



**People's experience of leaving Worcestershire
hospitals during Covid-19 (March 2020 - April 2021)**

HWW Report - August 2021



Why hospital discharge?

- Need to free up bed space due to virus
- March 2020 - Government Guidance - introduced national model:
 - Discharge same day as “medically fit”
 - Pathways approach
 - “Discharge to Assess”
- HWE Report - what is the situation in Worcestershire?



What we did



Online and Paper Surveys - 78 patients and 49 carers



In depth telephone or video interviews
- 7 patients and 8 unpaid carers



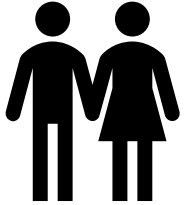
Care providers - interviews with 2 care homes and 3 home care agencies



NHS and Social Care Staff - interviews with 24 staff involved with hospital discharge



Who we heard from



Most survey respondents are **women 70%** and from a **White British Background (94%)**



Age range evenly spread between those aged 24 - 64yrs (52%) and older age groups (47%)



Most respondents **discharged from** WRH (67%), the Alex (27%) and Community Hospitals (7%)



WHAT WE FOUND OUT



Communication & Preparedness

Mixed experience

Issues - Patients

- 67% of respondents not given written information
- 45% reported their family weren't told they were leaving hospital
- 1 in 3 patients didn't feel prepared to leave

Issues - Carers

- Support for use of iPads/phones
- Communication could be difficult whilst relative was an inpatient, particularly if relative was living with dementia or non-verbal
- 1 in 2 carers didn't feel sufficiently informed or involved in discharge
- Some carers thought relative not ready to leave

Issues - Care providers

- Communication with care homes and care agencies about discharge



Leaving Hospital

- Not everyone is Covid-19 tested on discharge
- Discharge at weekends/night can be problematic
- 37% waited over 4 hrs to leave
- Transport - requirements, waits & suitability
- Medication - waits, information & management
- Discharge lounge - information from wards
- Information in discharge forms and letters varied
- 53% not given named contact for further advice
- Promote/create opportunities for feedback



Reablement & Community Services

- Most, but not all, asked about circumstances at home / care and support needs
- 40 had assessment and 36 had care & support at home - mixed experience

Positive:

- Most visited same day / day after
- Asked about a range of support needs
- Praise for timely support & for staff

Issues:

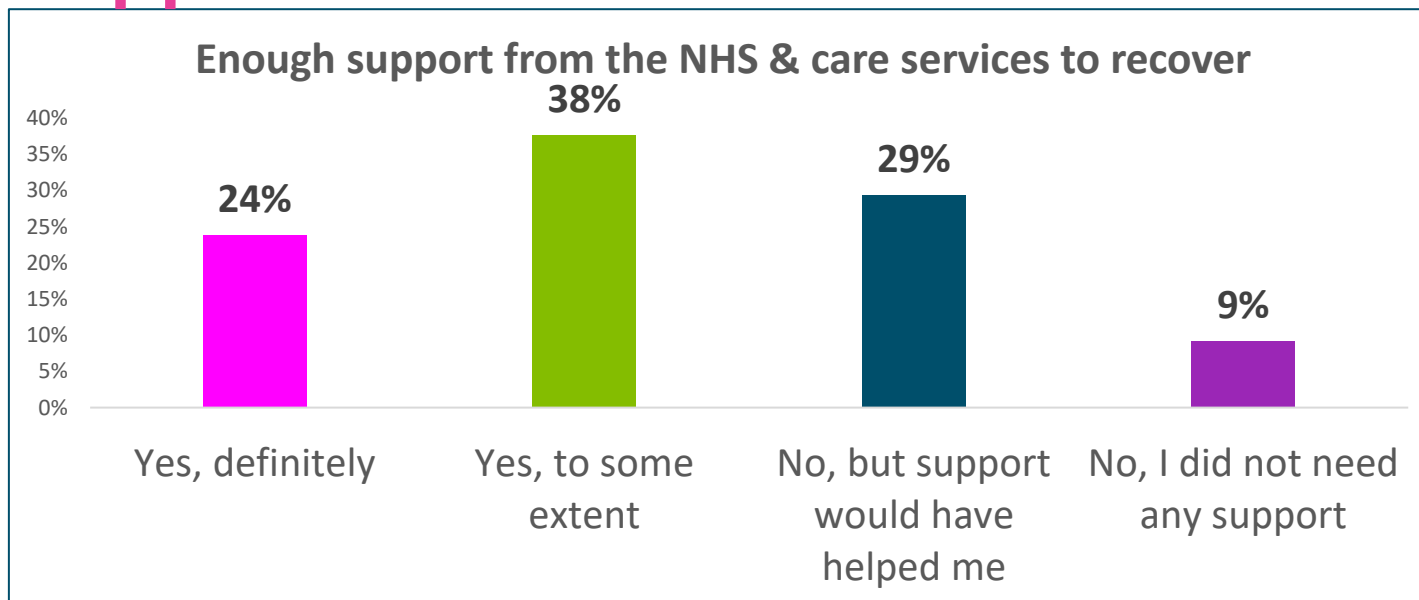
- Support needed but not provided
- Communication
- Support felt to be limited
- Generally positive experience of OT & Equipment on discharge, but community support can be difficult



Support for Carers

- 1 in 2 carers felt caring responsibilities were not considered in decision making when they should have been
- 44% of unpaid carers felt they did not have enough information to support their relative after discharge
- Covid-19 has added to pressures experienced by some carers

Support to recover



What NHS & Social Care Staff told us

- NHS & Social Care staff generally work well together
- Support for Discharge to Assess model
- Discharge planning in Acute hospitals should start earlier & decisions should be made earlier in the day
- Finding capacity to support people at home or in another setting can be challenging
- Room for flexibility is required to meet people's needs
- There are links between hospital and housing providers for people who are homeless
- It was clear NHS and Social Care staff wanted to get it right for patients

We heard praise for NHS and Social Care staff who were working hard to do their best for patients under difficult circumstances



Next Steps

- We made 29 recommendations covering:

Improved communication, better planning for and timing of when people leave hospital, Covid-19 testing, transport and medication, information to patients after they have been discharged, follow up contacts, support at home and in the community, improved dialogue with care providers and support for carers.

- We have asked for a “system” response
- We will follow up on our recommendations

