Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Before you go into hospital

When you have to go into hospital it can be a worrying and uncertain time. You may be attending for an appointment, or you may be staying overnight or for a much longer period of time. This section gives you information on what to do before you go into hospital, which will hopefully help to prepare you for your visit.

Speak to your GP

If you are about to go into hospital, you should try to let your GP know the date you are due to go in.

If you are **caring for somebody else**, talk with your GP about how correct care can be continued while you are in hospital.

If you think that you may need help to carry out your normal activities after **leaving hospital**, you should discuss it with your GP before you go in as well as with the hospital staff during your stay.

Hospitals in Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust runs the two main hospitals in Newcastle; the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) and the Freeman Hospital. The Trust also runs the Campus for Ageing and Vitality on the site of the former General Hospital.

The Patient and Visitor Information section on the Trust's website has more information on your stay in hospital.

Planning your visit to hospital

AccessAble can help you to plan your trips to hospitals and other places like restaurants. They visit and review the accessibility of places in Newcastle. Use their directory of venues to find wheelchair friendly venues, read more about facilities and disabled access available. Such as:

- photos of the facilities
- entrance to the building
- accessible toilets or changing places
- how easy it is to move around the venue
- lifts
- transport and parking

- dementia friendly
- quiet or safe space
- sign language

Individual or special needs

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provide the following services and facilities:

- **Interpreter Service** (including sign language and lip speakers) – if you require an interpreter, you need to contact the hospital ward before you go into hospital.
- **Wheelchairs or other special equipment** – you can take any special equipment you already have into hospital with you that you may need. However, you should contact the nurse in charge of the relevant area before you go in, so that the hospital staff know what you are bringing in with you.
- **Guide dogs** – are permitted in hospital
- **Carers** – you should advise the nursing staff on the ward if you are a carer or have a carer, so that they can take your needs into account
- **Mobility** – if you need assistance getting to the ward or to the department you are visiting in the hospital, you should ask the receptionist who will arrange help for you.

Accessible Information

The Accessible Information Standard is a UK law to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are given information they can easily read or understand. Hospital and health services must find out your information and communication needs make sure you get support the way you need it in an accessible format.

For example you may need large print text for a letter or a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter at medical appointments for communication.

Read more about Accessible information

What should I take with me?

Unless you are an emergency patient, you will have received an admission notification letter telling you when you need to go into hospital and where you need to go. You should take this letter with you.

You should also take in the following:

Information

- National Insurance number
- Government Pension Book number
- Department of Social Security number

- Name of your GP

Personal Items

- Night clothes, including a dressing gown and slippers. You may wish to bring some comfortable and loose ordinary clothing for during the day. Bedside storage space is limited so you should try to keep the amount to a minimum.
- Toiletries, such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, flannel, hairbrush/comb, shaving equipment (facilities are generally available on hospital wards for electric razors; however you should take your own shaving adaptor)
- Towels
- A small amount of money, in case you want to buy anything from the shop or use a payphone
- Books, magazines, puzzles, music, or notepaper and a pen, so that you have things to keep your mind occupied
- Any special equipment that you require to meet your specific needs, e.g. a wheelchair or walking stick

If you are able to, it is helpful to mark all clothing and towels with your name.

You should avoid taking valuables into hospital. Hospital staff can't accept responsibility for the loss of personal property or valuables, unless you have handed them over for safe keeping to the nursing staff. If you do hand them over to staff, you should ask for a receipt.

Medication

You should take any medication that you are currently taking into hospital and tell the nursing and medical staff what you are taking. If you have your medication in an organiser, such as a Dossette or Medidos box, or have any special cards which detail current treatment, you should let the staff know.

It is also important that you let the nursing and medical staff know if you have any allergies (e.g. to certain drugs or to latex), or if you have had any adverse reactions to medication, so that they can make a note of it in your records.

If any of your medication is changed while you are in hospital, the hospital will supply what you need.

Check the accessibility of the hospital

AccessAble can help you to plan your trips to places like hospitals, wards, restaurants, cinemas,, railway stations, hotels, colleges, universities, hospitals and more. They visit and review the accessibility of places in Newcastle. Use their directory of venues to find wheelchair friendly venues, read more about facilities and disabled access available. Such as:

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- accessible toilets or changing places
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What if I have a pet that needs looking after?

You may have family or friends that can look after your pet whilst you are in hospital. However, if you don't have anyone that can help, there are many local pet sitting and pet caring companies to choose from.

The Cinnamon Trust is a national charity for older people and their pets. Amongst other things they provide a national fostering service for pets whose owners face a spell in hospital. A network of volunteers take pets into their own homes and care for them until you leave hospital and are ready to be reunited.

Other Useful Information

- **NHS 111** is the new telephone service which has replaced NHS Direct. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.
- **NHS.UK** is a website providing health and medicines information and you can search for local services.
- **My Hospital films** show videos on a range of topics including relaxation techniques and what to expect from various treatments and screenings.

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Useful Organisations

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Email: pals@nhct.nhs.uk

Website: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/what-is-pals-patient-advice-and-liaison-service/

Telephone: 0800 032 0202

Address: Freepost PALS,

Patient Information Centre – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

Website: www.cntw.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 246 7288

Address: St Nicholas Hospital, NE3 3XT

Cinnamon Trust

Email: admin@cinnamon.org.uk

Website: www.cinnamon.org.uk

Telephone: 01736 757 900

Address: 10 Market Square, TR27 4HE

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Website: https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 233 6161

Address: Freeman Hospital, NE7 7DN

NHS 111

Website: www.nhs.uk/111

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

Email: info@scie.org.uk

Website: www.scie.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7766 7400

Address: First floor, SW1Y 5BP

AccessAble

Email: hello@accessable.co.uk

Website: https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/newcastle-city-council/

Telephone: 01438 842 710

Address: Unit 7 Arlington Court, SG1 2FS

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