



# Manchester LINK

## HOMELESSNESS

### Report on Hospital Discharge

#### Why did we look at hospital discharge?

Lydia Hurford-Cato from the Manchester LINK Support Organisation went out and spoke to people at different groups and organisations that work around homelessness. She spoke with workers and service users / clients to find out what they thought about health and social care services in Manchester.

One thing we were told about was people being sent home from hospital when they:

- Were not well enough to leave
- Didn't have a home to go to; or
- Their home was no longer 'fit' for them

The LINK asked some more questions and found out who

deals with hospital discharges.

We found out that there was already a piece of work looking at making hospital discharges better.

A Steering Group of people from ten boroughs in Greater Manchester have been working to produce a protocol called 'Hospital Discharge and Homeless Prevention'.

Lydia asked if she could attend the Steering Group meetings and was told yes.



**What is the LINK doing about Hospital discharge?**

This Steering Group met every couple of months and talked about what should go into the hospital discharge protocol. It was decided that the basic information should be put into this policy. After it has been approved then each statutory agency will be asked to sign up to use it.

Greater Manchester is made up of ten boroughs. The Manchester LINK is only looking at what the agencies in Manchester are doing.

What is a statutory agency?

It is a publicly funded organisation providing a service

In this case it is the local authorities, hospital Trusts, Primary Care Trusts, Council Housing departments and some Housing Associations in Greater Manchester.

## The LINK held an event on 5th October 2009

Christine Thomas and Ann Walker from the Hospital Discharge team within Adult Social Care gave a presentation about their services.

### Notes from the presentation

Initially this was meant to be a workshop (repeated twice). Due to the attendance on the day it was felt that it would be better presented to the whole group with questions.

Christine Thomas explained that there is currently a piece of work going on within Greater Manchester to look at what happens when people are

discharged from hospital.

People from all the different councils, housing associations and Supporting People are part of a committee to draft a protocol.

This will be used across the greater Manchester area with the idea that everyone will be working with people in the same way.

Once the draft protocol has been agreed, each Council (including their Supporting People team), hospital and NHS Trust and housing association (linked to the councils) will be asked to sign up to it.

Each organisation will then be able to fill in some of the detail that is missing, which reflects what goes in within that organisation and within each local authority area.



Christine explained that anyone with housing issues would be helped by her department and would get priority whilst they were receiving treatment in hospital.

Christine then spoke about what her department within Adult Social Care is able to do. It works with people who are in hospital for a period of treatment (e.g. not people who go to A&E), and is able to make sure that people get housing if they do not already have it.

If a patient is in hospital and their council, housing association or privately rented home is no longer suitable, the council will work to help find more appropriate accommodation.

For example, if someone is no longer able to use the stairs in their house, the council will work to get them a ground floor flat or bungalow.

Some questions were asked: Rick Jundi from Lifematters did not realise that anyone in hospital would be given priority housing needs. He and other people thought that only homeless women would be given priority.

Christine also let people know that the way that people are given priority needs is going to change soon. There will be a consultation about this around the 'allocation process'.

Once the information is ready to be sent out, she will send it to the LINK who will send it out to everyone on their contacts list.

It is really important that people have their say on what they feel about any changes due to take place.

Richard Wright from the LINK Steering Group suggested it might be a good idea for Christine and her colleagues to meet with a group of service users about any changes that are going on within housing.

Lorna from the Service User Network said that her group would be happy to host any such discussions or meetings.

## What happens next?

The 'Hospital Discharge and Homeless Prevention' protocol is being launched at an event on 22nd April 2010.

The event is being hosted by Greater Manchester Public Health Network as part of the 'Alcohol Carepathways Conference. Working together—Improving the alcohol clients' journey'.

NHS Manchester are keen to set up a 'task group' of Hospital Discharge nurses or leads from each acute hospital in Manchester. The LINK will be invited to be part of this group.

It will look at how hospital discharge works within Manchester. It will identify any third sector agencies that work in partnership with the hospitals. It will then put all the local detail needed into the policy.

The LINK is keen to make sure that service users are involved in this process. It will continue to keep an eye on what happens with this policy and keep the LINK membership up to date.

The Homeless Team within Adult Social Care are also working closely with NHS Manchester and hospitals within Manchester. They want to make sure that the hospital discharge leads are aware of what is available from Adult Social Care.

For example, did you know that if you are a patient in hospital, you should be assessed to see if you have a home to go to, or that your home is suitable before you leave hospital. So if you need any adjustments to be made to your home, these should be done before the hospital can discharge you.



There is a specific team within Adult Social Care that makes sure that any needs you have regarding your housing are looked at.

This piece of work will make sure that all the agencies that are involved are working together.

If you would like to know more, contact Lydia at the LINK.

## Department of Health Guidance: Hospital Admission and Discharge: People who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation

"People who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation includes:

- Rough sleepers
- Individuals or families owed the main homelessness duty and living in temporary accommodation
- People living in hostels, night shelters, squats, or in bed and breakfast accommodation."



Hospital Admission and Discharge: People who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation

### Aims of this document

These guidelines are issued jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health. They represent recommended practice for organisations involved in hospital admission and meeting the needs of people who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation, and were drawn up by an expert steering group consisting of representatives from Homeless Link, the London Network for Nurses and Midwives, and the Health Inclusion Project Advisory Group.

In 'Discharge from hospital: pathway, process and practice' the Department of Health stated that all acute hospitals should have formal admission and discharge policies ensuring that homeless people are identified on admission and that their pending discharge be notified to relevant primary health care services and to homelessness services.

More recently 'Our health, our care, our say' made clear that better integrated health and social care can help prevent the inappropriate use of specialist or acute health care and can help prevent or reduce homelessness. 'Commissioning a patient-led NHS - Delivering the NHS Improvement Plan' emphasises the need to change systems to be more responsive to patients needs through better integration of services.

The Government's homelessness strategy 'Sustainable communities: settled homes: changing lives' highlights that people who are homeless or living in temporary or insecure accommodation are more likely to suffer from poor physical, mental and emotional health than the rest of the population, and that hospitalisation presents an opportunity to deal with underlying medical, social and mental health problems, and to address their accommodation needs.



Available online at: [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

## The Homeless LINK



The Homeless LINK hosted the 'Hospital Discharge and Homeless Prevention' Steering Group.

"Homeless Link is the only national charity supporting people and organisations working directly with homeless people in England.

[They] represent homelessness organisations among local, regional and national government. As the national collaborative hub for information and debate on

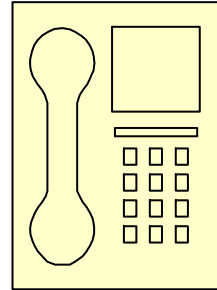
homelessness, [they] seek to improve services for homeless people and to advocate policy change. Through this work, [they] aim to end homelessness in England."

They represent and support over 480 organisations working with homeless people in the UK

To find out more go to their website: <http://www.homeless.org.uk>

## Who to contact at Adult Social Care

If you want to discuss anything about a specific patient requiring hospital discharge, you can contact the Hospital Discharge Officer:



Ann Walker from the Adult Social Care, Medical Team at  
6th Floor - Heron House  
Brazennose Street,  
Manchester, M2 5ED

Telephone number: 0161 234 5416

Or email:  
[a.walker@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:a.walker@manchester.gov.uk)

## Would you like to know more?

## Would you like to get involved with the LINK?

If you would like to:

- Find out more about any of the pieces of work about homelessness,
- Find out more about what the LINK is or what it is doing,
- Have someone from the LINK visit your group, or
- Get involved with the LINK

Then please contact Lydia on:

☎ 0161 214 3909

✉ Email:

[manchesterlink@blackhealthagency.org.uk](mailto:manchesterlink@blackhealthagency.org.uk)

✉ Write to: BHA, Gaddum House,  
6 Great Jackson Street,  
Manchester, M15