



PRESS RELEASE

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Urgent action needed if problem of delayed transfers of care is to be solved

Commenting on the report, [Discharging older patients from hospital](#), from the National Audit Office, Saffron Cordery, director of policy and strategy at NHS Providers, said:

“Today’s report is clear acknowledgement that without urgent action, the problem regarding delayed transfers of care will only worsen.

“Rising demand from an ageing population adds further strain to the financial sustainability of the NHS and local government, emphasising again the extreme pressure on health and social care. The publication also helpfully highlights that the true scale and impact of delayed transfers of care on services and, more importantly, on patients is not always apparent from data available to us.

“It is widely recognised that for much of the time, older people are not in hospital for any clinical benefit, but due to delays in arranging relevant social care. In our report, [Right place right time commission](#), we captured evidence and good practice about transfers of care across all settings involving our members. It showed that, with strong integration of services, it’s possible to stop the revolving doors whereby older people come into hospital because it’s the only place where the support they need is immediately available, and help them to get into the appropriate care setting and back to their own homes where possible. The report also gives evidence that delays in the discharge of mental health patients are also a key challenge as they may have to remain as an in-patient when there is not suitable housing or community support package in place.

“The combination of increasing demand and the longest and deepest financial squeeze in NHS history is exhausting the health and social care system. While there may not be a quick fix, there are ways to make sure processes run smoother. As it is a systemic rather than individual problem, we need to take action both locally and nationally to improve flow. This includes listening to patients to better understand their care needs and to promote independence, and to ensure there is a better alignment between the demands we place on health and social care providers and the resources we give them.

“We can improve what we offer to older and vulnerable patients by making clear at all stages in their care package what the benefit is for the patient and what everyone – the patient, family, system leaders, NHS providers – are seeking to achieve.”

Ends

Notes to editors

- NHS Providers is the membership organisation for NHS acute hospitals, community, mental health and ambulance services. NHS Providers acts as the public voice for those NHS trusts, helping to deliver high quality care by promoting shared learning, providing support and development and shaping the strategic system in which our members operate. NHS Providers has 95% of all NHS foundation trusts and aspirant trusts in membership
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