

Sodexo partners with Wiltshire Farm Foods to support vulnerable patients when discharged

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Sodexo [Health & Care](#) has partnered with Wiltshire Farm Foods to provide vulnerable patients with nutritious meals in their homes once discharged from hospital as part of its Onward Care service which it developed with Buckingham Health NHS Trust.

The Onward Care non-clinical service provided by Sodexo [Health & Care](#) was developed in partnership with Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust to reduce unplanned hospital admissions for frail people living at home and has been in operation since January 2023.

The non-clinical service has reduced readmission rates for patients in the programme by 66% compared to a matched demographic and comorbidity. Whilst also improving health inequalities, social isolation and self-confidence.

The Onward Care service provides a valuable service to frail patients returning home after a hospital stay, bridging the clinical care provided by the Trust with the 400 plus local community and charity organisations which offer relevant services. Signposting patients to the appropriate support available can help build their confidence when they've returned home and reduce the likelihood of hospital re-admission.

Patients identified by the Trust as likely to be re-admitted are offered the service and shortly after their discharge a member of the Onward Care team will visit them in their home to develop a home care plan. The service also includes home visits, regular phone calls and in home monitoring technology.

Now in addition patients will be offered three weeks' worth of main meals from Wiltshire Farm Foods. They

are able to select from a range of 30 meals including both premium and basic dishes to suit all tastes. Dishes on offer include cottage pie, lasagne, breaded fish and chips, seafood paella, chicken tikka masala, fisherman's pie, coq au vin and cauliflower cheese and broccoli bake. Five frozen meals are delivered each week, direct from Wiltshire Farm Foods.

Wiltshire Farm Foods meals are made from quality ingredients by expert chefs, they microwave from frozen and offer a complete balanced, tasty and nutritious meal in a matter of minutes.

Philip Leigh, CEO Health & Care, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: "Having developed and implemented the service in conjunction with the Trust we know that the Onward Care service is having a positive impact on patients discharged from hospital, and we are pleased to be able to enhance the service further with the addition of these free meals through our new partnership with Wiltshire Farm Foods.

"At Sodexo we are committed to doing all we can to help improve the communities in which we operate and through this new partnership we are able to address health inequalities and boost the health and wellbeing of many frail and vulnerable patients returning home after a hospital stay. Having the convenience of frozen ready-made meals, prepared by expert chefs, delivered to their door will help them gain their independence and build their self-confidence and most importantly will ensure that they are able to easily enjoy hot nutritious meals which will aid in their recovery."

Commenting on behalf of Wiltshire Farm Foods, Lee Sheppard, Director of Corporate Affairs, Policy & Sustainability said: "Making a real difference to the people and communities we serve is core to Wiltshire Farm Foods. Partnering with Sodexo and the Onward Care service at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust to support vulnerable patients during their return home from hospital is a meaningful initiative. It highlights the importance of tasty, nourishing food in aiding recovery and underscores the value of working together to prevent hospital re-admissions. We're proud to be part of this joint collaborative partnership."

The Onward Care service at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust offers patients identified at discharge as a re-admission risk the ability to utilise services including the delivery of groceries and shopping and for some Sodexo is able to install MiiCare, a passive remote monitoring service, which feeds valuable data from the patient's home.

The system can feed data such as the number of steps they are taking, the rooms they are using how often and for how long, enabling action being taken if the system flags the patient spending a prolonged period of time in one room. It can also include the use of AI-linked sensors on kettles and fridges specifically aimed at monitoring the hydration and nutrition of the patient. When changes in the patient's eating and drinking habits are identified Sodexo's Onward Care team contact the patient to help solve the issue or if necessary, escalate any clinical issues to the Trust.

Jenny Ricketts, deputy chief operating officer, Buckinghamshire Health NHS Trust added: "Onward Care is a service we are pleased to have developed with Sodexo Health & Care. The service is providing our clinical teams with the confidence that when discharging frail patients, they are receiving crucial support at home which is helping reduce the number of unplanned hospital readmissions. The feedback we have had from patients using the service this year has been very positive with many feeling more confident about being at home after they have been in hospital. The addition of the partnership with Wiltshire Farm Foods will be very welcome to elderly and frail patients who may feel vulnerable when returning home and

will benefit having meals delivered direct to them as they re-adjust to living at home again, especially as we enter the cold winter months.”