



NHS England and NHS Improvement
Cardinal Square
10 Nottingham Road
Derby
DE1 3QT

17 November 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Midlands Guidance: Trusts Discharging Patients to Care Homes

In order to support you to continue to ensure the safe discharge of patients from hospital settings to their care homes, colleagues from NHSE/I Midlands, UKHSA East Midlands and UKHSA West Midlands have summarised the key points from the national guidance to reinforce good practice principles across the region.

We have split this guidance into two sections: management of positive patients and the management of contacts.

Management of positive patients

- COVID-19 positive individuals should continue to be discharged into designated settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-settings-for-people-discharged-to-a-care-home/discharge-into-care-homes-for-people-who-have-tested-positive-for-covid-19> The guidance states: ***To prevent the risk of infections entering care homes, anyone who is likely to be infectious with COVID-19 should be discharged to a designated setting, a facility that has either been assured by CQC (by meeting CQC's IPC protocol) or deemed as a suitable alternative setting (for example, NHS community hospital beds), to specifically provide safe care for COVID-19 positive residents.***
- If a patient is COVID-19 positive and there are no designated settings or a designated setting would not be appropriate for the patient, a joint risk assessment with the care home should be carried out before discharge. This needs to consider the resident's COVID-19 status, IPC measures - including isolation facilities, staffing, PPE - available in the setting, the resident's ability to follow COVID-19 safe measures, safety and comfort of the resident and others at the setting.

Management of contacts.

In order for care homes to safely manage patients who would be considered direct contacts

- A negative PCR test should have been taken 48 hours prior to discharge to the setting, please try to take into account transport timings when taking the PCR test
- A joint risk assessment with the care home should be carried out before a resident is being discharged. This needs to consider the resident's COVID-19 contact status, IPC measures - including isolation facilities, staffing, PPE - available in the setting, the resident's ability to follow COVID-19 safe measures, safety and comfort of the resident and others at the setting.
- Please ensure that the discharge summary and handover information provides the date of the last contact with a known positive case as contacts should continue to isolate for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period with appropriate infection prevention and control precautions in place to deliver care.
- If following the joint risk assessment it is not appropriate for contacts to be placed back into the care home setting, these cases should be escalated for discussion on a case by case basis through to the CCG/ICS teams to support.

We would be most grateful if the above information can be shared so that staff are reminded of the guidance and we can all continue to work together to protect all patients within the system.


Yours faithfully



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