

Health Service Circular

Local Authority Circular

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sets out a specific action on the part of the recipient with a deadline where appropriate

National Service Framework for Older People

For action by:

- Health Authorities (England) - Chief Executive
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- NHS Trusts - Chief Executives
- Social Services Directors - England
- Chairs of Local Authority Social Services
- NHS Trusts (England) - Directors of Nursing
- Primary Care Groups & Trusts - Chief Executives

For information to:

- Community Health Councils, Chief Officers
- Consortia Business Managers
- Health Authorities (England)- Chairman
- Medical Schools - Deans
- NHS Trusts - Chairman
- Post Graduate Deans
- Primary Care Groups & Trusts - Chairman

Further details from: NHS Executive Regional Office and Social Care Region Contact (see below)

Additional copies of this document can be obtained from:

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It is also available on the Department of Health web site at
<http://www.doh.gov.uk/coinh.htm>

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National Service Framework for Older People

Summary

The National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People is an action plan to improve health and social services for older people. It sets new national standards and service models of care for all older people whether they live at home, in residential care or are being cared for in hospital. It focusses on:

- rooting out age discrimination
- providing person-centred care with older people treated as individuals with respect and dignity
- promoting older people's health and independence.

It also specifically addresses those conditions which are particularly significant for older people - stroke, falls and mental health problems associated with older age.

Finally it sets out local action and national underpinning programmes for implementation, and a series of national milestones to ensure progress with performance measures to support improvement.

Action

The accompanying document sets out the action needed to implement the NSF. For Social Services Authorities, the National Service Framework for Older People is issued as guidance under Section 7(1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.

Local NHS organisations and local councils should build on existing arrangements for planning and commissioning services for older people, in particular the arrangements for developing the Joint Investment Plan (JIP) . Where there is a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) or its equivalent, this should provide the overall framework for such planning. Where LSPs are not yet in place but are being developed, the need to implement the NSF should be built in from the start. Health authority and local council chief executives (under their new duties of partnership as defined by the Health Act 1999 and the Local Government Act 2000) will be required to ensure that such arrangements are in place, and that all relevant stakeholders, including older people, are represented. Local council chief executives are also requested to ensure that implementing the NSF sits within their council's overall strategy for older people and is coherent with it.

Background & Other Information

The programme of NSFs is part of the Government's agenda to drive up standards and reduce unacceptable variations in health and social services. HSC 98/074 set out a programme of work to develop NSFs in a number of key areas. In the NHS, standards will be:

- set by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and NSFs
- delivered by clinical governance, underpinned by professional self regulation and lifelong learning
- monitored by the Commission for Health Improvement, the new Performance Assessment Framework and the programme of patient and service user surveys.

The NHS Plan also sets out a major package of investment to improve services and standards of care for older people. Integrated policy and practice development will be essential in developing and working towards the standards set out in this NSF.

The Standards

The NSF sets out eight standards.

Standard One: Rooting out age discrimination

NHS services will be provided, regardless of age, on the basis of clinical need alone. Social care services will not use age in their eligibility criteria or policies, to restrict access to available services.

Standard Two: Person-centred care

NHS and social care services treat older people as individuals and enable them to make choices about their own care. This is achieved through the single assessment process, integrated commissioning arrangements and integrated provision of services, including community equipment and continence services

Standard Three: Intermediate care

Older people will have access to a new range of intermediate care services at home or in designated care settings to promote their independence by providing enhanced services from the NHS and councils to prevent unnecessary hospital admission and effective rehabilitation services to enable early discharge from hospital and to prevent premature or unnecessary admission to long-term residential care.

Standard Four: General hospital care

Older people's care in hospital is delivered through appropriate specialist care and by hospital staff who have the right set of skills to meet their needs.

Standard Five: Stroke

The NHS will take action to prevent strokes, working in partnership with other agencies where appropriate. People who are thought to have had a stroke have access to diagnostic services, are treated appropriately by a specialist stroke service, and subsequently, with their carers, participate in a multidisciplinary programme of secondary prevention and rehabilitation.

Standard Six: Falls

The NHS, working in partnership with councils, takes action to prevent falls and reduce resultant fractures or other injuries in their populations of older people. Older people who have fallen receive effective treatment and rehabilitation and, with their carers, receive advice on prevention through a specialised falls service.

Standard Seven: Mental health in older people

Older people who have mental health problems have access to integrated mental health services, provided by the NHS and councils to ensure effective diagnosis, treatment and support, for them and for their carers.

Standard Eight: The promotion of health and active life in older age

The health and well-being of older people is promoted through a co-ordinated programme of action led by the NHS with support from councils.

Five other major projects are underway to drive up the quality, availability and consistency of services available to older people:

- changes in long term care funding, including the availability of NHS nursing care¹ in all settings;

- the expansion of intermediate care (and community equipment) services across health and social care;
- the establishment of Care Direct, to provide comprehensive information and ease of access to health, housing, social care and social security;
- various initiatives (including flu immunisation and the retirement health check) to help older people stay healthy;
- use of section 31 Health Act 1999 flexibilities to promote joint working between the NHS and social services, along with the availability of Care Trusts to enable even closer integration between the NHS and social services.

These projects support the NSF standards and reflect their values.

Ensuring Progress and Milestones

Progress against the standards in this NSF will be measured against agreed milestones which are published in the NSF at Chapter Four. Progress will be overseen by the NHS Modernisation Board and the Older People's Taskforce.

Underpinning programmes

Five underpinning programmes will support local and national implementation:

- Finance
- Workforce
- Research and development
- Clinical and Practice Decision Support Services
- Information.

These are described in Chapter 5

Implementation support

The NHS Executive Regional Offices and the Social Services Inspectorate have been working together to prepare for implementation, ensuring consistency from one locality to another. They will continue to work closely with local health and social care partnerships to support implementation and to monitor progress.

Enquiries about local implementation of the NSF should be addressed to the appropriate NHS Executive Regional Office or Social Care Region as follows:

NHS Executive Regional Office contacts

Northern & Yorkshire	Marilyn Ekers	Tel: 0191 301 1360 marilyn.ekers@doh.gsi.gov.uk
Trent	Amanda Forrest	Tel: 0114 282 0355 amanda.forrest@doh.gsi.gov.uk
Eastern	Amanda Sherlock	Tel: 0190 884 4501 amanda.sherlock@doh.gsi.gov.uk

London	Jane Carrier	Tel: 020 7725 5563 jane.carrier@doh.gsi.gov.uk
South East	Zac Arif	Tel: 020 7725 2707 zac.arif@doh.gsi.gov.uk
South & West	Ian Plaister	Tel: 0117 984 1897 ian.plaister@doh.gsi.gov.uk
West Midlands	Sally Burton	Tel: 0121 224 4726 (including Social Care) sally.burton@doh.gsi.gov.uk
North West	Mick Dolan	Tel: 01925 704277 mick.dolan@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Social Care Regional contacts

Central	Joy Wilson	Tel: 0121 606 4372 joy.wilson@doh.gsi.gov.uk
	Kath Tempest	Tel: 0121 606 4373 kath.tempest@doh.gsi.gov.uk
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Further information

For a electronic version of the NSF and further information including examples of existing good practice for services for older people please visit our website on www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/olderpeople.htm

Associated Documentation

HSC(2000)28 : Resuscitation policy

Implementation Programme for the NHS Plan www.doh.gov.uk/nhsplanimpprogramme

NHS Plan - Services for Older People: Guidance for Developing Joint Investment Plans (JIPs) - to be included on the Department of Health's Joint Unit's JIPs website shortly

Planning for Health and Social Care: Guidance for health and local authorities on Service and Financial Frameworks

www.doh.gov.uk/nhsplanimpprogramme/planning

HSC(2001)1 : LAC(2001) Intermediate Care

HSC(2001)3 : LAC(2001)4 Implementing the NHS Plan: Developing services following the National Beds Inquiry

LAC(2001)6 : HSC(2001)6 Better Care Higher Standards: Guidance for 2001/02

HSC(2000)7 : LAC(2000)7 No Secrets: Guidance on developing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse

HSC(2001)8 : LAC(2001)13 Community Equipment Services: Guide to integrating community equipment services.

CI(2001)4 Care Standards Act 2000: National Minimum Standards – Care Homes for Older People

PL/CNO/2001/2 The Essence of Care: Patient-focused benchmarking for health care practitioners

This Circular has been issued by:

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· Subject to the passage of the NHS and Social Care Bill