

# Inter-hospital transfer process (neuroscience)

## Information for patients

This leaflet provides further information for patients with neurological or neurosurgical conditions who may require inter-hospital transfers. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to any member of the team caring for you.

### **Does this information apply to me?**

This leaflet provides general information to help you understand and be involved in decisions about the inter-hospital transfer.

It applies to patients who are admitted to a hospital with a neurological or neurosurgical problem, and require transfer to a regional neuroscience centre for further treatments, and then transfer back to the local hospital. It does not apply to patients being discharged from hospital directly to their home. It may also be useful for family members and carers.

### **Transferring to a regional neuroscience centre**

Many patients with neurological problems can be managed at their local hospital. However, some patients admitted to their local hospital with a neurological or neurosurgical condition may require specialised investigation and treatment at a regional neuroscience centre.

The transfer process will be carried out by a team of health professionals (doctors, nurses, bed co-ordinators) to make sure that patient safety is of the highest importance.

The team looking after you at the receiving hospital will be given the necessary information and arrange a bed space to be transferred to. It may take several days for a bed to become available.

Hospital staff will keep family informed of the transfer plan.

You will normally be taken by ambulance, accompanied by a team of trained staff, but a helicopter may be used for long distances. You may be given medical treatments during the journey if required.

## **Who needs to be transferred to a regional neuroscience centre?**

Below are some examples of reasons why a patient might need to be transferred:

- Specialist review. Patients with fluctuating illnesses, such as a severe head injury with reduced consciousness, or an infectious process (such as encephalitis), may need transfer for further observation.
- Specialist investigations. Certain investigations are only available at regional neuroscience centres. These include video telemetry and neuroimaging scans out of hours. Patients may be transferred for tests and return to their local hospital on the same day.
- Specialist treatments, such as neurosurgical procedures, medications for complex conditions, and neuro-ITU.

## **During your stay at a regional neuroscience centre**

The role of a neuroscience centre is to provide specialised care and treatment for patients with complex neurological and neurosurgical conditions. The care patients receive during this period will depend on the nature of their condition and its severity.

Due to the highly specialised facilities and skills required, a neuroscience centre may cover a large geographical area with only a limited number of beds. For some patients who still require medical care, but have completed their specialised treatment, it is appropriate to continue the care under a general team either in the same hospital, or back at their local hospital.

You will be looked after by a team of health professionals during your stay, and will receive carefully planned investigations and treatments.

## **Transferring back to your local hospital**

You may be transferred back to your local hospital for continued care, treatment or rehabilitation, as well as discharge planning with local services in the community. The aim is to get you home as soon as possible but it may take several days for a bed to become available.

At the local hospital, you may continue to receive care and medical treatment. The team there will carefully assess your care needs so that you can go home safely.

## **Support for families and carers**

The hospital staff caring for you should introduce themselves to family members or carers and briefly give an update.

The presence of friends and relatives during a patient's hospital stay can be very helpful. Talking and making physical contact, such as holding hands, can help the recovery process.

It is also important that relatives and friends do not feel they have to spend many hours at the bedside – they also need to have a break.

## **If you experience problems after leaving hospital**

On discharge from a hospital, you will be given a document called a 'discharge summary' which includes information about the treatment and care you received in hospital.

The details of your stay at the regional neuroscience centre may be given as a separate document, or put into the summary from your local hospital. Your GP will also be sent a copy of this.

If you have any questions about your treatment in the hospitals, you or your GP will be able to contact the team looking after you. Your GP will also be able to advise you if it is a separate issue not related to your admission.

## **Questions to ask about the hospital transfer process**

These questions may help you and your carers to discuss the hospital transfer process with the team looking after you:

- Can you tell me why I need to be transferred to another hospital?
- What are the tests and treatments that I may need to have?
- Can you tell me more about the tests you have offered me and why I need them?
- Can you provide any information for my family or carers?
- How long will the transfer process take?
- What care or support will I need for the transfer process?
- What should I do if I have any problems?
- For carers: what can I/we do to help and support the patient needing transfer to another hospital?

## **Further advice and support**

### **Brain and Spine Foundation**

Tel: 0808 808 1000  
[www.brainandspine.org.uk](http://www.brainandspine.org.uk)

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

This leaflet was co-produced by South London Neurosciences ODN, Brain and Spine Foundation and King's Health Partners - Neurosciences.

## **Sharing your information**

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

## Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: [kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: [kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net)**