

## Factsheet 4

# Leaving hospital with nowhere to go

Up to 36% of people who are admitted to hospital at any given time will be homeless on discharge. It may be that your home is no longer suitable for you to return to since you became unwell, or perhaps you were staying with a family member or friend on a temporary basis who can no longer accommodate you.

This factsheet outlines the support that is available to you.

### **Who to contact when you are in hospital**

Tell the hospital staff as soon as possible and ask them to contact the Housing Options Team at your local Council as soon as possible; ensuring that if you have a mobile telephone the hospital staff pass this onto the Housing Options Team. Every hospital will have a Discharge Coordinator, who will be able to help you contact your local council and/or social services department.

You could also call or email us yourself - Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Housing Options Team at 01303 853300 or [housing@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:housing@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk). Officers from the Housing Options Team will reply by either calling you back or replying to your email initiate an assessment of your situation and to explore the options available.

### **Requesting a Discharge Meeting**

You can also ask the hospital to hold a Discharge Meeting nearer the time you are leaving and request that they contact your local Council's Housing Options Team to ask them to attend the meeting.

### ***I have a rented home – can I get help to pay my rent while I'm in hospital?***

If you are on a low income or in receipt of benefits while you're in hospital, you should be able to claim Housing Benefit, or the Housing Element of Universal Credit so your rent can be paid while you're in hospital.

These payments can continue for up to 52 weeks while you are in hospital. If, due to your medical condition, you're advised that you're not going to be able to return home sooner than the 52 weeks, your payments will be stopped. This will also happen if it becomes known that you will be absent from your home for considerably longer than 52 weeks. You should contact your local Council Benefits team or seek advice on Universal Credit payments via the website [gov.uk](http://gov.uk). If you need help to sort this out, speak to the hospital social services department to ask them to refer you to a specialist agency like the Citizens Advice Bureau.

### ***If you have a home but it's unsuitable for you to return to***

If you own or rent your home but since your medical treatment it's no longer suitable for you, and does not enable you to live as independently as you would like, you may be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant from your local Council.

The grant (DFG), is means tested, based on your weekly income and is always worth applying for even if the full cost of works is not covered. If you are on a means tested benefit then there is no cost for the works. For smaller adaptations or provision of handrails and key-safes for example, there is usually a 'Handyperson' scheme in most areas who will be able to carry out the works at a lower rate than you would usually pay for a tradesperson and you have the assurance that they are "Trusted Assessors" who have the training and expertise to undertake the work in a professional manner.

### **Applying to the Council's Housing List**

If you are not already registered on your local Council's Housing List you should apply as soon as possible. If your local Council is in Kent you can apply online through the Kent Homechoice website at [www.kenthomechoice.org.uk](http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk). You generally have to have a local connection to the area you are applying to for social housing and you will be asked to provide evidence in connection with your application, which will include proof of identification and local connection to the area at the very least. If you are not on the housing list you cannot be considered for Council Housing or Housing Association properties. See **Folkestone & Hythe Housing Factsheet 1** for more details.

### **Looking for affordable private rented accommodation**

This is likely to be your fastest solution to securing somewhere to live in the local area. Finances are often the biggest barrier so make sure you have followed the advice above and if you are still struggling you might need to look in more affordable areas of the country. For more information on the ways to secure private rented accommodation see Folkestone & Hythe Housing Factsheet '**Housing Advice in the Folkestone and Hythe District**'.