If I have any questions who should I contact?
If you have any questions about returning to activities you can ask your surgeon or physiotherapist on the day of the operation.

If anything changes before the operation, or you have any enquiries about appointment dates you should telephone the admissions department on 01202 704919

If you have any clinical questions concerning your orthopaedics operation, please telephone 01202 704693.

If you have any problems following discharge then we advise you to telephone the ward which you returned to after your surgery.

Sandbourne Day Cases 01202 726104
Ward 9 01202 704724
Ward 12 01202 704770

Please bring this leaflet into hospital with you

Our Vision
Putting patients first while striving to deliver the best quality healthcare.
Introduction
This booklet tells you about your shoulder decompression surgery at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital. It is for people who have decided to have surgery after discussing the options, benefits and possible risks with their Consultant.

We have developed this guide to help answer any questions that you may have about your operation and recovery afterwards. It will be useful during each of your hospital visits so please bring it with you.

The booklet is a general guide and there may be alterations in your management made by your surgeon, anaesthetist, nurse or therapist. Those instructions should take priority.

All members of the Orthopaedic team are committed to providing you with the highest standards of care and we look forward to helping you with your recovery.

What is this operation for?
This surgery aims to reduce your shoulder pain. In the shoulder there are tendons which pass under an arch. This arch is created by the bones and ligaments of the shoulder. A tendon can rub on this arch causing swelling and pain particularly when you lift up your arm. A subacromial decompression may be necessary to relieve your symptoms. This surgery will increase the space under the arch, to break the cycle of rubbing and swelling and therefore reduce your pain when you move your arm.

What happens during the operation?
Anaesthetic
Your surgery is performed under a general anaesthetic. This means that you will be asleep throughout the operation. A nerve block may also be used. This is an injection that numbs your shoulder and arm providing good pain relief for the arm. It also results in a loss of sensation and movement in the arm. This will gradually wear off over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Clinic review
You will also receive an appointment through the post for a review with your consultant or a member of their team. This will be for about 6 weeks after your operation. They will be able to monitor your progress and answer any questions you may have.

Managing everyday activities
Depending on the type of surgery performed you may have to restrict movement at your shoulder. Before you come into hospital think about and practice how you will manage everyday tasks when you return home after your operation. Examples of activities which you may find difficult are:

Mobility: If you currently depend on a walking aid which requires you to use your operated shoulder you need to consider whether you could use your walking aid in the other hand. If you cannot, an alternative walking aid may be required. You may need to discuss this with the physiotherapist on your admission.

You will need to be able to stand up from a chair without using your operated arm. You may need to place an extra cushion on the chair, to sit on. This may make it easier to stand up.

Personal Care: Getting washed and dressed needs to be done carefully. Sitting down is usually best as you can support your arm on a pillow while it is out of the sling. Loose clothing with front fastenings is usually easiest to put on. When getting dressed, dress your operated arm first. When getting undressed this arm comes out last.

Food preparation and cooking: Freezing some meals or stocking up on ready meals is a good idea as preparing and cooking food will be difficult initially after your operation.

You may use your arm for light activities as you feel comfortable. Avoid lifting heavy items or performing repeated activities above shoulder height.
Exercise 1. Elbow flexion/extension
You should take your arm out of the sling every hour to bend and straighten your elbow fully 10 times. This will stop it from becoming stiff whilst you wear the sling.

Exercise 2. Wrist and hand
Make a fist with your fingers and then open up your hand. Repeat 10 times every hour. Keep your wrist moving also.

Exercise 3. Neck side flexion
Facing forwards. Gently take your right ear down towards your right shoulder. Hold for 5 seconds and slowly return your head to the starting position. Next, take your left ear towards your left shoulder and hold for 5 seconds before slowly returning to the starting position. Repeat this three times on each side.

Exercise 4. Pendulum exercise
Lean forwards with your good arm supporting you on a table. Let your operated arm hang down and relax. Swing your arm forwards and backwards 10 times, side to side 10 times, and in a circle 10 times. This can be repeated more if comfortable. Gradually increase the size of the swing/circle.

Exercise 5. Pulleys
Using a pulley system (you can improvise by asking someone to place a dressing gown belt through a coat hanger which is hanging over the top of a door), use your strong arm to help raise your operated arm. Only move your arm as far as you feel comfortable. Repeat this for up to five minutes.

Exercise 6. Assisted flexion
Lying on your back, support your operated arm with your other arm and lift it up as far as tolerated. Try not to arch your back. Repeat this 10 times as far as is comfortable.

If these exercises are going well, you can move yourself onto the following exercise.

What happens when I go home?

Rest
It is important that you have a balance between exercise and rest. You will be expected to complete your exercises 3 to 4 times each day. However you will need to ensure that you spend some of the day resting your shoulder.

Pain Relief
Your shoulder may feel a little uncomfortable for the first couple of days therefore you should take painkillers as advised by the nursing staff. This will allow you to move your arm comfortably and complete the exercises. You may also use an ice pack (or bag of frozen vegetables) wrapped in a towel for 15 minutes. This will help to reduce any swelling and pain.
Sling
This is provided for comfort. Some people like to wear their sling when going out to give their arm some protection. It should be taken off for exercises and washing. You should start to reduce the amount that you use the sling after a few days. When you are wearing the sling ensure your forearm is well supported and do not allow your hand to be lower than your elbow.

Sleeping
Lying on your back or the opposite side will be most comfortable. A pillow can be used for additional support. You may want to wear your sling in bed.

Dressings and stitches
You will have stitches to close the small wounds on your shoulder and these will be covered by waterproof dressings. This means that you can have a shower but you should not use soap or rub over the area. This will cause the dressing to peel off.

District Nurse
You may be contacted by the district nurse during the first few days after the operation. They can check the sensation in your arm, your wound and your pain control. Two weeks after your operation you will need to see the practice nurse. They will remove the stitches and check the wound.

Outpatient physiotherapy
We will arrange your outpatient physiotherapy appointment at the hospital closest to where you live. The physiotherapist will progress your exercises and assist you in your recovery. You will be required to attend a few physiotherapy appointments and continue your exercises regularly between these sessions.

Surgical Procedure
This operation is performed arthroscopically (this is another word for ‘key hole’ surgery). Two or three very small incisions are made to access the shoulder joint. The surgeon can use these incisions to place a small camera inside the shoulder as well as the instruments to perform the surgery. A surgical drill will shave away part of a ligament and some bone to create more space under the arch to allow the tendons to move more freely.

Closure and Dressing
The small incisions will be closed with stitches. These will be covered with dressings. When you wake up from the anaesthetic your arm will normally be in a sling.

What happens after the operation?
(While I am in hospital)

How long will I stay in hospital for?
We hope that you will be able to go home on the same day as your procedure, however depending on your recovery or home situation you may be required to stay overnight.

Physiotherapy
The next few pages show the exercises you should complete. These should be started once the feeling and movement have returned in your arm. You should complete all of the exercises 3 to 5 times each day until you attend for your outpatient physiotherapy appointment. You will be shown these exercises by the physiotherapist when you are in hospital.