

Integration in Action

Housing services within
GP practices & hospitals

**Silverlinks in hospitals - Age UK
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire**



This brochure describes the Age UK Nottingham & Nottinghamshire's [Silverlinks](#) project's help for older people being discharged from hospital, noting key findings from the [interim programme evaluation](#).

Outcomes include:

- Reduced delayed transfer of care
- Reduced risk of readmission
- Reduced risk of premature admission to residential care
- Improved well-being
- Extended independent living at home
- Increased resilience and ability to manage future life changes

The NHS England view of housing

Where people live, the physical quality, suitability and stability of their home, has a significant impact on their health, and hence on demand for NHS (as well as social care) services.

The *Next Steps in the NHS Five Year Forward View* highlights the importance of keeping people healthier for longer, improving care, reducing health inequalities and working jointly across professional boundaries, including housing.

NHSE's CCG Engagement Programme has published a *Quick Guide to Health and Housing* and its housing programme focuses on three key elements:

1. How housing can help prevent people from being admitted to hospital;
2. How housing can help people be discharged from hospital; and
3. How housing can support people to remain independent in the community.

This brochure outlines how an evaluated local service is helping to achieve these outcomes. A forward looking view of the NHS includes a focus on prevention and delivery of health care at or closer to home. This will only be achievable if patients live in suitable homes where such care can be provided effectively.

Ageing, Health & Housing Links

- 95% of older people live in general housing (ie. not specifically for older people) and 76% are home owners¹
- Older people are the main age group affected by unplanned admissions to hospital & delayed transfers of care²
- £820m pa - cost to the NHS of older patients in hospital beds no longer needing acute treatment²

Why Silverlinks?

Silverlinks is a Big Lottery funded project which connects older people who are facing challenges in their home with another older person who has been through a similar situation. The Silverlinks volunteers offer empathy as well as information about housing and care options, and they support an older person to make changes eg. adapt their current home, move to a more suitable home, finding services etc.

Silverlinks projects also run workshops for older people about "*Housing and Care Options in Later Life*". These provide the information needed to enable people to make well informed decisions about their future housing and care. They are often delivered as '*Pass it On*' sessions, whereby older participants agree to pass on what they have learned and give out brochures to their peers.

¹ Care & Repair England (2016) *Infographic*

² National Audit Office (2016) Discharging older patients from hospital, DH

A local solution

Helping older patients in Nottingham hospitals return home

Age UK Nottingham & Nottinghamshire (Age UK Notts) working with the national Care & Repair England Silverlinks programme, is helping older patients in Lings Bar Hospital, which has three rehabilitation and pre-discharge wards for older people who have often had primary treatment in the city's other hospitals.

They advise patients, including those who are ready to leave hospital when they are medically fit for discharge, and help to reduce risk of readmission.

Although the Occupational Therapists and nurses at the hospital do all they can to prepare people for leaving hospital there are often practical housing considerations which patients and families have not thought through enough or may still be worried about.

Age UK Notts have a hospital based patient representative who provides advocacy and a wide range of person centred support to help patients with a range of issues regarding their hospital stay and discharge. This work is complimented by the Silverlinks co-ordinator who visits the hospital, talking to patients, families and carers on the wards.

They discuss concerns about housing and care, providing information about making older people's homes more suitable to live in with their condition, offering additional housing and care options and further contact with a Silverlinks volunteer if they need more time to talk through their situation.



“I do events and the stands at the hospital.

There are lots of people there that speak to you individually. They like hearing what work you've had done on your home. You talk to people and they then pass it on (to others). They find it valuable to share experiences.”

Silverlinks volunteer

Case study: Mrs Jones

Mrs Jones, 84, lives alone in her own home. She was admitted to hospital with a complex limb fracture resulting from a fall. Mrs Jones was extremely worried that she would not be able to return home and would be admitted to residential care.

Whilst in hospital Mrs Jones talked to the Age UK Notts Housing Options Adviser and Silverlinks volunteer.

They were able to provide factual information about options, practical help at home, aids & adaptations, reassuring her that she would not be 'forced' to move to residential care and enabling her to see that with some changes she could feel and be safer at home.

A period of re-enablement in a local facility was negotiated with the hospital, and, having initially been told that there may be a 2-3 week delay, after explaining the situation the transfer was organised for the following day.

The Silverlinks volunteer also prepared Mrs Jones' home for her return, including organising for flooring to be re-glued to prevent falls, assisting with a short term relocation of her bed and moving items in the kitchen to minimise the need to bend.

Mrs Jones is now living happily and well at home, with reduced falls/hospital admission risk.



SAVINGS

Reduced delayed transfer of care - daily saving ¹	£ 400 per day
Reduced risk of unplanned admission - each incidence ²	£2,837
Avoidance of residential care - reduced annual costs ²	£25,636

¹ Data.gov.uk

² Unit costs of health and social care, Personal Social Services Research Unit

The Impact

The national Silverlinks programme is enabling more older people to think and plan ahead for their later life housing and care, and supporting older people facing difficult housing situations to make informed decisions.

- 29,940 older people have increased knowledge of later life housing and care options as a result of 'pass it on' workshops, talks and events
- 3,630 older people have been directly involved in project activities - 88% reported improved ability to plan ahead, 87% are more confident about making housing and care decisions
- 1,159 older people have been supported on a one to one basis by Silverlinks volunteers

Age UK Notts work in NHS hospitals and medical centres is incorporating the Silverlinks model, reaching older patients who are facing life changing situations and difficult decisions and helping to resolve those issues, either through changing the current home or moving. This in turn results in reduced risks to health and, in the case of in-patients, supports successful hospital discharge.

OUTCOMES

- Reduced delayed transfer of care
- Reduced risk of readmission
- Reduced risk of premature admission to residential care
- Improved well-being
- Extended independent living at home
- Increased resilience and ability to manage future life changes.



"...we have problems with hospital discharge because of housing problems. The service brings a range of expertise and provides support once (patients) are home, taking pressure off social workers."

Hospital social worker¹

¹ Elderly Accommodation Counsel (2016) *Making the Case: FirstStop Advice: the evidence for integrated, impartial information and advice about housing and care for older people* London EAC

About Care & Repair England

Care & Repair England (Charitable Society Reg. No. 25121R) aims to improve older people's housing. It innovates, develops, promotes and supports practical housing initiatives & related policy and practice which enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they choose.

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