



## Introduction to virtual wards

This leaflet is for patients who are under the care of our virtual ward.

Virtual wards bring **our** hospital into the place you call home, including care homes. This allows us to safely and conveniently bring you the care you need at home, rather than in hospital.

There are two types of referrals into the virtual ward:

- You are referred into a virtual ward when being discharged from a hospital ward
- You are referred into a virtual ward to avoid admittance to hospital

Every patient will have a care plan that is based around their individual needs.

In a virtual ward, support can sometimes include using remote monitoring technology. This could involve inputting your daily readings onto a mobile phone/device or you may be given technology that you wear all the time. This will send your readings to the virtual ward team automatically. Your care team will be able to show you how to use this equipment.

### Who works on a virtual ward?

The team will be dependent on your needs, but usually the core team would include, your hospital doctor, a lead nurse, a team of experienced nurses and a pharmacist. It could also include allied health professionals such as, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, dieticians and occupational therapists.

### What does a virtual ward look like?

A virtual ward provides the same medical care as a hospital ward, but you are in the comfort of your own home/living space. In line with your virtual ward care plan, you will have regular contact with the team who will call you and check how you are progressing and discuss your monitoring results if you have monitoring equipment.

The benefits of the virtual ward are that you are in your own environment yet still being looked after by a team of experienced health professionals.

### How do you contact the virtual ward team?

The virtual ward team is available between 8am and 8pm and can be contacted on 0121 424 5666, if you feel your health is deteriorating or you require advice.

If it is out of hours, please call 111 or 999 if you require immediate medical attention.

### How are you looked after on a virtual ward?

If you are suitable to be under the care of the virtual ward and you would like to be, your doctor will contact the virtual ward team. You will not be recommended to the virtual ward team if your doctor feels you would not be safe at home. The virtual ward team will then come to see you and your doctor to agree a personalised care plan with you. This will include discussing whether you need monitoring technology, any further investigations that might be required, your medications and the level of contact the virtual ward team needs to have with you.

## Information for Patients

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If you are not happy with going to the virtual ward or feel uncomfortable please speak to your doctor.

On the day you are admitted to the virtual ward you will be given all your medications and a clear plan for how to contact the virtual ward team. The team will contact you once you get home to ensure that everything you need is set up and working and inform your GP that you are now admitted to the virtual ward. The virtual ward team will then follow your agreed care plan made by your hospital doctor and record everything in your electronic patient record.

If your condition worsens or your results raise concerns for the virtual ward team, they may visit you or refer you back to the care of your local hospital.

When you are ready to be discharged from the virtual ward we will provide a discharge summary to you and your GP and contact any community services you might need as with a standard hospital discharge.

### Medicines

You will be given a supply of medicines labelled for you to take when you are in the virtual ward and for one to two weeks afterwards to give you time to organise new prescriptions from your GP and community pharmacy.

It is important you take your medicines as recommended by your doctor.

Your doctor might need to change your medicines during your virtual ward stay. This will be discussed with you and a supply arranged if necessary.

Waste medicines should be returned to your community pharmacy.

### What do I do with the equipment provided for my virtual ward stay?

Please return any monitoring equipment and/or wearable technology that you have been loaned during your virtual ward stay, so that other patients can use it. The team can advise you if you need to keep anything for a longer-term (i.e. nebulisers), but everything else will need to be given back to the team.

### What do you do after discharge from the virtual ward?

Your ongoing care will be handed back to your GP, community provider or your existing specialist team. Once you have been discharged from the virtual ward, please contact your GP if you have any concerns.

If you can, please ask your care team about accessing your electronic patient record online. The Trust providing your care will have their own system, and we have outlined these below (details can be found on their websites):

- Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust - BCHC Patient Portal
- University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust - myhealth@UHB

Information for Patients

Your care plan

Name

Date

How and when will we contact you?

What, if any, monitoring technology do you have?

Planned investigations

Emergency contact and number

Other

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email [patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk).