



Working with



# SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEM

**Delivering positive hospital  
discharges for all**

# FOREWORD



Winter is traditionally the busiest time for the NHS and the environment many trusts work in during the winter months is extremely challenging. In recent years demand has climbed to record levels in the midst of the longest and deepest financial squeeze in the history of the health service. The combination of rising demand, coupled with severe workforce shortages across the health and care system is having a visible impact on both the length of time patients are left waiting for urgent care, cancer treatment and operations, and the morale and wellbeing of NHS staff.

However staff working in emergency departments faced tougher demand on services last summer than during five of the last eight winters, suggesting there is now a year-round pressure on the NHS. Limited capital investment in buildings and technology, as well as a lack of funding and a shortage of staff also adds to this ongoing crisis. With the NHS under such pressure the impact this has on people and the system is hard to overstate. At the same time people are getting stranded in hospital, often because of a lack of care in their local area or due to simply not having the right support at home prior to discharge, such as making sure the heating is on or having food in the fridge.

This publication is all about the support British Red Cross provide the NHS during these winter pressures and how they can improve patient flow with their assisted discharge service. They support the clear ambition to embed a whole-person approach to health and care in the NHS and the forthcoming government green papers on prevention and social care.

We present the data and feedback of the findings from an independent economic evaluation of British Red Cross' discharge support services in 2018 and evaluation of their 2018/19 winter pressures support to illustrate the value delivered to the system and the individuals supported.

I hope this publication gives you some ideas about how you too could use the service to enhance patient care and clinical stability in your trust.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saffron Cordery".

Saffron Cordery  
Deputy Chief Executive  
NHS Providers

# SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEM:

## Delivering positive hospital discharges for all

### Who are British Red Cross?

British Red Cross are a national organisation who support local communities. The charity plays a unique role in health and social care in the UK. Their staff and volunteers work with emergency departments across the country, providing ambulance support, transporting patients to and from hospital and supporting tens of thousands of older vulnerable people in their homes.

Across the UK, British Red Cross is well placed to bring insight and practical aid to people who currently fall in the gap between home and hospital. They provide practical and emotional support to enable them to live in their own home.

### Support at home services provided by British Red Cross

In 2018 British Red Cross helped over 85,000 people move more swiftly and safely through the health system in over 100 services, supporting people being discharged from hospital. They also provided additional capacity during winter pressures, between December 2018 and April 2019, delivering 30 services that either had no existing provision in the hospital, or where existing services were given additional capacity. All support is aimed at facilitating patient flow by helping patients get home quickly and safely, ensuring their practical and emotional needs are met at home to help them get back on their feet.

British Red Cross' assisted discharge service assists frail and vulnerable patients to get home following an inpatient stay and prevents unnecessary admissions to A&E. They meet with the person prior to discharge to discuss how they can best help them home and to identify how they can help them better manage their health and wellbeing.

If patients are returning from hospital, British Red Cross make sure they have everything they need during the first 24 to 72 hours back at home. They may then provide up to 12 weeks of support depending on the level of help needed to support individuals in meeting their goals. Support includes:

- transport home from hospital
- door-to-door transport for essential health-care journeys
- help with everyday tasks (for example, picking up prescriptions and shopping)
- companionship
- rebuilding confidence
- help arranging for bills to be paid
- short-term use of a wheelchair and toilet aids.

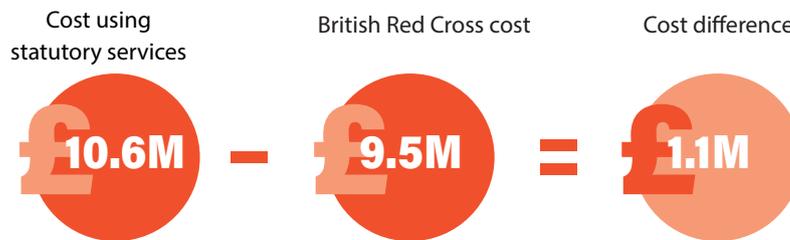
# SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEM

## Delivering positive hospital discharges for all

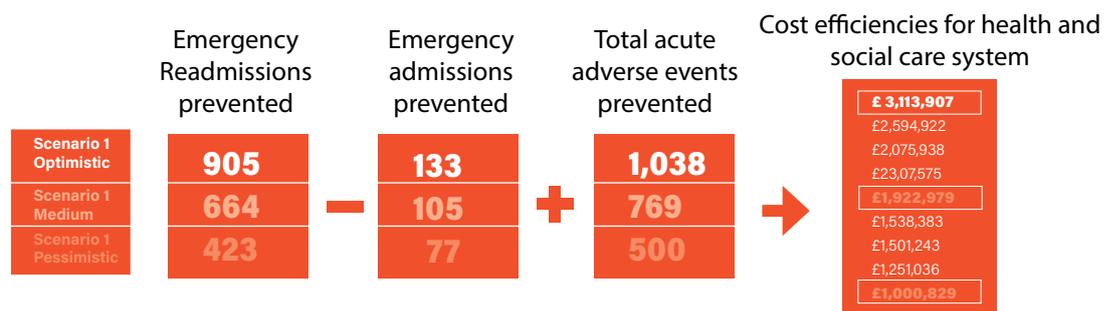
### Delivering value to the system

British Red Cross conducted an independent economic evaluation of their discharge support services in 2018 and an evaluation of their 2018/19 winter pressures support to illustrate the value delivered to the system and the individuals supported. The economic evaluation<sup>1</sup>, conducted in 2018, used two methods of analysis to estimate the value of our services; cost comparison and scenario modelling.

**1. Cost comparison:** this compared activity costs to a statutory provider using unit costs of an NHS reablement worker and an average cost for patient transport journeys<sup>2</sup>. Results showed that this level of provision using statutory services would have cost the health and social care system an additional £1.1m.



**2. Scenario modelling:** This should be based on assumptions related to the source of referral, if people lived alone, hospital readmission rates for older people and admissions from A&E. Based on other existing research, it should use optimistic, moderate and pessimistic estimates of the effect of our intervention.



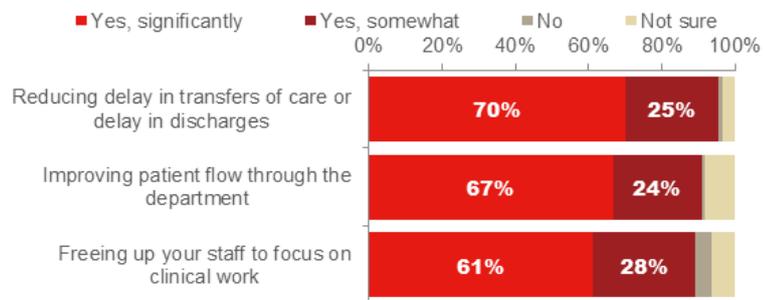
Adding the value from these two methods of analysis estimates that during 2018 the services offered by British Red Cross generated cost efficiencies to the health and care system of £3m.



## How the service helps hospital staff

Evaluation of British Red Cross winter pressures support<sup>3</sup> found over half of hospital staff providing feedback felt their services had helped prevent admissions and readmissions. Confirmed efficiencies were also felt on the ground which was helping to reduce pressure on the system.

9 out of 10 staff providing feedback indicated it had improved patient flow and reduced delayed transfers of care or discharges. The majority (89%) of staff providing feedback also indicated that the capacity British Red Cross staff added, helped to free their staff to focus on clinical work.



## Delivering value to the people supported

British Red Cross' winter pressures evaluation shows there were very high levels of satisfaction with the service from people supported:

- 99% of people were satisfied with their experience
- 95% would recommend the service to their family and friends.

*“I was discharged from hospital at the last minute and my daughter couldn't pick me up. I also live quite a distance away and was so worried about getting home. The British Red Cross came to get me so quickly and made the journey home very comfortable.”*

**Service user**

The transport element of their service, paired with resettlement support delivered by a compassionate workforce, were central to positive experiences for the people supported. Their transport was universally acknowledged as a timely and responsive service and the resettlement support was particularly beneficial during an anxious time for the people they supported. This was predominantly elderly patients who were most likely to live alone, many of whom had been worried about how they would get home.

### How British Red cross helps get people home from hospital in 10 simple steps

1. The patient is signposted to the service by hospital staff
2. The charity ensures the person has suitable clothes to wear to keep warm
3. British Red Cross check they have medication and know how to and when to take it
4. They transport the person home, either by assisted public transport or car/ambulance
5. They ensure the person has their keys and can get into their home okay
6. Checks are made to see if the individual can move around in their homes okay to see whether they need a mobility aid
7. British Red Cross check whether there are any trip hazards or any other safety concerns at home
8. They check the power is working and the heating is on
9. They ensure there are enough supplies such as food in the fridge
10. Next steps - check in with people, connect them with local services, accompany them on shopping trips or appointments and help build confidence and recovery.

## In summary

The services offered by British Red Cross have a simple idea at their heart: preventing problems from escalating into personal crises. At their best, they enable people to regain their confidence and independence.

Across the UK, British Red Cross have seen how these initiatives are making a real difference to the home-from-hospital experience. The assistant discharge service provides practical and emotional support, resulting in improvements to health and wellbeing, and increased and retained independence. It has also helped to prevent hospital admissions to A&E and prevent delayed discharge. Working within both the community and hospitals provides the charity with a unique insight into where people are falling through the gaps.

## Find out more

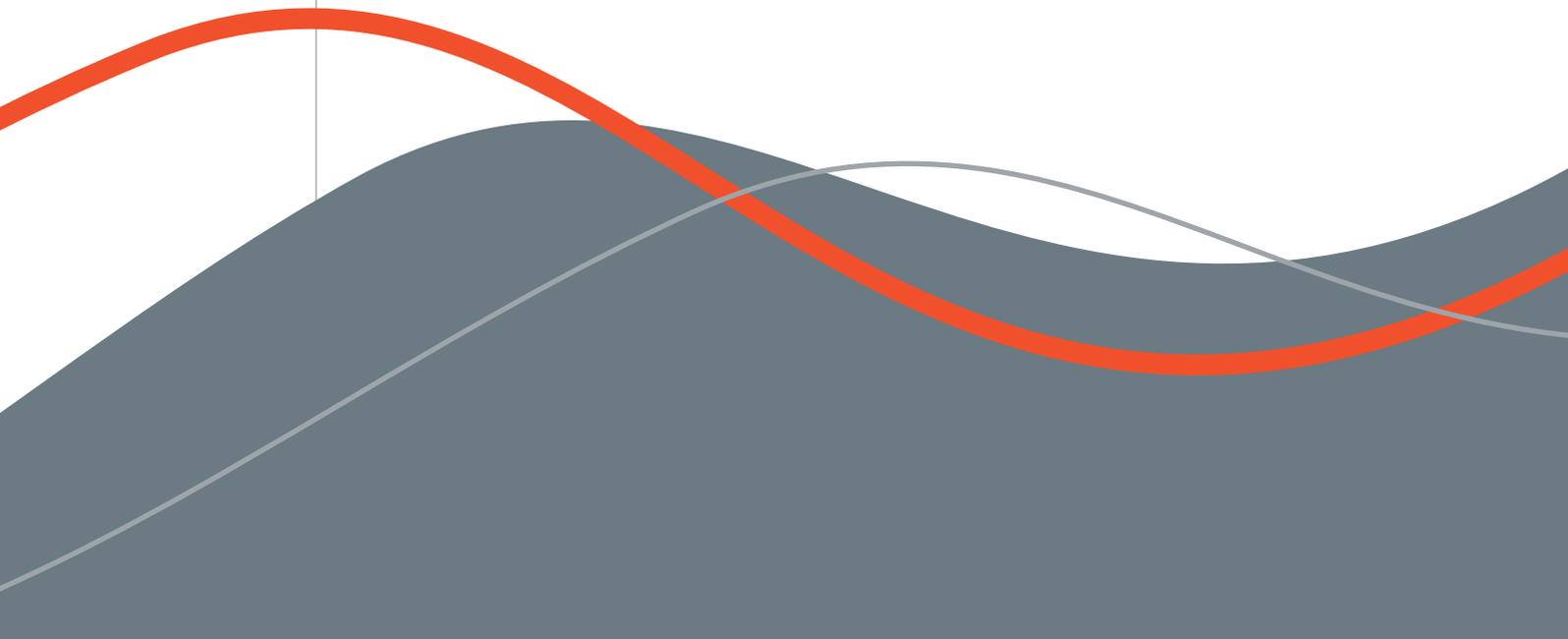
For more information about British Red Cross' services visit [redcross.org.uk](http://redcross.org.uk) or to arrange a call contact:

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NHS Providers has all trusts in membership, collectively accounting for £84bn of annual expenditure and employing more than one million staff.

### **NHS Providers Connect**

A new programme which matches NHS member trusts with selected suppliers with proven value to our members. We support a collaborative approach between members and partners, generating partnerships to help deliver new models of care and save trusts money.

To find out more NHS Providers Connect or other opportunities please contact:

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