

Information for patients

The Butterfly Scheme



General Information

What is the Butterfly Scheme?

The Butterfly Scheme was devised by a carer whose mother had dementia, but it soon became clear that it was useful to anyone whose memory was less reliable than it used to be; its purpose is to improve patient safety and well-being in hospitals.

The scheme enables staff to respond appropriately and positively not only to people with dementia, but also to those with memory impairment or temporary confusion, and allows people to request that care response via a discreet Butterfly symbol.

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 bit of information can make a great difference, so please just offer whatever you can.

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.

Further information

To find out more, visit: www.butterflyscheme.org.uk



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet.
Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

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