

Nadine's story – July 2025

Name of service: Virtual Ward

Main purpose of service: The NHS is introducing more virtual wards to support people in the place they call home. A virtual ward provides an alternative option for those who are frail, elderly, or with acute infections and other short-term exacerbations of an existing health condition or illness.

Virtual wards prevent avoidable admission into hospitals, support early discharge out of the hospital, and increase the overall bed base available for acute care. The Virtual Ward team arrange any diagnostic tests, necessary medication, and equipment you may require and will co-ordinate the team responsible for your care at home.

Nadine and Alison: Nadine is 87 years old and lives with her daughter Alison. They invited Jo from Locala's Engagement Team to join them at their home to talk about their experience when Nadine was a patient with the Virtual Ward. Alison was impressed with the service. **"Right from the very beginning they were all great. 111, the doctors on the phone, the SDEC (Same Day Emergency Care) unit at the hospital. Then the nurses who came to the house – they were like a new family. They were fabulous."**



Nadine had been taken to A&E by ambulance following days of feeling unwell. A change to her angina medication had resulted in sickness and diarrhoea. Nadine had begun to feel dizzy and could hardly stand up. She stayed on the SDEC unit for 24 hours whilst her medications were reviewed and a drip was in place. She then left hospital to be cared for by the Virtual Ward. Alison explains, **"You're not actually discharged. You're still under hospital care. They come out every day before 1pm. They took Mum's blood pressure and checked her skin. The pharmacists from the team came and were here a good couple of hours, checking Mum's medication. They were continually tweaking them to get Mum right. They discussed things with us."**

Safe hands: Nadine continues, **"They were brilliant. Nothing could be better! Nothing was too much trouble. I felt in safe hands."** Nadine was visited by the Virtual Ward's physiotherapist. **"She checked I was OK on the stairs or if I needed handles, which I didn't. I'm using a wheeled walking frame. I'm improving and they told me."** Alison adds, **"Over the Bank Holiday weekend, I was asked to take Mum's blood pressure – we have our own machine – so the team rang everyday to ask me for the results. I am capable to do this, but I wonder if others would be?"**

Discharged: Nadine remembers when the Virtual Ward discharged her. **"Jen, one of the nurses had been, then went outside to join the online meeting from her car. She came back in and said, 'we've sacked you!' I felt relieved – you know everything is fine."**

More information: for more information on the Virtual Ward, see Locala's website - <https://www.locala.org.uk/services/virtual-ward>

And finally... Nadine feels that the service is an excellent idea. **"It was especially nice to be nursed at home and this aided my recovery. It was also good to know I wasn't 'bed blocking' and taking up a bed in the hospital that was needed by someone else, who was not able to be at home like me."**