

MHA Free Form Project

v.4 release notes 5th May 2022

What's new in the v.4 release?

- Toggle boxes for deletions on forms now strikethrough text rather than deleting it entirely, wherever practicable.
- List boxes embedded in text for choices such as nearest relative delegation options have been replaced with more user-friendly dropdown boxes.
- Completion check code now checks that method of reception of a form matches the method of furnishing it stated in a previous part of the form.

What is the MHA Free Form Project?

The goal of the MHA Free Form Project is to give health and social care organisations free access to versions of MHA statutory forms containing code designed to reduce the possibility of errors being made when forms are being completed, and which can be used with standard office software such as Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat.

For the standard release, forms which ask for local authority or hospital details have been prepopulated with the names and addresses of LSSAs in London and all hospitals recorded by the CQC as offering mental health services in the London area. I have limited the hospitals drop-down to the CQC's London area list for two reasons:

- 1) Including all 1018 hospitals listed by the CQC as offering mental health services nationally made the drop-down box almost impossible to use.
- 2) In deciding which hospitals to keep in a curated list I have favoured the area in which I currently happen to work.

Alternative versions are now available for the South-East and I'm happy to make versions for other regions upon request. If you would like more information on the project, would like to get involved or would like to provide feedback or suggestions on these forms please contact michael.chalmers@nhs.net.

How do the forms work?

Adobe PDF forms can be adapted to behave in various ways using a language called Javascript, which can be triggered when fields on the form are interacted with by the user. The prototype forms in this release use Javascript to, for example:

- make text and drop-down boxes visible and/or fillable only in certain circumstances (e.g. depending on the information you have already entered in the form),
- only allow dates to be entered that conform to certain rules (e.g. not in the future, no more than X days apart etc),
- check the form for completeness so that the user is alerted if required fields have not been filled in.

Most of these processes will run in the background, for example if the user starts filling in a particular option which is mutually exclusive to another option that other option will no longer

be available until the user deletes the relevant information that they have already entered (whereupon all the options will become available again).

The exception to this is the “Click to Check” buttons that feature in each form. Clicking these will run a script which checks the form for completeness and highlights any omissions to the user.

How can I use these forms?

The forms are prototypes which have been developed for use with Adobe Acrobat software, the latest version of which is available for free [here](#). Many computers will be set up to automatically open PDF files in a web browser such as Chrome, Edge or Firefox. Because web browsers use their own software to interact with PDFs rather than Adobe’s own software not all of the functionality of these forms will currently work if you open them in a web browser (in particular the “Click to Check” buttons).

In order to access all of the functionality of these forms they need to be opened with Adobe software: either by opening Adobe Reader first and then loading the form into that software using the “Open” option in the “File” menu, or by right-clicking on the downloaded files and using the “Open With...” option to open the files with Adobe software.