

04 October 2012

To:
Chief Executives of NHS Trusts
Chief Executives of NHS Foundation Trusts
Chief Executives of Care Trusts
PCT Cluster Chief Executives
SHA Cluster Chief Executives
NHS Trust Board Chairs
PCT Cluster Chairs
Medical Directors
Directors of Nursing
Directors of Finance
Communication Leads
Emergency Care leads

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ROCR/OR/2159/001VOLU

Dear Colleague

Implementation of the Friends and Family Test

The Prime Minister announced in May this year that, from April 2013, patients will be asked a simple question (the 'Friends and Family' test) to identify whether they would be happy for their friends or family to be treated in a particular acute hospital ward or accident and emergency unit.

The Friends and Family Test will help commissioners and providers work together to improve the experience of patients by providing timely feedback that, alongside other sources of patient views, will highlight priorities for local action.

Many organisations already put patients centre stage in the delivery of their services by actively seeking feedback, and, crucially, acting upon this to drive up quality and improve patient experience. But this is not universal. We want to make this the norm and apply it in a simple, comparable and consistent way that is easily understood by patients and staff alike.

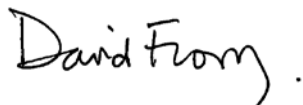
Collection of the data for the Friends and Family Test needs to be in place at the latest by April 2013, covering all acute inpatient wards and all Type 1 and 2 A&E departments (including patients discharged from Medical Assessment Units).

To support this, from April 2013, it will be a contractual requirement on all providers of NHS funded acute inpatient services and A&E departments to deliver this work.

To ensure this is prioritised within your organisation, you should work with SHA clusters and commissioners to ensure necessary plans are put in place in good time to be 100% confident of reporting usable results in April 2013. As organisations start to implement the FFT ahead of April 2013, the results should be reported via a centrally specified route following technical reporting guidance to be issued in the autumn.

We strongly encourage providers of NHS funded care to commence reporting from this autumn onwards. SHA clusters will oversee timetables for implementation over the next few weeks and will assess the state of readiness for implementation for all NHS trusts and Foundation Trusts in January 2013.

The attached guidance, which has been co-developed with SHA clusters, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts and the NHS Commissioning Board, reflects the experience of organisations that are already delivering the Friends and Family test and similar patient feedback systems, and its aim is to help you prepare for implementation on time.



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Department of Health



Tim Kelsey
National Director for Patients
and Information
NHS Commissioning Board