

# Reducing unnecessary journeys and admission to emergency departments for frail elderly people who fall at home

---

## London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

### What was the problem?

Elderly people who fall at home often call 999, although not all need to go to hospital. Ambulance crews can either leave them at home with little or no intervention or support, or take them to the accident and emergency department. Low-acuity falls take ambulances that could attend elsewhere off the road, while journeys to hospital increase pressure on A&E and often result in an overnight stay, adding to costs.

### What was the solution?

London Ambulance Service and North East London NHS Foundation Trust funded and introduced a joint emergency response team with an experienced community treatment nurse working alongside a paramedic in an LAS emergency response car. The nurse assesses patients and gives community-based care and treatment. People who have fallen receive a falls assessment; the car carries equipment such as mobility aids for patient use. Nurses refer patients to other community teams for follow-up care where needed.

### What were the results?

On average 70% of patients attended are managed at home. Feedback is positive. What started as a pilot project is now a fully funded service commissioned by the CCG. Outcomes include:

- a new referral process and staffing model – the patient still calls 999, is fully triaged and taken to A&E if clinically determined, or if they ask to be taken
- about 30 fewer transfers to hospital per week
- financial benefit
- quick, direct referrals for follow-up care to avoid similar incidents.

### What were the learning points?

- Continuously measuring impact is essential: present data in a relevant and meaningful way for all stakeholders.
- Maintain momentum and enthusiasm, and build relationships with weekly contact/teleconferences.
- Commitment to collaborative working and continuous testing and adapting are critical to success.

## Find out more

Lea Agambar, Nurse Practitioner, [lea.agambar@nelft.nhs.uk](mailto:lea.agambar@nelft.nhs.uk)

Debbie Richmond, Group Station Manager, [Debbie.Richmond@lond-amb.nhs.uk](mailto:Debbie.Richmond@lond-amb.nhs.uk)

## Contact us

NHS Improvement  
Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London  
SE1 8UG

T: 0300 123 2257

E: [enquiries@improvement.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@improvement.nhs.uk)

W: [improvement.nhs.uk](http://improvement.nhs.uk)

NHS Improvement is the operational name for the organisation that brings together Monitor, NHS Trust Development Authority, Patient Safety, the National Reporting and Learning System, the Advancing Change team and the Intensive Support Teams.

This publication can be made available in a number of other formats on request.

© NHS Improvement (September 2016).