



Handbook for family, friends and carers

Oxfordshire Stroke Rehabilitation Unit

What is this leaflet for?

This handbook is for families, friends and carers of people receiving care and treatment in our community hospitals.

We recognise that looking after someone can at times, be challenging and stressful. This handbook will provide you with information to support you in this important role.

What is a carer?

A carer is anyone who cares for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. The care they provide is unpaid.

What does the Oxfordshire Stroke Rehabilitation Unit do?

Oxfordshire Stroke Rehabilitation Unit (OSRU) is a 20-bed inpatient unit based at Abingdon Community Hospital. We provide inpatient rehabilitation for people who have had a stroke, are registered with an Oxfordshire GP and are not able to be discharged directly home from hospital.

The team recognises you as the family member/carer and as the expert in your knowledge of the patient and their daily needs.

We want to work with you in partnership to try and meet the expectations you have of us and how best to communicate with you while your relative or person you care for is in hospital.

While recognising we will not always be able to deliver the same individualised care you provide, we will endeavour to pride our care to a high standard. We have tools that can help us learn about the person you care for such as the 'knowing me' tool which we have on the ward.



Who's who?

There are a range of health professionals working within the community hospital. To help you identify who these are please see the chart on the following page.

Uniforms	
Matron	Navy with red piping
Ward Sister/ Manager	Navy with white piping
Deputy Ward Manager/ Junior Sister	Royal Blue with white piping
Registered Nurse	White with navy piping
Rehab Assistant	Grey with white piping
Healthcare Assistant	Pale blue with white piping
Occupational Therapist	White with green piping
Physiotherapist	White with navy piping
Speech and Language Therapist	Purple with white piping
Dietitians	Red
Student Nurse	White with pale blue piping
Nursing Associate Trainees	White with orange piping

The ward staff work as a team with an allocated nurse for a group of patients on each shift. This nurse will be able to provide you with an update on your family member.

The nurses on the unit work with the therapy team to develop a discharge plan once the patient is medically well. The nursing team will be able to tell you which therapists are involved with your family member and they will be able to contact them on your behalf.

The ward manager's name is:

The matron's name is:

The consultant's name is:

Looking after someone in hospital

We know that when someone is admitted to hospital it can be a very distressing and difficult time for both the person you care for as well as yourself.

We aim to treat most patients in their own home wherever possible, but if someone is particularly unwell they will be admitted to hospital so their needs can be fully assessed and they can receive treatment. Our wards provide a safe place where trained staff can provide specialist care.

Admission

Following admission, our clinicians will be given all the information regarding care and rehabilitation that the patient has received so far.

An assessment will then will be carried out by the multi-disciplinary team including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists. Depending on the patient's needs, our speech and language therapists and dietitians may also carry out assessments.

Following assessment, the team will support the development of goals and developing a treatment plan to help you achieve them. As the family, you will be involved in these decision-making processes.

A weekly timetable is provided, setting out individual and group therapy sessions. Therapies take place on weekdays

from 8am to 4.30pm, with some sessions available on Saturdays.

The multidisciplinary team meet weekly on a Tuesday morning. This is an opportunity for all clinicians to update the team regarding progress and discuss discharge plans. A family meeting is arranged within the first two weeks of admission, to provide an update on progress. The family meeting will also be used as a point to start discussing discharge plans. These are usually arranged on a Wednesday or Thursday between the hours of 1pm and 4pm.

We set an initial expected discharge date as 28 days after admission. However, this date and the patient goals are revisited weekly at the multidisciplinary meeting and can be adjusted depending on how well the patient responds to treatment and therapy. Therapy can continue at home, which means the patient may not meet all their goals as an inpatient.

Visiting

Visitors are welcome between 11am and 8pm. It is important to note that patient care and therapy may be scheduled during these hours. We are grateful for your co-operation.

The OSRU operates a protected mealtime policy between both 12pm to 1pm, and 5pm to 6pm. Only visitors that are assisting patients with their meal will be allowed on the ward at this time at the discretion of the shift co-ordinator.

If you are present during mealtimes and are not assisting with feeding, you may be asked to wait in another area.

We ask for there to be no more than two visitors per patient at one time. Flowers are not allowed on the unit, and please always check with staff if you want to bring in food or drink for your relative.

Free wifi is available in our unit.

Discharge information

A provisional discharge date is put in place within 48 hours of each patient's admission to the OSRU. This is created based on initial assessments made by the team. We will ask about a patient's home situation, previous care received, available family support, equipment in place and finances. This information is used to build a plan for discharge and will help our team to set goals.

Please be aware that once an individual is ready to return home we will apply for the care they require and will discuss this with you. Please do not plan to make any significant changes or alterations to the house that may prevent discharge from progressing.

You should also be aware that, if the patient requires care at home and this is available, the discharge will go ahead as planned even if you are not available on that day.

It is also important to note that care is not always available immediately on request and can come up at short notice.

Discharge to a residential or nursing home

If your family member or friend will require residential care you may be asked to look at residential or nursing homes at short notice. The care home may ask to assess the individual before you have seen their facilities. We will try to make this as seamless as possible.

If the residential or nursing home of your choice is not available, an alternative will be sourced to act as an interim placement.

Involving You

The trust wants to ensure that you are still involved in the care of your family member or friend when they are in hospital. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns that you have and to ask any questions, including the option of speaking to a doctor by appointment.

Each ward has regular ward rounds which give the clinical team the opportunity to discuss current treatments and progress with everyone involved. These discussions also form the basis of the discharge plans.

You are more than welcome to accompany your family member or friend to any appointments with our services.

Confidentiality and Sharing Information

We know that as a family member, friend or carer you want as much information as possible about the person you are caring for in order for you to be able to provide them with the best possible support.

Most of the time the person you care for is happy for us to share information with you, but sometimes when someone is really unwell they might change their minds about whether we can do this or not.

We understand how frustrating and worrying it can be if we don't have their consent for us to share information with you. If this is the case we will always continue to listen to you, so please continue to share information with the clinical team.

We can help you to manage any symptoms that are of concern to you, as well as provide generic information on specific health conditions or medications that you believe your family member or friend is taking.

We will continue to work with the person you care for to support them to see the importance of being able to share information with the people closest to them.

If you are worried about this then please do speak to a member of staff about completing an advance statement.

Advance Statement

Patients can make an advance statement when they are well that will tell us what they want to happen should they get unwell.

An advance statement is about a patient's wishes, choices and preferences. They can record anything they would like to happen as long as it is legal and related to the care provided by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. This will be held in the patient's confidential record.

For further information please speak to a member of staff.

Carer's Assessment

What is a carer's assessment?

A carer's assessment is an assessment that is focused on the carer as an individual, their caring situation and needs. It enables an individual to be formally recognised and supported in their role as a carer and is a time for them to express their needs and concerns arising out of their caring role.

If you are in an unpaid caring role, you can have an assessment no matter what your level of need, the amount of care you provide or your financial means; young carers (under the age of 18) included. A carer's assessment is always free.

Why have a carer's assessment

An assessment can help you feel less isolated and more aware of the help available to you. Your carer's assessment should cover:

- Your caring role and how it affects your life and wellbeing
- Your feelings and choices about caring
- Your health
- Work, study and training
- Relationships and social activities
- Housing
- Planning for an emergency

How will the assessment help?

The assessment will provide you with information based on your needs, such as:

- Details on specialist carer's organisations which can help with your health and wellbeing, housing, benefits, employment, training and leisure opportunities
- Carers' support groups
- Help to plan for an emergency

Where do I have an assessment?

You need to be 18 or over and looking after somebody living in Oxfordshire also aged 18 or over. Carers' assessments are completed online at Carers Oxfordshire:
www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk.

If you are unable to undertake an online assessment you can email carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk or telephone 0345 050 7666, where someone will help you.

A young carer is a child under 18 who provides, or intends to provide care to another person because that person is ill, disabled, or misuses drugs or alcohol. While young carers are not eligible for a carers assessment, if you are worried about the impact providing care for someone is having on your child, you may benefit from an assessment.

You can contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 050 7666. The MASH will decide what type of assessment would be most appropriate.

For further information about an assessment and support for young carers visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk and search for young carers.

Carer's Allowance

The Carer's Allowance is a financial benefit to help you look after someone who needs to be cared for.

You do not need to be related to or live with the person you are caring for to receive this allowance but you must meet certain eligibility conditions, including spending a minimum of 35 hours per week undertaking your caring role.

For information on eligibility, the effect it might have on any other benefits and how to make a claim please visit: www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview or call the benefit enquiry line on freephone 0800 882 200.

About Stroke

A stroke is a serious life-threatening medical condition that occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. Strokes are a medical emergency and urgent assessment is essential.

FAST

It's vital to know how to spot the warning signs of a stroke in yourself or someone else. Using the FAST test is the best way to do this:

Face: Can the person smile? Has their face fallen on one side?

Arms: Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?

Speech: Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say? Is their speech slurred?

Time: If you see any of these three signs, it's time to call 999. The sooner a person receives treatment for a stroke, the less damage is likely to happen. If you suspect that you or someone else is having a stroke, phone 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance.

Causes of a Stroke

Like all organs, the brain needs the oxygen and nutrients provided by blood to function properly. If the supply of blood is restricted or stopped, brain cells begin to die. This can lead to brain injury, disability and possibly death. There are two main types of strokes:

- **Ischaemic** - where the blood supply is reduced or stopped because of a blood clot, accounting for 85% of all cases
- **Haemorrhagic** - where a weakened blood vessel supplying the brain bursts

There's also a related condition known as a transient ischaemic attack (TIA), where the blood supply to the brain is temporarily interrupted. This causes what's known as a mini-stroke, often lasting between a few minutes and several hours.

TIAs should be treated urgently, as they are often a warning sign that you're at risk of having a full stroke in the near future. Seek medical advice as soon as possible, even if your symptoms resolve

Certain conditions increase the risk of having a stroke, including:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes

Treating a Stroke

Treatment depends on the type of stroke that has occurred, including which part of the brain was affected and what caused it.

Strokes are usually treated with medication. This includes medicines to prevent and dissolve blood clots, reduce blood pressure and reduce cholesterol levels.

In some cases, procedures may be required to remove blood clots. Surgery may also be required to treat brain swelling and reduce the risk of further bleeding in cases of haemorrhagic strokes.

Recovering from a Stroke

People who survive a stroke are often left with long-term problems caused by injury to their brain.

Some people need a long period of care before they can recover their former independence, while others may never fully recover and will require support adjusting to living with the effects of their stroke. The multi-disciplinary team at the OSRU will do their best to support you during this difficult time, and offer advice regarding recovery.

Local authorities can provide reablement services following an assessment. This will be discussed at the family meeting and as part of discharge planning.

Feedback

Your feedback is incredibly valuable to us as it enables us to continually develop and improve our services.

You can share your feedback and experiences directly to a member of staff, through the I Want Great Care website (<http://oxfordhealth.iwgc.net>) or ask a member of staff for a paper survey.

Family, friends and carers play a critical role in looking after people and supporting them with their recovery, and we recognise that you might need support too.

We hope this handbook provides you with an overview of how we, as an organisation, can enable you to access help if you need it.

If you have any other questions please ask a member of staff who will be happy to help in any way they can.

Additionally if you have a caring related enquiry or feedback, contact us at icareyoucare@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk.

Getting Involved— Opportunities

There are always a lot of opportunities for you to be involved in service development and quality improvement projects. For more information on what's happening locally please look at the involvement section of our website: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/about-us/getting-involved

Checklist of Questions

It is normal to feel anxious at times about caring for someone with a health problem, but the team are there to support you too so please do make sure you ask them any questions that you have or if you need more detail about something you are not sure of.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We hope that your contact with our staff and services is positive. However, we know that occasionally things might not be to the standard we expect. If that does happen we are here to support you to make things right and to resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

If you are unhappy about any of the care of treatment or about any aspect of our services, you should initially try to speak to a member of staff.

They may be able to resolve your concerns straight away. If your concerns are not resolved, please contact the Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS), which provides support and advice to patients and their families and friends.

PALS can be contacted on freephone 0800 328 7971 or by email at PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk.

Useful Contacts

There are many local and national organisations that you can contact to find help and support in your caring role.



Carers Oxfordshire is a free service which offers information, advice and support to people aged 18 and over, who are looking after someone aged 18 and over in Oxfordshire, who could not manage without this help.

T: 0345 050 7666 E: carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Age UK Oxfordshire offers a free and confidential information and advice service for older people, their families and carers.

T: 0345 450 1276 and ask for the helpline.



Dementia Oxfordshire/Guideposts works to ensure carers access the right information and support to help them cope with their caring role.

T: 01993 893560 Website: www.guideposts.org.uk



Headway provides support, services and information to brain injury survivors, their families and carers, It has more than 120 groups and branches throughout the UK.

T: 0808 800 2244 Website: www.headway.org.uk



Stroke Association

When stroke strikes, part of your brain shuts down, and so does a part of you. Life changes instantly and recovery is tough. But the brain can adapt. Our specialist support, research and campaigning are only possible with the courage and determination of the stroke community.

T: 0303 3033 100



Different Strokes helps younger stroke survivors to reclaim their lives through active peer support and independent recovery. Staff have personal experience of the realities of life after stroke.

T: 0345 130 7172 E: info@differentstrokes.co.uk

Website: www.differentstrokes.co.uk



Carers Trust is a network of local centres providing advice, information and support to carers.

T: 0300 772 9600 Website: : www.carers.org



Carers UK

A wide range of information for carers, with a helpline available from Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, with trained volunteers who can advise on any aspect of your caring situation.

T: 0808 808 7777 E: advice@carersuk.org

Website: www.carersuk.org

Please contact us if you would like the information in another language or different format.

Arabic يُرجى الاتصال بنا إذا كنتم ترغبون في الحصول على المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بتنسيق مختلف.

আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় বা আলাদা আকারে **Bengali** পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।
Urdu اگر آپ یہ معلومات دیگر زبان یا مختلف فارمیٹ میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Chinese 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，請與我們聯繫

Polish Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

Portuguese Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutra idioma ou num formato diferente.

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Headington
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OX3 7JX

Switchboard 01865 901 000
Email enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
icareyoucare@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Website www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/stroke-rehabilitation-unit-osru

OH 042.19