



# *Case study*

**Age UK Norfolk information  
and advice service at Norfolk  
and Norwich University Hospital**

## Summary

Age UK Norfolk visit eight wards on a rota basis three afternoons a week and give information and advice at the patient's bedside or in a private room. They give people an information leaflet describing the service and how they can contact Age UK Norfolk while they are in the hospital and after they return home. It advises patients about the other services provided through phone support or home visits, and lists other important sources of help and support. When visiting is over, Age UK Norfolk convert a table in the hospital restaurant to an advice desk to take general enquiries when families are visiting.

The service can often improve decisions made about older people's discharge. For example, a terminally ill lady wanted to spend her last days at home but the hospital believed the home situation was not suitable. However Age UK Norfolk helped her son to reverse this decision and arrange appropriate care and adaptations, allowing her to return home for the last two weeks of her life. Her son couldn't have been more grateful.

In many cases the service prevents re-admission to hospital by enabling older people to use support services in their own homes of which they were unaware. They have also been able to increase the income of many older people, helping them to buy items or services to make coping at home easier.

**Name of project** - Information and advice service at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital

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**Region** - East

**Location** - Norfolk

**Website** - <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/norfolk/free-information-advice--support/hospital-and-home/>

**Target population** - Older people in Norfolk and Norwich University hospital

## Aims

To ensure that patients and their families receive timely information and advice on a whole range of issues to help with timely discharge and independence and well-being at home.

## Activity to date

The service is provided by an Assistant Manager supported by trained volunteers. People are easily identified in the hospital by red waistcoats and Age UK Norfolk badges. 1,664 patients and families were provided with information from Sept 2013 to August 2014 with 132 provided with in depth advice and support including home visits. In 2014 to March 2015, 1,832 were provided with information with 137 provided with in depth advice

Age UK Norfolk has developed strong relationships with hospital ward staff and senior hospital managers who fully support the service. The hospital have provided office space, free training in hospital and health procedures and a telephone. Age UK Norfolk has raised awareness with ward staff of the services which are available in the community and patient's rights, and have good links with occupational therapists who are influential in decisions about the discharge of patients.

## Outcomes

The service has speeded up hospital discharges and reduced readmissions.

## Case studies

### **Elsie's case:**

We met Elsie, who has dementia, and her daughter, Margaret, when Elsie's discharge was delayed because a movement sensor was required at home. (The sensor would alert Margaret when Elsie got out of bed at night.) By speeding up the process, we enabled Elsie to return home earlier. Once Elsie was back at home we visited her to carry out a safety check and recommended grab rails be installed by the front door. We were also successful in applying for Attendance Allowance at the higher rate for her as she needed care night and day, increasing her annual income by £4,227. Margaret said that our support was '*absolutely brilliant*'.

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### **Ian's case:**

Ian's wife, Peggy, approached us because he had recently been diagnosed with dementia and she was struggling to come to terms with this. He was already frail and using a wheelchair. Following an initial discussion with her at her husband's bedside, Peggy phoned our advice line for help. We helped her obtain a blue parking badge so she could park very near shops and other services. Peggy expects her husband to receive Attendance Allowance very soon. She said that, but for our efforts, she would not have known to apply for these things. The blue badge will make travelling with her husband much easier and the extra money will help them buy the extra support they now need.

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We would welcome any feedback about content.

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