

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Immediate release:** 12 June 2018

### **‘RED BAGS’ PACKING A DIFFERENCE FOR CARE HOME RESIDENTS**

The red bag scheme or ‘hospital transfer pathway’ is a small change having a big impact by personalising hospital care for care home residents in south west Essex.

This simple patient focused initiative will improve the ambulance service handover to the hospital and will also assist to reduce A&E assessment times for the patient.

When a care home resident becomes unwell and requires hospital care, care home staff will pack a red bag which will have been personalised for the individual and will consist of standardised paperwork about the residents’ health care needs, a list of their medication, along with personal items, such as glasses, hearing aids, toiletries and day-of-discharge clothes and all will be transported to the hospital with the patient.

South west Essex has a high number of people living in care homes. Due to the complex and long-term nature of the health issues of many elderly care home residents, there are often frequent and sometimes sudden admissions to hospital.

Admissions and discharges involve input from several health and care organisations and all depends on good, robust communication and having the relevant information present.

Initially the scheme is being rolled out as a pilot to a number of care homes in south west Essex. Following the trial period, it is hoped the scheme will be extended.

**Dawn Patience, director of nursing at Basildon University Hospital, said:**

“Hospital, ambulance, social care, community and hospice teams have worked effectively together to launch the Red Bag scheme, which will be a great bonus for patients.

The red bags mean that people coming to hospital from care homes have their key information about their condition and needs, and any medication they are taking, in one obvious place. The bags also contain patients’ possessions, including essential items like hearing aids and glasses, that are important for their comfort, wellbeing and understanding of their surroundings and their treatment.

But the bags are about more than containing patient information and possessions; they also enable hospital staff to identify patients who are care home residents, who

may be living with dementia, to ensure that their needs are met during their hospital stay and when they are discharged.”

As vital patient information will be in one place and this will travel with the patient, it will save time at each stage of the patient journey.

Discharge information will also be put into the red bag so when they return to their care home, staff can ensure any advice given can be followed up straight away, instead of waiting to hear from the GP.

**Irene Lewsey, Senior Commissioning Manager, NHS Thurrock CCG said:**

“This simple Red Bag is a great example of how small changes to partnership working can have great benefits to the patients care and dignity by putting the needs of the patient first.”

**Emma Branch, Commissioning Manager for Community Services at Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) said:**

The Red Bag scheme will not only support both medical staff and the patients though out their hospital journey, but will also ensure that patients care can be handed over between the care home, Ambulance Service and the hospital smoothly.

The scheme has proved so successful in some parts of the country that it’s being rolled out elsewhere with the help of a new quick guide published today.

The guide aims to provide care homes, trusts, CCGs and ambulance services with practical tips on how to implement the scheme.

A simple change, the scheme has shown to reduce hospital delays, help stop patients losing personal items and improve communication between care home and hospital staff.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

The Red Bag scheme in south west Essex has been achieved through partnership work between NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG, Thurrock CCG, Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, East of England Ambulance Service, Thames Ambulance Service and south west Essex care homes.

The Red Bag contains standardised but current information about the health and well-being of the resident, a list of medication needs, personal aids and belongings (such as glasses, hearing aids, clothes) and this stays with them from the time they leave the care home to go into hospital, until the time they return to the care home at the end of their hospital stay.

Each red bag has a personalised serial number for each care home resident to facilitate tracking of any admissions or discharges and the red bag itself immediately identifies the patient as a care home resident.

For more information locally, please visit the Basildon and Brentwood CCG website at <http://basildonandbrentwoodccg.nhs.uk> or you can also contact the CCGs by email: [bbccg.communications@nhs.net](mailto:bbccg.communications@nhs.net) or [thurrock.ccg@nhs.net](mailto:thurrock.ccg@nhs.net)

**Nationally**

The initiative was pioneered by Sutton Homes of Care, South London, in 2015. Sutton was subsequently chosen as one of six enhanced health in care homes vanguard areas as part of the 2016-17 New Care Models Programme.

Nationally, nearly 50% of Health and Wellbeing Boards report they have started the scheme in their area and 90% say they aim to roll it out next year.

[Further information on the scheme](#) can be found on NHS England's website.