Dear NHS Colleague,

**Using Discharge Cards to address the low-cost issues stopping patient discharge**

*“Patients feel reassured there is someone who can help them, and staff feel empowered and get more job satisfaction that they are really helping people.”* – Senior Inclusion Health Nurse

*“It’s not only saving bed days. It’s improving quality of care for patients.”* - Senior Nurse

*“It’s such a good project, it reduces length of stay and we spend less but save more.”* – Hub Lead

Increasing numbers of people are healthy enough to leave hospital, but can’t due to a lack of suitable support for their recovery. This delays their discharge and slows admission for other patients, considerably impacting patient flows and people’s experience of care. The issue is particularly acute during winter.

Since 2022, the Personalised Care Team at NHS London has been supporting local Integrated Care Boards to test one-off personal health budgets for hospital discharge. The evidence gathered to date has demonstrated clear benefits to the NHS system, clinicians, and the individuals awaiting discharge from hospital.

Using a payment mechanism known as a Discharge Card, teams can make one-off payments, usually for £200 or less, to provide patients on Pathways 0 and 1 with the initial support they need to leave hospital quickly, safely and more comfortably.

They are considered a one-off personal health budget (PHB), which is set out in NHSE guidance: Next Steps in Increasing Capacity and Operational Resilience (Aug 2022) and One-off PHBs within Hospital Discharge Pathway (Apr 2022).

This approach can be very effective. London has collectively spent £43K and saved at least 1409 bed days since November 2022. This has been achieved at a pilot level of maturity with relatively low awareness among the wider workforce.

To support the spread of Discharge Cards, the NHS England Behavioural Insights Team looked at the real-world barriers and opportunities for rolling them out across London. They undertook a series of qualitative interviews and peer review sessions with discharge leads and staff across London.

We have used the insights they gained to develop this toolkit to help Hospital Trusts raise awareness and increase the use of Discharge Cards as a way of easing pressures through personalising care for patients. Inside you’ll find:

* briefing on what Discharge Cards are, examples of use, and a flyer to share with staff teams
* visual reminders including electronic wallpapers, e-signature graphics and powerpoint templates
* posters and badges to distribute in team areas (we can send you hard copies on request)

It has been developed in close consultation with Personalised Care colleagues and representatives of discharge teams across London. We hope you can encourage your teams to share this information on your intranets, in team meetings and in shared staff spaces.

More information can be found on <https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/london-clinical-networks/our-networks/personalised-care/discharge-cards-for-personalised-care/>

We are confident this work will demonstrate one element of how Personalised Care can underpin our efforts to recover services for patients, support the NHS workforce and address health inequalities.

Your sincerely,

  

**Jane Clegg Briony Sloper Dr Jagan John**

**Regional Chief Nurse Deputy Programme Director Clinical Director**

**and SRO for Personalised Care Health and Care in the Community Cell Personalised Care**

**NHS England London Region NHS England London Region Primary Care Board NE London ICB**

