



# National guide about **Acute mental health inpatient services for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults**

Acute mental health inpatient services are for people with a serious mental health need who need to be in hospital



# What's inside?



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 2



**Introduction**

Page 3



**About this document**

Page 12



**Acute mental health inpatient services**

Page 35



**Principles - the best way to run services**

Page 59



**The team**

Page 60



# What's inside? (continued)



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 3



**What acute mental health services should look like**

Page 3



**Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people**

Page 12



**Care and treatment**

Page 35



**Discharge or planning to leave hospital**

Page 59

Welcome

# Introduction



## Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 4



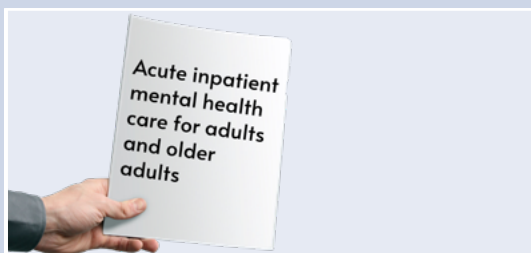
This guide is about services for adults who have a learning disability and autistic adults who are over eighteen years old.



It explains how the NHS will offer acute mental health inpatient care to adults to treat serious mental health needs.



There are other guides that you can also read which are about mental health services. These include:



[Acute inpatient mental health care for adults and older adults](#)





Welcome

# Introduction



## Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



[Meeting autistic people's needs in mental health services.](#)

Integrated Care Boards



**Integrated Care Boards** plan and pay for acute mental health services.



National guide about  
**Acute mental health inpatient services for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults**

Acute mental health inpatient services are for people with a serious mental health need who need to be in hospital



The **Integrated Care Boards** can use this guide to update mental health services in their local area.



# About this document



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



This document explains what should happen when an adult needs to go to an acute mental health hospital.



These services should be co-produced by people with lived experience and their families.



The services include skilled teams who provide treatment and support.



Someone should not stay in an acute mental health hospital for any longer than they need to.

# Acute mental health inpatient care



Introduction

About this document

**Acute mental health inpatient services**

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



This guide is about two different types of acute mental health inpatient hospitals.



The first type is **general** acute mental health hospitals. These are for adults who needs to go to hospital because of their serious mental health needs



By law **reasonable adjustments** should be made for anyone who needs them to use **general** acute mental health hospitals.

# Acute mental health inpatient care



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



The second type is acute mental health inpatient care that is **just** for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults.



This inpatient care is for adults:

- who need the support of an acute mental health hospital for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults



- who cannot use a general acute mental health hospital because it is not possible to make enough reasonable adjustments.

- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④
- ⑤



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

**Principles – the best way to run services**

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



In this section we look at the ways a good acute mental health inpatient service should be run. These are also known as **principles**.



These principles apply to both types of acute mental health hospitals.





# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



**People in a mental health hospital should be treated fairly and as individuals**



It is hard for some groups of people to access health care and treatment as easily as other people.  
This is sometimes called **health inequality**.



Teams in hospitals should work to make sure that access to health care and treatment is fair.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

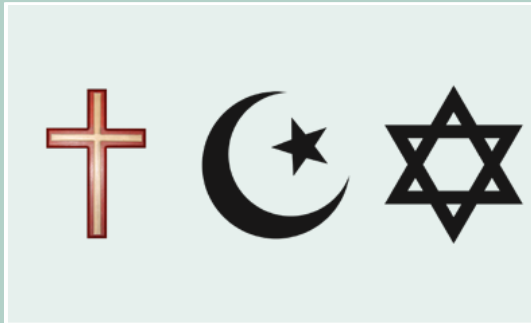
Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Some of the things that the teams should think about include a person's:



- religion or faith



- culture



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- race



- disability or condition



- gender



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



People should only go to hospital when they need to



There should be good community services to support people with their mental health needs.



These services make sure people **only** go into hospital:

- when they need it



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- when they cannot safely be supported in the community.



Services in the community could include:

- training for families



- a choice of short breaks





# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- choice about where someone lives



- skilled care organisations



- Mental health services which make reasonable adjustments for people



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- Community health teams including intensive support teams



**Intensive support teams** support adults with a learning disability and autistic people who behave in a way that challenges others.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



**Services should work together**



Services should work together to plan a person's care.



Teams in acute mental health hospitals should work closely with community services including:



- health



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

**Principles – the best way to run services**

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- education



- care



- housing services



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Teams in acute mental health hospitals should work closely with local organisations:



- during a person's hospital stay



- after they leave hospital.



- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④
- ⑤



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Teams in the community should be able to work with the person in hospital.



This could be a care organisation, or a health team which is called **in-reach**.



**In reach** means the team who supports a person at home can also support them at hospital, along with hospital staff.



Hospital staff should be able to work with the community teams when the person leaves hospital.

This is called **out-reach**.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Having teams that do **in-reach** and **out-reach** is important because:



- the person is supported by the same people.



- teams can share skills and knowledge.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



People should be supported in **general acute mental health hospitals where possible**



Most people can be supported in **general** acute mental health hospitals with reasonable adjustments which could mean:



- changing the care and treatment someone gets



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- making changes to the hospital ward or grounds



- changes to the staff team



Reasonable adjustments should be in a person's care and support plan and be on the digital flag system.



Staff should have training on reasonable adjustments.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

**Principles – the best way to run services**

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



**A hospital stay should make people get better**



A person should get the right care and treatment in a place that helps them to get better.



People with a learning disability and autistic people should only go to a mental health hospital when they have serious mental health needs.





# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

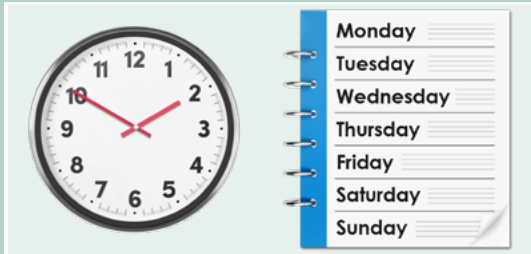
Discharge or planning to leave hospital



**A hospital stay should take place at the right time and should be local**



When a person needs acute mental health inpatient care it should be:



- available as soon as they need it



- at a mental health hospital close to where they live.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



**A hospital stay should be as short as possible**



When assessment or treatment can only be provided at hospital, a person should not stay any longer than they need to.



**Sixty days**

NHS England checks how many adults and older people stay at acute mental health inpatient services for:

- more than 60 days



**Ninety days**

- more than 90 days.



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



**Plans to leave hospital should be well made/long lasting**



When a person does not need care or treatment in hospital, they should have a date before they are ready to go.



A person should write a care and support plan with someone they trust and:



- housing services



# Principles: The best way to run a service



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health  
inpatient services

**Principles – the best  
way to run services**

The team

What acute mental  
health services  
should look like

Acute mental  
health services just  
for people with a  
learning disability  
and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or  
planning to leave  
hospital



- local support services.



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

## The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



It is important that the team in both types of acute mental health hospital are skilled at:



- supporting adults with a learning disability and autistic adults



- supporting people with a mental health need.





# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

## The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



NHS staff who plan and pay for services should make sure there is a wide range of different staff. The team should also include a mix of skills such as:



- Peer support workers
- Registered Mental Health Nurses
- Art therapists



- Social Workers
- Health Care Assistants
- Learning Disability Nurses



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

## The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- Physiotherapists.
- An occupational therapist or OT
- Speech and language therapists



All acute mental health hospitals should employ experts by experience such as:

- adults with a learning disability
- autistic adults



- family carers.



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

## The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



The jobs could include:

- peer support



- checking if services are good



- training or employing staff.



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

**The team**

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



There are guides on how many staff should be in an acute mental health team.



A key document to read is the **National Quality Board guidance on Safe Staffing**.

This **is not** an Easy Read document.



All staff should get lots of training.



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

## The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



There will be different numbers and types of staff in the two types of inpatient mental health services.



Acute mental health hospitals that are **only** for adults with a learning disability or autistic adults will have a team which is different to a general acute mental health hospital



The team should have a lot of experience supporting adults with a learning disability and autistic adults such as:



- Learning disability nurses





# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

## The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- Speech and Language Therapists



- Occupational Therapists.



In general acute mental health hospitals these three roles might be **in reach**.



Inpatient services just for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults should include these three roles in their core staff team.



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

**The team**

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



The Health and Care Act says that staff who support adults with a learning disability and autistic adults must get the right training.



NHS England offers training for teams. This includes:



- Oliver McGowan mandatory training that all staff must complete by law

[Read the Easy Read document about the training](#)



# The team



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services


**The team**

What acute mental health services should look like


Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- Care (Education) and Treatment Review or CETR training.



[Click here to read the Easy Read document about CETR](#)



# What acute mental health hospitals should look like



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

**What acute mental health services should look like**

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 38



Being in hospital can be upsetting for some people, for example if they are affected by lighting, noise and smells.



People should be able to have their say about how hospitals are designed.



General adult wards should be built and designed using advice and information from:



- NHS England



# What acute mental health hospitals should look like



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

**What acute mental health services should look like**

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



- NDTi – National Development Team for Inclusion

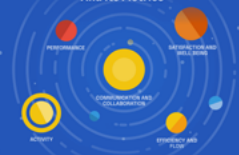


Department of Health & Social Care

- Department of Health and Social Care

## THE SPACE FRAMEWORK

And Its Metrics



- the SPACE framework – a way to meet the needs of autistic people in healthcare places



# What acute mental health hospitals should look like



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

**What acute mental health services should look like**

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 40



Using this advice means making sure that the lighting, noise and smells on a hospital ward do not upset people.



Everyone should have their own bedroom, ideally with its own bathroom.



Hospital signs should be clear.

# What acute mental health hospitals should look like



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 41



Communication should be suitable for the person.  
For example, Easy Read or audio.



There should be a quiet area where people can go to get away from noise, lights and talking.



People should also be able to go outside.

# What acute mental health hospitals should look like



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

**What acute mental health services should look like**

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 42



The ward should remind people of home so they can choose their own cushions, posters, paintings or plants.



The ward should be safe and should not stop people from doing too many things like:

- opening their own mail



- having visitors.



# Acute mental health hospitals just for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

**Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people**

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Where possible these services should be next to a **general** acute adult mental health hospital.



When this happens teams from the two hospitals can work closely together and share skills.



Here are a few examples of what should be available in the hospital:



# Acute mental health hospitals just for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

**Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people**

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Areas where people can mix with other people and socialise.



Areas where people can change things, for example, the heating or lighting.



Private areas where people can see their family or carers or spend time with their pets.



# Acute mental health hospitals just for adults with a learning disability and autistic adults



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

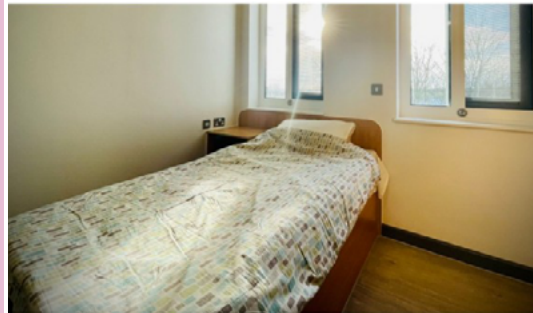
The team

What acute mental health services should look like

**Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people**

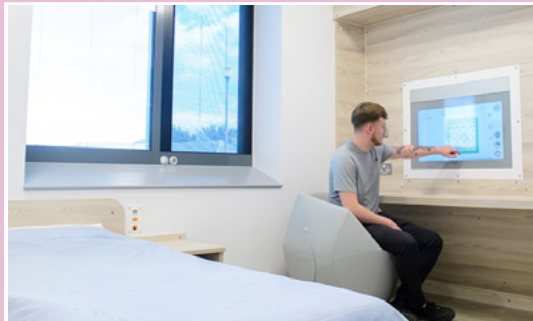
Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



People may be supported in a **single person environment**.

This means people could have their own:



- bedroom
- lounge or living area
- bathroom.



People who are living on their own must be able to see and talk to other people from outside the hospital.

# Care and treatment



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital



When a person goes into hospital the care and treatment they get:

- should meet their mental health needs



- should help them to get better.



Local teams might work with hospital staff in the general mental health hospital, to make the right reasonable adjustments for people.

# Care and treatment



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

**Care and treatment**

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 47



This might mean thinking about a person's different support needs and communication needs.



It also means understanding:

- how a person shows emotion



- how they prefer to meet other people.



# Care and treatment



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 48



The five good communication standards by the Royal College of Speech Therapists should be followed.

[Click here to read five good communication standards](#)

This document **is not** in Easy Read.



NHS England and NICE - the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence - also have different guides for:

- people with a learning disability
- autistic people



# Care and treatment



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

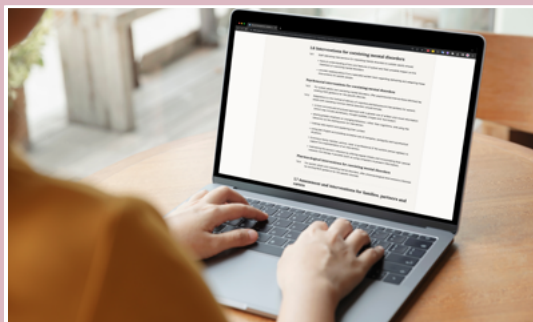
What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

Discharge or planning to leave hospital

Page 49



Here is the link to the NICE [guide about autistic adults with mental disorders](#)



Here is the link to the NICE [guide about managing mental health problems in people with a learning disability](#)



# Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

**Discharge or planning to leave hospital**

Page 50



People should leave hospital when they are ready.

This is also called **Clinically Ready For Discharge**.



This means the person does not need any more care or treatment at hospital.



The person might still need support, but it could be provided outside of hospital.

# Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

**Discharge or planning to leave hospital**

Page 51



The plan for a person to leave hospital should start before they go into hospital.



This will make sure they do not spend any longer in hospital than they need to.



The planning should include:

- why the person is going into hospital

# Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

**Discharge or planning to leave hospital**

Page 52



- when they will be ready to go home.



Planning should include the person's housing, health, social care and education needs.



The **Personalised Care and Support Plan** should be shared with the GP and other professionals so that the person gets good support.

# Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

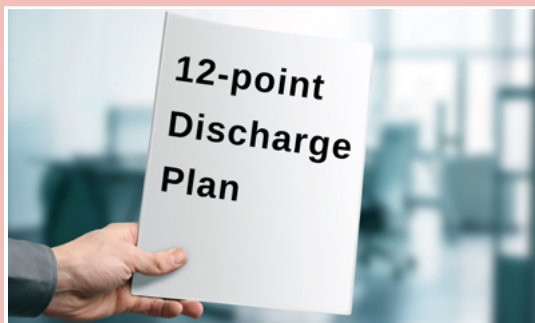
What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

**Discharge or planning to leave hospital**

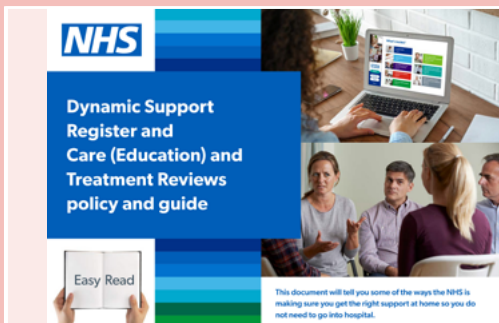
Page 53



The **12-point discharge plan** should also be used to write a personal discharge plan.



There is more information about the **12-point discharge plan** in the Easy Read Care Education and Treatment Reviews.



[Click here for the Easy Read Care Education and Treatment Review.](#)

# Discharge or planning to leave hospital



Introduction

About this document

Acute mental health inpatient services

Principles – the best way to run services

The team

What acute mental health services should look like

Acute mental health services just for people with a learning disability and autistic people

Care and treatment

**Discharge or planning to leave hospital**

Page 54



When planning for someone to leave hospital the local teams should be able to work with hospital staff.



A local team could be a community health team like an intensive support team, or it could be a care organisation.



This is important as the person will see the same team when they leave hospital.