

Are you set for surgery?



Lancashire and South Cumbria
Patient Charter

“Improving health together”

healthwatch

In partnership with Healthwatch Cumbria
and Healthwatch Lancashire



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Why do I have this booklet?

During a meeting with a clinician, you have had a discussion about a condition which may require surgery.

Some people will receive this book when they are being referred to the hospital. Others may already be on a waiting list.

You may already be thinking about steps you can take to improve your health or improve your symptoms, so that you do not need to see a surgeon.

It doesn't matter which applies to you. The simple steps in this booklet can benefit us all. They are a set of principles designed to get someone as well as possible before an operation, which may have long-term health benefits too. This Charter sets out how we can do it. We want to help everyone be as healthy as they can be.

In return, we ask that you help us to help the NHS – to recover from COVID, and to help the maximum number of patients get fit and well again, quickly.

This new approach has been co-produced across the hospital and GP practices, with feedback from nearly 1000 previous patients.

The same information, and interactive elements, are available online at:

<https://www.uhmb.nhs.uk/get-involved/patient-experience/transforming-surgical-care>



**#setfor
surgery**

Prehab:

Are you set for surgery?



1/4
unfit

Patients have told us that in 2019, around one quarter of those undergoing surgery considered themselves unfit; over one third took no regular exercise. None of us would run a race without preparing ourselves. Having an operation puts considerable strains on your body, it's a big physical challenge. The more you train, the better race you will run. Surgery is little different. Patients who are fit are known to recover faster, with less complications, shorter time in hospital, and fewer re-referrals with similar problems in the future.

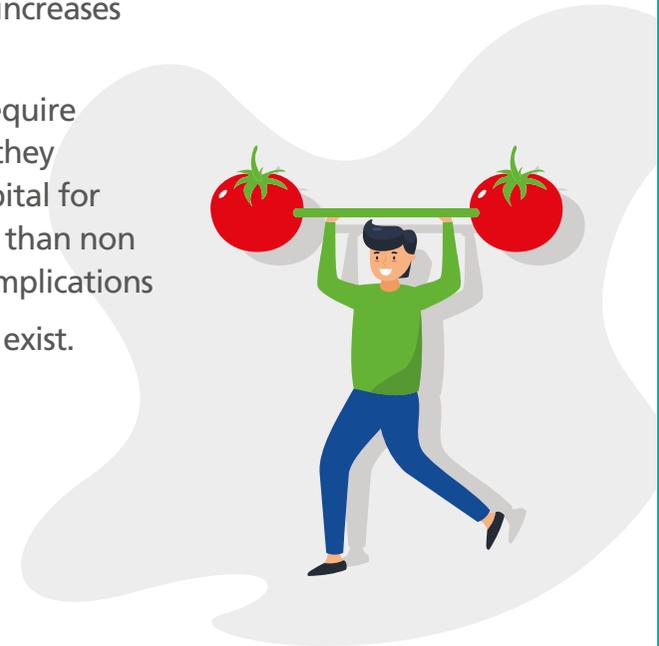
You might have heard of “rehab”, where you gain support from health professionals to speed up recovery AFTER surgery. With prehab, you are supported BEFORE your surgery to ensure your body is in optimum condition.

What's more, there are now really convincing studies showing:

- 1 Smokers are much more likely to die after an operation (nearly double the risk of a non smoker)
- 2 Being obese (BMI 30+) can double your risk of blood clots, infections, and cardiac complications: this increases with weight
- 3 Diabetic patients require optimised control: they tend to stay in hospital for significantly longer than non diabetics due to complications

Many other examples exist.

And what about beyond surgery? We know that if you change your habits, centred on a trigger (in this case, possible surgery), you are more likely to keep the good habits in the future. So it's a Win-Win.





Below are the 'risk factors' which are spoken about in Prehab programmes – all the things that can be improved, to help surgical outcomes. What's more – even if you consider yourself physically fit and well – a little training can make you even better. There are still gains. If you have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure – now is the time for us to help you make sure they are well controlled.

Many patients are going to wait longer for their surgery now.

Although the hospitals are working very hard to work quickly through the waiting lists, some delay is inevitable. Therefore, there is an opportunity in this pause to ask, what can you do to improve your wellness – and if or when you come to have an operation, you can be assured that you are set for a good outcome.



Prehab:

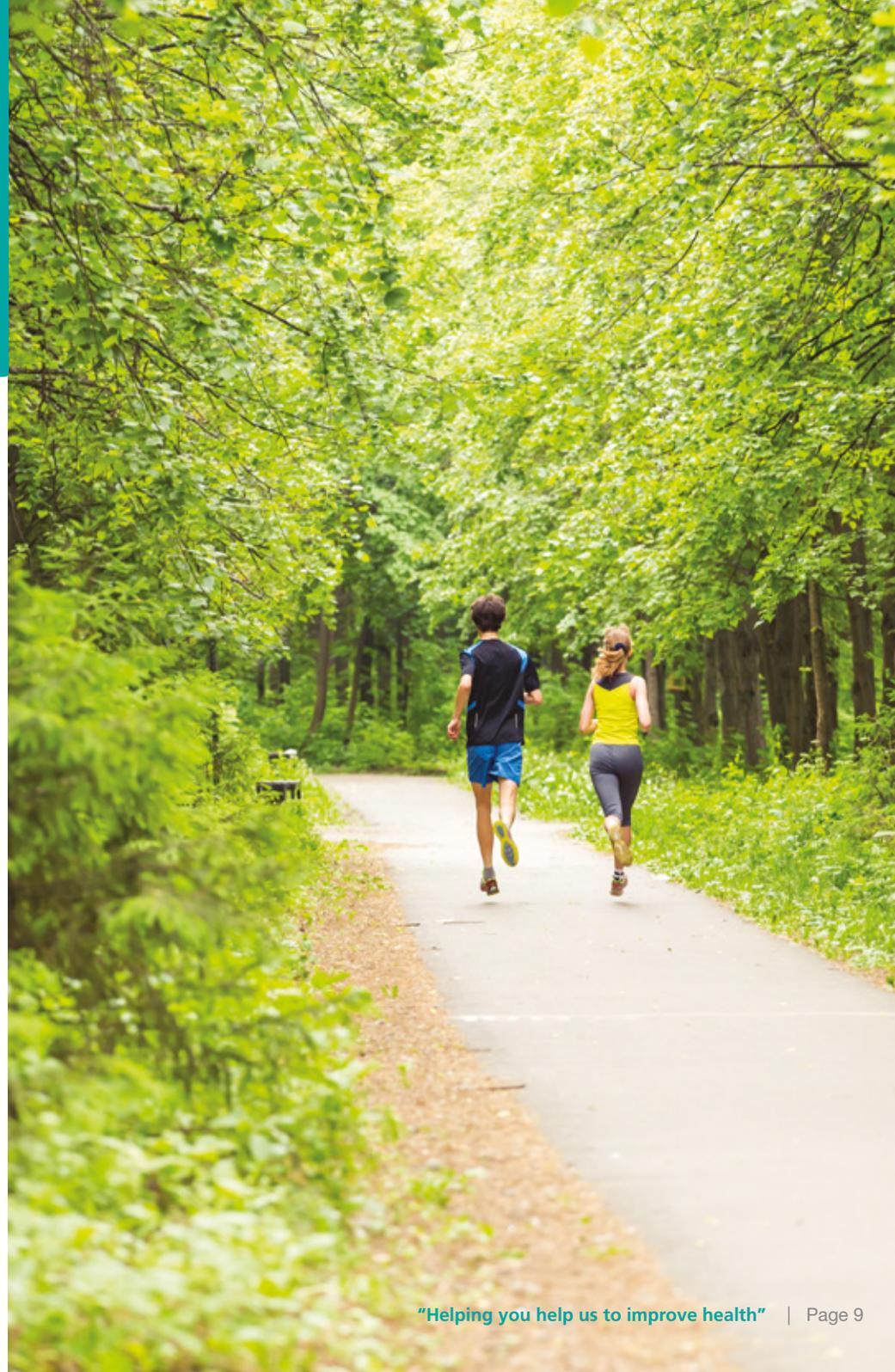
Are you set for surgery?



Your healthcare team should already have indicated to you where they feel you have scope to improve your wellness.

Later pages in this booklet will help you keep a note of your progress. We set out to help you work towards these goals, and will support you: you can refer to this online directory, <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/>, and you should not feel alone in this journey.

Some patients are motivated by the fact that – with substantial improvements in health and risk factors, some surgical ‘problems’, such as an arthritic hip, or a grumbling gall bladder, seem miraculously to resolve. Any surgeon will tell you the only failsafe way to avoid complications is to avoid an operation!



Why the charter?

We need your help too



In 2019, nearly 20 percent of patients, that's one in five, who were listed for an operation in general and orthopedic surgery, never went on to have the procedure.

Some were cancelled by the hospital anaesthetic clinic as they were not fit enough for a safe operation – disappointing for sure, after the surgeon had agreed to it with the patient. But surgery is only the technical part of the challenge of getting patients fit and recovered. Safety first.

We need to ensure every contact you have with the health and care system counts. We are working through the waiting lists, but many people are not as 'set for surgery' as they were?

Prehab has always been about getting the right patient to the right treatment at the right time – under the right conditions to achieve the best possible outcome.

As our healthcare systems return to a new normal, with important improvements to inpatient care, outpatients, and the operating theatres, we will all work to ensure you receive the care that is right for you,

20%





Around half these patients cancelled themselves – the operation was simply not a priority for them at that time, and no-one can ‘keep a place’ forever on the waiting list.

If this happened on the day of surgery, the resources wasted are immense (**around £6000 for a hip replacement cancelled on the day**) – this was by no means a rare event. What’s more, it stops some other patient from having their procedure that day.

At this time, we ask that you keep in touch with us, and if you have appointments or dates scheduled, keep them, or cancel with plentiful notice so that someone else can use it.

If you need to talk to someone about your choices, we are here to support that (**see back page for contacts**).



What next?



This depends on your own circumstances, whether you are already referred to meet the specialist, or whether you are trying out this approach with the aim of health improvement, and maybe avoid an operation all together.

You might ask, if I hit my goals quickly, what then?

By keeping in touch with your wellness team, we can ensure that any referrals are acted on quickly – and, if we know you are fit, you might be considered available for surgery quickly.

What if I try, but just cannot reach my goals?

We will try to support you some more. There is little point in setting out this offer without trying to ensure it brings benefits for all. When we asked patients themselves what should happen here, nearly half said that they should NOT go ahead immediately with their operation. Every case is individual, and we would not leave anyone at risk, but, please do consider what this would mean to you.

This is a new approach for the region, with the aim of creating longlasting wellness in our population. If you become a **'patient champion'** – someone who in signing onto this charter, gets a great surgical outcome – we may ask you to help future patients too. Certainly, we will be checking

in with you at a future date, just to see if those habits are sustained.

It's all about helping one another, and the NHS.



Patient Champion





Bay Health &
Care Partners
delivering



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Website: **<https://www.uhmb.nhs.uk/get-involved/patient-experience/transforming-surgical-care>**

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require this document in an alternative format.

The information in this report is correct to the best of our knowledge as of January 2022.

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