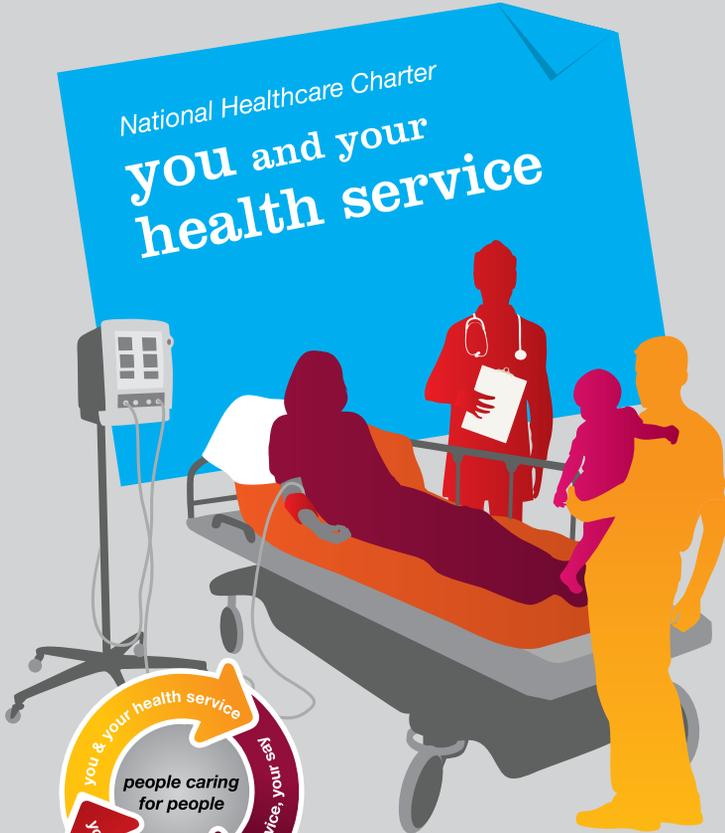


This leaflet was produced as a recommendation of a patient working group on ways to promote improved safety in patient care and to empower patients to take greater control over their health and well-being whilst in hospitals in Ireland.



National Healthcare Charter you and your health service

Get involved!

Find out about how you can get involved in improving health services in Ireland.

The HSE is actively inviting service users to get involved on patient forums and quality improvement initiatives. To find out more contact:

National Advocacy Unit, HSE,
Quality & Patient Safety Directorate,
Health Service Executive, Oak House,
Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

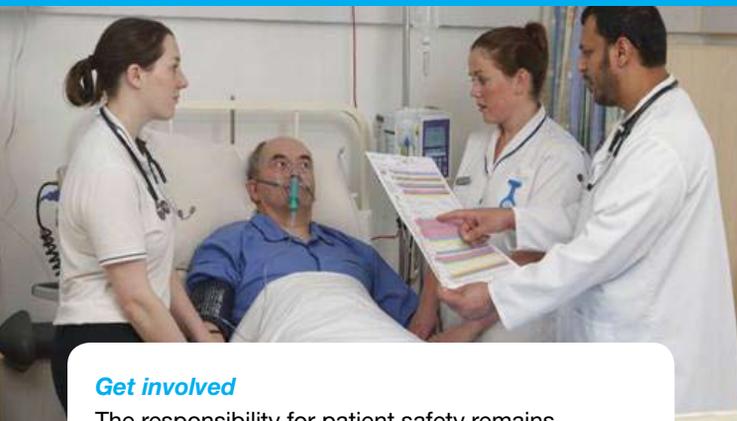
Tel: (045) 880 400
Email: yoursay@hse.ie
www.hse.ie

National Early Warning Score

It's safer to ask
**about your early
warning score**

people caring for people

To ensure that any deterioration in your condition is picked up early, hospitals in Ireland have a scoring system in place called the National Early Warning Score (NEWS). The total score will guide decisions about your care.



Get involved

The responsibility for patient safety remains with your healthcare team. Patients and family members play a vital role. We encourage all patients to ask questions. Patients and families who are more informed and involved in their healthcare often experience safer and better care and have improved quality of life afterwards.

Remember - it's safer to ask.

Your vital signs

Vital signs are signs that are essential for life, for example, breathing and heart rate. Your vital signs are assessed while you are in hospital.

Healthcare staff:

- assess your breathing, your heart rate and your level of consciousness
- take your blood pressure and temperature
- assess the level of oxygen in your blood.

All of these measurements are recorded in your observation chart at the end of your bed.

How is the early warning score calculated?

Each vital sign is allocated a score, these scores are added together to give you a total early warning score.



What do the scores mean?

A score of 0 is the best score.



If the score is 3 or more the doctor is informed and nursing staff will monitor you more closely.



If the score is 7 or more nursing staff will ask the doctor to come to assess you immediately.

What happens if your condition gets worse?

If your condition gets worse during your stay in hospital your early warning score will start to increase. Nursing staff will inform the doctor requesting that they intervene early to prevent your condition from getting worse.

If you are feeling unwell ask the nurse:

(or get someone to ask on your behalf)

What is my early warning score?

Remember, if your score is greater than 3 ask the nurse:

- Has the doctor been informed?
- What is being done to stop my condition from getting worse?

We can provide safer and better care for you by using the National Early Warning Score (NEWS).

Note: In certain groups of patients such as those who have COPD or emphysema, an elevated early warning score on a continuous basis may be normal. An individual plan of care is put in place for these patients.