



19 March 2020

Accountable Officers of NHS and Foundation Trusts  
Accountable Officers of Clinical Commissioning Groups  
Directors of Adult Social Care

Cc: Chief Executives of Councils  
NHS England and NHS Improvement Regional Directors

**To:**

### **COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirements**

We face an unprecedented challenge in the weeks and months ahead to provide health and social care services that meet the needs of people affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).

One of the most important tasks will be to ensure we have the capacity to support people who have acute healthcare needs in our hospitals. To do this we need to organise the safe and rapid discharge of those people who no longer need to be in a hospital bed. The new default will be discharge home today.

Strategic Coordination Groups across the NHS, community and social care settings need to ensure we create and maintain acute bed capacity through faster rates of appropriate discharge from NHS beds for the foreseeable future.

Today we publish Hospital Discharge Service Requirements, which set out actions that must be taken immediately to enhance discharge arrangements and the provision of community support.

Each system will tackle this challenge from a different starting position and should take account of their local workforce and care home/domiciliary care supply dynamics, together with awareness of the capacity of family carers and volunteers in the community to continue to support local action. Supporting and sustaining social care will never be more vital to these efforts.

A range of virtual resources and live interactive sessions have been developed to support every sector to work through how to achieve this new way of operating and are detailed in the document.

Thank you for your support and the important work you are undertaking.

Yours faithfully,

Professor Keith Willett  
**NHS Strategic Incident Director (Coronavirus)**

Matthew Winn  
**Director of Community Health, NHS England & Improvement**

Rosamond Roughton  
**Director for Adult Social Care, Department of Health and Social Care**

Alex Skinner  
**Director, Local Government Finance, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**