

Changes to Delayed Transfer of Care guidance

1. Arrangements for discharging hospital patients with support from social care are set out in the Care Act 2014, the Care and Support Statutory Guidance and the Care and Support (Discharge of Hospital Patients) Regulations 2014. Part of the discharge process involves health and social care organisations agreeing together how any delays in the discharge process (known as Delayed Transfers of Care or DToCs) will be coded and counted. Each NHS Trust is responsible for reporting this data every month to NHS Digital to enable benchmarking and highlight areas for action.
2. The Emergency Care Improvement Partnership Team (part of NHS Improvement) found evidence of coding misunderstandings and discrepancies around the country. This resulted in the production of clarification guidance, issued in November 2018 by NHSE. The November 2018 guidance is called 'Monthly Delayed Transfers of Care Situation Report – Principles, Definitions and Guidance'.
3. Nottinghamshire County Council has been improving its performance consistently in relation to delays coded to social care since 2015 and was ranked as 1st in the country for the first time in November 2018. Therefore, it is important to be aware of any changes in the coding guidance that may result in more delays being coded to social care than before. The Department will work with health colleagues to adopt the new guidance and seek to put in place actions where it indicates that there is the potential to further improve how we avoid any delays to people's safe discharge.

Changes that are beneficial to social care discharge planning

4. We will have a longer period of time to discharge someone from hospital on the day after their Predicted Date of Discharge. A DToC is now counted for every "midnight" when the patient is in hospital instead of being at home. Previously, the day after was counted as a delay if the patient was still on the ward by 11am on the next day.
5. Minimum timescales for action on Notices are longer – Assessment Notices must be issued at least 2 days or 48 hours in advance and one day or 24 hours in advance for Discharge Notices. The previous guidance did not state these timescales in hours.
6. Category of delay "Housing" can no longer be attributed to social care.
7. Within the Mental Health sector, all DToCs falling under the category of 'supported/specialist housing' are to be attributable to the NHS within the SitReps reports under 'O'. Currently all supported housing delays are coded to social care and health (as joint delays) if the patient has a joint funding agreement.

Changes that could increase the number of delays attributed to social care recorded delays and actions being taken to mitigate this

8. Assessment delays (A) must be coded to social care if the patient is waiting for an assessment by a care home, where the placement will be funded by social care. This is a change of practice for South Notts and Bassetlaw, but not Mid Notts. This would have added 7 days of social care delay in November 18 but none in December 18. ***Mitigation: these delays can be minimised if the interim care offer is made only for homes that are able to come out and assess straight away.***
9. Waiting for package of care (E) – to avoid a delay waiting for a home care provider to have capacity, ASCH staff offer the patient a free, up to 4-week stay in a residential care home, to enable the discharge. This is known as ‘interim care’ If the patient refuses the option, any resulting delay will be coded to health. There are joint policies in place and leaflets setting out expectations that people will not be able to remain in hospital beds once they are well enough to return home and that whilst every attempt will be made to put the right service in place immediately, sometimes the person will need an ‘interim’ service for a short time. Under the new guidance, a care home placement will not be considered a “reasonable alternative” to care at home so any delays will be coded to social care. This would have added 190 days of social care delay to November and December 18 (60 in Bassetlaw and 130 in Mid-Notts). ***Mitigation: the hospital social work teams will work with Strategic Commissioning & Quality and Market Management teams to source alternative homecare options prior to making interim care offers as a last resort.***
10. There are some queries about some sections of the new guidance which have been addressed to the Emergency Care Improvement Partnership Team for advice. These were answered on 11.2.19 so we are now in a position to implement the new clarification guidance in partnership with our Nottinghamshire NHS Trusts.