

What patients and relatives say about the service...

“I was very happy to be given the opportunity to learn how to use new equipment and regular opportunities to practice on the ward.”

“I felt really supported by the SHC team, both in hospital and on discharge.”

“The single-handed care approach enabled me to continue caring for my mother.”

Contacting us

Single-handed Care Team
8am-4pm Monday – Friday
Tel: 0118 322 7557
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If you leave a message on our answerphone, we will call you back as soon as we are able to.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Single Handed Care Team, December 2022
Next review due: December 2024



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Single-handed Care Service

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet explains what single-handed care is and how the service works to ensure you leave hospital with suitable and safe care support.

What is 'single-handed care'?

Also known as 'reduced-carer handling', put simply, it is the general idea of reducing the number of carers that a task requires.

Due to challenges in the availability of community care, patients requiring more than one carer per task ('double-handed' care) typically wait longer than those waiting for single-handed care.

Reducing care packages from double to single-handed for patients with complex manual handling requirements takes some initial effort and expertise but is beneficial for all.

Who are the Single-handed Care Team?

The team consists of a specialist occupational therapist and therapy assistants, based in the hospital.



How does single-handed care work?

Patients on the ward who have been assessed as needing double-handed care can be referred to the service, usually by the ward therapists, with the aim of reducing care to single-handed care.

When referrals arrive, the team will check them for suitability and will normally aim to complete an initial assessment within 24-48 hours. They will then visit you on the ward, introduce themselves and will complete a person-centred assessment of your moving and handling needs. Together with you and your family/carers, the team will then plan a safe discharge ready for when you are medically well enough to leave hospital.

Depending on the complexities of each case, a plan for discharge would normally be made within 5 days.

How the team can help?

They can review equipment and techniques you may need, ensuring you fully participate in decisions, with necessary training and instructions to ensure a safe discharge.

They may assess your home environment (by asking you questions or by doing a home visit, if necessary) and discuss any changes that could be made, such as providing essential equipment to support you for long- or short-term needs.

They will make sure you have the right support when leaving hospital. This may

involve referring you for a care package or community therapy.

What are the benefits of single-handed care?

- It reduces waiting time in hospital for patients.
- It is an efficient use of community resources by reducing the size of care packages requested.
- It maximises independence for patients and subsequently improves their quality of life.
- It reduces costs to local authorities and patients.
- It enables patients to do as much for themselves as possible, both at home and in the hospital. This reduces the likelihood of the patient deteriorating and needing readmission to hospital.
- It is less invasive and more personalized. With fewer carers and a real opportunity to build relationships, patients who have used the service have reported that they feel more involved in decisions about their care.

