Ambulatory emergency care (AEC) is the provision of same-day emergency care for patients who would otherwise be considered for emergency admission. It is a well-established model in which stable patients with acute conditions for whom inpatient admission would previously have been the default option are assessed, investigated, treated and able to return home on the same day. The infrastructure of AEC services may also be used to promote early supported discharge.

There are various models of ambulatory emergency care, with multidisciplinary teams consisting of different combinations of emergency physicians, GPs, secondary care specialty teams, nurses, occupational and physiotherapists, social workers and patient transport services. Sites implementing AEC have shown improved clinical outcomes, increased patient satisfaction and reduced costs.¹ AEC can improve the patient experience by providing care in an efficient, streamlined manner without unnecessary hospital admission for suitable patients, while reducing length of stay and overcrowding in other areas.

We expect that hospitals introducing AEC could convert 30% of acute medical admissions to ambulatory care episodes\(^2\) with further potential in other specialty groups including surgical disciplines. NHS Improvement recommends the optimal model to be a service that is open for at least 12 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and one that considers AEC for all patients presenting acutely who are not clinically unstable.\(^2\)

The Ambulatory Emergency Care Network provides published guidance and hands-on support for trusts to implement and develop AEC services. Further information can be found here: [https://www.ambulatoryemergencycare.org.uk/](https://www.ambulatoryemergencycare.org.uk/)

The publications index has been developed by the AEC steering group jointly hosted by NHS England and NHS Improvement, in partnership with the AEC Network. It signposts key resources from across the healthcare system including the AEC Network, the Royal College of Physicians, NHS England and NHS Improvement, and a range of other sources. The publications index can be found here: [https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/ambulatory-emergency-care-publications-index](https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/ambulatory-emergency-care-publications-index)

These resources will help providers implement and develop new and existing services to reduce unnecessary emergency admissions, and help reduce the inpatient length of stay.

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