Ellern Mede

Ellern Mede Ridgeway

Patient Booklet





About Ellern Mede

Founded in 2000, Ellern Mede has over 25 years' experience as a trusted mental healthcare service. We provide bespoke inpatient treatment for individuals with complex mental health needs and overlapping conditions, including eating disorders, emotional dysregulation, trauma and neurodivergence. Our mission is to support meaningful and sustainable recovery from even the most complex mental health conditions.

About Ellern Mede Ridgeway

Ellern Mede Ridgeway Hospital provides specialist inpatient care for children and young people with complex needs, including eating disorders and disordered eating.

Treatment is delivered across three wards, each offering a different level of support to meet patients at their current stage of recovery and help them progress towards greater independence:

- **Lask ward (High Dependency unit):** Provides enhanced support, monitoring, and stabilisation for patients with higher clinical complexity or risk.
- **Nunn ward (General unit):** Offers a structured therapeutic programme for patients who are medically and psychologically stable enough to engage in treatment.
- **The Cottage (Step-down unit):** Supports increased independence and prepares patients for the next stage of recovery.

Transfers between wards are based on individual needs and risks and are discussed with patients and families to ensure the right level of support at the right time.

'I will be forever grateful for all the team at EM for believing in me when times got tough and making me smile every day.'

-Former Patient

Why have you come to Ellern Mede?

People come to Ellern Mede when they need a level of support that is best provided in hospital. Being here gives you time, space, and specialist care to help you feel safer and to understand what's been making things difficult. Your stay is about learning more about yourself, getting the right support, and taking steps towards feeling stronger. Your team will work with you to understand your needs and to plan support that helps you now and as you move forward.

Who will support me?

At Ellern Mede, you will be supported by a multi-disciplinary team who work together to help keep you safe and support your recovery. Your team will include nurses, doctors, therapists, psychologists, dietitians, teachers, and support workers. Everyone has a different role, but they work closely together so your care feels joined up and consistent. You will have named members of staff who help coordinate your care and who you can talk to if you have questions or worries. It's okay if it takes time to get to know people, we understand that trust builds gradually.



Patient feedback

‘At first coming to Ellern Mede was extremely difficult as I didn’t know anyone. I found it hard to be away from home. However, I quickly settled in and made friends with the other patients. The staff are also lovely and helped me when I was struggling and during day to day life. Personalising my room was also comforting as it felt more homely and not like a hospital. At first I stressed about not being able to talk to my friends, but I am able to call them every day. Being at Ellern Mede has been a positive experience overall and I am grateful for coming.’

‘Thank you Dr Hind. I live because of you. And not only am I alive, I am enjoying my adventure in continuing to exist. You did not give up on me. You caused yourself trouble by keeping me as a patient. My life, my achievements in succeeding and recovery and everything since, I must credit to you. You are truly a hero.’

‘Dear Ellern Mede, I just wanted to say I will never ever forget what you have done for me. I can’t begin to say thank you enough. Thank you for all your kindness and patience and support.’

What to expect on your first day

Written by a previous patient

First you will have your Pre admission meeting, then you will come upstairs to the ward and be introduced casually to the patients and staff on the ward. You will then be shown to your room, where you will meet your roomate and sort through all your belongings and unpack with a member of staff. Staff will ask to check your vitals too. The staff and patients are so welcoming and inclusive, so it is easier to interact and build up theraputic relationships with staff especially. The staff may ask about your interests and if you would like to play a game with them.

Also in the in person pre admission assessment you will meet people who are important to your care plan, for example, your consultant, ward manager, your psychologist and your dietician. If you have a diagnosis of Autism you will also meet the autism champion of the hospital, who will meet with you once a week to help you with your stay as an inpatient with autism.

There is a lovely big garden and cosy school cabins, which you will be shown when you are ready. You will be given care tailored to you as an individual too. Based on your intake you will be informed of your meal plan, wether that be supplement or solid food

Your care pathway

Your care pathway will be personalised to meet your individual needs.

Pre-admission Assessment

Pre-admission assessment

You andyour family/carers will meet your Consultant Psychiatrist who will have received your referral before they meet you. You will be able to tell them how you feel and they will talk to you about your admission goals and treatment plans.

Admission

Admission

As an inpatient, further assessments will help the team to shape your treatment. This includes developing a ‘formulation’ (a shared biopsychosocial understanding of your needs), what type of therapy is right for you, how we can support you during meals and the family support we can put in place. For a time this may include close observations of you by a member of staff.

Treatment

Treatment

When you are admitted the staff will support you, to help keep you safe. You will be supported with meal plans by the dietician. Our therapy team will help you understand the way you feel and think, your habits and behaviours and support you to learn new skills. You will have weekly MDT reviews and 4-6-weekly CPA reviews.

Discharge

Discharge

From the point of your admission we will be working with you and those supporting you to plan your discharge. Our aim is to ensure we build the right support and skills together to help you to thrive after you are discharged.

What is a person-centred approach?

Person-centred care means we take time to get to know you as a whole person, beyond diagnoses or difficulties. Everyone's story is different, and your care should be too.

We work with you (and those who support you) to understand what matters to you, recognise your strengths, and make sure your voice is central in decisions about your care. As your needs change, your care can change too, so it continues to feel personal and right for you.

What is a formulation assessment?

A formulation assessment is a series of conversations that helps us understand you as a whole person and make sense of what you're experiencing.

You'll spend time talking with members of your care team about how you're feeling, what has been difficult, what has helped in the past, and what feels important to you right now. We may also talk about your physical health, your experiences at home or school, and the people and relationships that support you.

These conversations help us build a shared understanding (called a formulation) of your strengths and needs. This includes exploring how different factors may be connected, such as mental health difficulties, neurodevelopmental needs (for example autism), and the impact of past experiences or trauma. Understanding how these areas overlap helps us plan care that is more effective, personalised and supportive.

Your formulation guides your care and treatment plan and can change over time as your needs change. You will be involved throughout the process, and you can ask questions or share things at your own pace.

Reviewing your treatment

Regular reviews take place to ensure a collaborative approach to personalizing your care and treatment plans

Weekly MDT review meetings

Your treatment plans will be reviewed with the whole team weekly, including your recovery goals and discharge plans. MDT meetings include input from patients, families and community teams. Patients can give written input weekly and are invited to join the meetings on a fortnightly basis along with family members and members of your community team. MDT reports are sent to parents/carers and community professionals every week. This is subject to your consent as part of your information sharing agreement.



Care plans and ‘PILRIMP’ plans

The nursing team willwork withyou to develop your care plans for your day to day care. This includes your PILRIMP (Patient inclusion in least restrictive management plan) which ensures advance planning around how the team can support you during episodes of distress. These plans will be reviewed regularly with you, led by your key nurse.



CPA meetings

‘Care programme approach’ (CPA) meetings are held every 4-6 weeks, led by your Consultant psychiatrist. Members of your team share review reports, taking into account your formulation, admission goals and discharge plans. Young people are encouraged and supported to attend if they wish to do so. Family members and relevant professionals from the community team are also invited to join.

Community meetings

Once you are settled, you may want to share your views about life on the ward or what's happening in the hospital.
Community meetings take place each week and give patients and staff the chance to:



- raise concerns
- share ideas
- ask questions
- talk about things that matter to them

Meetings may take place on your ward or across the hospital. Staff will let you know when these are happening and how you can take part.

Wards guidelines

Each ward has some guidelines in place to help keep everyone safe and to support a calm, therapeutic environment. These may include guidance about dress code and items that cannot be kept on the ward.
When you arrive, staff will explain the guidelines and the reasons for them, and you can ask questions at any time. We understand that being in a new place can feel overwhelming, and staff are there to support you and help make your stay as positive as possible.

Digital safety - Phone policy

We ask all patients to agree a contract for use of phones and media devices on the ward. We will work with you and your family to agree a plan that promotes your safety and wellbeing. We recognise the many benefits of accessing your mobile phone and devices and appreciate this is an important way of staying connected with the world whilst in hospital. Whilst in our care we request your camera must be disabled. We want to promote your autonomy and rights whilst also keeping you safe and promoting maximum engagement with your care and treatment plan. Ward devices are available for video calls.



Room personalisation

Please note that most patients will share a twin room with another young person. Patients can usually personalise their side of the bedroom. Please note that room changes may be necessary at short notice.

The multi-disciplinary team (MDT)

Our multidisciplinary team (MDT) brings together a range of professionals who work closely together to provide coordinated, person-centred care. Team members meet regularly in MDT reviews (ward rounds) to share updates, plan treatment, and ensure all aspects of your health and wellbeing are addressed in a joined-up way.

Hospital Manager
A senior registered nurse who oversees the day-to-day running of the hospital, ensuring services are safe, well-managed, and meet regulatory and quality standards.

Consultant Psychiatrist
Leads medical care, including diagnosis, treatment planning, and medication management, and oversees coordination of care across services.

Specialty doctor / Ward doctor
Supports day-to-day medical care, monitors physical health, and responds to medical needs on the ward.

Psychologist
Provides psychological assessment, formulation, individual and group therapies, and supports the wider team through reflective practice. Ellern Mede has clinical and counselling psychologists as well as trainee and assistant psychologists. They work closely with other team members to integrate the formulation and therapeutic care into all areas of treatment.

Family therapist
Works with patients and families to strengthen communication, relationships, and support recovery within the family system.

Dietician
Assesses nutritional needs and provides individualised meal planning and dietary support to promote physical health and recovery.

Social worker
Supports safeguarding, discharge planning, and access to community resources, working closely with patients and families.

Nursing team
Provide 24-hour care and support led by the Ward Manager. Nurses administer treatment such as medication. Each patient is allocated a key nurse for regular one-to-one support.

Autism team
Led by our Autism lead nurse, the team includes an Autism champion at each hospital. The Autism team can provide autism screening and assessments, advocates for patients with autism and other forms of neurodiversity, and ensures care approaches and environments are personalized, inclusive and supportive.

Healthcare assistants / Therapeutic support workers
Support day-to-day care, safety, routines, mealtimes, activities and emotional wellbeing on the ward.

Occupational therapist (OT)
Supports independence and daily living skills, helping patients engage in meaningful activities.

Activity coordinator
Facilitates therapeutic activities and supported outings that promote wellbeing, confidence, and skill development.

Psychotherapist
Provides individual therapy to help patients explore thoughts, feelings, and experiences, supporting emotional understanding and positive change.

Art therapist
Uses creative activities such as art-making to help patients express emotions, process experiences, and support emotional wellbeing, particularly when feelings are difficult to put into words.

Physiotherapist
Supports physical health, mobility, and rehabilitation where required.



If you want help, support, or someone to speak up for you

Talking to a Social Worker

You can ask to speak with the hospital Social Worker at any time. They can help with things like family contact, benefits, discharge planning, concerns and support outside the hospital.

To speak with the Social Worker:

- ask any member of ward staff, or
- ask a family member to contact the ward on your behalf

Staff will help arrange this for you.

Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)

You can speak with an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) if you would like to talk to someone who is independent of Ellern Mede about your care or treatment.

The IMHA:

- listens to you
- explains your rights
- gives information and advice
- respects your wishes
- only acts on what you ask them to do



The advocate visits the hospital regularly and can also meet with you by arrangement.

We work with Advent Advocacy. Their contact details are displayed on the wards, and any member of staff can help you contact them.

Phone: 01325 776554

Email: info@adventadvocacy.co.uko.uk

Daily Routines

Daily life at the hospital is structured to balance therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities, all tailored to each young person's needs. Your personalised timetable will include set times for meals and snacks, school or study, therapy sessions, and group activities such as DBT skills, sensory groups, or post-meal support.

There are also opportunities for self-directed activities like arts and crafts, board games, or watching films, either independently or with staff support. Physical activity is built into the day through supervised walks, exercise, and weekly trips to local attractions, helping you practise new skills, explore your interests, and support recovery.

Activities

Our onsite activity rooms are equipped to support creativity, relaxation, and social connection as part of your recovery. These spaces provide access to a range of activities, including arts and crafts, video games, board games, puzzles, and spaces for yoga or dance. Designed to meet a variety of interests, the rooms encourage self-expression and promote well-being in a supportive environment. We also have spaces for yoga, dance, and movement-based activities.





'We believe activities are an essential part of your recovery, providing opportunities to build confidence, develop new skills, and find enjoyment in a supportive environment.'

Therapeutic spaces



Sensory room
The sensory room is a calm and comfortable space you can use when you need some time to feel more settled. It's a place to take a break, slow things down, and help your body and mind feel safer and more relaxed. The room has different sensory features that can be adjusted to suit what helps you most. Some people use it to manage feelings of anxiety or overwhelm, while others find it helpful for grounding, relaxing, or focusing. Your team can help you decide when and how to use the sensory room as part of your care.

Quiet spaces and multi-faith areas
There are quiet rooms on the unit which you can use if you need some downtime, including the Zen Den. There are also multi-faith spaces you can use, with access to spiritual and faith resources. Ask a member of the team if you would like to use these spaces.

Places to go for outings

Mill Field
Small local green space within short walking distance, suitable for brief walks and outdoor time

Brent Cross Shopping Centre
Prince Charles Drive, London NW4 3FP

Vue Cinema
Great North Leisure Park, London N12 0GL

Hollywood Bowl Finchley
Great North Leisure Park, N12 0GL

Belmont Farm
The Ridgeway, London NW7 1QT

Clay Pottery Café
Ceramix Clay Café & Art Studio, Unit 20 Sentinel Square, London NW4 2EL

Ellern Mede School



At Ellern Mede you can attend our school which has been rated by Ofsted to be “outstanding”. This means you won’t fall behind in your education. The school staff will talk to your own school and make sure that you are supported in your education from GCSEs up to your A Levels.

Ellern Mede School has been rated “Outstanding” by Ofsted.

Subjects which are taught at Ellern Mede Ridgeway School:

- English Literature
- English Language
- Mathematics
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- Spanish
- French
- History
- Geography
- Psychology & Sociology
- Music
- Art
- Art & Design
- Drama

	Lesson am	Break am	Lesson am	Break pm	Lesson pm
Monday	09:30-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:30	13:30-15:00
Tuesday	09:30-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:30	13:30-15:00
Wednesday	09:30-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:30	13:30-15:00
Thursday	09:30-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:30	13:30-15:00
Friday	09:30-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-12:00	12:00-13:30	13:30-15:00

What to pack

Items allowed in rooms
(subject to risk assessment)



- 12 Items of day clothing (jumper, hoody, trousers, cardigan, jeans, skirts etc)
- 12 pants
- 12 pairs of socks
- 5 bras, sports bras or vests
- 5 pairs of tights or leggings (if worn)
- 7 T-shirts (including vests)
- 2 pairs of pyjamas
- 2 pairs of shoes (no high heels)
- 1 pair of trainers
- 1 pair of slippers
- 1 pair of wellingtons
- 1 dressing gown (no cord)
- 1 regular coat
- 1 waterproof coat
- 1 bathing suit (for privacy when washing)
- 1 musical instrument
- Cuddly Toys (Max 5, medium sized or within reason)
- 10 books (nurses to check suitability)
- **Toiletries (maximum amounts)**
- 2 bottles of shampoo
- 2 bottles of conditioner
- 2 shower gel/body washing
- products
  2 roll-on deodorants,
- 2 bottles of body spray or perfume
- (non-aerosol)

In some situations, exceptions may be agreed with the nursing team. If items cannot be kept safely in bedrooms, they will be stored securely in your property drawer in the nurse's office or in the property cupboard. Decorations and cards are welcome to help personalise your space.

Items to be stored in Nurses' Office

- 1 mobile phone (for phones, tablets and devices, camera and internet restrictions apply)
- 1 laptop (to be used supervised in the activity room only)
- 1 tablet or games device
- 1 hair dryer
- 1 pair of hair straighteners
- Chargers, cables and any other risk items

All personal items not listed as contraband (see on next page) must fit entirely within a box measuring 30cm wide, 40cm long, and 15cm high. This includes items such as makeup, nail art supplies, aerosols, toiletries, and similar belongings.

Items to be stored in the Patient's store cupboard

We can also keep a second box (same size as above) and up to two bin liners full of clothing, for patients who are unable (due to risk) to have any of the above items in their rooms.

All other items must be taken home by parents. Thank you for your cooperation.



Questions

What can I bring with me to Ellern Mede?

There is a full list of suggested items earlier in this booklet to help you prepare for your stay. You are encouraged to bring comfortable clothing and personal items that help you feel settled, such as books, photos, or a soft toy if that's helpful for you. If you're unsure whether something is safe or allowed, or if an item is important to you, a member of staff will be happy to talk this through with you when you arrive.

What am I not allowed to bring to the ward with me?

For everyone's safety, some items cannot be kept on the ward. These include:

- Alcohol, medication, chemicals, or aerosols
- Glass items, including mirrors
- Sharp or metal objects (such as scissors, needles, pins, staples, or ring binders)
- Electrical items, wires, chargers, or loose batteries
- Items with cords, strings, or belts
- Chewing gum, blue tack, glue, or similar items

Items that cannot be kept on the ward will be stored safely and returned when appropriate.

How do I stay in touch with my family?

We encourage regular visits, as well as phone and video calls, to help you stay connected with family and friends.
Visits take place in designated visiting areas away from the ward and must be booked in advance with the ward team. Visiting times are:

- Monday to Friday: 5.00pm – 8.00pm
- Weekends: 10.00am – 8.00pm

What is the smoking/vaping policy?

Smoking and vaping are not allowed inside the hospital or on the ward. This is to help keep everyone safe and well.
If you smoke or vape, staff will talk with you about this and explain what support is available during your stay, including nicotine replacement options where appropriate. You can ask a member of staff if you have questions or need support.



What are my legal rights and status?

When you are in hospital, you may be staying as an informal patient or as a formal patient under the Mental Health Act (MHA).

If you are an informal patient, this means you (and, where appropriate, your parents or carers) have agreed to your admission and treatment.
If you are a formal patient, this means you have been admitted under the Mental Health Act to help keep you safe. Your team will explain what this means for you and your rights.

For young people under 18, parents or guardians usually have parental responsibility and are involved in care decisions. Young people are also involved as much as possible, depending on their age and understanding. In some situations, treatment may be agreed by parents or provided under the Mental Health Act.

You can ask at any time for your legal status to be explained or checked, or to speak to an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA).

Who should I speak to if I have concerns?

If you have any worries, questions, or concerns about your care, it's usually best to start by talking to someone on the ward. This could be your nurse, key nurse, or another member of staff you feel comfortable with.

If you would rather speak to someone independent of Ellern Mede, you can contact an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA). An IMHA can listen to you, explain your rights, and help you share your views.

Details about advocacy and how to make a complaint are included elsewhere in this booklet.

Our advocate visits the ward once a week. Posters are displayed on the ward with their contact information.



Who sees my medical records?

Clinical reports will be shared with your parents and health professionals involved with your treatment, with your consent. Information that you share with us in confidence remains so. If there is a concern about your safety which requires us to share this information with appropriate people, we will tell you and explain why. If you would like to access your clinical records you should write to the Hospital Manager with this request. We can help you to do this. If anyone else wants to see your records they have to ask you and your consultant for permission. We would inform you and your family of the decision

What is a second opinion?

A second opinion is when another consultant psychiatrist is asked to review your assessment, diagnosis, or treatment plan. This can help provide reassurance or a different perspective.
If you would like to ask about a second opinion, you can speak to a member of your care team or an Independent Mental Health Advocate.



How do I make a complaint?

If you are unhappy with any part of your care, you can make a complaint using the complaints or feedback forms available on the ward, or by asking a member of staff for help.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within two working days and reviewed by the Hospital Manager and Complaints Team. You will be kept informed of the outcome.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you can ask for a review by the Managing Director, and then contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman if needed. An Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) can also support you.

Fire safety procedure

When you arrive, staff will explain the fire safety procedure and what to do if the alarm sounds. The fire alarm is tested weekly on Fridays at 2.00pm, so you may hear it during your stay.

Who will support me?

At Ellern Mede, you will be supported by a team of people who work together to care for you.

You will have a Key Nurse who gets to know you well and helps support you day to day. You will also meet other members of your team at different times, depending on what support you need.

Everyone involved in your care works together and shares information so that your support feels consistent, joined up, and focused on you. If you're ever unsure who to speak to, any member of staff can help you.

Can pets or animals visit?

We understand that animals and pets can be an important source of comfort. Planned animal visits may take place in the garden space. At present, pets are not usually able to visit the ward for safety and hygiene reasons. Staff can let you know what is possible and talk with you about any questions you may have.



Doctify

Trusted Reviews

We use Doctify, a trusted and independent healthcare review platform, where patients and families can share their experiences of care at Ellern Mede. This allows you to read real reviews from people with lived experience of our services.

‘EM has delivered professionalism and compassion in equal measure. All staff have been supportive and positive throughout, and have communicated clearly on all topics. Our family has benefited enormously from the services provided by EM and we are deeply grateful.’

‘All the staff are so kind and friendly, very accommodating.’

‘Warm, friendly and always willing to go the extra mile to help. Having a young person struggling is tough, and the team at Ellern Mede Ridgeway recognise this and always make sure any visit is made as easy as possible. I travel to be able to visit our young person, and the reception team will go out of their way to ensure I have a room to use. This has sometimes been at short notice, and they will do all they to accommodate any request. I can’t thank them enough.’

Gallery













Contact us

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Ellern Mede

Ellern Mede is the trading name of Oak Tree Forest Ltd. Registered Office: Ellern Mede Ridgeway Holcombe Hill, The Ridgeway, London, England, NW7 4HX