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Information for patients and Carers

Dementia and Memory Support



The Butterfly Scheme

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What is the Butterfly Scheme?

The Butterfly Scheme helps people who are in hospital and who find it hard to remember everything that's going on. Hospitals can be busy places and we know that can feel overwhelming at times.

The scheme teaches staff how to help people who need memory support whilst they're in hospital.

You can request that extra support by choosing to display a discreet Butterfly symbol.

Many hospitals across the U.K. have made the Butterfly Scheme available. We have the scheme here, so please ask a member of staff if you'd like to consider using it; patients, their families or carers can request it.

The opt-in process is extremely simple and there is no charge.

The Butterfly Scheme was originally designed to help people with dementia, but it was soon found to also help anyone whose memory was simply less reliable than it used to be, or whose memory was less good than usual because of illness. The symbol used will not in any way suggest that you have a dementia diagnosis - just that you could do with some memory support.

What happens when someone has opted into the scheme?

A discreet Butterfly symbol will be placed next to the patient's name. This prompts all staff to follow a special response plan which aims to ensure:

- the patient is gently reminded of what's going on, each time a member of staff approaches them
- the patient is prepared for what is to happen next (e.g. blood pressure, examination) so that they aren't taken by surprise
- the patient's bed will be situated in as suitable a place as can be provided so as to reassure them and keep them safe

- the bedside area (table, etc.) will be kept as consistent as possible, with possessions, drinks and so on easily accessible and replaced where they were originally found
- cleanliness and drinking, which may become more difficult to maintain independently when the patient is away from home, will be given special attention
- medical history of any kind will be checked via records or carer; the patient will not be relied upon to provide accurate medical history, but will still be asked courteously about it
- instructions and information (including the taking of medicines) will be offered to the patient but the patient will not be relied upon to remember them; a member of staff will take responsibility and will, where appropriate, pass information on to carers

Is anything else involved?

Carers will also be asked to fill in a carer sheet, so that the valuable insight they have into their loved one's care needs can be shared with the staff who are taking over that care during a hospital stay. This way, carers can really help staff to help their loved one. Even a little information can help staff a lot.

What if you don't opt into the scheme?

The choice is entirely yours. Having the Butterfly symbol makes it far more likely that every member of staff will know about the memory status of the patient and will remind staff to use the Butterfly Scheme response, but staff will still do their best to care for all patients whether they have the Butterfly symbol or not.

The staff want to give excellent care. Please do speak to a senior member of the ward staff if you feel more can be done.

Please note: ward staff will endeavour to meet all the documented needs of the patients but this may not always be possible.

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