

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership: 17 May 2006

Subject: Delayed Discharge Position

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report advises the Partnership of the number of West Dunbartonshire residents whose hospital discharge has been delayed at the point of the 15 April 2006 national census.
- 1.2** It also advises of the joint actions that the Partnership will undertake to reduce these numbers in line with national policy and locally agreed improvement targets.

2. Background

- 2.1** Delayed hospital discharges have been recognised by the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership as an issue that has negative consequences for patients and for local hospital systems. The Scottish Executive Health Department issued a directive on 23 February 2006 which set out future target setting for local partnerships and defined short-stay specialties (formerly described as “acute”). This directive instructs that the key targets will be
- For 2006-07, to reduce all delays over 6 weeks by 50%;
 - For 2006-07, to free up 50% of all beds occupied by delayed patients in short-stay beds;
 - For 2007-08, to reduce to zero patients delayed over 6 weeks; and
 - For 2007-08, to reduce to zero those delayed in short-stay beds.
- 2.2** On delays over 6 weeks, the starting position for each partnership will be set against performance in relation to the April target. This means that those who surpass the target will have fewer reductions to make in 2006-07. Partnerships who miss the April target will have to make up lost ground.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Targets have been in place for a number of years now and the West Dunbartonshire target for 15 April 2006 was 25 delayed discharges. Despite considerable joint efforts to discharge as many people as possible to more appropriate settings, our overall figure for that date was 33.
- 3.2** The main issue that prevented people from moving from hospital to other settings was that patients and/or their families were awaiting their first choice of care home. There were also two people waiting for residential care home

placements where care needs increased to such extent that nursing home placements were required.

3.3 Of the 33 people whose discharge has been delayed, 24 are awaiting care home placements; 6 are still within the assessment process and the other 3 are delayed due to Adults with Incapacity legislation.

3.4 The table below describes the geographical location of those 33 people whose discharge is delayed, and indicates our local performance expectations for the coming two years in terms of the targets set by the Scottish Executive Health Department.

	April 2006 Target	April 2006 Actual	April 2007 Target	April 2008 Target
Overall Number				
Clydebank	4	5	3	2
Dumbarton/ Alexandria	21	28	17	14
TOTAL	25	33	20	16
Delay > 6 Weeks				
Clydebank		5	3	0
Dumbarton/ Alexandria		26	13	0
TOTAL		31	16	0
Short-stay Specialties				
Clydebank		0	0	0
Dumbarton/ Alexandria		18	9	0
TOTAL		18	9	0

3.5 Staff from NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and West Dunbartonshire Council are continuing to work together to identify appropriate care home places for those people who require them.

3.6 Work is also being concentrated on developing robust care packages that get people back to their own homes as soon as they can be safely discharged from hospital, to prevent loss of confidence and institutionalisation which can lead to a requirement for a care home place.

3.7 Delayed Discharge activity is a priority area within the Partnership's and Council's performance management system. It is recommended that reports are presented to all the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership meetings and regular management reviews of performance are considered within the Partnership's Older Peoples Strategy Group

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 The delayed discharge targets set by the Scottish Executive will be challenging. However there appear to be no direct issues in terms of staffing levels.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The targets demand that we retain a clear focus on managing existing budgets, which may be put under additional pressure if we continue to have such a strong reliance on care home places. At present the funding for care home placements and home care support to meet the targets for delayed discharges is manageable within existing budgets.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** Despite the concerted efforts of NHS and local authority staff we have been unable to achieve our April 2006 target for reducing delayed hospital discharge. This underscores the need to redesign older people's services in order to achieve a more appropriate balance of care that helps keep more older people healthy and out of hospital, and that offers a broad menu of services that can help people to get back to independent living as soon as possible, should a hospital stay be necessary.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1** The Partnership is asked to consider the report, and to make comment to the Acting Director of Social Work Services.
- 7.2** The Partnership is asked to instruct the Joint Strategy Group (Community Care) and the Older People's Strategy Group to deliver an action plan to manage delayed discharge performance taking account of the capacity planning work already underway.
- 7.3** The Partnership to receive reports on delayed discharge performance at every meeting.

William W Clark
Acting Director of Social Work Services

Person to Contact: Helen Watson, Joint Strategy Officer. Social Work Offices, 7 Bruce Street, Clydebank G81 1TT. 0141 951 6223 helen.watson@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

Background Papers: Scottish Executive Health Department letter of 23 February 2006.

Wards Affected: All council Wards.