

## Opportunities and ideas for 3rd Sector involvement in Hospital discharge

The planning of discharge can be a complex issue which takes many factors into consideration. Most of the time this works well and all of the identified needs can be managed. However, there are times when delayed discharge can take place due to a number of circumstances arising from services or the individual and their carers. Unplanned readmission can also be avoided in some circumstances where forethought and planning are prioritised. As with most things small changes really do make a difference.

My time in post has highlighted gaps in services which often have an impact on the individual or their carers. Many of these may be areas where the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector can work alongside statutory services to support individuals to return to their own homes and remain there longer, if this is their wish.

### ➤ Travel from Hospital

Scottish Ambulance Service had other priorities and was unable to attend. The service user had no family or they were at work and could not assist with discharge arrangements.

### ➤ Support with returning home with shopping, heating and tidying.

Some services are unable to handle money and cannot buy the basics people need when they come home from a stay in hospital.

Where a service user has had an unplanned hospital admission the home can be left in an upheaval. This can be upsetting for people to come home to, and may increase the likelihood of falls as they try to put things right.

Some individuals without central heating depend on heating systems such as coal fires and electric heaters. Coming home to a cold house after a hospital stay can be detrimental to services users' health. A warm meal on your first day out of hospital, and someone to check in on you, can make all the difference.

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### ➤ Looking after pets

An elderly lady I met in hospital spent all her time worrying about her cat. She was very concerned that if there was nobody willing to care for it the SSPCA would take it from her.

People without families or carers often find great comfort and companionship with their pets; the thought of being without them can be very distressing

### ➤ Timing of discharge.

Due to transport arrangement some services users are discharged some time before their first allocated homecare visit. For example, if the service user is discharged at 2pm and their first visit is at 8.30pm this can be a long wait on their first day out of hospital.

### ➤ Long term hospital stays

There are some individuals remain in hospital due to legal processes such as Guardianship or because of a lack of services such as Very Sheltered Housing or Residential care beds. Lack of activities including mental and physical stimulation can impact on their wellbeing and health prospects.

There will be circumstance I have not encountered or foreseen. Each person is an individual and will bring opportunities and challenges for all service. We have a valuable Island culture, and Orkney's strong communities can be harnessed to support her people to live healthy, happy lives in the manner they choose.