Hospital discharge information for staff and volunteers to support patients with mobility issues

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO BE MORE ACTIVE FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RECOVERY

Whilst in hospital most people move less than normal and this can result in people feeling weak, and sometimes more unsteady on their feet when they leave hospital. This is due to normal loss of muscle because of a lot of bed rest or sitting. It is important that people exercise to regain their muscle strength as soon as possible, as this will help them feel better both physically and mentally.

This resource is for healthcare staff and volunteers, to advise patients on the best ways to recover, when they leave hospital and return to their usual residence. It does not apply to patients who need a physiotherapist or occupational therapist assessment to inform discharge planning. Asking the patient the following questions, irrespective of age, will enable you to be confident that you are giving the correct advice to the patients who need it.

- Have you been in hospital for five days or more?
- Do you have any problems with walking or balance?
- Have you become much less active during your hospital stay?
- Do you feel as if you have lost confidence during your time in hospital?
- Do you have any underlying health condition, which may affect how long it will take you to recover from illness?

Please familiarise yourself with the patient version of this leaflet, so that you can discuss, with the patient, the recommended resources to increase activity safely and effectively. The resources listed do require access to the internet and if patients do not have on-line access, you could suggest alternatives, for example, assistance from a family member, neighbour or community-based volunteer to download and print the information. (Subject to COVID-19 social distancing measures.)

As well as encouraging people to keep active, it is particularly important to reassure patients who have had COVID-19 that ongoing respiratory symptoms are very common. Patients may experience fatigue and be more breathless than usual, as they recover and try to go about their day-to-day activities. Patient resources include managing breathlessness and fatigue with simple breathing exercises, energy conservation and pacing techniques. Resting positions and breathing through pursed lips described in the leaflets are particularly helpful for breathlessness.