NHS COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements

With the situation rapidly changing with COVID-19, the need to free up hospital beds is a top priority. The Department Heath and Social Care published on 19th March **NHS COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements.** This document requires social care providers to take immediate and swift action to free up 15,000 beds by March 27th. The full document can be read here. QCS has summarised some of the key actions required by Care Homes, Nursing Homes and Domiciliary Care providers with immediate effect.

What do Care Home and Nursing Home providers need to do?

- Maintain capacity and identify vacancies that can be used for hospital discharge purposes
- Adopt from Monday 23rd March 2020 and implement the Capacity Tracker during the COVID-19 outbreak to make vacancy information available to NHS and social care colleagues in real time
- Providers of Care Homes, in partnership with their local Primary care Networks and Community Health Provider, should consider how best to support residents, and where already in place, embed the Enhanced Health in Care Home Framework in line with timescales already outlined by NHSEI which have been communicated to primary care providers. This will ensure their residents are better supported (7 days a week) by the NHS.

    • Implement NHSmail in their care home from Monday 23rd March, to ease communication between NHS and social care colleagues. From Monday 23rd March 2020, faster NHSmail roll-out will be available to all care providers, to support safe and secure transfer of information. NHSmail is accredited for sharing patient identifiable and sensitive information, meaning it meets a set of information security controls that offer an appropriate level of protection against loss or inappropriate access.

Secure Communications - All social Care Providers

To improve communication between health and social care during the COVID-19 outbreak, **NHSX is speeding-up the roll-out of NHSmail and temporarily waiving the completion of Data Security Protection Toolkit (DSPT) to allow for quicker on boarding**. This is in-line with information governance guidance for COVID-19. These are temporary measures to improve communication during COVID-19. NHSX is committed to enabling care providers to choose the right communication solutions for them. Providers will be asked to give their own assurance that they are secure and post-COVID-19, afterward NHSmail regional teams will take providers through the full DSPT process, supporting them to accredit their secure email system or NHSmail for sharing in future.

What do Domiciliary care providers need to do?

- Identify extra capacity to adult social care contract leads, that can be used for hospital discharge purposes or follow on care from reablement services.

Trusted Assessors

- Where 'Trusted assessor relationships and arrangements are not in place with Acute providers, rapidly work with the discharge team to implement these rules and processes

How is this going to be Funded?

The Government has agreed the NHS will fully fund the cost of new or extended out of-hospital health and social care support packages, referred to in this guidance. This applies for people being discharged from hospital or would otherwise be admitted into it, for a limited time, to enable quick and safe discharge and more generally reduce pressure on acute services.

How will Local Authorities and Hospital Discharge Teams keep on top of availability?

Whilst most people will be discharged to their homes, a very small proportion will need and benefit from short or long term residential or nursing home care. The Discharge Service will be able to access live information from a national community bed tracker system. The existing North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) care home tracker will be extended to cover all care home places, all NHS community hospital beds and hospice beds. All providers must sign up and start using the tracker by 23 March 2020

Is there any support?

To support implementation, NHS England will be running webinars to run through the guidance and provide local areas with the opportunity to ask questions. This will be supported by Frequently Asked Questions which will be regularly updated from 16th to 23 March .To register for the webinars, the web link is: http://www.supportingdischarge.eventbrite.co.uk

Further Reading

This document should be read alongside the 2015 NICE guideline, Transition between inpatient hospital settings and community or care home settings for adults with social care needs.

Trusted Assessors: CQC Trusted Assessors