

Gaddum ... Carers

Hi, I'm Gaddum.

Let's Talk About...

Speaking With Professionals

When the person you are caring for is unwell or in hospital it can be a stressful and confusing time, it may feel overwhelming if lots of different professionals are in contact with you. Hospital wards can seem busy and you may feel under pressure to get the person you care for home as soon as possible. We can help you manoeuvre through this.

As a carer you are able to access a support worker from Gaddum, who can help you through the hospital process. They could attend meetings with you and help with any questions or things you might be struggling with. The discharge process can feel complicated, but it is important for the medical team to get a total understanding of the patient's needs and anything they can't manage on their own so they can put the correct care in place. If you are concerned about something you can raise this so the right support can be implemented to protect both you and your loved one. You can also ask to be kept updated and go to the meetings so you know what is being discussed. Check our Hospital Admission and Discharge Factsheet for more information.

Knowing what questions to ask...

You are entitled to have someone at the meetings with you if this makes you feel more comfortable, this could be a support worker. It will be easier for you to discuss any questions or things you might be concerned about with them beforehand.

It might help to write your questions down so you have something to refer to during the meeting and so you can remember what questions you had, these could be:

- Taking the right medication / what changes are there (can I help administer this)?
- Will they need extra equipment?
- Will they need additional care once home – how is this done?
- Do they need a specific diet?
- When will they be able to come home?
- Will they have physio or therapy appointments to help them? If so, how often and when will this start?

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What meetings do you have a right to attend?

So long as the person you care for consents to you being in the meetings you have a right to be included in it. It is important you attend to get all the information and are given the opportunity to ask any questions and raise any concerns you may have about the person you care for managing at home. Due to COVID-19 restrictions these meetings might be held over the phone or virtually so you might be asked for your phone number so they can call you and then conduct the meeting. You can still ask questions, they might ask your opinion or ask if there is anything you don't understand.

Types of meetings...

- Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) - A group of professionals who meet to discuss the care for the person you care for, this could be health care professionals, social workers and support workers.
- Discharge Planning – Meetings to discuss what needs to be done to start getting things ready for the person to be discharged.
- Best Interest (BI) – Where someone doesn't have capacity, a best interest meeting will be held to make a decision about their treatment. Healthcare staff, an advocate, where appropriate, and you as the carer could be asked to attend, to ensure that everyone agrees that going ahead with the treatment is in their best interest.
- Care Planning – This could take place when the person you care for is in hospital, or a care home. This is for staff, families, social workers and the patient to talk about day to day life, such as meals, activities, therapies, personal schedule, medical and nursing care, and emotional needs.

Listening to a lots of professionals speaking can feel confusing, and sometimes the language they use can contain medical terms or abbreviations that you have not heard of before. It can help to take notes, write down anything you do not understand or ask someone to repeat things if you feel unsure.

Knowing who to speak to...

If the person you care for is moved to a ward, let the staff on the ward know you are their main carer. They should put you in contact with the discharge coordinator when they are ready to start planning their discharge.

You should be contacted by the social worker who has been allocated to the person you are caring for. They are there to discuss the options of discharge and any extra support they may need when they get home.

Most importantly, you are the person that looks after them so ensure that you are kept informed and if you have any concerns raise them with staff, they are there to support you and the person you care for.