# Winter Initiative

## Integrated Discharge Planning

### COMMUNICATIONS

ACTION PACK

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Version 4:18-02-09
1. Introduction
This pack has been designed to help you communicate the new HSE Discharge Planning Protocols and tools. It contains advice and information to help you communicate and promote the discharge planning developments locally. This pack includes:

- An overview of this discharge planning protocols
- Information on distributing campaign materials throughout your area
- Staff communications
- Using the local media
- Advice on gathering local case studies and briefing spokespeople

Overview

The HSE has over the past year engaged in a comprehensive process of literature review, consultation, workshops and focus groups which has resulted in the development of a National Code of Practice for Integrated Discharge Planning. The Code provides a framework within which efficient care and case management can be delivered and provides clarity around key roles, responsibilities and performance standards for integrated discharge planning. It comprises of a suite of national standards, recommended practices, forms, toolkits, key metrics and audit tools covering the following areas:

- Communication and Consultation
- Organisational Structure & Accountability
- Management & Key Personnel
- Education & Training
- Operational Policies & Procedures for Discharge Planning
- Discharge Planning Process
- Audit & Monitoring
- Key Performance Indicators

Key points identified for reducing delay include:
- All patients should have a treatment plan within 24 hours of arrival in hospital.
- An expected date of discharge should be set within 24 hours of arrival or in many cases before admission for elective patients and communicated to the patient and all staff in contact with the patient.
• The expected date of discharge should be proactively managed against the treatment plan (usually by ward staff) on a daily basis and changes communicated to the patient.
• Ward rounds should be scheduled in a way that allows, at least daily, a senior clinical review of all patients
• Internal hospital processes should be reviewed to reduce delay e.g. patient assessment, access to diagnostics
• Protocol based discharge planning and use of estimated dates of discharge should be implemented
• There should be a national focus on simple discharge process in all hospitals. National guidelines should be adopted, reviewed and built into a robust clinical governance process across each organisation and the system as a whole.

2. DISCHARGE PLANNING TOOLS

DISCHARGE PLANNING MATERIALS FOR DISTRIBUTION
There are a limited number of printed codes available from dischargessupport@hse.ie

The Integrated Discharge Code is available as a single PDF on the Publications section of the intranet. It is also on the system broken down into the five sections so that staff can access the individual chapters. The patient information booklet and templates are on the intranet for staff access.

Action: NCU (A Lambourn)
Deadline: 31 January 2009 (completed)

3 STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Regional Workshops
Members of the Integrated Discharge project have hosted nine regional workshops covering all of the areas in the HSE. These one day workshops have been used to launch the code and facilitate the local implementation process across primary and secondary care sectors. This is resulting in the establishment of a number of Joint Implementation Groups (JIPs) and sub-groups who will drive the implementation process. The progress of the implementation will be reported through the regional Local Implementation Teams (LITs).

Action: National Support Team
Deadline: December 2008 (completed)
E-mail

The weekly alert system to All HSE Users should be used to inform all staff that the code is in place and to highlight the benefits to patients – as many staff are likely to have some friend/relative currently receiving or scheduled to receive inpatient care from the health services. Staff are an important communication medium for getting messages out to the wider community. Updates and success stories can be communicated via the national HSE Internal Communications e-mail bulletin message; and by including it in the CEO’s regular bulletin.

Responsibility: NCU (A Lambourn)
Deadline: end of January 2009 to announce intranet page launch and as and when required

Intranet/internet

There will be a Discharge Planning page on the intranet that can be accessed from a variety of sections on the intranet including the NHO, PCCC and winter initiative pages. The page will contain all documentation relating to the code; a set of frequently asked questions and answers based on the queries raised from the regional workshops; any media releases that may be issued; and updates and contact details.

Action: NCU (A Lambourn)
Deadline: End of January 2009 (completed)

The publication and any media releases will also be placed on the HSE website.

Action: NCU (A Lambourn)
Deadline: End of December 2008 (completed)

Health Matters

The December 2008 issue of Health Matters, the HSE Staff Magazine, is carrying a piece on the Integrated Discharge Code of Practice. Articles on the implementation of the code and individual success stories will be included on an ongoing basis in Health Matters. This will enable staff to identify with the new code and get continuing updates on the ongoing development of the code.

Action: A Lambourn + W Reddy
Deadline: quarterly
MEDIA

National Media
The National Press Office is including references to the new Integrated Discharge in all press releases relating to bed capacity; emergency department issues; winter initiative etc. The press office will also target key health journalists with information on the new code of discharge. When the discharge code has been implemented it is anticipated that key success stories will be identified and highlighted in the media through releases and offers of interviews. A formal launch should take place within a few months of the code becoming active; once we have a series of individual success stories to tell.

**Action:** National Support Team and NCU

**Deadline:** Launch and conference by end of May 2009

Local media
The NCU Area Communications Manager/Department will assist in all media issues locally. Please ensure you develop a plan with them as soon as possible and that all media issues go through your Area Communications Manager.

Gathering spokespeople and case studies
In preparation for the introduction of national discharge planning systems please try to get a bank of influential local spokespeople who will support the concept and be able to talk about the benefits. Try and secure at least one each of the following:

- Senior healthcare spokesperson
- Local clinical lead
- Former patient who has experienced a proper planned discharge and the benefits for patients

**Action:** JIG chair and Area Communications Manager

**Deadline:** 31 March 2009

Press release
We will be sending you a national press release at least one week in advance of the campaign. Your local Area Communications Manager will add details of your local spokespeople and case studies where marked.
Local stories or case studies
Journalists will often want a human-interest angle to the story. So, try to identify local people willing to be involved in getting your message out:

- Older, disabled or vulnerable patients and happy to tell their story about why they benefited from discharge planning – support at home; family input etc

These case studies will help the Area Communications Manager to push the story to local media, so the stronger the story, the better.

Ensure that all spokespeople have been carefully briefed and are aware of the communications that we are focusing on.

**Action:** JIG chair and Area Communications Manager

**Deadline:** Q2 2009

Media tools
Journalists sometimes want supplementary material to turn a news item into a longer feature. Often they want figures for fact boxes to put the story into context. This information can be used by journalists to expand on a news story.

Key Facts

- **Benefits to patients**
  Better information and communication
  More certainty in planning the journey home
  Shorter lengths of stay
  Safer and more efficient service

- **Benefits to health service**
  Better role clarity and empowerment of staff
  Improved communication between staff
  Less duplication of effort
  Improved job satisfaction
  Safer system of care and treatment
  Patients and carers working as partners with providers
• **Benefits to tax payers**
  - Improved efficiency and less waste
  - Improvement in access to health services
  - More confidence and trust in the healthcare system

**Patient Communications**

One of the messages we have to communicate is the concept of being discharged at 12 midday. This message will have to be clearly and carefully communicated to patients as the concept of ‘check out’ time may alienate patients and their families as it may be inappropriately compared to hotel check out.

As part of the Code of Practice for Integrated Discharge print materials we have produced a Patient Information Brochure outlining the key steps in discharge. This patient information requests patients to make arrangements to be collected no later than midday of their discharge date.

**Action:** JIG to ensure hospitals are disseminating patient information  
**Deadline:** ongoing

In addition we can produce posters to be displayed in wards and main hospital areas to get that message across. The posters could be scanned into the TV info boards that many hospitals use in waiting rooms and outpatient areas. The information/poster can also be included on the webpage.

**Action:** NCU (A Lambourn)  
**Deadline:** End of March (budget dependent)

Critical to the success of the midday discharge will be the ability of each individual hospital to complete all discharge procedures (tests, prescriptions, discharge letters etc) by 11.00 for each patient scheduled for discharge.

**Action:** JIG and local service managers  
**Deadline:** ongoing
Feedback

Evaluation of local campaigns
In order to evaluate this discharge campaign and help the Discharge Project Team plan for any changes or further developments, we would appreciate if you could let us know if there is anything you have done to implement the new protocols that made it successful, so we can include it in any updated communications pack. This could be a bit of media work that secured lots of coverage or a local event or networking opportunity that achieved good results.

Evaluation of local action pack
It would also be really helpful if you could let us know whether you found this action pack helpful and how we might improve upon it in the future.

Please write to Audrey Lambourn audrey.lambourn@hse.ie by the end of March 2009.

Audrey Lambourn
Special Projects Manager
National Communications Unit
12 December 2008