

Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officers
NHS Board Chief Executives
Local Authority Chief Executives

Via email

04 July 2024

DWD (Discharge Without Delay) national and local focus

Further to our letter of 14 May 2024, it has become increasingly clear that despite our collective best efforts the pressure across the health and social care system has not abated. We appreciate the pressures faced across all areas including increased demand for services, increasing frailty of our elderly population and significant challenges in recruitment and retention in social care. We also recognise the significant financial challenges being faced in all local areas. The Scottish Government and COSLA want to work with local systems to ensure that you are supported to take a focused and concerted position ahead of winter.

On that basis the First Minister and the President of CoSLA have agreed the importance of a focused and intensive approach to reduce this pressure with a significant reduction in the level of delayed discharges. Although this is clearly not the only pressure across our health and social care system, there is a clear need to reduce delayed discharge. We are all too aware that behind every statistic is a person who will not sleep in their bed tonight and who is being put at risk by being kept in hospital after it is clinically necessary. But we also know that being delayed in hospital can lead to poorer health outcomes for those individuals as well reducing the ability to provide care for others who need urgent care.

It is clear that there has been focused efforts in a number of areas with senior system leader support to make progress. The evidence points to variation across the country. Whilst we fully recognise that the challenges faced in reducing delayed discharge will vary from area to area the situation is such that we must take urgent action now. Through the jointly chaired Collaborative Response and Assurance Group (CRAG), Scottish Government, COSLA and local system leaders, including many who will be receiving this correspondence, have agreed a joint mission to significantly reduce the level of delayed discharges to pre-pandemic levels and address variability across the country. As such, we are asking you all as the senior system leaders do whatever is required to deliver a step change in the level of delayed discharges across your local systems in order to bring down the global national level of delayed discharges to pre-pandemic levels. This is a maximum of 34.6 delays per 100,000 adults in any Partnership and is set out further in **Annex A**

It is important to stress that this is not a social care or an NHS problem, but rather it requires a whole system response, with our NHS, working closely with our Health

and Social Care Partnership and Local Authority partners, and indeed our independent and third sector partners. We recognise that improvement must be delivered in a sustained and sustainable manner and as chairs of the CRAG, we stand ready to support you in your endeavours, both nationally and where you identify additional support that could be provided to assist your local delivery.

To support this, CRAG will now meet on a weekly basis, to allow us to provide regular updates to the First Minister and CoSLA leaders and we will be supported by a number of workstreams, and we will need to work closely with you in the weeks and months ahead. We are determined to deliver a substantial reduction in the level of delayed discharges, to those below pre-pandemic levels and are committed to support you in collectively delivering against this joint mission. That includes removing barriers or obstacles to enabling you to deliver, and escalating where required.

We know that we all share the aim of reducing delayed discharges to ensure that people in our communities get the right possible care at the right time and in the right place and we are sure you would agree that we all need to work together to achieve this.

Neil Gray MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

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Councillor Paul Kelly

COSLA Health and Social Care Spokesperson

Delayed discharge reduction levels agreed during 18 June 2024 CRAG meeting

In order to deliver the agreed trajectory of reducing delayed discharge to pre-pandemic levels, the following reductions are currently required, as at 03 July 2024:

HSCP	% reduction of current number of people delayed	Total net delay reduction required to reach agreed level
Highland	65%	124
South Ayrshire	56%	41
Dumfries & Galloway	55%	51
Scottish Borders	54%	39
Western Isles	53%	8
Orkney Islands	50%	6
Falkirk	47%	39
Argyll & Bute	40%	17
North Ayrshire	36%	21
Aberdeenshire	33%	35
East Dunbartonshire	31%	11
Dundee City	31%	8
West Dunbartonshire	29%	10
South Lanarkshire	28%	36
Midlothian	23%	8
Renfrewshire	22%	6
Moray	21%	7
City of Edinburgh	19%	35
Glasgow City	18%	40
Clackmannanshire and Stirling	18%	9
Aberdeen City	13%	6
Perth & Kinross	13%	6
East Renfrewshire	10%	1
North Lanarkshire	7%	2

Other partnerships are already under this target and delays should not increase in these areas to meet the Scotland target.