

Ambulatory Emergency Care: a solution to manage emergency demand, improve outcomes and reduce waits

What is Ambulatory Emergency Care?

Royal Colleges and clinical teams across England have recognised that a new approach is needed to transform emergency care and have recently published guidance to streamline emergency systems. The College of Emergency Medicine made ten recommendations in the report 'Drive for Quality' published earlier this year, one recommendation is that clinical decision units and

Dr Martin Kuper, Medical Director at Whittington said "Ambulatory care is central to our vision of Enhanced Recovery healthcare for the 21st Century. Helping many more patients to stay mobile and prevent them needing to spend the night at a hospital will be a step change in health care delivery and the Whittington is at the forefront of this development"

ambulatory emergency care are important components of the emergency systems.

Equally the 'Future Hospitals' report recently published by the Royal College of Physicians recommends that 'care will be organised so that ambulatory ('day case') emergency care is the default position for emergency patients, unless their clinical needs require admission. Systems will ensure ambulatory care patients continue to receive prompt specialist

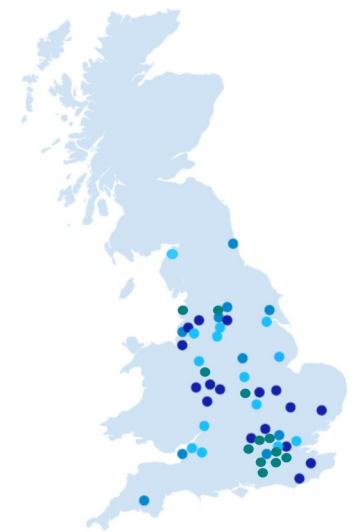
care aligned to their needs, maximising alternatives to acute hospital admission, and improving safety, outcomes and experience of patients in ambulatory care'. The Emergency Care Intensive Support team has stated that Ambulatory Care should be the 'default' position for emergency care as one of the eight key principles of improving emergency patient flow.

Ambulatory care means patients presenting to hospital as an emergency are diagnosed and treated on the same day and sent home with on going clinical support and supervision as needed. This approach has improved both clinical outcomes and patient experience and reduced costs and pressures in the urgent care system.

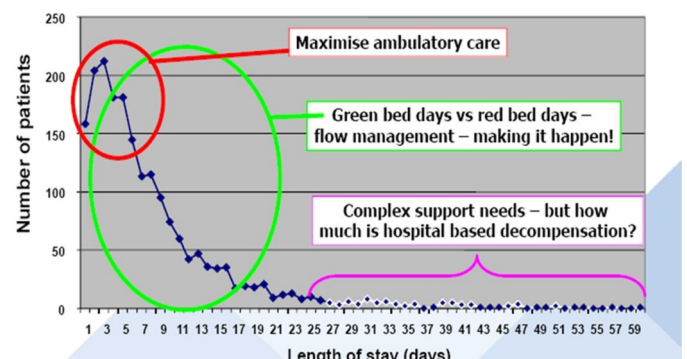
How can the AEC Network help teams to adopt this approach?

Many of the teams adopting AEC have been supported by a national programme, the **Ambulatory Emergency Care Network**. Sites participating in the programme report managing significant numbers of emergency patients same day, without the need for full admission, converting at least 20-30% of emergency admissions to same day care. The shift needed is illustrated in figure 1 below. You can expect to convert patients that have previously stayed in hospital for 2 or 3 nights to a zero length of stay once processes are redesigned to eliminate waits from the system.

The evidence for this approach is presented in the *Directory of Ambulatory Emergency Care* which



Managing Length of Stay



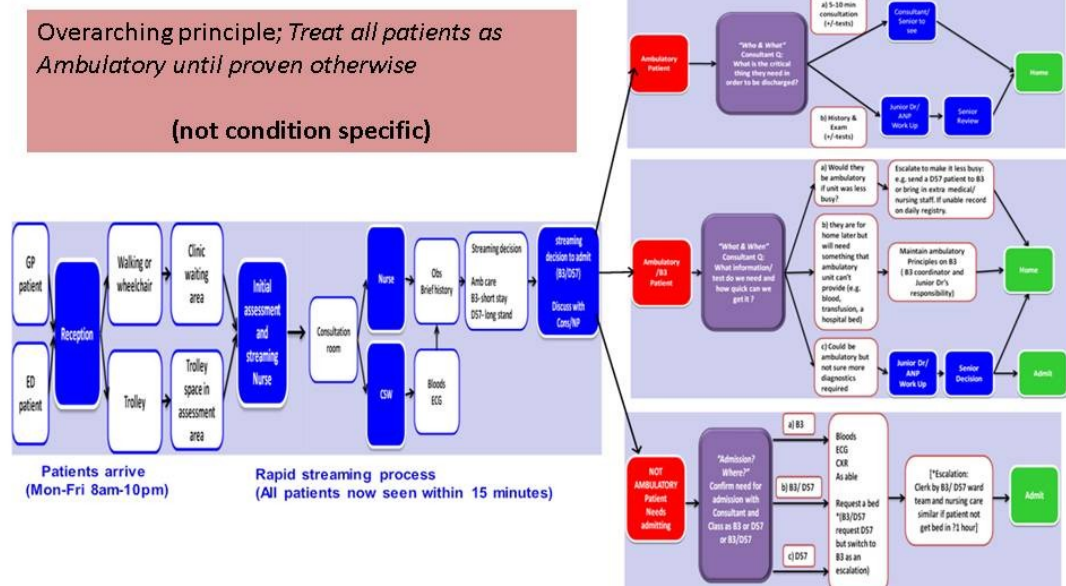
outlines 49 emergency clinical scenarios suitable for ambulatory treatment. This was first published by the NHS Institute in December 2007 and has been regularly reviewed and updated by the Network with version 3 published in November 2012. Whilst the Directory has been helpful in identifying and analysing case mix, pioneer sites are now moving away from a pathway approach and adopting a process method. This means creating a system where all patients are considered for ambulatory care, unless clinically unstable, or until proven otherwise. With this approach teams are reporting converting 25-30% of admitted patients to same day care.

The AEC programme is designed on a collaborative model to support participating sites to adopt and implement ambulatory care. The programme is delivered by an experienced team of clinicians, operational managers and improvement leaders and is made up of national collaborative events, work shops, visits, webinars and on-site individual support for participating teams.

A significant network is emergency nationally with teams able to share best practice and support one another to implement proven changes quickly.

Pioneers of ambulatory emergency care have achieved amazing results, with growing evidence of impact.

New Process for GP Assessment and Ambulatory Care



As a result the AEC Network is now able to support sites and health communities to be more ambitious from the outset in order to realise the full potential of the AEC approach rapidly.

For more information

If you would like to know more please contact us at aec@nhselect.org.uk for more information or go to www.ambulatoryemergencycare.org.uk to register interest in the next programme.