

Information for patients

# 'Informal' or 'voluntary' admission to a mental health hospital



safe • personalised • accessible • recovery focused

## Background

Informal/voluntary admission requires a person to consent and not to object to entering hospital and receiving care or treatment. People who lack the capacity to consent to admission and/or treatment in hospital can still be admitted

under the Mental Capacity Act or, if they are not objecting, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). If a person is objecting to hospital admission the Mental Health Act may be considered.

## The admission process

A qualified nurse will explain the admission process. Confidentiality will be discussed with you and you will be asked to sign a consent form to detail who we may share information with, other than members of your care team. The ward will have certain expectations that they would like you to agree with

in order to maintain both the safety of yourself and others.

They will:

- Provide a brief outline of the layout and ward routine
- Assign a named nurse who will be responsible for co-ordinating your care.

## Assessment process

You will meet the care team who will discuss your problems with you and, with your help, formulate a care plan to address your identified needs and promote recovery.

With your consent, your family's / carer's views are

included in your assessment and care plan.

You are entitled to be cared for in the least restrictive way possible, conducive to your safety and well-being. This will be based on your current risk assessment as determined by

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your clinical team and with negotiation with you and / or your family. If staff are immediately concerned

about your safety or the safety of others they could use physical intervention.

## Your rights

As an informal inpatient you have the following legal rights:

- To come and go from the ward. Any arrangements relating to time off the ward will need to be discussed with your nursing team, who will need to consider your current risks. You will need to discuss where you are going and when you are planning to return.
- To decline to receive aspects of your care or treatment or to bring into hospital an advance decision detailing your wishes for your care.
- You may withdraw consent to any part of your proposed treatment plan as well as your recovery action plan at any time.
- The right to be treated with dignity and respect and to have your views heard without being judged by others.
- The right to be given all relevant information concerning any proposed treatment to enable you to make an informed decision about your care.
- The right to have taken into account any gender, sexuality, social, cultural and religious preferences which may impact on your care provision.
- The right to discharge yourself from hospital at any time. If you wish to discharge yourself from hospital, the nursing staff will ask you to wait to see a doctor before you leave.

## Discharge and additional information

If the care team do not believe that discharge from hospital is in your best interests, or if they have concerns about your safety if you left hospital, they may arrange for you to be assessed under the Mental Health Act (1983). If you no longer have capacity to consent to informal admission they may request a Deprivation of Liberty

Safeguards (DoLS) assessment.

The ward team will work with you to achieve a planned and timely discharge from hospital which may include a small supply of your medication to take home, access to follow-up care either by short term home visits from community services or via out-patient appointments.

## Maintaining safety

To ensure safety there may be some aspects of the environment or your care that restrict you whilst you are in hospital. The doors of the ward / unit may be locked, but you are free to leave the unit. Please ask staff to facilitate this.

On admission staff will carry out a property search to ensure your safety / safety of others. There are some items which are 'restricted' or 'items of concern' within the hospital,

such as lighters or sharp items.

Staff will need to carry out observations which may mean they check on you every hour or every 15 minutes. In some situations a staff member will stay with you all the time.

The ward staff have to ensure patient safety at all times, therefore the ward policy states that during the night time patients wellbeing will be checked every hour.

## For further information

If you have any queries or require assistance, please contact:

### Mental Health Law Team

tel: **01782 441 643**

fax: **01782 441 644**

email: **[mentalhealthlawteam@northstaffs.nhs.uk](mailto:mentalhealthlawteam@northstaffs.nhs.uk)**

If you require information about other types of admission to hospital under the Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act or Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, please ask a member of staff.



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If you are unable to use telephone or email communication, you can text the Harplands Reception on 07803 575 643 or 07834 148 926 and the team will respond as soon as possible (this text service will be charged at your network provider's rate).

