



What is the link between patient handovers and the government's £500m discharge promise?

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The cause of handover delays lies not in emergency departments alone, but in the **flow of patients through the hospital**. The NHS cannot admit more sick patients because it cannot release those who are substantively better back into their own homes, because of a lack of care and support in the community.

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Ambulances waiting outside emergency departments cannot respond to incidents. Responses to life-threatening incidents were **2 minutes higher** in September 2022 than in September 2019. Over the same time, responses to serious category 2 incidents have nearly doubled.

HOSPITAL

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On an average day in September, there were 22,253 patients in England who no longer met the criteria to remain in hospital, but **just 8,948 were discharged** (40.2%). This means a considerable amount of medically fit patients remain in hospital while poorly patients wait outside.

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The key reason for what the Care Quality Commission calls "gridlock" lies not in the NHS but in social care. With **165,000 vacant posts in social care** (up 52% since 2020/21) care workers are among the lowest paid roles in the England (median pay £9.50 ph).

CARE HOME

Emergency Department (A&E)

NHS

1

Figures released by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives in September show some of the worst patient handover statistics to date. **203,000 patients** experienced handovers in excess of 15 minutes, with the hours lost to those handovers reaching the third highest on record (146,000).

Until the government recognises and addresses the issues in social care, ambulances, emergency departments and hospitals will continue to struggle this winter.