



Great Western Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Passport

Covid-19 Recovery Pathway



**Great People.
Great Place.
Great Western Hospitals.**

Your patient passport from hospital admission to community services.

Name:

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Introduction

This pack has been developed to support you with your recovery from Covid-19, wherever that journey may begin.

It has been designed to offer advice on the management of some of the main symptoms that you may experience on your road to recovery.

Symptoms may include:

- Shortness of breath
- Muscle weakness and joint stiffness
- Reduced mobility or fitness
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Psychological impact

You may also wish to access the following resource, made available by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust:

<https://covidpatientsupport.lthtr.nhs.uk/#/>

Recovery from Covid-19 may take many months and this may be perfectly normal.

However, if you do not see any improvement in your symptoms or you are concerned, then you should speak with your GP, 111 or your health care provider.

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Information about you

Preferred Name:	
Lives with:	
Type of property [stairs / access]?	
Package of care / other help:	
Cares for:	
Occupation / previous occupation:	
Likes:	
Dislikes:	
Additional information:	

Goal setting

Setting achievable goals as various stages, helps to focus your recovery and see the progress that you are making. You may like to set new goals each week, which can include physical and/or mental health goals.

Examples:

- To walk to the end of my bed
- To do a form of relaxation daily
- To make a cup of tea/coffee on my own

My goal	How will this goal be achieved?
Date goal set: Goal set by: Achieved on:	

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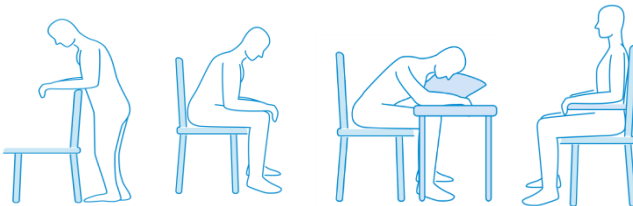
Breathlessness

Most people will experience breathlessness during their recovery from Covid-19.

Many tasks may now make you breathless, such as getting out of bed, getting dressed, walking, or doing jobs around the house. Being breathless can make you panic or feel frightened.

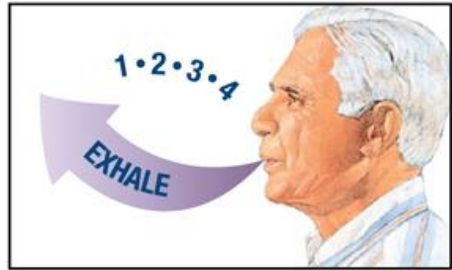
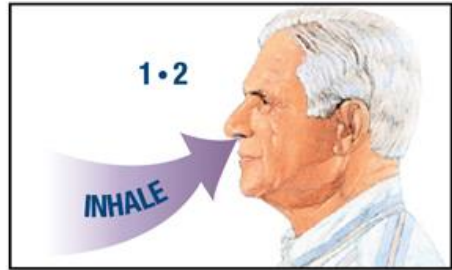
Try the following ways to ease your breathlessness:

1. Stop talking/moving, and allow your breathing to settle.
2. Find the most comfortable position for you



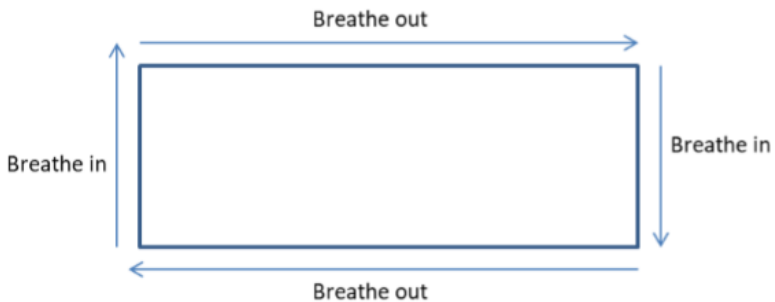
3. Breathing control - the aim is to move from fast, upper chest breathing to relaxed, slow tummy breathing:

- a) Breathe in through your nose.
- b) Breathe out slowly through pursed lips.
- c) Allow a rest and wait for the next breath in to come.
- d) Place one hand on your tummy – feel it rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.
- e) Enjoy the feeling of slower, calmer breathing



You could also try “rectangular breathing”. Look at rectangle (e.g. window, screen or picture)

and track your eyes along the edges, controlling your breathing as below:



Physical Ability

It is normal to become weak and deconditioned during your illness. Your recovery will need to be a gradual process, during which you will be able to do more daily activities. These might start as simple tasks such as feeding yourself or, brushing your teeth.

It is also beneficial to build your physical ability by doing daily exercises, which will strengthen your muscles, heart and lungs, lower stress, help with sleep and improve your mood.

Below are some guided exercises for different stages of your recovery journey.

When you are following these exercises, it is often hard to know how much you can safely do. You may find it beneficial to use the Borg scale as a guide.

You should aim to exercise between levels 3 and 5, in the yellow zone.



The Borg Scale:

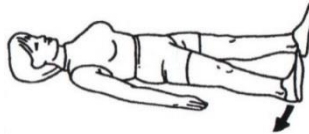
	Breathlessness	Muscular Effort
1	No problem	Very light
2	Very easy	Fairly light
3	Easy	Moderate
4	Beginning to feel puffed	Somewhat hard
5	Feeling a bit puffed	Hard
6	Feeling puffed	
7	Tiring	Very hard
8	Very tiring	
9	Out of breath	
10	Exhausted	Very, very hard

Bed Exercises

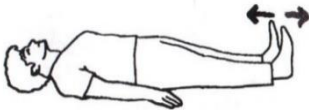
All exercises are to be done lying on your back on the bed with your legs straight. Repeat each exercise on both sides.



Push the back of your knee into the bed. Pull your foot up towards you.



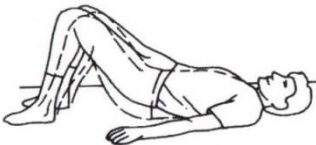
Slide your leg out to the side then return to the middle.



Keep your legs straight, pull your toes up towards you and then point them away.



Slide your heel up the bed towards your bottom and back down again. Slide your heel back down the bed.



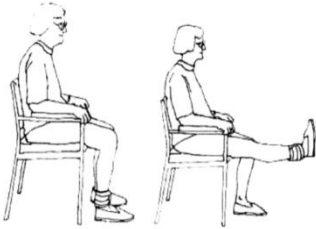
Keeping both knees bent and your feet flat on the bed, lift your bottom off the bed.



Use a rolled up towel under your knee. Raise your heel off the bed and straighten your knee.

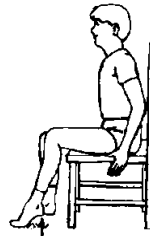
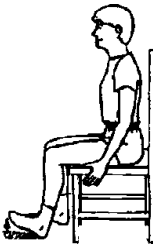
Seated Exercises

Sit up tall in a chair with your back well supported



Straighten one knee at a time and hold for 5 seconds before lowering gently.

March your legs in sitting position.



Raise your toes up, keeping heels on floor and gently return.

Raise your heels up, keeping toes on the floor and gently return.

Standing Exercises



Stand from a chair using arms if needed. Gain balance then slowly sit back down again.

Place hands on stable surface for support, feet shoulders width apart. Stand tall and look ahead. Then complete the following exercises on both legs.



March on the spot

Lift one leg out to the side then lower slowly



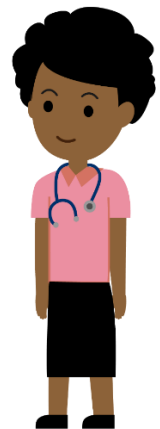
Lift one leg straight out behind you then lower slowly.

Use the below calendar to keep track of your home exercise programme. Tick each time you complete your exercises

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	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							
Week 5							
Week 6							
Week 7							



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Links to online exercise resources:

Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust does not accept any liability for any injuries sustained by any person following or during the below exercise programmes.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)

Keeping active and healthy pages

www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-healthy

The British Lung Foundation (BLF)

Stay Active and Stay well exercise videos

www.blf.org.uk/exercise-video

NHS

Live well, exercise pages

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/

Links to community exercise support:

Swindon – Live well hub

www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20139/live_well_swindon_hub

Wiltshire - Active Health

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-gp-referral



Fatigue

Fatigue is an extreme sense of physical tiredness and weakness that may continue for weeks or months after a serious illness or hospital stay. It is often due to a mixture of physical and emotional factors, and may result in changes to your sleeping patterns or eating habits.

Cognitive fatigue can result in difficulties managing to follow conversations with several people, stay on top of your normal correspondence and to problem solve your difficulties

Fatigue can be extremely frustrating, but there are ways to make the most of the energy you do have.

Energy Conservation is a way of increasing your activity, without causing unwelcome fatigue. This is achieved by following 3P's.

Plan ahead:

Spread your tasks throughout the time you have, rather than all at once. Plan rest in between tiring activities or do these when your energy levels are higher such as first thing in the morning / in the evening.

Reduce distractions when you are trying to learn new information

Pace:

Break tasks up into manageable chunks, allowing for rests in between. Do not rush activities, but take your time and go at a steady speed.

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Too much activity in one go will leave your energy levels very low, and it will take a long time to recover.

'Paced' activity ensures your energy levels don't drop too low, and allows you to achieve more.

Prioritise:

Decide which tasks are most important for you to do and let others help you with the rest.

Over time, your energy levels will start to improve and you will be able to do activities more easily.



Psychological Impact and Support

It can take many months to recover after having been admitted into hospital with covid-19. Being physically weak and having to put a lot of effort into doing daily things, like getting washed and dressed, can make us feel low and frustrated. Help from others is often needed, especially in the early days, which can leave us feeling as if we've lost our independence.

You may notice that you are feeling:

- sad and tearful
- irritable and snappy
- exhausted or not able to sleep properly
- not bothered about your appearance
- guilty about how others are affected and a burden to your family and friends
- stigmatised by having had covid-19 and fearful of others getting it
- frustrated by the things you can't currently do or how forgetful you are
- angry that this has happened to you and how slow recovery seems to be
- much less hungry than you used to be and struggling to eat
- confused about what has happened and how unwell you have been
- scared that you have had covid-19 and more fearful for your health and that of your loved ones
- worried about the future and whether you will get back to doing what you were before.

Your family and friends will be pleased to have you home, but they may not understand your feelings or why you are acting differently. Talk to them about how you feel. Also, speak to someone from your healthcare team or GP surgery as they will be able to offer you help or who best to contact during this difficult time.

After leaving hospital, you may notice some psychological experiences related to the challenging time you have been through. Sometimes these can be triggered by a sound, smell, something you see, or by a conversation with someone. They usually disappear over time, but could include things like:

- intense, vivid dreams or nightmares that feel very real
- disturbing, sudden, vivid memories of events in the past (flashbacks)
- experiencing seeing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- feeling much more worried, nervous or anxious about things than usual
- feeling tearful or depressed, or having deep feelings of hopelessness
- not enjoying the things that you usually do or lacking interest in life

Understanding what has happened to you

People feel differently about their time in hospital. For some, the memory soon fades into the background. Some have no clear memory of it, or they may try to forget it. For others, being so ill can be a very traumatic experience and it may take time for them to come to terms with it afterwards.

The strong drugs and the treatment the staff had to give you to help support your body will have affected your body and mind. It is common for patients who needed intensive treatment, such as a ventilator, to experience hallucinations, nightmares or dreams that can seem real and very frightening. At times, you may have felt slightly aware, but didn't know where you were or what was happening.

It's common for patients who have been heavily sedated to have hallucinations or nightmares. You may have had dreams or feelings of being tortured, trapped in bed, or felt as if you were being held captive. This is likely caused by having drip lines and catheters inserted into the body to help fight the virus. The fear this causes can remain for weeks afterwards.

You may also have felt some paranoia as you tried to make sense of things when you were confused. This too tends to pass with time.

If going back to hospital for a follow-up appointment frightens you, take along someone you trust to reassure you.

Occasionally, patients (and their relatives) can have very powerful stress reactions after their time in hospital. This is known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Most people who have experienced PTSD found that talking to a psychological therapist about their stay in hospital helps. If this is something that is affecting you, please discuss it with your GP.

Things that may help you get over what happened

After leaving hospital you may have questions about your stay. Sometimes we may be able to invite you back to the ward you were in to look around, see some of the staff who looked after you, and

find out more about what happened to you. The idea of going back to the ward may feel frightening and it may be some time until you feel ready to do it. However, it can be very helpful to see where you were and find out more about what happened.

You may not remember everything that happened to you in the ward. Writing down what you can remember can help collect together your memories. You could try to remember something each day to help make sense of the time you lost. It can also help to ask your family and friends what things they know.

If it helps, take the time to understand the medical side of what happened to you, so ask questions during your follow-up appointment.

Sleep

You need regular sleep to keep your body healthy. It can take time to get back into a normal routine. You may find it harder to fall asleep, or you may often wake during the night. Try a milky bedtime drink, but avoid tea or coffee as the caffeine can keep you awake. Reading or listening to the radio or relaxing music before you go to sleep may also help. Your doctor or nurse can give you advice if you have trouble sleeping, but things should return to normal as you become stronger and more active.

Kindness and goals

Being kind to yourself is an important part of the recovery journey.

Take things slowly, and don't expect too much of yourself too soon. Your body and mind has been through a lot, and it is bound to take time to build energy levels and stamina back up. Set yourself

realistic goals that you can achieve each day, and find ways to reward and praise yourself. Perhaps write these down in a notebook or diary so you can look back on the progress you're making over time.

It can be important to set goals that are fun and pleasurable, such as watching comedy on the tv and spending time with loved ones, in addition to your physical rehab goals, so that you are nurturing both your mind and body.

Talk to yourself in a caring and compassionate way, as you would to a loved one – be an encouraging and supportive coach to yourself, saying things like 'I can do this' 'I am making progress' 'It's taking time, and that's to be expected and OK'.

Relaxation

Make sure you plan in time regularly each day to relax and re-charge by doing something relaxing. This is another really important part of your recovery. This could be engaging your mind or body in anything you find soothing and relaxing, such as putting your feet up listening to calming music, reading, doing a puzzle or spending time practising meditation. Experiment with different things and find out what works for you. Remember to be realistic with what you aim for - if 5 minutes is realistic, don't aim for more.

Here are some websites with further psychology information that you may find helpful:

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips
www.psychologytools.com

Psychology Support in the Community

Your GP can direct you to the NHS psychology service within your local area:

In Swindon, this is LIFT Psychology <https://lift-swindon.awp.nhs.uk>

Tel: 01793 836836

In Wiltshire, this is Wiltshire IAPT <https://iapt-wilts.awp.nhs.uk>

Tel: 01380 731335

Every area has an NHS psychology service, usually offering a range of online courses as well as 1:1 appointments to help learn useful ways of coping.

If you feel at risk of harm to yourself then please call your GP or out of hours GP line 111, or the Samaritans are available 24/7 on 116 123.



Swallowing

As a result of COVID-19, you may experience difficulties eating, drinking or swallowing.

There could be several different causes for these issues:

- Swelling in your throat
- Difficulty coordinating breathing and swallowing
- Muscle wasting from periods 'off your feet'
- Reduced sensation in your mouth/throat
- Damage from breathing tubes

Tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Sit upright for all eating and drinking
- Only eat and drink when you're fully awake and alert
- Reduce distractions during mealtimes
- Take small sips/mouthfuls
- Eat slowly
- Try softer foods if needed

Who can help?

Speech and language therapists assess, diagnose and treat swallowing disorders. Speech and language therapists also provide education for families and carers and liaise with other professionals.

Get help if you are experiencing:

- Coughing during or after swallowing
- Losing weight
- Recurrent chest infections
- Choking

If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your GP who can refer you for specialist assessment.

Useful information:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/swallowing-problems-dysphagia/



Communication

COVID-19 can cause temporary changes to the sound and comfort of your voice. These voice problems may take 6-8 weeks to resolve.

COVID-19 can also cause reduced breath support for speech, and fatigue can affect your thinking skills.

Tips and strategies:

- Keep well hydrated
- Always aim to use your normal voice, don't worry if all that comes out is a whisper or a croak; avoid straining to force your voice to sound louder
- Don't deliberately whisper – this puts your voice under more strain
- While your voice recovers avoid prolonged (more than 5 minute) conversations by telephone or video chat. Try using text-based options instead
- You may notice your voice fatigues more rapidly than normal. This is to be expected – take a break to give your vocal cords time to recover

Who can help?

Speech and language therapists assess, diagnose and treat voice and communication disorders. If you are an inpatient, ask your nurse or ward doctor for a referral to speech and language therapy. If you are at home, then your point of contact should be your GP who can refer you on for speech and language therapy and for ear, nose and throat specialist assessment.

Nutrition

Good nutrition is important for recovery from illness, your symptoms may well have affected your appetite, ability to eat and drink and may have caused some changes to taste and smell. As a result of this, you may have noticed that you have lost weight and strength.

What, how and when you eat and drink will be a vital part of your recovery – to help you replenish the protein, vitamins and minerals your body lost during the infection and to give you energy and strength to help your mind and body recover well.

A dietitian will aim to review you by telephone soon after you have been discharged from Hospital and offer to provide you with support on your nutritional journey to recovery.

Most people will need to think a little differently about what, how and when they eat compared to how they ate before they were unwell, and a dietitian can help you decide what you need to do and how to make your plan work.

In the meantime, the information on the following website and supporting leaflets may be of interest and help you find food and drink solutions to some of the challenges you may be facing.

www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk/covid19

Eating Well – During and After COVID-19 Illness

www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/covid19green.pdf

Improving Your Nutrition – During and After COVID-19 Illness

www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/covid19yellow.pdf

Nutrition Support – During and After COVID-19 Illness

www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/covid19red.pdf

Our Dietitians

Leading evidence-based nutritional care and education to optimise health and well-being

EMPOWER
SUPPORT
ENABLE



Diabetes

Managing diabetes during periods of illness can be difficult and challenging.

If you do become unwell, there are extra things that you may need to consider if you have diabetes.

- If you are normally required to monitor your blood glucose and/or blood ketone levels, you will need to increase the frequency of this whilst you are unwell.
- Your requirements for your diabetes medication, including insulin, may increase whilst you are unwell and you should discuss a plan ('sick day rules') with your diabetes team if you are unsure of how to manage this.

If you are newly diagnosed with diabetes or started on new medication for your diabetes whilst you are unwell with Covid-19, this may need to continue, or as you start to feel better need to be decreased or stopped, your diabetes care team will support you during this period.

We appreciate that the current situation may create anxiety and worry and that you may have questions related to your diabetes management.

Please contact your current diabetes care team if you require support.

If you receive care from the diabetes team at the hospital and need support, please contact them:

Tel: 01793 604054

Email: gwh.swindondiabetesnurseteam@nhs.net

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Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust community diabetes team:

Tel: on 01793 696621

Email: swiccg.communitydiabetesservice@nhs.net

If you need urgent advice, or it's out of normal working hours (Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm), please use the [NHS 111 service online](https://111.nhs.uk/) (<https://111.nhs.uk/>) or phone NHS 111; or if it's a life-threatening emergency, call 999.

For on-going advice regarding COVID19 and diabetes, please see:

- [NHS website: Diabetes](#)

www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/

- Diabetes UK website

www.diabetes.org.uk



Recovery at home

Going home is a significant step in your journey to recovery. Although you may feel relief at being home, you may also experience a range of emotions as you readjust to everyday life.

Everyday activities that you could do before your illness such as making a hot drink, or washing and dressing, may now be exhausting and require help from others.

Even though this may result in frustration, it is important to remember that it is entirely normal. You will have been much less active during your illness, and your muscles will have become weak.

Your recovery may take some months, depending on how unwell you have been, and if you have any other medical conditions.

As you continue to increase your activity, continue with your exercises, regain your appetite and sleep better, you will regain your strength and vitality.

Below are some ideas for exercising at home or if having to self-isolate:

- Sit to stand exercises
- Marching on the spot
- Step ups on the bottom step of your stairs using the rail for support
- Walk a lap of the house downstairs or the garden if this is safe to do so

Tips for a good recovery:

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- set some new goals, and put a copy of them on the fridge. Ensure they are realistic – start with a small goal, and build on it over the coming weeks
- get support and help from others if needed
- reward yourself with a treat when you achieve a goal
- be kind to yourself if you do not achieve your goal. Look at what has stopped you getting there, and re-write your goal to be more realistic
- find a new way of doing something with pacing rather than stopping it altogether

If you feel that you are not making progress with your physical recovery or you would like some advice or support, it is recommended that you contact your GP who will be able to make appropriate recommendations or referrals.

Further Information

Contacts for support at home

Royal Voluntary Service Tel. 07342076383
Can help with getting shopping

Swindon:

Live Well Hub Tel.01793 465513
Can help to collect prescriptions and will support you with welfare phone calls

Volunteer Action Service Tel. 01793 538398
Can help with getting shopping

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Swindon Borough Council

Tel. 01793 445500 option5 - Can deliver food boxes which can be paid for over the phone with various different options of type of box available (1 weeks food for 1 person approx. £30 per box)

Morrisons Doorstep Delivery

Tel.0345 611 6111 option5 - Can take telephone order and deliver to you

Wiltshire:

Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub Tel. 0300 003 4576

wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk

Returning to work

COVID-19: Government Guidance for employees

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees>

ACAS - Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

<https://www.acas.org.uk/absence-from-work/returning-to-work-after-absence>

Financial support

Department for work and pensions

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/>

British Lung Foundation

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/welfare-benefits>

Community referrals and on-going support

Upon discharge from hospital, some people may require on-going support in one or more areas and may be referred on to a community based service.

Details of any community referrals made by hospital staff:

To:	
For:	
Made on:	
Made by:	

To:	
For:	
Made on:	
Made by:	

Any referrals will be followed up by a member of the community team. Please contact your GP/111 if you require more urgent review.

Equipment Returns

Please do not return small aids / equipment issued by Therapy back to the Great Western Hospital.

If you are issued multiple items or larger aids then the equipment provider for your locality will collect but individual items will need to be returned to your locality equipment store.

Please contact your local equipment provider for the most up-to-date procedure for return/repairs:

Swindon Community Equipment Stores

01793 464777

Medequip (Wiltshire)

01249 815052

Millbrook Health Care (Oxford)

0333 999 0870

NRS (Berkshire)

0344 893 6960

GIS (Gloucester)

01452 520438

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Patient Advice and Liaison Service [PALS]

PALS helps ensure patients and visitors have a positive experience of using the Trust's services from start to finish.

PALS listens to patient feedback and work with teams and departments across the Trust to improve the way we do things for future patients.

PALS does **not** provide clinical advice, but does work closely with the Trust's clinical lead nurse for care quality and patient experience.

This ensures actions are co-ordinated and take a joined-up approach to improving services.

PALS Opening Hours: 0900-1700 Mon-Friday

Tel: 01793 604031

Email: gwh.pals@nhs.net



This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net.