

Message from Helen Jones, Director of Commissioning, Wiltshire Council and Clare O'Farrell Interim Director of Commissioning, Banes, Swindon & Wiltshire CCG

As you know, we've been working hard across the Wiltshire health and care system to rapidly implement local system changes in response to the Covid-19 situation. We've been working with National Guidance when available. New hospital discharge pathways went live on Monday this week and we've made some small changes to them to make sure they work well. We now feel comfortable to confirm these pathways with you and we welcome comments on any difficulties you may experience with them.

The priority for hospital discharges during the Covid-19 situation is to help people to return home. There may be some cases where people can be discharged from hospital but can't yet return home so they will need to be moved to a community bed, either in a community hospital or in a nursing or residential care home.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, all 'intermediate care beds' in care homes will be converted to 'discharge to assess (D2A) beds'. This new total of 129 D2A beds is needed so we can move people without Covid-19 out of hospital and make room on wards for people who do have Covid-19.

Wherever possible, care homes providing these beds are being asked to site them in an area that can be zoned off from other residents to further reduce the limited risk of Covid-19 infection. Nobody who is Covid-positive will be moved in this process so homes can be confident that they are not increasing risks by supporting this transfer from hospitals.

The process for hospitals to discharge to the D2A Beds is that a single, standard assessment form will be completed and sent to the WHC Patient Flow Hub (PFH). The PFH will triage the referral and, if assessed as an appropriate referral to any of the 129 D2A beds, will be transferred to the Council's Brokerage service, which will confirm a placement. The Brokerage Service is extending its operational hours to provide a service seven days a week.

So that the D2A beds can be made available for people being moved out of hospital, care homes that operate these beds are being asked to move people who are currently in them to other care settings. The hospital discharge form can also be used by care homes to make a referral from the D2A beds to Brokerage to find alternative packages for them and has been circulated by email to the relevant homes. Providers should work with social services colleagues to make sure that referrals are appropriate.

In anticipation of the likely surge in Covid-19 cases over the next few weeks, we're looking to create extra capacity in specific care homes to look after people with a confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19. This will further limit the risk of infection in other homes. Discussions are taking place with various homes to set up this model of 'hot locations' in the north, west and south of the County and we will confirm arrangements as soon as possible.

We have received some questions about self-funders who are being discharged into D2A beds and whether their care will continue to be funded beyond discharge from these beds. The current guidance is that, while care will continue to be funded by the Government during the Covid-19 situation, these people are likely to return to normal funding arrangement when the emergency funding ends at the end of the Covid-19 period. The current, proposed end date for funding arrangements is 30th June, although that may be extended on Government advice. This must be discussed with any people who are likely to be affected and with their families during their stay in a D2A bed.

In respect of PPE, which we acknowledge is a matter of concern for everyone in the system, please have a look at this helpful video, which is presented by Martin Kiernan, an infection control practitioner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7JXJJgnLo4>.

Finally, thank you for everything you're doing during this extremely challenging situation. Your commitment and support is very much appreciated by everyone in the Hub.

Best wishes.

Helen and Clare