



Working with



# IMPROVING HOSPITAL DISCHARGES

Manchester University NHS  
Foundation Trust

# FOREWORD



As part of our role to support our members, we always seek to highlight best practice and showcase ways in which trusts can improve their finances and the quality of care they provide to their patients.

With the NHS under pressure to make efficiency savings and change how care is delivered, it is important that we learn from each other. When one of our members has used a product or service that has supported their work or dramatically improved services for their trust, we want all our members to know about it. This ultimately helps to share that success in the hope that it can be replicated in other trusts.

Our members were telling us that with all the time pressures facing senior management, they were finding it increasingly difficult to seek solutions for the challenges they faced. At the same time, suppliers to the NHS were talking to us about the innovative solutions they had successfully applied in trusts which they wanted other providers across the country to benefit from. This is why we launched *NHS Providers Connect* – a service which aims to bridge this gap and let our members know about what products and services their peers are using to achieve much-needed efficiency savings.

This report is all about how the British Red Cross is supporting the NHS to improve patient flow with one of their assisted discharge services. It really is one of those innovations that prompts the question “why isn’t everyone doing this?”.

People are getting stuck in hospital, often because of a lack of care closer to home – particularly those living on their own. The impact this has on people and the system is hard to overstate. Older people are estimated to lose up to 5% of muscle strength per day in hospital, ultimately reducing their ability to live independently at home once discharged.<sup>1</sup> In 2017 the British Red Cross helped over 187,000 people to live independently, and as a result avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharges.

The case study in this report tells the story of how the British Red Cross worked with Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust to help their patients get home following an inpatient hospital stay and stay well at home. I hope this publication gives you some ideas about how you too could use the service to enhance patient care and clinical sustainability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gill Morgan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gill Morgan  
Chair  
NHS Providers

# WYTHENSHAW HOSPITAL ASSISTED DISCHARGE SERVICE

Supporting Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

## Who are the British Red Cross?

The British Red Cross helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. They are part of a global voluntary network, responding to natural disasters, conflicts and individual emergencies. They enable vulnerable people in the UK and overseas to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their own communities.

## Support at home services provided by the British Red Cross

In 2017 the British Red Cross helped over 187,000 people live independently, and as a result avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharges. They have been delivering health and social care services for over 70 years, working closely with partners to help people move more swiftly and safely through the care system. Their range of services provide a person-centered approach to ensure all the practical and emotional needs of a person are met, to help them get back on their feet and live independently. The British Red Cross are working with more than 100 hospitals in the UK, including over 20 A&E departments. They work in partnership with local services and support by utilising existing community assets first. Their services build resilience not reliance; providing support only where needed, and reducing this over time.

The British Red Cross' assisted discharge service at Wythenshawe Hospital assists frail and vulnerable patients to get home following an inpatient stay and prevents unnecessary admissions from A&E. The service supports people to feel well and stay well; remaining safe in their own homes.

The British Red Cross meet with the person prior to discharge to discuss how they can best help them home and to identify if and how they can help them better manage their health and wellbeing. On the day of discharge, to ensure people are settled safely back into their own home, the British Red Cross support people through a range of tasks, including:

- providing transport home
- collecting keys
- doing a crisis shop
- checking heating
- waiting for carers to arrive
- activating pendant alarms
- telephoning family/friends on behalf of patients
- helping prepare a light meal.

If necessary, ongoing support tailored to individual needs can be provided for up to 6 weeks, including a telephone call or visit within 72 hours of their discharge.

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1 National Audit Office (May 2016). *Discharging older patients from hospital*. (web) Available at <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/discharging-older-patients-from-hospital/> [accessed 6 August 2018]

Between August 2017 and May 2018, the British Red Cross received over 550 referrals for vulnerable people at Wythenshaw Hospital. Over half (57%) were over 80 years of age and almost two thirds (61%) lived alone. Their support included:

- 904 journeys, including journeys home from hospital and as part of ongoing support
- 583 appointments in people's homes, hospital or in their local community
- 1,246 phone calls to the people they support or others as part of their support
- Signposted people to other community based support services and groups 74 times.

## The difference the British Red Cross makes

The British Red Cross looked at the impact of their service three months after support ended. This analysis is based on 564 referrals received between August 2017 and May 2018. After support ended they found that the people they had supported benefited from:

- **fewer A&E attendances** a reduction of 42%
- **fewer hospital admissions** a reduction of 38%
- **shorter hospital stays** - inpatient bed days fell by 26%; 834 fewer bed days.<sup>2</sup> This removed 198 admissions before their support and 298 admissions after their support.<sup>3</sup>

## What people say about the service

100% of people giving their feedback stated they would recommend the service.



*Absolutely wonderful service. I cannot express how caring and helpful it was at a very stressful time for my husband and myself. I had no means to get him home from hospital when he was discharged. Many many thanks to the two wonderful ladies who brought him home.*

## What hospital staff say about the service



An invaluable addition to the hospital team.  
**Claire Smith, A&E Nurse, Wythenshawe Hospital**



It feels that we are making a difference to their lives.  
**Allison Middleton, Discharge Nurse, Wythenshawe Hospital**

<sup>2</sup> Any spells which had a length of stay of less than 1 day or more than 49 days were excluded from the analysis as outliers.  
<sup>3</sup> Source: Red Cross Analysis May 2018, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

# SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

The British Red Cross team worked with the hospital to identify how best they could further support people being discharged safely and prevent readmission or attendances at A&E.

Data and feedback collected from the service revealed that some of the people supported were readmitted because they deteriorated over the weekend. The British Red Cross were able to extend their service to offer support seven days a week, covering 10am-5pm Saturday and Sunday. This means people who are discharged on a Friday are able to receive support from the service over the weekend to maintain their recovery.

## In summary

The British Red Cross assisted discharge service at Wythenshaw Hospital is making a real difference to people's lives in times of crisis; providing the practical and emotional support people need to help get home and remain at home. The range of benefits at an individual level includes:

- Improvements to health and wellbeing
- Increased and retained independence
- Enhanced quality of life
- Greater choice and control over health, wellbeing and support
- Increased information and access to appropriate services.

The service is also having a significant impact on reducing ongoing needs. Service users experienced fewer hospital admissions and A&E attendance following their contact with the service, and when they did need to be admitted into hospital they were able to return home quicker. By working in partnership with Wythenshaw Hospital the British Red Cross was able to:

- Prevent hospital admissions from A&E
- Prevent readmission from homes
- Prevent delayed discharge.

## Find out more

For more information about the British Red Cross' services visit [redcross.org.uk](http://redcross.org.uk) or to arrange a call contact:

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**NHS Providers** is the membership organisation and trade association for the NHS hospital, mental health, community and ambulance services that treat patients and service users in the NHS. We help those NHS foundation trusts and trusts to deliver high-quality, patient-focused care by enabling them to learn from each other, acting as their public voice and helping shape the system in which they operate.

NHS Providers has all trusts in membership, collectively accounting for £84bn of annual expenditure and employing more than one million staff.

### **NHS Providers Connect**

A new programme which matches NHS member trusts with selected suppliers with proven value to our members. We support a collaborative approach between members and partners, generating partnerships to help deliver new models of care and save trusts money.

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