

MENTAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

We must always assume that a patient has the mental capacity to decide where their discharge destination will be, unless this is in doubt. In these cases, mental capacity must be established formally under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. This assessment can be performed by a doctor or social worker.

A patient will be deemed to lack mental capacity if they cannot:

1. understand information about their discharge
 2. retain the information given
 3. use that information to make a decision
 4. communicate their decision (by talking, using sign language or any other means)
- It is important to remember that mental capacity is date, time and decision specific. Therefore, although a patient may lack capacity around their discharge destination, this does not mean that they lack capacity around other aspects of their care, for example, diet and fluid intake.