

Briefing August 2015

Discharge from Secondary Mental Health Services

This briefing summarises what the 'Code of Practice'¹ says should happen when somebody is discharged from secondary mental health services.

The duty to provide information

'The Regulations made under Part 2 of the Measure place duties on LHBs and local authorities to provide relevant patients who are being discharged from secondary mental health services with certain information.' (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.9*)

'Where a decision is made to discharge a relevant patient from secondary mental health services provided by an LHB and also from secondary mental health services provided by a local authority on the same day, and it cannot be ascertained which partner made the final discharge, local policies may be developed between the partners for an area that set out which partner is to be viewed as making the later discharge for the purposes of provision of information to that relevant patient on discharge. (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.11*)

Information to be provided

When a relevant patient² is discharged from secondary mental health services the LHB or local authority is under a duty to provide certain written information to that person, namely:-

1. The reason for the individual's discharge from secondary mental health services; and,
2. The action which must be taken, and by whom, if the individual who has been discharged considers that further support and advice in relation to his or her mental health is required following discharge.

(*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.12*)

When an adult is discharged from secondary mental health services, in addition to the information above, they must also be informed in writing about their entitlement to assessment under Part 3 of the Measure for 3 years from the date of their discharge. (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.14*)

¹ Code of Practice to Parts 2 and 3 of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010

² Someone who uses secondary mental health services - the full meaning of 'relevant patient' is defined in Part of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010

To enable this to take place appropriate planning with the relevant patient, their family/carers and any ongoing support agency is likely to be necessary including the relevant patient's general practitioner. A lack of comprehensive transition arrangements around discharge is known to elevate the risks of ongoing support breaking down. *(Code of Practice; paragraph 7.13)*

In addition to the information required by the Measure and Regulations, the mental health service provider may also choose to give additional information to a relevant patient on discharge. In practice this may well be carried out by the care co-ordinator.

This could include, for example, information on: -

- a) Medication and side effects
- b) Who to speak to for advice on benefits and entitlements
- c) Other services available to provide ongoing support, such as voluntary support groups, drop in centres, self help groups;
- d) Where to access housing advice;
- e) The availability and access to health and leisure activities, such as gymnasias and swimming pools.

(Code of Practice; paragraph 7.16)

It is also recommended that this information is provided to the relevant patient's GP, with the consent of the relevant patient, to promote continuity of care and understanding. *(Code of Practice; paragraph 7.18)*

In practice, this information may be provided by the relevant patient's care coordinator, although the responsibility for the provision of such information rests with the mental health service provider. *(Code of Practice; paragraph 7.19)*

'Discharge from secondary mental health services can be considered as an important potential outcome for relevant patients within secondary mental health services as part of the recovery process, and in order to maximise the opportunities for good mental health and achieving a better quality of life for the individual. It is important, however, to understand the implications of being discharged for both the relevant patient and mental health service providers.' *(Code of Practice; paragraph 7.2)*

'The phrase 'discharge from secondary mental health services' is used to describe a situation where, for whatever reason, the individual who was formerly a relevant patient is no longer in receipt of any secondary mental health services provided by an LHB, a local authority, or (exceptionally) the Welsh Ministers.' *(Code of Practice; paragraph 7.3)*

‘Discharge from secondary mental health services can be considered to be a significant achievement and outcome for the relevant patient. However there must also be recognition that some relevant patients may find the transition from high levels of support to reduced levels, or even no further support, difficult.’ (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.4*)

‘Although it may not always be possible, discharge from services should be based on agreement that the planned outcomes for that relevant patient have been achieved.’ (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.5*)

‘Ongoing monitoring and review of the relevant patient’s care and treatment plan should continue until it is determined when considering the outcomes to be achieved that the relevant patient no longer requires the services provided by secondary mental health services. It is normally the case that this will take place during the formal review of the care and treatment plan where the views of all relevant members of the care team should form part of the decision making process alongside those of carers, immediate family members and other significant supporters in the relevant patient’s life.’ (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.6*)

‘The care and treatment team should not necessarily regard discharge as an end point in meeting a relevant patient’s mental health needs. Discharge from secondary mental health services may be a staging post in a longer course of recovery.’ (*Code of Practice; paragraph 7.8*)

About Hafal

We are Wales’ leading charity for people with serious mental illness and for carers. Covering all areas of Wales, Hafal is an organisation managed by the people we support: individuals whose lives have been affected by serious mental illness.

Underpinning our services to clients is our own unique Recovery Programme. Based on modern principles of self-management and empowerment, this holistic programme offers clients a methodical way of achieving recovery by focusing on all areas of their life.

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