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**Advice for people leaving hospital**

This is information for those who are due to be discharged from the hospital and are concerned that they have no accommodation or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Please see separate advice for “Advice for those living with a mental health condition” if you are not being, or have recently been, discharged from the hospital.

**Before being discharged from hospital**

If you are being discharged from hospital but have no home to go to you must make sure the hospital staff is aware of your circumstances.

If you were homeless before being admitted to hospital you should make sure any agencies or support workers that were supporting you are made aware that you have gone to hospital. They will know you are safe and can work with you to maximise the opportunities to access accommodation when you are ready to be discharged.

If you had accommodation before being admitted to hospital but you are concerned that this accommodation may no longer be available or suitable you should discuss this with the hospital staff as soon as possible. The hospital staff might contact the Council’s Housing Advice Team or local accommodation providers to try and arrange a planned discharge from hospital. This is the best way to increase the chances of avoiding being discharged without accommodation. The hospital should submit something called a ‘Duty to Refer’ to the Council. This is where a specific public authority identifies and refers a service user who is homeless or at risk of homelessness to a local authority. The hospital would need your consent to make the referral. You can choose the local authority you wish to be referred to. For further information on this, please follow the link here: <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/dutytorefer>.

The Discharge Coordinators in West Sussex hospitals have access to services provided by Southdown Housing whose job it is to work with the Council and providers to plan your discharge if you are concerned about being discharged without accommodation. Local arrangements may be in place with district Council where you lived before admission.

The Council might have a duty to provide you with emergency accommodation when you are discharged. This will depend on your circumstances, your previous accommodation and whether you are ‘vulnerable’ when you are ready to leave hospital.

Irrelevant of any vulnerability you will be entitled to advice from the Council on securing alternative accommodation when you are ready to leave hospital.

**Emergency accommodation**

If you are homeless when leaving hospital, you should ask the hospital to help you contact the Council. This could be where you were living before going into hospital, or where you might need to live in the future if you require additional on-going support.

The Council will consider whether you are vulnerable (because of your admission, treatment and other health issues) to determine if there is a duty to provide temporary accommodation.

When considering assistance available the Council will look at:

* the length of time you were in hospital
* your current health on discharge
* any discharge plan and evidence provided by the hospital
* information from your GP
* any medication you have been prescribed
* whether you receive any third-party support (e.g. occupational therapy, probation services, advocacy, Community Mental Health Team, drug or alcohol rehabilitation, learning disability team, Adult Services)
* evidence provided by yourself about your homelessness
* the nature of your discharge and how successful you have been in securing and sustaining accommodation
* your personal support networks including professionals, friends and family
* evidence of any vulnerability including your mental health, drug and alcohol misuse or time in care, custody or the armed forces
* any other factors that might impact your ability to find accommodation independently

Any accommodation provided will need to be suitable for your needs and may not therefore be available in your preferred location. If you are not eligible, homeless and ‘vulnerable’ on discharge from hospital the Council can still provide you with advice on your housing options but will likely not be able to provide you with accommodation.

**Future accommodation options**

The range of your future accommodation options will be determined by your circumstances, but these could include:

* private rented sector accommodation
* supported housing (either through local charities or the housing register)
* Accommodation provided by West Sussex County Council (if your needs are considered too high to be met by general needs housing provisions).

The Council will work closely with yourself, medical professionals and other support services to ensure that your needs are fully assessed and suitable future housing options identified.

If you have no local connection to Chichester the Council may refer you to an area where you do have a connection for support to be offered in helping you access accommodation.

**Disabled Facilities Grants**

If you have a home, but also have a disability which means it needs to be adapted to live safely and independently, you might be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) form the Council.

DFGs are available to homeowners, private tenants & housing association tenants in the Chichester District and can be given for works including:

* Providing access to your property
* Installing a stair lift
* Converting a bathroom to a level access shower
* Providing wheelchair accessible rooms

You will need to have had an Occupational Therapist (OT) assess your needs. You can contact the OT Team at West Sussex County on 01243 642 121. Further information regarding occupational therapy can be found here: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/support-in-your-own-home/occupational-therapy/>

For further guidance on Disabled Facilities Grants, please see information detailed on the Chichester District Council website, located here: <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/adapting-your-home>.

If you require further advice, or you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, please submit a housing advice form to us: <https://www.chichesterhomemove.org.uk/>

**Who else can help you?**

You will be able to get more advice on housing options for people leaving hospital from the following services:

**West Sussex County Council (WSCC)** – provides services to vulnerable adults within the county through Adult CarePoint.

Website: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/adults/contact-us-for-adult-social-care-support/>

Phone: 01243 642 121.

**Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** – if you are not sure how to seek help the CAB can provide you with a direction on who to speak with. The CAB in Chichester is based in the Chichester DC offices.

Address: East Pallant House, Chichester PO19 1TY or you can call on 08082787969.

**Shelter** – provides advisory services to those with a housing need. Shelter's offers a 24-hour helpline.

Website: [england.shelter.org.uk/](http://england.shelter.org.uk/)

Phone: 0808 800 4444