

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS & SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE	Subject: SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE GUIDANCE : FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRODUCTION OF JOINT HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PROTOCOLS	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 24.02.2004	Ref: JN/LMcA	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose to this report is to advise Committee of guidance received from the Scottish Executive on the above subject and to seek approval from Committee to engage in a process of jointly reviewing existing protocols with health partners. Such a review will develop a new protocol which embraces the framework provided by the Scottish Executive.
- 1.2. The guidance provides a framework for the production of hospital discharge protocols, which should be jointly agreed between health and social work partners in NHS Board areas.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The overwhelming majority of people who experience an in-patient stay in hospital are discharged routinely at the end of their period of treatment. However, for many thousands of people each year, discharge from hospital can only be achieved with proper health and social care assessment and effective after-care arrangements being put in place to facilitate the discharge.
- 2.2. In the Lanarkshire NHS Board area, hospital discharge protocols have existed for a number of years. These protocols allow for partnership arrangements to be in place to ensure that discharge from hospital is managed effectively and efficiently, placing the patient / service user and their carers at the centre of the process.
- 2.3. While the protocols between NHS Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Council are viewed as robust, much has changed in both the health and social care fields since the protocols were adopted several years ago. Added to those changes is the publication of new guidance from the Scottish Executive on the matter. These developments suggest a need to review existing protocols with a view to meeting future challenges in health and social care.

3. THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE GUIDANCE

- 3.1. The guidance provides a model framework for the production of hospital discharge protocols, recognising as it does that only some Local Authority and NHS Board Partnerships have joint discharge protocols in place. As already stated, North Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire do have protocols in place.
- 3.2. The guidance is intended to ensure broad consistency across Scotland in terms of the approach and arrangements for discharge protocols.

- 3.3. The framework recognises the context of the national Delayed Discharge Action Plan, the Joint Future agenda and particularly the Single Shared Assessment process. The framework also recognises the need for integrated professional assessments and co-ordination of care management in making hospital discharge a planned and co-ordinated process for those who continue to require services post discharge.
- 3.4. Of particular importance to the process is the clear recognition in the guidance that the individual's interest must remain central to discharge planning.
- 3.5. A checklist is annexed to the guidance to ensure that discharge protocols meet certain minimum requirements and to ensure a consistency of approach in the process.

4. FINANCIAL / POLICY / PERSONNEL / LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. There are none of the above considerations in this guidance which simply requires a review and updating of existing processes and joint arrangements in this area of partnership working.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Committee is asked to:

- i) Authorise the review of existing hospital discharge protocols with appropriate stakeholders in the health and social care partnership in North Lanarkshire.
- ii) Seek a further report in due course updating existing hospital discharge protocols, following such a review.
- iii) Otherwise note the content of this report.



Jim Dickie
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28 January 2004