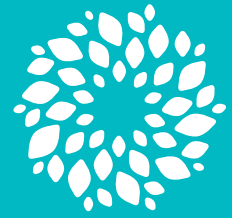
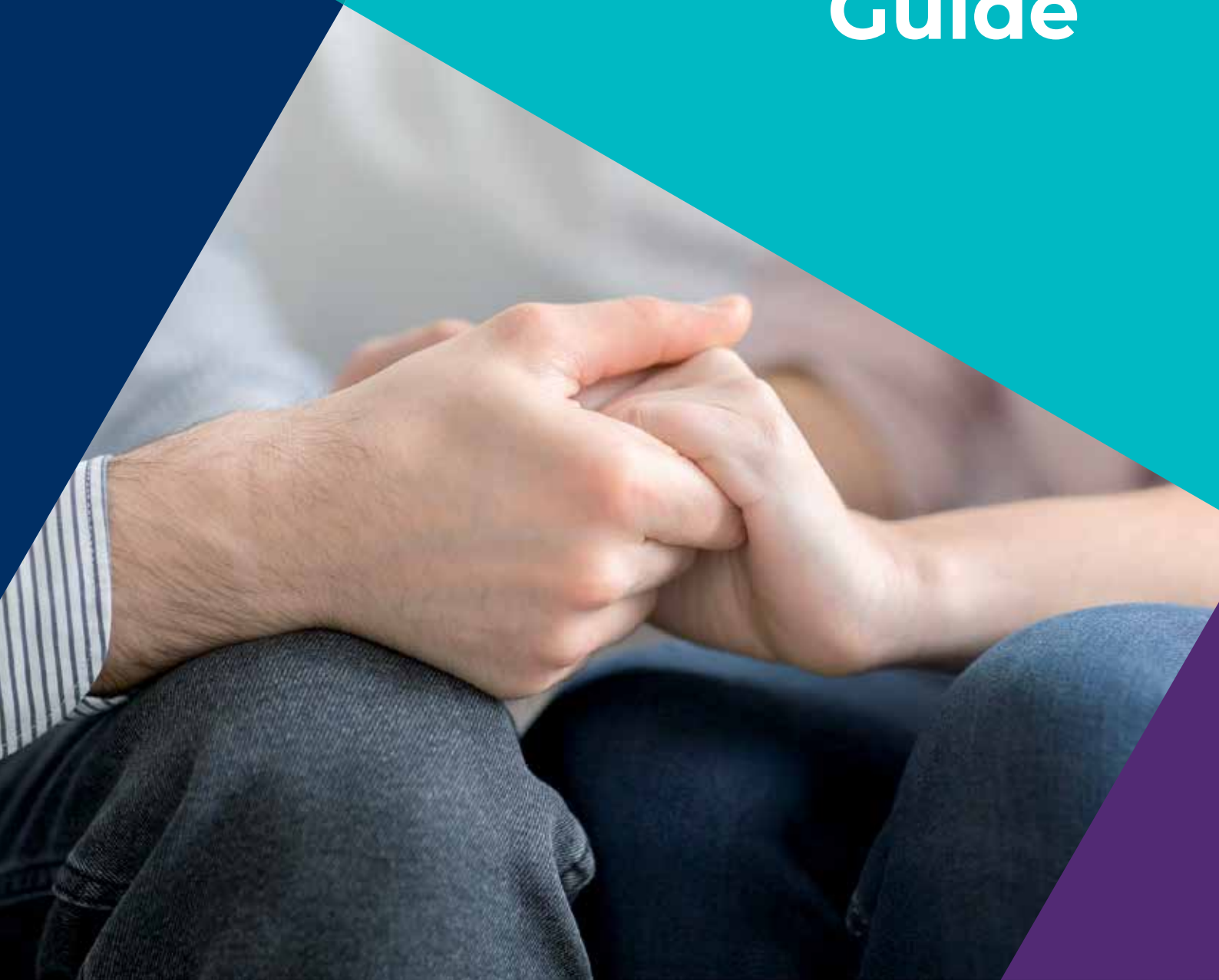


St Patrick's
Mental Health Services



Carers and Supporters Information Guide



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Foreword



Making the decision to seek help for a mental health difficulty is a courageous and often life changing choice. It requires self-belief and determination and also the support of those who are closest to us.

These are the people who are there throughout the recovery journey supporting, re-energising and encouraging. Sometimes these are the people who make the difference by reinforcing the impact of formal therapy and treatment.

I am very pleased to welcome this revised edition of *The Carers and Supporters Information Guide*. This practical and accessible guide was written by our Service Users and Supporters (SUAS) Council for supporters of those in the care of St Patrick's Mental Health Services.

The guide highlights how best to support a person throughout their recovery journey, but also gives some practical advice for carers, relatives and friends on how they can nurture their own wellbeing.

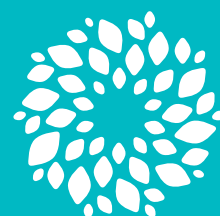
I wish to congratulate all of those who were involved in preparing this guide and who have driven this project from concept to completion. SUAS is an essential part of the services provided by SPMHS and all its members give their time voluntarily. Their experiences, wisdom and vision are apparent throughout this guide. Since 2005 SUAS has played a significant role in transforming SPMHS into the human rights, person-centred organisation it is today.

International research supported by our everyday experience confirms that those who experience mental health difficulties should expect to recover and lead fulfilling lives. In this guide, we emphasise that carers and supporters should also believe in this expectation of recovery.

I know that this guide will provide carers with vital information and reinforcement for the valuable and challenging commitment that they make for the benefit of others.

Paul Gilligan


Chief Executive Officer



Section One

About this guide





We, the members of St Patrick's Mental Health Services' (SPMHS) Service Users and Supporters (SUAS) Council, have written this guide for those supporting people with mental health difficulties. We hope this guide will help you as you support someone's journey to recovery.

The guide has been reviewed and approved by SPMHS governance structures.

SUAS is a voluntary group of former service users and carers who advocate on behalf of all those who use the hospital's mental health services.

Getting started with this guide

This guide aims to be a tool for the carers of people who are treated by SPMHS, especially those who are coming into contact with the services for the first time.

There are a number of different headings in the guide so that you can quickly find the sections that are of most interest to you.

We have tried to provide information that will help you understand how SPMHS works, especially the inpatient journey, and to answer the kind of frequently asked questions that our family members and supporters have as well as listing the kinds of questions you might ask SPMHS staff.

We have also included some information about ways you can support yourself during this time. [Mental Health Ireland](#) have produced a very [helpful booklet for carers and family members](#) which you might find useful.

We are very aware that being involved with a mental health service for the first time can be a challenging experience for everyone concerned.

We hope that this information booklet will be a helpful guide for you when supporting someone on their path to recovery.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is aimed at carers and family members of service users who are attending SPMHS, particularly where they have been admitted to hospital. SPMHS also provides a community and outpatient care pathway through its network of Dean Clinics and its Wellness and Recovery Centre, which provides day patient care. All services can be accessed remotely or in-person, depending on what public health restrictions are in place.

SUAS believe that having a guide for carers and family members that is written in plain English will help you to better understand your loved one's hospital journey. We hope you find this guide helpful, at what we know can be a challenging time. We welcome feedback on this guide and any suggestions for improvements or changes.

You can contact SUAS by:

- email: sfitzharris@stpatricks.ie, or
- In writing: SUAS, PO Box 136, James's Street, Dublin 8.

Words used in this guide

In this guide we use some terms that you might find helpful for us to explain here.

When we are talking about the person who is in SPMHS' care, we talk about:

- service user
- loved one.

When we talk about the person who supports a service user who is receiving treatment provided by SPMHS, we use the terms:

- carer
- caregiver
- family member
- relative
- supporter.

Am I a carer?

You might not think of yourself as a carer. However, as a family member or friend who is doing their best to support someone you are close to, and who is going through a very hard time, you are in the broadest sense a carer.

There are a number of ways to define a carer. You are a carer if you spend a lot of time supporting someone in your family, or a friend, who needs help in dealing with a mental health difficulty, and you are an important part of that person's support system.

Carers may be:

- husbands/wives or partners
- children
- siblings
- housemates
- parents
- close friends.

Carers provide ongoing support, which may be in a social, emotional, physical and/or financial capacity.

Sometimes, providing this type of support may have an impact on your own employment, relationships, social life, physical or mental health, or all of these things. It is important that you take care of yourself. There are several self-help or support groups and services available to help and these are listed in Section Six of this booklet.

If you are a carer you may have found yourself feeling confused when the person you care for develops a mental health difficulty. This response is very common, and we hope that this guide may help you with some of the issues that may arise for you.

Should you have any worries or concerns about your safety and wellbeing as a carer or supporter, the multidisciplinary team involved in treating the service user can be contacted for advice and to assist with access to specialist services that may be helpful.

Experience of any form of abuse in relationships is not acceptable and SPMHS staff are available to provide information and support to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both service users and their families.



Recovery Festival at St Patrick's University Hospital

Young carers

In some cases, the service user may be a parent with a mental health difficulty, and their young son or daughter (under 18 years of age) is acting in a caring role in the family home during this time.



As part of the SPMHS admission, the staff will identify where a young person is providing care. In these circumstances, they will work with your loved one to help and support their family.

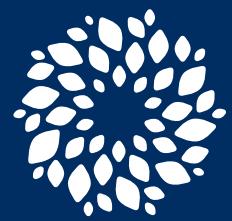
More information can be found at familycarers.ie.

Safeguarding at SPMHS

SPMHS has a number of policies in place to protect people through out their lifespan. These include policies to protect vulnerable adults, older persons and those subjected to domestic violence and coercive control.

The child protection and welfare policy promotes safety and wellbeing for children. This policy directly reflects the [Children First Act 2015](#).

During the course of treatment, it is very common for people to speak about traumas that they experienced in the past. It is often important for their recovery to deal with this trauma. However, it is also essential that any child protection concerns that may arise from a disclosure about past abuse is referred to the statutory services so that the safety of children they may have contact with now is established.



Section Two

About St Patrick's Mental Health Services



St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS) is Ireland's largest independent, not-for-profit mental health service provider. It provides community and outpatient care through its Dean Clinics and day patient services through its Wellness and Recovery Centre.

SPMHS also offers a Homecare service and remote access to its services through phone and video channels.

SPMHS provides multidisciplinary inpatient and homecare services through its three approved centres:

- St Patrick's University Hospital (SPUH)
- St Patrick's, Lucan (SPL), formerly St Edmundsbury Hospital
- Willow Grove Adolescent Unit (WGAU).



Recovery

SPMHS's philosophy is that with proper treatment, and in cooperation and partnership with various mental health professionals, people can and do get well and recover from mental health difficulties.

In fact, recovery is central to everything that SPMHS does. SPMHS bases its recovery programmes on the Wellness and Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®) principles developed by Mary Ellen Copeland, a US Mental Health and Wellness pioneer.

The recovery programmes are not specific to any one diagnosis, but help an individual develop their own wellness plan including:

- identifying triggers
- having someone available to support them
- planning for crisis, should it reoccur.

Family recovery

Recovery is not confined to the experiences of the person availing of care and treatment. It can be, and often is, a journey that all members of their family, carers and supporters undertake as well.

As mentioned earlier in this booklet, Mental Health Ireland have produced a resource for family and carers with lots of helpful information for people supporting someone who is experiencing a mental health difficulty. You can access their website [here](#).

As a family member, carer or friend, you can visit the free drop-in Information Centre located opposite reception in St Patrick's University Hospital (SPUH). The Information Centre can provide information about mental health issues, support services and educational materials.

See Section Six in this guide for more information.




Speaking about mental health difficulties with others

For many people, speaking openly about their mental health in a way that's free of stigma can be very empowering. However, it is important to remember that mental health difficulties, as with other health matters, are by their nature personal and it is up to the person themselves as to how, when and with whom, they wish to speak about mental health issues.

It is helpful to establish with your loved one who they are comfortable with knowing about their mental health so that you can respond appropriately if another friend or family member asks after them.

While being able to speak openly with family members, partners and those closest to us is vital to mental health, this should be done in a way that respects the wishes and preferences of the person who is experiencing the mental health difficulties.

Establishing these preferences is an important step in building support networks for your loved one and in enabling non-judgmental and supportive conversations about their mental health.



Information about your loved one and confidentiality

Confidentiality is very important to people who are receiving care and treatment. SPMHS can only give a supporter or a family member information if the person who is receiving care and treatment gives their consent. SPMHS is bound by this agreement between the person receiving care and treatment and the mental health professional.

If your loved one gives their consent, you can speak to staff about their progress in hospital and be involved in some of their meetings with their consultant and other staff. This is always decided on an individual basis as part of the care and treatment plan. Your loved one also has the option of sharing key information about their care and treatment at SPMHS with you via [Your Portal](#). This is an online, secure platform that can be accessed on your computer, smartphone or tablet. Information on how to register and use the portal can be found on the [SPMHS website](#).

If the person you are caring for or supporting indicates that they do not want any information disclosed, SPMHS is legally bound to abide by this. Any disclosure would be considered a confidentiality breach.

SPMHS does encourage friend and family support as much as possible. However, it cannot force this on any individual if they choose that they do not want to have family or carer involvement in their care and treatment. We know that this can be very difficult, but education about the illness and support groups may provide some help with this.

Child protection and welfare

St Patrick's Mental Health Services, along with all healthcare providers, has a Child Protection and Welfare Policy in place. This policy promotes the safety and wellbeing of children. It is important that children have a secure and positive environment that promotes their wellbeing and growth. It is our aim to join with parents or guardians in promoting the best outcomes for children.

SPMHS has a clearly defined [Child Protection Statement](#) that is included in the SPMHS Charter. This Statement is also available on the SPMHS website, in the Service User Information Booklet and on all wards.

A summary of the charter is provided in the next section of this booklet and you can request a copy of the full charter from the Information Centre, any staff member, or from the [Clinical Governance Department](#).

Charter of Service User and Family Rights and Responsibilities

SPMHS has a Charter for those receiving care and treatment and it includes a section for family members. This is summarised on the next page, and a full copy of the charter is available in the Information Centre, from any staff member, or from the Clinical Governance Department.

You can contact the Clinical Governance Department [by email](#) or in writing at this address:

Clinical Governance Department,
St Patrick's University Hospital,
James's Street, Dublin 8.



Summary of the SPMHS Charter

SPMHS are committed to delivering an effective mental healthcare service, in an environment that fosters mutual respect for the rights and dignity of all.

The SPMHS Charter of Service User and Family Rights and Responsibilities helps SPMHS to achieve this goal.

These rights are without regard to gender, culture, economic, educational, age, sexual orientation, marital/family status, religious or ethnic background or source of payment for care.

As a family member / carer you have the right to:

- a safe environment
- collaborate in the care of the person receiving treatment with their consent
- visit the person receiving treatment in hospital with their consent
- be treated respectfully and considerately
- receive clear responses to queries you make
- make a complaint and know its outcome
- request to participate or refuse to participate in teaching, clinical trials or research at any time
- refuse to participate in teaching or research at any time
- receive the following information:
 - legal rights and entitlements
 - names and qualifications of those treating the person undertaking treatment in SPMHS
 - details of any treatments suggested
 - notice of significant events (including transfers) that involve your relative, and plans regarding discharge
 - pending discharge
 - explanation of the costs of care.

Rights to information are dependent on your relative or friend's expressed wishes.

As a relative or carer you have a responsibility to:

- give accurate information to SPMHS
- co-operate with investigation of any complaint you make
- consider and respect others and your surroundings
- respect the confidentiality and privacy of others
- be responsible for belongings you keep in your possession
- not to bring in, or arrange to be brought in, any items or substances that may be considered harmful
- comply with staff direction in matters of safety
- not engage in criminal, violent or antisocial behaviour
- abide by other rules made known to you.



Section Three

The inpatient or Homecare journey



When your loved one is admitted to hospital, it can often be difficult to understand what will happen during their stay, particularly if it is their first time as an inpatient. This section provides a general summary of what you and your loved one can expect along the various stages of their journey.

There is no 'one size fits all' rule and just as everyone's illness is different, so too is the treatment and their journey. However, we hope that this overview will give you some general information about how SPMHS delivers care and treatment.



Recovery Festival

Voluntary or involuntary admission

In most cases people admitted to hospital recognise they need treatment and they are admitted on what is called a voluntary basis. This means that they have the right to make decisions regarding their care and treatment including the right to refuse or accept treatment, and to leave the hospital prematurely if they wish to do so.

However, there are also occasions when a person is very unwell and does not have the capacity (ie. ability, capability or fitness) to make these decisions. When this happens, they may be admitted on an involuntary basis.

The law provides a mechanism to protect these service users' rights to access care and treatment by means of an involuntary admission, but strict procedures must be followed for this to happen. This [information booklet](#) produced by the [Mental Health Commission](#) provides more detail about the Mental Health Act 2001 and the circumstances when someone can be admitted to hospital against their will.

Someone can only be admitted to hospital involuntarily if they have been diagnosed with a mental disorder. The definition of what a mental disorder is in law is detailed on [page 22 of the information booklet](#) produced by the Mental Health Commission.

Procedures for involuntary admission

Before admission to hospital, a doctor will examine your loved one and if they think that they meet the conditions for involuntary admission, they will recommend that they are admitted. Sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to have your loved one accompanied to hospital by a specialist ambulance service or the Gardaí. We know that this can be very distressing for you and your loved one, but these options are only used when it is necessary for the safety of your loved one.

A consultant psychiatrist in the hospital will then examine your loved one. If, following their comprehensive assessment, the consultant agrees that they meet the conditions for involuntary admission, they will sign an admission order which lasts for 21 days. The Admission order must be sent to the Mental Health Commission and it is them who assign a legal representative to your loved one and convene a Mental Health tribunal within 21 days of the order. The treating consultant will review your loved one on a regular basis but will also do this formally in the seven days before the admission order ends.

If the consultant believes that your loved one still has a mental disorder, they will sign a renewal order. This renewal order means that their consultant psychiatrist believes that it is in their best interest to stay in hospital for another period of time, which cannot be longer than three months. This decision is reviewed by the independently appointed mental health tribunal and either affirmed or revoked.

Most service users who are detained under the Mental Health Act are admitted in to the Special Care Unit at SPUH. This is the intensive care unit where your loved one will have much higher levels of observation and more restrictive practices to ensure their safety and assist in their initial recovery.

If your loved one does not meet the conditions outlined in the Mental Health Act 2001, the consultant psychiatrist will not sign the admission order. This means that they are free to leave hospital if they choose to do so, but it may be possible for them to stay in hospital as a voluntary patient.

During their hospital admission your loved one may decide that they want to leave the hospital. If this happens they should always discuss this with a member of their care team. If a voluntarily admitted service user expresses a wish to leave hospital and their treating team are of the opinion that they are suffering from a mental disorder, they can be detained under the mental health act for a period not exceeding 24 hours for the purposes of assessment.

If following that assessment, the treating consultant psychiatrist is satisfied that the person is suffering from a mental disorder, they can make the person an involuntary patient, and they will be afforded all of the protections of the mental health act, including independent review and review by an independently appointed mental health tribunal.

Stage one:

Admission to hospital

Accompanying your loved one to hospital for an admission is difficult regardless of whether it is their first admission or if they have been admitted in the past. The first person you and your loved one will meet will be a member of the reception team. They will direct you to the Assessment Centre where you will be greeted by the Admissions Officer or the Clinical Nurse Manager.



The Admissions Officer will complete all the necessary admission forms with your loved one. Following this, an admission assessment will be carried out by an admitting doctor or a Team Liaison Nurse (TLN).

The admission process and assessment procedure can take about two hours as it is important that the staff have a comprehensive understanding of symptoms to make an initial diagnosis.

Your loved one will be asked to nominate a family member, friend or relative with whom hospital staff can speak to on an ongoing basis. This nominated person can act as a spokesperson and inform other concerned family members or friends of their progress.

When the admission process has been completed, your loved one will be brought to their room or ward. A member of the nursing staff will then complete a risk assessment which includes searching their belongings. This is done to make sure that there are no items which could potentially cause harm either to themselves, other service users, staff members or visitors.

Any items that are removed for safekeeping are logged on an inventory and will be returned to your loved one when they are being discharged or later in their admission, subject to risk assessments.



Your role at admission

The admissions team may ask you, as a carer, family member, friend or supporter for additional information about your loved one.

SPMHS staff will only ask you for this information if the person being admitted gives their consent. This information is recorded in your loved one's medical chart.

The doctor who is admitting them may ask you to provide some family history, or background information, or both, about the person being admitted. This is recorded in the care plan. The care plan is part of the medical record and is reviewed weekly. People receiving care and treatment in hospital are entitled to receive a copy of their care plan.

Your loved one will also be able to access this information on [Your Portal](#). It is also possible for them to share access with you to their portal so that you can view some or all of the information in their record.

If, after discharge, your loved one requests their clinical record, the hospital will seek your written consent before sharing with them the additional background information you provided on admission.

Admission to Homecare

If your loved one is admitted to the Homecare service, the admission process will be similar to that detailed above, except they will not have a physical assessment. Service users admitted to Homecare also have a bed reserved for them onsite. This is to ensure that if they need to come into hospital for any reason, they can be admitted without delay. The service also includes arrangements with local pharmacies for medication.

Stage two:

Inpatient care

The first few days after being admitted provides a period of rest, assessment and an opportunity to settle in. During this time, the person in hospital will meet the staff on the ward who will give them information about the routines and practices on the ward such as mealtimes; when the members of the treating team will be available; and general activities.

Staff may initially place someone in a bay bed which is located close to the nurses' station and not an individual room; this is so that the nurses can observe and assess them.

Every person receiving care and treatment has an Individual Care Plan (ICP) and their recovery is managed through a multidisciplinary team (MDT). The MDT is the team of mental health professionals who will be looking after your loved one's care and treatment.

During their first few days in hospital, your loved one will meet with their MDT, their key worker and nursing staff on the ward. They may attend a therapeutic programme or undertake one-to-one therapy or assessments.

The team usually meets weekly to review their care and recovery. A MDT generally consists of the following clinicians:

- Consultant psychiatrist
- Registrar in psychiatry / Team Liaison Nurse
- Social worker
- Occupational therapist
- Psychologist
- Pharmacist
- Counsellor / Therapist
- Multidisciplinary nurse specialist
- Ward-based nursing staff

The names of the members of the MDT for the consultants on your loved one's ward are clearly displayed on each ward. If your loved one has any questions about any aspect of their care they should speak first to a member of the nursing staff, who will try to resolve any queries or questions they may have.

You should direct ongoing or day-to-day queries about your loved one's care and treatment to a member of the ward-based nursing staff.

Supporting your loved one on Homecare

If your loved one is availing of the Homecare service, you can support them in a number of practical ways.

- Check in with them if they have appointments and help them to find a quiet private space where they can engage with the members of their treating team in private and without disturbance.
- Difficulties with technology can often cause stress and worry. If they need support using technology to access appointments or activities, then you can contact the Service User IT Support (SUITS) Service on their behalf to request help.

The SUITS service is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and you can phone them on 01-249 3629 or contact them by email suits@stpatricks.ie

- Encourage and support your loved one to engage with the activities available to them. They will be sent an email each day with information about the activities available for the following day.

Safety concerns

If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of your loved one, you should make contact with the ward to which your loved one is assigned. If you do not have this information, then you can contact the main hospital reception by phone on 01 249 3200, day or night and staff will direct your call and guide you to the most appropriate action.

What is an Individual Care Plan?

The MDT will work with your loved one to develop and implement an Individual Care Plan (ICP). This information will be outlined in their care plan document which is part of their clinical record and is reviewed weekly by their team.

Your loved one may request a copy of their ICP from the team. Each week your loved one will be asked to complete an expectation form which forms part of their weekly review. Nursing staff provide them with a copy of this form before their MDT meeting.

What is a key worker?

A key worker is the health professional responsible for making sure that your loved one and their MDT team work to their agreed ICP.

Your loved one's key worker can be any member of the MDT looking after their care and treatment. The key worker acts as a link between your loved one and the other members of their MDT while they are in hospital.

Your loved one will be assigned their key worker following the first meeting with their MDT and they will arrange to meet with them within 72 hours of this team meeting to discuss their care plan and recovery.

Your loved one should meet with their key worker within 10 days of admission to hospital. If they have not met their key worker by that time, then they should ask a member of the nursing staff to find out the name of their key worker and request that they contact them.

They will also be assigned an associate key worker to cover this important role when the key worker is not on duty.

Your involvement in the care plan and treatment

Sometimes, the person who is receiving care and treatment will tell the hospital that they do not wish to have any information about any aspect of their care and treatment discussed with family members or relatives. In these cases, SPMHS must respect the person's right to privacy and confidentiality.

This is a requirement under both medical ethics and data protection laws. However, in most cases, the person receiving care and treatment is happy to have information about their condition shared with their carer or family members.

Where suitable and appropriate to the individual's recovery and care plan, SPMHS will include family members, supporters and relatives as active participants in their treatment.

This may take the form of a meeting with the treating consultant or MDT responsible for the care and treatment. This meeting may be with a number of family members or with one individual carer. This depends on the needs identified in your loved one's care plan. For example, on some treatment programmes there are educational components for family members or supporters.

As previously mentioned in this guide, if you are providing support to a loved one they may share access to their online record through [Your Portal](#). This will help to keep you informed during their treatment.



Your Portal is a secure, online platform that provides service users with access anytime, anywhere to view and document their own health-related information

Remote access to care and treatment

If your loved one has been admitted to the Homecare service, they will receive their care and treatment remotely. This means that they will have access to their treating consultant, MDT and therapeutic programmes via phone or video call.

If you or your loved one needs help accessing these appointments remotely, then you or your loved one can contact the [Service User IT Support \(SUITS\)](#) service. This service is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and you can contact them by phone on 01 249 3629 or by email suits@stpatricks.ie. SUITS can also help with registration to [Your Portal](#).

Questions you might want to ask care staff

When someone is admitted to SPMHS for the first time, you as a carer may have a feeling of being overwhelmed or 'all at sea'. We understand this. Below are some of the questions you might want to ask staff.

We suggest that you should put them to the ward manager, known as the Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) of the ward to which your loved one has been admitted; or to an appropriate member of your loved one's MDT.

- What is their diagnosis and what does it mean both in the short and long term?
- How long are they likely to be in hospital or on Homecare?
- Will they have to take medication and, if so, for how long?
- Will the medication have side effects and, if so, what might they be?
- What is a therapeutic programme?
- Will they be put on a therapeutic programme and, if so, when might it start and how long will it last?
- Will there be aftercare follow up after they have been discharged?
- What involvement can we as family members or supporters have?
- What can we do to help and support?

Advocacy for service users in St Patrick's Mental Health Services

As a supporter or carer, you may wish to advocate for the person receiving care and treatment.

[Peer Advocacy in Mental Health](#) provides independent advocacy in mental health services throughout Ireland and can be contacted by phone on (01) 547 0510 or by email: peeradvocacyinmentalhealth.com

All adults who are receiving care and treatment in SPMHS can access an independent advocate through [Peer Advocacy in Mental Health](#).

Peer advocates are people who have personal experience of mental health difficulties and who have achieved a sufficient level of recovery to complete an accredited training course in peer advocacy.

Once they are qualified they can complete a period working with an existing peer advocate before engaging with service users on their own. Their role is to give support and information to people in hospital.

Other advocacy agencies include the National Advocacy Service, advocacy.ie, telephone 0761 01 3000, and Sage Advocacy sageadvocacy.ie, telephone 1850 71 94 00.

SPMHS encourage people to self-advocate, if they so choose and are able to do so. This is to ensure that their rights are upheld and that they have access to support and treatment that meets their needs. They do this through the care planning process, by listening to the views of service users and ensuring that service users are included in all aspects of their care. Written comments and feedback are also encouraged, as is speaking directly with the nurses on the ward or their MDT in the first instance. Comments, feedback and complaints are managed through the Clinical Governance Department.



Therapeutic programmes

SPMHS offers a wide range of therapeutic programmes for those receiving care and treatment. This may be as an inpatient, on Homecare, or as a day patient after discharge.

Service users are referred to programmes by their MDT that are appropriate to your loved ones needs and as identified in their ICP.

If your loved one is referred to a therapeutic programme, a member of the programme team will arrange to visit them to discuss the programme in more detail. A therapeutic programme is a programme aimed at providing information and education as well as developing skills for recovery from illness.

Your loved one may need to answer questions or complete an assessment to ensure that it is the most appropriate programme to meet their needs and recovery.

Once they have started a therapeutic programme, they will be given all of the information about the programme including a timetable.

Additional information on programmes and how to access them is available from any member of the MDT and the Information Centre.

Activities

While your loved one is an inpatient, there is a wide variety of activities they can avail of. It is possible that for the first few weeks of their admission, they may not feel up to taking part in any of these activities, and that is perfectly understandable. As they settle in and hopefully start to feel a little better, they may begin to take more interest in the activities available.

If your loved one has been admitted to the Homecare service, they can access a range of activities remotely. These are social, recreational and therapeutic programmes, which are recoverybased.

The following information details the range of activities that are available to your loved one while they are an inpatient or on Homecare.

Daily activities

Each day a range of activities and talks are available for inpatients and those on Homecare. An information sheet detailing all the activities available that day is positioned outside the lecture hall, on ward noticeboards and in the Information Centre. These are also emailed to all inpatients and those on Homecare.

Your loved one, if they are able, will be encouraged to attend activities such as morning lectures, which are held daily at 9.45am. These morning lectures are delivered by SPMHS staff on a variety of topics that are connected to their care and treatment. Staff do encourage service users to take part in the various activities available throughout the day and evening.

Occupational therapy

There are a wide range of occupational therapy activities available to inpatients to support them to take part in the everyday activities that matter to them. These include an art room, craft room, computer room, pottery room, music room, therapeutic garden and library.



Gym and exercise facilities in hospital

A modern gym is located in the grounds of SPUH adjacent to the Temple Centre. There is also a games room available in St Patrick's, Lucan (St Edmundsbury) as well as indoor and all-weather gym equipment in the garden which is available to all service users.

Exercise classes including pilates, yoga and circuit training are also available. A walking group leave from the main reception every day at 3.30pm and do a walk in the local area that takes approximately 45 minutes.

Evening and weekend activities

SPMHS provides a range of evening and weekend recreational activities for service users.

Activities include but are not limited to bingo, quizzes, movie nights, music sessions, karaoke, singing and performances, Tai-Chi, art and creative activities.

SPMHS also organises major events from time to time which are available to both service users, family members and the general public. Notices for these activities are placed on all wards as part of the daily information sheets that are emailed to service users and are also available in the Information Centre.

Therapeutic leave

As people recover and are feeling better, the MDT may recommend 'therapeutic leave' for either a day or over a weekend.

Therapeutic leave provides your loved one with an opportunity to go home, to see how they are progressing in their recovery, and to review progress when they return to hospital.

Their bed in hospital remains available if they have any difficulties and they can return at any time. This is an important part of recovery and is encouraged as part of the recovery journey.

Stage three:

Medication

Medication can play an important role in your loved one's recovery. It is important for you and your loved one to be informed about medicines and the choices available.

The Choice and Medication website is available through the SPMHS website. It provides easy-to-understand information about medication and the side effects. This means you have this information to hand and a better understanding of the medication and side effects that the person you are caring for or supporting is taking.

The website address is:

choiceandmedication.org/spuh/

You may also wish to speak to a member of the MDT looking after your loved one in hospital or on Homecare. In this context, here are some questions that might be on your mind about medications.

- What medication is to be used?
- How often will the medication be reviewed?
- How long will the medication have to be taken for?
- Are there other medications that could be used if this one doesn't work?
- What will happen if they stop taking the medication?
- What happens if none of the medications works?

If your loved one is on Homecare, they will have their medication reviewed as regularly as inpatient service users. The MDT will also make arrangements with local pharmacies for prescriptions to be sent and collected.

Stage four:

Discharge

The discharge process, strange as it might seem, begins at the point of admission and should be an integral part of your loved one's care plan. Discharge involves a number of components.

These include:

- care and monitoring after discharge
- self-help techniques
- information about relevant support groups.

Admission to hospital is part of a person's journey of recovery. In some cases, that recovery may be complete when they are being discharged.

Others may need additional supports after discharge, for example:

- day programmes
- aftercare
- follow-up therapy
- individual appointments.

At discharge, people are at various stages in their recovery. It is important as a carer or supporter to remember that, sometimes, an inpatient stay or Homecare can be only part of the journey and ongoing help and support may be needed.

You may wish to develop a plan to support ongoing recovery, or if there is a relapse or other difficulties arise. This will ensure that you are clear about, and reflect, the wishes of the person you are supporting.

Stage five:

Post discharge supports

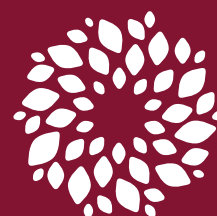
When your loved one is discharged from hospital or Homecare, they may return to attend a day services therapeutic programme, to undertake one-to-one therapy, or to attend an aftercare programme.

When they are discharged they will be given a free-of-charge follow up appointment in a Dean Clinic which are in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Dean Clinic at St Patrick's University Hospital.

See Section Six for further supports.



Dean Clinic at St Patrick's University Hospital



Section Four

Some practical matters



ATM / access to cash

There is currently no ATM service available in SPUH. However, a cash back facility is available at the hospital shop, which is located opposite the restaurant on the ground floor.

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and
Saturday and Sunday 9am to 5pm

The nearest ATM machines are in Heuston Station and at the Bank of Ireland on James' Street. Both facilities are a five-minute walk from the hospital.

Hairdressing service

A hairdressing service is available in SPUH on Wednesdays. Appointments can be booked at reception for the hairdresser and information on prices and services is available from the Information Centre. This is a paid service and payment should be given directly to the hairdresser.

Children visiting hospital

St Patrick's University Hospital provides for children to visit their parent or relative in hospital. All children who are visiting a service user must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

SPUH has a dedicated visiting room for children, called "The Wishing Well Room."

This room is situated along the corridor leading to the garden. Children must be accompanied by an adult in the room at all times.

Access to the room can be requested from the reception staff and is restricted to adults accompanied by children.

If your loved one is resident on Dean Swift Ward or the Special Care Unit, a designated area where your children can visit can be provided.



GP service

SPUH provides an onsite GP service from Monday to Friday. If your loved one needs to attend the GP, a member of the nursing staff will make an appointment for them. There is also an out of hours GP service provided for medical emergencies.

Car parking

The hospital does not provide free car parking. The hourly rate is currently €2.20 per hour. A weekly ticket can be purchased in the hospital shop and this costs €25.00. This ticket is valid from first use for a period of seven days. Car parking rates are set at commercial rates and these may change.

Hospital shop

In SPUH the Hospital shop is located directly across from the restaurant on the ground floor. This facility sells newspapers, drinks, cigarettes and a variety of other items.

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm
and Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays
8am to 5pm.



Information centre

SPMHS provides a free drop-in mental health information centre that is open to current service users, family members, supporters and the general public.

The Information Centre is open Monday to Friday and is located opposite the main hospital reception in SPUH.

It provides information about mental health issues including diagnoses, symptoms, medications and support services.

Public transport

St Patrick's University Hospital is a few minutes' walk from Heuston Station. The Luas Red Line operates to the city centre, Busaras and Connolly Station (Irish Rail). Dublin Bus also operate services to the city centre.

Restaurant

There is a restaurant called 'Ridgeways' located on the ground floor along the corridor from the reception area for staff, service users and their families.



Ridgeways Restaurant

This facility is managed by an external contractor and serves breakfasts, lunches and evening meals as well as snacks and refreshments.

Ridgeways opening hours are:

- Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 8.00pm
- Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays: 8.00am to 6.00pm

An outdoor coffee kiosk, The Well Bean, is situated in the middle garden at SPUH. This is open in the summer months from 9.30am to 12.30pm and from 2pm to 4pm, seven days a week.



The Well Bean, St Patrick's University Hospital

IT support

The Service User IT Support (SUITS) service can help you or your loved one with any technical issues or information support you need to access care and treatment.

They are available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and you can phone them on 01 249 3629 or by email suits@stpatricks.ie.

Laundry

The hospital provides a paid-for laundry service through an external contractor. Details of collection times and costs are available on each ward.

Phone communication

Mobile phones are permitted in the hospital unless specifically disallowed in your loved ones own Individual Care Plan or when they are receiving care and treatment in the Special Care Unit.

Service users may be asked to turn off their mobile phone while attending programmes, during mealtimes, during specific activities or in one-to-one sessions.

You or your loved one should not take photographs or record other service users, members of staff or visitors in order to ensure their privacy is maintained.

If your loved one does not have a mobile phone they can receive calls directly to the ward.

Wi-Fi access

Wi-Fi is available throughout the hospital.

Valuables

SPMHS encourages people to only bring what they need when they are attending the hospital. A safe is provided in each room to store valuables and nursing staff can also arrange for valuables to be stored on behalf of a service user.

Visiting times

Contact and visits from family and friends is an important part of treatment and recovery. SPMHS encourages contact between service users and their family and friends but please remember that your loved one may be attending therapeutic programmes and activities during the day and may not always be available for visitors and they should make you aware of this.

General visiting times in SPUH and SPL are:

- 2pm to 5pm; and
- 6pm to 8.30pm.

On Saturday and Sunday, there is also currently an additional visiting time of between 10am and 12.30pm.

Ward mealtimes

Visitors are not allowed on the ward during mealtimes and these are provided in SPUH at the following times:

Delany, Kilroot, Stella, Grattan, Clara and Swift Main Wards:

Monday to Sunday (including Public Holidays)

- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1pm
- Tea 5pm

Vanessa Ward

Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1pm
- Tea 5pm

Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays

- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1pm
- Tea 4.45pm

Temple Centre

Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1pm
- Tea 5pm

Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays

- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1pm
- Tea 5.15pm

Swift Special Care Unit

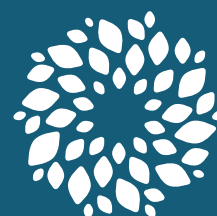
Monday to Sunday

- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1.15pm
- Tea 5pm

St Patrick's, Lucan (St Edmundsbury)

Monday to Sunday


- Breakfast 8.30am
- Lunch 1pm
- Tea 5pm



Section Five

Supporting you





Usually, the person you are caring for will accept that they need help and support, but it is important to know that sometimes it can be difficult to maintain a positive relationship between you and the person receiving care and treatment. Where possible, it is useful to explain to the person that you are helping them because you care about them.

When they are well enough, you could consider discussing your needs and feelings. Try to talk honestly with them about how you feel, particularly if there are times when you feel especially tired or stressed. This can also help your loved one to understand that you care and are trying to do your best.

Remember that it is natural to wish that the person did not have a mental health difficulty and, particularly, if you knew them before symptoms developed, to want them to be well again. This does not mean that you resent them.

The Information Centre opposite the main hospital reception in SPUH is a great resource and is open for anyone seeking information about mental health issues including various diagnoses, symptoms, medications and support services.

The Social Work Department in SPMHS provides advice and support to family members through casework with the service user. A Family Connections Programme is provided by the Department for family members and supporters of service users with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder.

Several external organisations provide training and support for families. Details of these supports can be found in the Information Centre and in Section Six of this booklet.

Your own feelings

Some carers feel that their loved one is letting them down. However, it is helpful to remember that the person you care for would rather be well than in crisis. You might find it challenging that suddenly all attention is focused on your loved one.

You might think that nobody cares about you and that you are being excluded. It is very important to recognise such feelings as they are quite common. If you need support about issues like this, think about attending a support group. These groups are a great way to connect with people and find support from others who are experiencing similar challenges and often know how you feel.

How else can I look after myself?

It is important to look after yourself as well as using other services to help you as a carer. Remember:

- you are not responsible for your loved one and their illness
- they are in good hands with a very experienced team
- you should plan your time carefully to ensure you have breaks doing things you enjoy.

Learn more about the condition

Develop your understanding of the condition or conditions that the person you are caring for is experiencing. It is often less stressful or worrying to be a carer for someone with a mental health difficulty when you have an understanding of what they are facing.

If they have a diagnosis, you might want to read about the condition. Remember to be careful to get information from a reliable source - some websites may not be accurate. The SPMHS Information Centre is an excellent resource and is located opposite the reception desk in SPUH.

Keep up your own interests

As well as any organised activities like work commitments, education or social groups, try to make time for things you are interested in, for example:

- reading the newspapers
- book clubs
- arts and crafts groups
- sports clubs.



While this can be difficult if you are very concerned about your loved one, the chance to relax, even briefly, can be helpful. You should not feel guilty about this.

Stay in contact with your own supporters

Make sure you are in regular contact with your own supporters to help get some of your worries off your chest.

Coordinate visits

Coordinate visits to the hospital with other carers or relatives so that you can get time out. Look after your health.

It is important to:

- try to get exercise
- get outdoors when you can
- eat a healthy varied diet.

There are sayings that are very relevant here:

"If you don't look after yourself, then you will not be able to look after anyone else"

"Is ar scáth a cheile a mhaireann na daoinne"
(proverb)

"I'll get by with a little help from my friends"
(Lennon & McCartney)

Providing support during mental health difficulty or crisis

Supporting your loved one while they are unwell can sometimes be a challenge.

A good place to find out more information is the hospital Information Centre. The [mental health section](#) on the SPMHS website is another very useful resource, as is the Library in Your Portal.



Helping children

If someone with a mental health difficulty has children, they should decide if they want to tell them, and what they should say. The Social Work Department at SPMHS can provide support to service users and their families on how to discuss mental health with children. A range of resources for the person accessing treatment is available through the Information Centre and the team social worker.

It is also important for you to know that you can discuss any concerns you might have with the multidisciplinary team and with the social worker on that team in particular. The multidisciplinary team's social worker will engage with you to assess what supports would best suit your family's needs. Then the social worker can provide relevant information, advice and/or counselling, and can help you to access potentially beneficial services and resources in the community.

Be optimistic

Encourage the person who is ill to be hopeful about recovery.

Accept help

Remember, as a caregiver, you cannot do everything; sometimes, you need to take a step back and accept professional help.

Understand behaviour

Try to understand that some behaviours are not personal and are often a feature of the illness itself.

Avoid asking too many questions

Try not to ask too many questions of the person you are supporting. Learn about the illness using the resources available to you in the hospital, such as the Information Centre, and the SPMHS website, stpatricks.ie.

This means you will be able to ask relevant questions as you will have a level of understanding about the condition.

Daily life

Remember to talk about everyday things; just because someone is not well doesn't mean that they should be excluded from what is happening outside of hospital and in daily life.

Agree roles and responsibilities

Agree roles and responsibilities for daily living (for example, paying bills, shopping and so forth) during periods of illness for both yourself and the person you are supporting.

Useful services and information to help and support you

A number of self-help or support groups exist to support people with mental health difficulties and their carers. While we cannot endorse any particular support group, we are happy to list those that we are aware of and that you or your loved one might find helpful. A list of these groups is provided in section six of this guide.

St Patrick's University Hospital Information Centre

SPMHS has to find the right balance between keeping families and carers informed while respecting the rights of the person who is receiving care and treatment to confidentiality and privacy.



However, SPMHS are happy to provide you with general information about the kind of mental health difficulty that your loved one is experiencing. This information is available in the Information Centre, which is to the right of the reception desk as you enter SPUH.

The Social Work Department

The Social Work Department at SPMHS supports the emotional and social wellbeing of service users and their families impacted by illness. The team social worker works in partnership with the individual and the family to help strengthen positive coping strategies and access new supports where necessary.

If you are unhappy with the care and treatment

As a family member, supporter or carer, if you have a concern about care and treatment your loved one is receiving, you should first speak to the clinical nurse manager or any member of staff about your concern.

You can also avail of the hospital comments and feedback system to voice your concerns. These cards and feedback boxes and forms are available on all wards, in communal areas, from the Information Centre and on the SPMHS website.

You may also request to speak with your loved one's MDT. This can be facilitated where consent has been provided and it is appropriate to do so.

You have the right to complain about any aspect of services provided by SPMHS.

A complaint can be made verbally, in writing or it can be submitted by email to: clinicalgovernance@stpatricks.ie

In conclusion

Dealing with the issues that arise when a loved one has a mental health difficulty can be both an emotional and difficult experience for those who care about that person.

We hope that this guide can offer you some suggestions about how you might face that challenge and, above all, address your own needs; needs that can often be ignored.

The two most important things to remember are:

- gain an understanding of the illness
- take care of yourself and your needs while your loved one is going through their journey to recovery.



Section Six

Support groups and additional information



The Service Users and Supporters Council

SPMHS Service Users and Supporters Council (SUAS) is a voluntary group of past service users and supporters and we produced this guide.

We work closely with SPMHS management to make sure that service users, and their families, who undertake treatment provided by SPMHS have a positive experience.

Our overall objective is to act in an advocacy role in representing the views, experiences and aspirations of service users and their families, of mental health services at SPMHS and in partnership with SPMHS to actively participate in areas of policy-making, planning, organisation, delivery and monitoring of such services.

If you are interested in joining SUAS, please get in touch. You can also contact SUAS if you would like us to raise an issue with SPMHS management.

There is more information available about SUAS on the [SPMHS website](#).

You can also contact us by email:

sfitzharris@stpatricks.ie

By phone: 01-2493390, or

By letter:

Service Users and Supporters
(SUAS) Council,
PO Box 136,
James' Street,
Dublin 8.

Community Based Supports

Age Action Ireland

Age Action supports and advocates for equality and human rights for all older people. They provide practical service, such as their care and repair service and computer training. They also provide an information service which can help with entitlements, including for carers, respite services, accommodation and safety issues.

Website: ageaction.ie

Phone: 01 475 6989.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

AA provides an extensive list of meetings where people affected by alcohol addiction find strength and hope by sharing their experiences.

Website: alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Al-Anon

Al-Anon helps families and friends of alcoholics in an anonymous environment, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not, or if their loved one recognises that a problem exists. The only requirement for membership is that a relative or friend has a problem with alcoholism.

Al-Anon Information Centre
Room 5,
5 Capel Street,
Dublin 1.

Opening hours: 10.30 am to 2.30pm
Monday-Friday.

Website: al-anon-ireland.org

Phone: 01 873 2699.

Email: info@al-anon-ireland.org



Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland provides a wide range of services for people affected by dementia. It provides 28 carer groups. A full list of the regional offices, home and care support services and respite centres is available on their website. The Society also operates the Alzheimer National Helpline Service.

Website: alzheimer.ie
Helpline: 1800 34 13 41.

Aware

Aware provides support to people who are managing their own experience of depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder. They also provide support to people who are concerned about a loved one. They provide in person, phone and online support groups, as well as a freephone helpline and email service.

Email: supportmail@aware.ie
Freephone helpline: 1800 80 48 48.
Website: aware.ie

Bodywhys

Bodywhys is voluntary organisation supporting people affected by eating disorders. In addition to supports for people affected by eating disorders, they also provide support and training for family members and supporters.

Website: bodywhys.ie
Phone: 01 210 7906.
Email: alex@bodywhys.ie

Citizens Information

This website, provided by the Citizens' Information Board, gives information on public services and entitlements in Ireland.

Website: citizensinformation.ie
Phone, Monday-Friday,
9am to 8pm: 0761 07 40 00.

Gamblers Anonymous

Gamblers Anonymous (GA) is a fellowship of men and women who share their experiences, strengths and hopes with each other. They aim to solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling.

Phone: (have a pen handy as the machine may give you a contact number when the office is unattended), (01) 872 1133.

Email: info@gamblersanonymous.ie
Website: gamblersanonymous.ie

GROW

GROW is a mental health organisation that helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems. Members are helped to recover from all forms of mental breakdown, or to prevent them happening. They have a number of regional offices and a Lo-call helpline and you can also contact them by email. Details of all services are available on their website.

Website: grow.ie
Phone: 1890 47 44 74.
Email: info@grow.ie

LifeRing

LifeRing is a network of in person and online support groups for people who want to live free of alcohol and other addictive drugs. Information about meetings and support groups can be found on their website.

Website: lifering.ie
Phone: 1800 938 768.
Email: info@lifering.ie

Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service is the State's money advice service, guiding people through dealing with problem debt. Their Helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9am - 8pm. A face-to-face service is available in more than 65 locations nationwide.

Website: mabs.ie

Phone: 0761 07 20 00.

National Counselling Service

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge in all HSE regions. Its clients are adults who have experienced trauma and abuse in childhood with priority given to adult survivors of institutional abuse in Ireland. Full details of the location of services are available on their website.

Website: hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/National_Counselling_Service/

Phone: 1800 234 111.

Nurture Health

Nurture is an Irish charity offering timely and affordable professional counselling and supports. Their services are around pregnancy, infertility and childbirth mental health illnesses and emotional wellbeing. They offer the service to women, their partners and families in Ireland.

The charity's philosophy is one of listening and supporting individuals and families through:

- counselling
- support groups
- education.

All counselling, support groups and programmes are subsidised by Nurture to make them affordable to everyone.

Website: nurturehealth.ie

Email: info@nurturehealth.ie

Phone: 085 861 9585.

OCD Ireland

OCD Ireland provides support groups for people who are affected by OCD, body dysmorphic disorder and trichotillomania. Carer groups are also held. Full details of all services are available on their website.

Website: ocd.ireland.org

Email: information@ocdireland.org

Pieta

Pieta provides a professional one-to-one therapeutic service to people who are in suicidal distress, those who engage in self-harm, and those bereaved by suicide. All of their services are provided free of charge and no referral is needed..

Website: pieta.ie

Phone: 0818 111 126.

Recovery International

A self-help, after-care organisation founded in Chicago Illinois in 1937, by the late Dr Abraham A Low. It offers The Recovery Method of Will Training for improved mental health and for control of nervous symptoms. There are a number of meeting locations throughout Ireland.

Website: recoveryireland.ie

Email: info@recoveryireland.ie

Phone: 01 626 0775.

Shine

Shine (formerly Schizophrenia Ireland) provides support groups, advocacy services and counselling services for people affected by mental health difficulties. This includes family and friends. The Shine website provides general information about mental health difficulties and specific information about Shine services.

Website: shine.ie

Email: info@shine.ie



Samaritans

Samaritans provide a listening ear 24 hour a day every day of the year. This is confidential, nonjudgmental, emotional support by phone, email, letter and online. The Samaritans also provide face-to-face support at their local branches.

Website: [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

Phone: 24 hours: 116 123.

More detailed local information can be accessed through the Hospital Information Centre.

Family Carers Ireland

Family Carers Ireland is the national charity supporting the 500,000 family carers across the country who care for loved ones such as children or adults with physical or intellectual disabilities, frail older people, those with palliative care needs or those living with chronic illnesses, mental ill-health or addiction. They provide support and training online and in person as well as in home supports for families.

Website: [familycarers.ie](https://www.familycarers.ie)

Phone: 1800 240 724.

St Patrick's
Mental Health Services



James' Street, Dublin 8, Ireland
phone: +353 1 249 3200
fax: +353 1 679 8865
visit: stpatricks.ie