

DELAYED DISCHARGES – POSITION AT 15 JANUARY 2006

NHS Lanarkshire has 93 delayed discharges at 15 January 2006. This represents a decrease of twelve from the previous month. The Scottish Executive has set the target for the maximum number of delayed discharges at 15 April 2006 at 66. The ability to deliver the delayed discharge target is influenced by a number of factors:

- Patients waiting funding to nursing home accommodation.
- Early access to home care for all patients where home care comprises all or part of the care package.
- Patients aged under 65 years waiting appropriate accommodation in the community.
- Patients waiting discharge to another NHS facility.

The most significant factor in terms of number of delayed discharges is patients waiting funding to nursing home accommodation. This represents thirty-one patients of which eight have mental health difficulties. This category of patient represent one third of the total number of delayed discharges. In all instances, the inability to discharge the patient is the absence of funding. The annual cost to discharge thirty-one patients to nursing home accommodation is 496K on the assumption of 16K for each placement. Whilst there exists an option to discharge all thirty-one patients in 2005/06 through use of health care monies, the constraint is the ability of the Local Authority to commit to continue funding after 1 April 2006. The issue will be discussed further at the next meeting of the Joint Funding and Resources Committee. The outcome of those discussions will determine the ability of the Lanarkshire Partnership to achieve the delayed discharge target at 15 April 2006.

Work continues to improve and strengthen the management of delayed discharges and this is achieved through each Locality Area Group (LAG). There is work in progress to jointly commission additional home care to facilitate earlier discharge and, through improved use of inpatient beds, an increased number of patients have been discharged to another NHS facility. It should also be noted that there are no patients currently undergoing community care assessment that have exceeded thirty days. In addition, improved use of off site beds has reduced the number of delayed discharge patients occupying acute hospital beds.

As indicated previously, the Scottish Executive is currently reviewing the criteria to be adopted in 2006/07 to calculate delayed discharges. This will inform the target setting for that period. It is understood that a discussion paper will be issued during January 2006 with an invitation to Partnerships to comment.

Ian A Ross
Chief Executive
Acute Operating Division

