

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Health Select Commission
2.	Date:	18th March 2013
3.	Title:	Discharge Arrangements from Hospital
4.	Directorate:	Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

5. Background Summary

- 5.1 The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust has on average 70,000 patients admitted to the hospital per year. Whilst 38,000 patients are admitted for a planned elective procedure, 32,000 are admitted as an emergency.
- 5.2 The number of emergency admissions continues to rise year on year, and this year there is to date a 7.6% increase in emergency admissions this year compared to last year.
- 5.3 In addition, there is a significant increase in the number of frail elderly people being admitted to hospital. This patient group is very vulnerable and often have very complex care needs, which require very complex discharge planning arrangements.
- 5.4. It is also acknowledged that Rotherham as a health and social care community admits more patients with long-term conditions over and above the national averages and at any given time has patients in acute hospital beds that do not necessarily require that acute level of care.
- 5.5 Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust has and continues to work in close collaboration with partner agencies to explore and provide alternatives to admission to hospital and a number of new initiatives have been developed over recent years to provide alternatives to hospital admission i.e. Breathing Space, Intermediate Care, Community Hospital beds.
- 5.6 Due to the pressure and demand on hospital beds and the need to be able to accommodate the admission of acutely ill patients, it is important that the hospital can expedite discharge where the patient no longer needs to be in hospital.
- 5.7 Whilst it is important to discharge patients in a timely way, it is equally important that discharge is safe and that patients who have complex discharge needs have those needs carefully planned for and executed.

5.8 As a result, Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust has a comprehensive and detailed Discharge Policy (attached).

5.9 This Discharge Policy has recently been systematically reviewed and the current version is in its final draft format, having been consulted upon.

6. Reasons for Delayed Discharges

6.1 There will always be some patients who experience a delay to their discharge for a number of reasons:

- A complex home care package of support is required
- Equipment to support discharge is required
- Patient choice for those patients requiring 24- hour residential or nursing care
- Housing adaptations are required
- Re-housing is required
- Complex family dynamics
- Financial complexities

6.2 The Delayed Discharge Act clearly defines the criteria for reportable delayed discharges and Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, working closely with RMBC Social Services, has a low rate of reportable delayed discharges. This is a reflection of the collaborative approach taken.

6.3 However, there are patients where this delay is not reportable, but is still a delay i.e. patients undergoing complex assessments.

6.4 All patients are entitled to have their ongoing needs assessed against Continuing Health criteria for Continuing Health Funding. This process can be lengthy and complex and the documentation associated with this process can be time-consuming and resource intensive.

6.5 Occasionally there can be a dispute between agencies, families, and healthcare providers in terms of what is required to facilitate a safe and appropriate discharge. This dispute process, whilst always resolved eventually, can add delays into the discharge process.

6.6 The attached Discharge Policy pulls together all of these potential complex issues, in order to ensure that any discharge or transfer of care is safe and effective, whilst keeping the patient/family needs at the centre of the decision-making process.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 This report to view the discharge arrangements of Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust was requested, in order to provide reassurance to Rotherham Borough Council Members of the hospital's commitment to safe and timely discharge.

7.2 The attached comprehensive policy demonstrates the hospital's acknowledgement of the need to ensure that discharge is well planned,

adheres to legislation, takes a collaborative approach with partner agencies, and most importantly meets the needs of the patient and their family.

7.3 There will always be room for improvement in terms of greater co-ordination between partner and voluntary organisations for those patients with very complex needs.

7.4 The attached revised version of the policy is in a final draft format and is about to go through the RFT policy ratification process and, therefore, should members have comments or suggestions that they would wish to make, these would be welcomed.

8. Policy/Papers/Attachments

8.1 Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust Discharge Policy attached

Should there be any questions in relation to this summary report or the attached policy document, please contact:

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