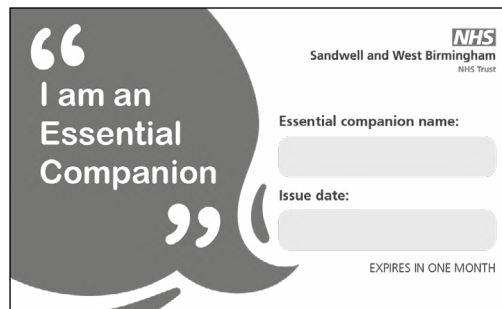


# Essential Companion Access Card

Information and advice for patients

Patient Experience Team



## Do you look after someone?

If you are caring, for someone without being paid for it who needs help because of disability or ill health, an essential companion access card could make your life easier by providing you with support and recognition.

If you would like to hear more about an essential companion card, please contact

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## Who is an Essential Companion?

An essential companion is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who needs help due to illness, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction.

If you give significant support to another person, whether you live with that person or not, you are considered an essential companion, even if the person you care for is unable, or even unwilling, to acknowledge your involvement.

## An Essential Companion Access card gives you

- Ability to have freedom of visiting
- Participation in personal care of you wish
- Assisting with mealtimes
- Overnight stay at the bedside if appropriate
- Free carparking (for up to one month)
- Partnership in care and involvement in decision making (if consent is given and or in best interests)

## How to get an essential companion access card

If the person you are an essential companion for is a patient in hospital or maternity identify yourself to the nurse in charge. They will issue you with a card after ensuring you are caring for someone without being paid for it.

If the person you are an essential companion for is attending a clinic as an outpatient identify yourself to the person in charge. They will issue you with a card if you are caring for someone without being paid for it.

**The card once issued can only be used by the person identified on the card and is not transferable for use by anyone else.**

**The card applies to all our campuses.**

## Contact Details

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If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email [swbh.library@nhs.net](mailto:swbh.library@nhs.net).



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