



Hospital discharge readiness checklist for care providers

Be ready to take a client home from hospital safely and on time.



Contents

- 1 Why readiness matters
- 2 Before the referral
- 3 On referral
- 4 The day of discharge
- 5 The first 72 hours
- 6 The first six weeks
- 7 Involving unpaid carers and family
- 8 What to record and share
- 9 Sources

About this PDF

This guide is a tagged PDF with headings, bookmarks and alternative text. You can also read it online at caresque.co.uk/guides/hospital-discharge-readiness-checklist. Need this in another format? Email hello@caresque.co.uk.

Version 1.0, published 16 October 2026. Next review 16 April 2027.

Why readiness matters

When a care provider is ready, people get home sooner and more safely. NHS England's situation reports show that in September 2026, on average, 13,647 patients a day remained in hospital although they no longer met the criteria to stay. [\[S39\]](#) NHS England describes this data as management information.

Not every delay is about care at home, but every provider can make its own part of the journey quicker and clearer. National guidance says planning for discharge should start on admission, and that the vast majority of people are expected to go home. [\[S42\]](#)

Before the referral

- ☐ We know how many new clients we can safely take this week, and who in the team holds that number.
- ☐ Our rota has room for new packages, including first visits at short notice.
- ☐ We have checked travel times for the areas our local hospitals discharge to.
- ☐ Our discharge team contacts know who to call at our service, and when we can be reached.

On referral

Ask for the information you need to start safely, and write down what you were told and by whom.

- ☐ Who to call on the ward or discharge team, and how to reach them.
- ☐ Current medicines, any changes made in hospital and who is supplying them.
- ☐ Equipment needed at home, who is providing it and when it will arrive.
- ☐ The care plan or assessment, including what the person can and cannot do now.
- ☐ Details of any unpaid carer or family member, and whether they are willing and able to help.

- ☐ Which discharge pathway the person is on, and whether short term support at home is arranged.

Tip

Where intermediate care, including reablement, is provided by local authorities, national guidance says it is provided free of charge for up to 6 weeks. [\[S42\]](#) Check what applies locally so you can explain it to the family.

The day of discharge

- ☐ A safety and welfare visit is booked for the day the person gets home.
- ☐ We know how to get in, for example a key safe code, and it has been shared securely.
- ☐ Medicines are in the home, with clear instructions, before the first visit ends.
- ☐ Heating, food and drink are in place, or someone has agreed to sort them.
- ☐ The family knows when the first visit is and who to call with questions.

Watch out

Do not accept a package you cannot staff. Saying no early, and saying why, helps the discharge team find another option faster than a late cancellation.

The first 72 hours

- ☐ Visits happen at the agreed times, and any missed or late visit is followed up the same day.
- ☐ Staff record how the person is managing and any change since hospital.
- ☐ Any concern about medicines, falls or eating is raised with the right person straight away.
- ☐ The family is kept up to date in plain English.

The first six weeks

- ☐ We review the package with the person, the family and the commissioner at agreed points.
- ☐ We note what has improved, so support can step down where that is right.
- ☐ We know what happens when short term support ends, and the family knows too.

Involving unpaid carers and family

National guidance says unpaid carers and family members should be involved in discharge decisions. [S42] Ask what they can do, what they cannot do and what they need from you. Give them one named contact and a simple way to reach them.

What to record and share

- ☐ The information received on referral, and anything that was missing.
- ☐ Start dates, visit times and the staff who will attend.
- ☐ Any change in the person's needs, shared with the commissioner and the family.
- ☐ Lessons from each discharge, so the next one is quicker.

Sources

1. [S39] NHS England, Acute discharge situation report, September 2026, published 8 October 2026. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/discharge-delays/acute-discharge-situation-report/>
2. [S42] Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England, Hospital discharge and community support guidance, updated 26 January 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hospital-discharge-and-community-support-guidance/hospital-discharge-and-community-support-guidance>

This guide is general guidance, not legal, clinical or procurement advice. Version 1.0, published 16 October 2026. Next review 16 April 2027.

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Strategy, product design and digital delivery, with specialist knowledge of the NHS and social care.

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