

Appendix A: Topic guides

A. Clinician Interview Semi-structured topic guide (all clinician participants)

1. In your role, how would you describe the purpose of a discharge summary?
2. How would you describe your role in the discharge communication process?
3. What do you need to be able to do conduct your role appropriately?
4. Could you tell me about an example where there has been a problem with discharge communication or information?
5. Are there any recurring problems with discharge communication to GPs?
6. How might this affect patients?
7. How does medical complexity affect the difficulty of discharge communication?
8. Could you tell me about an example where discharge communication has been done well, in the face of a difficult situation to communicate?
9. Could you tell me about an example where discharge communication has required more than a 'routine' discharge letter?
10. Do you feel that discharge communication is appropriately valued?
11. How well do you think the system works?
12. What would good look like?

Additional Questions to Hospital Clinicians only:

- a) How have you learnt to write discharge summaries as a doctor?
- b) How does your team support its junior members in writing discharge summaries?
- c) Do you feel that you are confident in knowing what the GP and patient need from a discharge letter?
- d) Have you ever been made aware that a discharge letter hasn't met the needs of a GP?

Additional Questions for GPs and GP Registrars only:

- a) Do you feel that the authors of summaries understand your needs as a GP?
- b) How does the quality of communication received affect how well you can play your role as the GP?
- c) If you need more information about a patient's hospital stay that isn't available in the summary, how easy is it to get it?
- d) What advice would you give hospital doctors about writing discharge communication?

B. Administrative and Infrastructural Staff Semi-Structured Topic Guide

1. What is your/your department's role in the discharge communication process?
2. Could you describe a typical example of your/your department's activity in the pathway of discharge communication?
3. Are there any recurrent problems that you/your department face?

C. Clinician Focus Group Topic Guide

The clinician focus group took place after all the clinician interviews and administrative/infrastructural staff interviews had taken place. Data from the interviews was used to make the probes, as outlined below.

1. Participants were shown Figure 2 as a framework for the system
2. Participants were shown a model showing purposes of communication (an early iteration of Figure 3),
3. Participants were asked how well does the system perform to serve the purposes identified
4. Barriers to system performance found during the clinician interviews were briefly shown to the participants as an early iteration of figure 4.
5. Participants were asked to write down ways that could make these purposes served better or more consistently, based on the barriers shown, and the participants own clinical practice.
6. "Post it notes" were filled out individually, without any further discussion, and placed on the phase of the system (i.e. *Creation, Reception, Interpretation & Action* or *Resolution*)
7. Several ideas were picked out for group discussion by the facilitator
8. Questions were asked to the group:
 - a. Can the information needs be met every time, first time?
 - b. How could the system change to take better account of this?
 - c. Who should be involved, to make any changes?