

Support for unpaid carers

Information for families and friends supporting
or caring for a patient at UHS



At University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS), we are committed to providing support, advice and information to anyone providing unpaid care for a patient at one of our hospitals.

This leaflet explains how we may be able to support you, both in hospital and in your local community with the support of our charity partners. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this leaflet.

Who is classed as a carer?

A carer is anyone who regularly helps a person close to them (for example, a relative, friend or neighbour) with their day-to-day life, because of illness, disability, mental health, age, substance misuse or gambling.

The support the carer offers may be practical or emotional but is always unpaid (benefits such as Carers Allowance do not count as payment).

How can we help you?

Southampton Carers Charter

At UHS, we are proud to display the Southampton Carers Charter, which describes our commitment to anyone who helps others by providing unpaid care and support. It explains the standards you can expect from our services and who to contact if things go wrong.

The Southampton Carers Charter has been developed by carers together with a range of local organisations. It is adapted from the Hampshire Carers Charter, which was co-designed by over 100 carers.

The Southampton Carers Charter is based around five core commitments:

- We help and support you as a person in your own right.
- We actively seek your knowledge and opinion and, where appropriate, recognise that you speak for the person you support.
- We listen, we keep you updated, and we consult with you when things change.
- We work in partnership with you to provide care and support.
- We value your voice and first-hand experience in shaping and improving our services.

If you have any questions about this, think we have not upheld our commitments, or want to compliment a service or staff member on their support for carers, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS).

Telephone: **023 8120 6325** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm)

Email: pals@uhs.nhs.uk

Patient and family support hub

Our patient and family support hub provides a single point of contact for patients, families and unpaid carers who need additional support from UHS. Our team is made up of a number of permanent staff and volunteers.

Because all carers have different responsibilities and requirements, we aim to offer tailored support that is centred around your individual needs and preferences.

Support we can offer includes:

- Advice, support and information for carers centred around your individual needs.
- Access to rest breaks and time away from the wards during long-stay inpatient visits.

- Appropriate signposting to some of our community and charity partners, depending on where you live (this may include help to access community support and other services to protect and support your health and wellbeing).
- Registration with the sunflower lanyard scheme to let hospital staff know that you may require extra support.
- Advocacy, to help ensure your voice is heard in hospital and in the community.
- Help with discussing your role in your loved one's care and how you might communicate effectively with clinical teams.
- Designated carer shower and changing facilities on site so that you can wash and refresh yourself without having to be too far from your loved one.
- Meal vouchers so you can access a hot meal while you are caring for your loved one in hospital.

For more information about how we can support you, please read the information on the next page or visit our patient and family support hub which is located on B level, East wing at Southampton General Hospital (near the eye unit entrance). The hub is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays).



Support in hospital

At UHS, we aim to help pave the way for carer support. We are proud to offer the following support to carers in our hospitals.

Carer meal vouchers

If you are staying overnight to provide care while the person you care for is an inpatient, you may be entitled to meal vouchers sponsored by Southampton Hospitals Charity. These vouchers are for use in our Feast restaurant on B level.

To see if you are eligible for the vouchers, please contact our patient and family support hub using the details at the end of this leaflet. If you are eligible, you can obtain one meal voucher per patient per day from nursing staff on the ward your loved one is being cared for on or from our patient and family support hub.

Please note that if you are a parent caring for a child in hospital, in addition to the meal vouchers, you may also be able to receive meals and snacks from the ward your child is being cared for on. Please ask the ward nursing staff about this.

Parking concessions

If the person you are caring for is staying in hospital, you may be eligible for certain parking concessions (special discounts) as per government guidance. The ward caring for your loved one can provide you with a form that gives a 7, 14 or 30 day concession. There are also a number of other special concessions available. For more information, please speak to the ward providing your loved one's care or contact the Travelwise office: www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-general-hospital/uhs-travelwise-office

Community signposting

Our team are specialised in supporting carers and will be able to signpost you to services in the community to help assist you once your loved one leaves our care.

Myra app

Myra is a free, easy to use app designed to help support older adults, families and unpaid carers through hospital discharge (leaving hospital), recovery and everyday care at home.

It brings together trusted guidance, practical tools, and access to local and national services, helping people feel informed, prepared and supported at some of the most challenging moments in their or their loved one's care journey.

You can download the Myra app from the App Store or Google Play. For more information, please visit: myra-app.co.uk

Sunflower lanyard scheme

We offer free, personalised sunflower lanyards to UHS patients with a physical or hidden disability and their carers. These lanyards indicate to people around you that you may need additional support, help or just a little more time. If you would like to register for a sunflower lanyard, contact our patient and family support hub.

Garden access

Our patient and family support hub has a beautiful garden, which is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a great space to take a break and get some fresh air.



Shower and changing facilities

There are designated shower and changing facilities for unpaid carers to use in the patient and family support hub. These facilities (including the use of towels and toiletries) are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 3.30pm. If you would like to use these facilities, please contact or visit our patient and family support hub to book a time slot.



Appointment companion service

If you are unable to attend an outpatient appointment at the hospital with the person you are caring for, our patient and family support hub offer an appointment companion service. As part of this service, the hub can arrange for a member of their team to accompany your loved one from any entrance at Southampton General Hospital to their appointment and then accompany them back to the same entrance. Please note that the appointment companion will not attend the appointment. If you would like more information about this service or to book an appointment companion, contact our patient and family support hub.

Butterfly friend volunteer service

Butterfly friends are specially trained volunteers who provide emotional support and companionship to patients nearing the end of their lives and their families and friends.

For more information about butterfly friends, please visit:

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/patient-experience-and-satisfaction/bereavement-support/butterfly-friends

If you would like a butterfly friend to be there for you or your loved one, please speak to our patient and family support hub team or a member of the healthcare team caring for your loved one.

Call for Concern service

Call for Concern (C4C) is an inpatient safety service that is part of Martha's Rule (a patient safety initiative). It gives inpatients or their loved ones an opportunity to call for help when they feel concerned that the healthcare team has not recognised their own or their loved one's worsening condition. For more information about C4C and how to access this service, visit: www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/intensive-care/critical-care/call-for-concern

Frequently asked questions

Is there Blue Badge parking on site?

If you or the person you are caring for has a Blue Badge, you can park at our hospitals for free. Please have your badge number ready as you approach the exit gate, then press the call for assistance button on the ticket machine. You will be asked to provide your badge number to exit the carpark.

You can find Blue Badge spaces in the following locations:

Southampton General Hospital

- Orange car park lower level
- Blue car park (there are lots of spaces outside Victoria House)
- Opposite the West wing entrance
- Outside the Wessex Neurological Centre
- Underneath Ronald McDonald House
- On the roadside next to the orange car park and other entrances to the hospital site

Princess Anne Hospital

- Yellow car park

Is there wheelchair access?

There are a number of wheelchairs available at the main entrance of Southampton General Hospital which patients, carers or visitors can borrow. These require a £5 deposit which will be refunded to you when you return the wheelchair.

Where can I access support getting to and from appointments?

If you are unsure where to go in the hospital, speak to a member of staff on the front desk who will be happy to help you and give you directions.

For help with travelling to the hospital, please read Healthwatch Southampton's 'Travelling to Healthcare Appointments in Southampton' booklet. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.healthwatchsouthampton.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Healthwatch-Southampton-transport-booklet-FULL-ONLINE-VERSION-2.pdf



Can I stay overnight?

Where possible and appropriate, we will support you to stay with the person you care for overnight, either on a reclining chair or a fold-out bed. Please discuss this with the ward staff and they will accommodate this where they can.

Can I help in providing the care?

Yes, but you will need to discuss this with ward staff first so it can be managed safely. We know that you are an expert in the care you provide, but sometimes we may need to change the way care is delivered in hospital.

Our clinical and nursing staff are responsible for providing nursing care to our patients during their stay in hospital so you will not need to provide this type of care unless you wish to.

The ward staff caring for your loved one will complete a document known as a 'Carers Pass' with you. This document provides a framework for open discussion and clear communication, helping to establish agreed ways of working between patients, carers and hospital staff. For more information about the Carers Pass, visit our 'Carers support service' page (see 'Useful links' section on page 11).

For more information about the care we provide at UHS, see our 'Fundamentals of Care' framework.

Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/your-stay-in-hospital/fundamentals-of-care



Can I visit the hospital if there is an infection control warning in place?

Although we recognise the importance of your role as a carer, the safety of our patients, carers, visitors and staff is our main priority. When completing your Carers Pass with the ward, please discuss visiting guidelines and restrictions (visiting will be assessed on a case by case basis when a restriction is in place).

Additional support

In addition to the support we can provide in hospital, we also work with a number of local charities who can provide you with support and advice, both while your loved one is being cared for in hospital and after they leave hospital.

The charities on the next page can:

- provide free information, advice and support
- listen to your challenges and discuss ways to help you
- provide you with information to help empower you to make informed choices

- give you a voice
- raise awareness of unpaid caring
- signpost to local support and social groups
- inform you of upcoming activities and events for carers

Unpaid Carers Support Southampton

Unpaid Carers Support Southampton is a support service for adults aged 18 and over who provide unpaid care to a family member, partner, friend, or neighbour who could not manage without help due to illness, disability, mental health needs, addiction, or frailty.

The service is delivered through a project of Citizens Advice Southampton and aims to improve carers' wellbeing, confidence, and access to support.

Website: www.unpaidcarerssupport.org.uk

Carers Together

Carers Together is a carer-led charity that offers support for unpaid carers living anywhere in Hampshire.

Website: www.carerstogether.org.uk

Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Hampshire

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Hampshire is part of a network of 130 Carer Centres in the UK. The network is co-ordinated by The Carers Trust (formally PRTC). It provides unpaid carers with free information, support, advice, contingency and emergency planning, resources and more.

Website: www.carercentre.com

Useful links

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/patient-and-family-support-hub

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/patients-with-additional-needs-and-carers/carers-support-service

Contact us

If you are a carer and would like to get in touch, please contact us.

Patient and family support hub

Telephone: **0800 484 0135** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm)

Email: PFSH@uhs.nhs.uk

Please include your name, telephone number and postcode.

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **PFSH@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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