Section 17 leave from hospital

Information for service users and carers

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber
NHS Foundation Trust

Corporate Services
My ward is: ..........................................................................................

Contacts in case of crisis

Ward ........................................... Other .....................................................

Planned contacts with care co-ordinator

Date: ........................................... Time: ......................................................

Venue: .............................................................................................................
What is Section 17 leave?

Section 17 is planned leave from hospital which is usually an important part of preparing you, over time, for discharge from hospital.

For you, your doctor and people important to you in the community, it will be a way of finding out how well you are progressing in your care and treatment. It will also enable you to keep in touch with family and friends and attend to things that you need to do.

When you return, the doctor in charge of your care and others in the care team will want to know from you and others how well the leave went and about any successes or difficulties you may have had.

When will I get leave?

This will be different for every person, because the effects of illness and circumstances outside hospital are different for everybody.

Your doctor and the care team must consider the benefits and risks of leave in relation to your health and your safety, and possibly, the protection of other people. They will also want to plan this leave with you and perhaps your family or friends.

Who can allow me to have leave from hospital if I am detained on a Section?

Only the doctor in charge of your care, known as your responsible clinician (RC) is allowed to authorise leave. This is usually your consultant, but may be another doctor, if your doctor is away from the hospital for more than a few days.
Can I do anything or go anywhere I want when I am on Section 17 leave?

Your consultant (RC) will let you know the details of the leave in writing (you will be given a copy of the Section 17 leave form), such as dates and times, and any conditions that apply to your leave, for example whether you need to be escorted by nursing staff. Any conditions that apply to the leave that is granted will be discussed with you and copies of the form given to other people who should know, for example your nearest relative.

Driving whilst receiving treatment

If you hold a driving licence your Consultant Doctor or GP will advise you to notify the DVLA of your medical or mental health condition, as you may be required to surrender your licence. If you have any concerns, please discuss with the Clinical Team.

Will I always be able to take the leave that my doctor has authorised?

Your doctor may have left instructions for the nurse that you should not have authorised leave if you are particularly unwell, and that you or other people would be at risk if the leave were to go ahead. The doctor will have discussed with you the kind of situation in which the nurse will have the discretion to delay the leave until your doctor has assessed you.
If you have been granted leave, with the condition that you are escorted by nursing staff, there may be an occasional delay in providing the nurse escort. This should not happen very often and is best avoided by planning ahead with your named nurse.

**Can my leave be extended without my returning to hospital?**

Yes, but only by the responsible clinician (usually your consultant). No other person may give you permission to stay longer on leave.

**What if I don’t come back on time?**

You should always try to be back on the ward at the time agreed and stated on your Section 17 leave form.

If you stay out of hospital for longer than your doctor has allowed, the Mental Health Act says that the hospital staff must bring you back to the hospital, with the help of others if necessary.
Useful contacts

Carers team

Chaplaincy
01302 796165

Cloverleaf Advocacy
01724 854952

Patient Advice and Liaison
Service (PALS)
0800 015 4334
This information is correct at the time of publishing
Last Reviewed: January 2014