

Guidance: COVID-19 Trusted Assessor guidance

Summary

This guidance is an interim supplement to our [Guidance on Trusted Assessor Agreements](#). It was written to support NHS and social care providers and Trusted Assessor schemes during the Covid-19 pandemic. It will apply until further notice.

There is an unprecedented challenge in the weeks and months ahead to provide health and social care services that meet the needs of people affected by the COVID-19 virus.

This update seeks to further remove and reduce delays in decision-making processes that can stop patients who are ready to be discharged from leaving NHS acute or community beds. Shifting to this revised approach will require hospital staff, providers and other partners to work in new and different ways.

The Government has agreed to suspend legal requirements around assessments and funding for continuing free nursing care after discharge from hospital. This means the priority can be on timely discharges, with eligibility assessments and funding decisions taking place afterwards.

'Trusted Assessor' schemes are a national initiative designed to reduce delays when people are ready for discharge from hospital. Providers adopt assessments carried out by suitably qualified 'Trusted Assessors' working under formal, written agreements.

Assessments and care planning can be undertaken by Trusted Assessor schemes in a way that meets both people's needs and legal requirements on providers

Providers accepting trusted assessments must have access to a process by which they can escalate concerns when a person has been discharged to their service with needs they are unable to meet. The process must be able to respond to those concerns promptly. Where a concern is raised about the appropriateness of the placement, CQC will expect this to be considered promptly.

Key changes from existing arrangements:

1. All hospitals will train additional discharge staff to operate as 'Trusted assessors'. Trusted Assessors will continue to support care providers with discharge arrangements. The additional staff will supplement Trusted Assessors in existing schemes.

2. Most hospitals already use trusted assessor schemes for discharges to care homes and care at home services in their areas. These should be kept up to date in local NHS Discharge to Assess (D2A) arrangements. This should be prioritised.
 3. Over this period CQC's priority is to continue to check that people are safe. Where we have serious concerns we will use inspection and other processes to do so.
 4. Registered providers and managers will need to have confidence that legal requirements for assessments will be met, and that particular consideration will be given to safety and infection control-related needs during this heightened period.
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Tools and resources

Guidance on Trusted Assessor Agreement