

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2005

AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT: MOVING ON? AN OVERVIEW OF DELAYED DISCHARGES IN SCOTLAND

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the Audit Scotland Report: Moving on? An Overview of Delayed Discharges in Scotland published on 23rd June 2005 which relates to the national delayed hospital discharge agenda.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Over recent years there has been a perception that delayed hospital discharges impact on waiting lists for hospital treatment, result in cancelled operations and have a negative affect on the wellbeing of patients delayed, who in the main are older people. In 2002, a system of public reporting was introduced to monitor delayed discharges.
- 2.2 The Health Service Information and Statistics Division (ISD) publicly report on a quarterly basis the number of delayed discharges in each of the 15 delayed discharge partnership areas across Scotland and also by each local authority area. There are two measures for Delayed Discharges; those delayed for up to 6 weeks (acceptable for assessing, planning and implementing care) and those delayed for longer than 6 weeks.
- 2.3 The Ayrshire and Arran Partnership comprises the three Ayrshire Local Authorities and NHS Ayrshire and Arran. A delayed discharged action plan is in place which includes a range of initiatives in order for the partnership to achieve the national target of a 20% reduction in delayed discharges on an annual basis.

3. KEY FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The Audit Scotland Report is in 2 parts:
- An overview of delayed discharge in Scotland
 - A handbook to address delayed discharge based on work Audit Scotland have undertaken in Tayside.

The full report is available in the Members Information Point.

3.2 The report is helpful in that it recognises the importance of a whole system approach i.e. that prevention of admission through good community based social and health care services is an essential part of addressing delayed discharges and that relying on purchasing extra care home places, in isolation, produces the poorest performance overall.

3.3 The main findings from this overview report are as follows:

- The number of patients delayed in hospital has reduced over the past few years, although it remains a problem.
- 3 out of every 4 people delayed in hospital are waiting for community care assessments to be completed or community care arrangements to be put in place.
- Almost three quarters of people delayed in hospital are aged 75 and over
- The length of time patients wait to be discharged once they are fit to leave hospital has fallen; the mean length of delay reducing from 149 days in January 2001 to 102 days in January 2005.
- The national target of a 20% reduction on an annual basis potentially penalises partnerships that are performing well; acts as a deterrent to doing better than the target and leads to a less challenging target for those partnerships that do not achieve their annual target. This is because the national target for each partnership is based on actual reduction in delayed discharges in the proceeding year rather than the target figure
- An annual national target for delayed discharge does not necessarily recognise the complexity of the issue nor does it reflect local circumstances.
- A more coherent approach to target setting is required. For example as well as the national target for delayed discharges, a local improvement target for delayed discharges has been introduced, the local improvement target having to equate to the national target. It is not clear what the added operational value of a local improvement target in the context of a national target is?
- Better evaluation is required in assessing the success of local partnership initiatives to reduce delayed discharges.
- Partnerships require to consider all aspects of their system when developing strategies to reduce delays and integrate these into mainstream capacity planning which takes account of the projected growth in the older population. Partnerships must also develop a shared understanding of the way in which local health and social care services interact.

3.4 The main recommendations from the report are as follows:

- The Scottish Executive Health Department (SEHD) should review the way in which the national target is set. If it decides to continue with a national target, ensure that targets are as sensitive to local circumstances as

possible, take a more joined up approach to target setting and ensure that partnerships are not subject to too many targets aimed at tackling delayed discharges and also review the implementation of guidance on joint discharge protocols and choice of accommodations.

- Local partnerships should include cost, quality and success measures when evaluating services and initiatives aimed at reducing delayed discharges, consider a range of strategies to reduce delayed discharges including those aimed at redesigning services as well as increasing capacity in the community; **take a whole system approach to developing a shared understanding of the interdependence of services**, ensure that all key stakeholders are involved in developing an understanding of the whole system; link delayed discharge planning with mainstream capacity planning and improve information on the cost, quality and provision of community care services.
- The SEHD should work with local partnerships to develop a consistent approach to evaluating local initiatives through the provision of systematic and consistent evaluation tools and supporting benchmarking through the learning and sharing network.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST AYRSHIRE

- 4.1 Outcomes within the East Ayrshire partnership to reduce delayed discharges has progressed well, with East Ayrshire achieving its target for 2004 and 2005. Our performance in relation to reducing delayed discharges of 6 weeks or more has been particularly successful with this figure reducing from 35 in April 2004 to 20 in April 2005.
- 4.2 In setting the national target for 2005/2006, The SEHD has taken cognisance of the Audit Scotland report recommendation regarding target setting and has agreed to base this year's 20% reduction on the 2005 target figure rather than the actual figure achieved. For East Ayrshire, the target for 2005 was 41 but we exceeded this and the actual figure achieved was 37. The 2006 target is 33, meaning we have to achieve an overall reduction of 4 during the course of 2005 / 2006.

EAST AYRSHIRE PARTNERSHIP DELAYED DISCHARGE FIGURES				
DELAYED DISCHARGE	APRIL 2004 ACTUAL	APRIL 2005 TARGET (APRIL 2004 – 20%)	APRIL 2005 ACTUAL ACHIEVED	APRIL 2006 TARGET (APRIL 2005 – 20%)
Total Delayed Delayed over 6 weeks	51 35	41 28	37 20	33 22

4.3 The achievements of the East Ayrshire partnership truly reflects a whole system approach. The current environment sees

- a reduction in the number of hospital beds, supported by resource transfer monies from Health to develop community services.
- maintenance of the current level of care home placements and
- a significant increase in resources directed towards supporting people to remain in their own homes, both in terms of home care and equipment and adaptations.

4.4 Social Work Committee has previously agreed to the Review of Sheltered Housing Services and Formulation of a Care Home Strategy, both of which will further develop the whole system approach in our locality.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Nil.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 To continue the positive trend in reducing the number of delayed discharges will require additional investment to both build community infrastructure and fund care home places. In the immediate future we look towards additional announced investment from the Scottish Executive in services to older people and further resource transfer monies from Health.

7. POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Nil.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Effective measures to address delayed hospital discharges contribute to Improving Health and Improving Opportunities themes of the Community Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) acknowledge the positive performance of the East Ayrshire Partnership in exceeding national targets;
- (ii) note the implications for future service developments as outlined in section 3.4; and
- (iii) otherwise note the content of this report

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
19 August 2005
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Moving on? An Overview of Delayed Discharges in Scotland
2. Moving on? A Handbook on Modelling the Whole System for Delayed Discharges in Tayside

For further information regarding this report please contact:
Eddie Fraser, Senior Manager, Community Care, telephone (01563) 554825.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY