing Advice Centre (**0191 277 1711**) or [housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk)