



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:

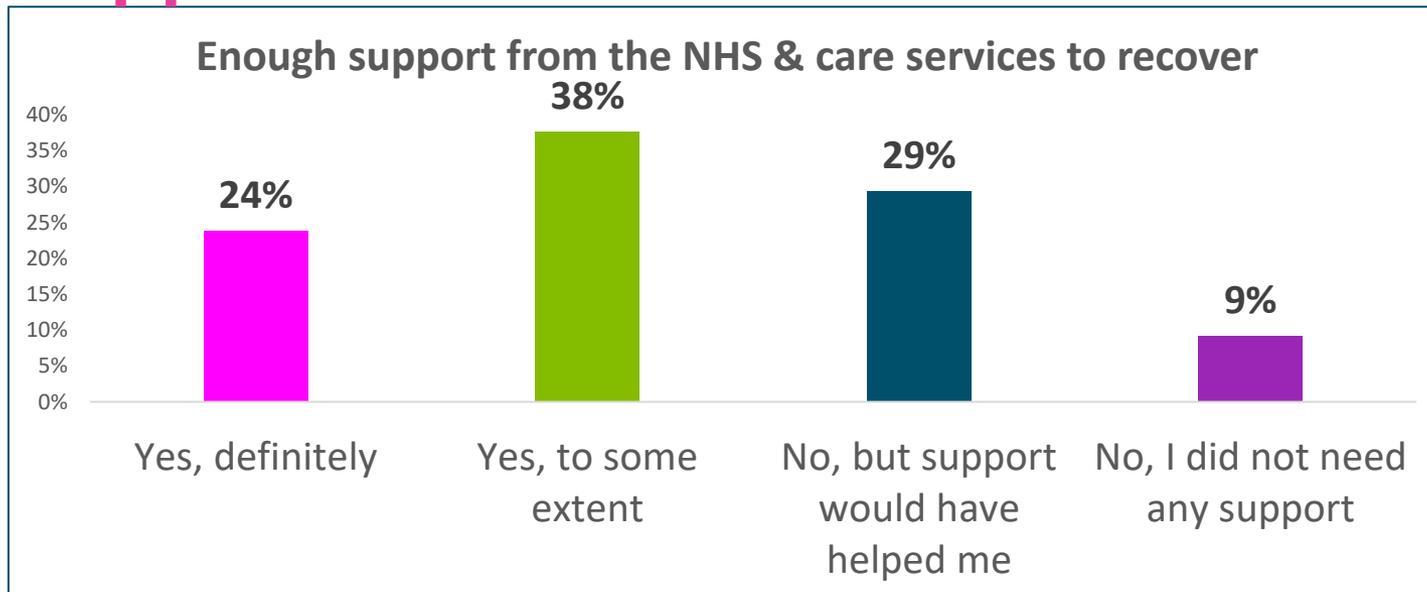
- Support needed but not provided
- Communication
- Support felt to be limited
- Generally positive experience of OT & Equipment on discharge, but community support can be difficult



# 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

