

A&E and hospital admission alternatives

We are seeing continuing increases in attendances at our A&E departments and in urgent admissions. Where possible, we want to help patients get access to the specialist advice and care they need without having to go via A&E and without having to be admitted. Where patients do need to be admitted, we want to get them to the specialist service they need as quickly as possible. Here are a range of services that can help.

1 Ambulatory emergency care

What is ambulatory emergency care (AEC)?

AEC provides same-day emergency care involving consultant reviews for patients with urgent or emergency health problems without the need for attendance in A&E or, where possible, hospital admission. Appropriate patients can be directly referred to one of two AEC units in our Trust – at St Mary's or Charing Cross hospitals.

Where are our AEC units and when are they open?

St Mary's Hospital, QEQM building, second floor

- Monday – Friday: 08.00 – 22.00
- Saturday – Sunday: 08.00 – 20.00

Charing Cross Hospital, enter via A&E on St Dunstan's Road, ground floor

- Monday – Friday: 08.00 – 22.00
- Saturday – Sunday: 08.00 – 20.00

How do I refer a patient to AEC?

Trust clinicians or local GPs can refer patients with a wide range of presumed conditions directly to AEC, providing the patient is stable and mobile. Patients cannot refer themselves to AEC.

Presumed conditions that can be reviewed and treated in AEC are:

- Abscesses
- Cellulitis
- Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- ENT/tonsillitis/Bell's palsy
- First fits
- Hyperemesis
- Iron infusion
- Lower respiratory tract infections (LRT)
- Low risk GI bleed
- Low risk head injury
- Low risk chest pain
- Low risk pulmonary embolism
- Painless jaundice
- Pyrexia of unknown origin (PUO)
- Red hot joint
- Renal colic
- Stable pyelonephritis
- Transient loss of consciousness (TLOC pathway)

To refer a patient, call the relevant AEC service:

- St Mary's Hospital – **020 3312 3196**
- Charing Cross Hospital – **020 3313 0734**

2 Outpatient parenteral antimicrobial therapy (OPAT) service

The OPAT service operates across the organisation to allow early discharge (or avoid admission) for patients who are medically stable yet still require a course of intravenous antimicrobials. The OPAT team which is comprised of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) of infection specialists will assess and manage appropriate patients and facilitate antibiotic administration in either the patients home or via their outpatient clinic.

Examples of some of the infections OPAT treat are: skin and soft tissue, urinary tract, respiratory and bone and joint infections.

Patients are reviewed daily as required and all patients attend a weekly MDT review.

How do I refer a patient to the OPAT service?

The service receives referrals from all our sites into one of our two OPAT bases:

- St Mary's Hospital:
imperial.opat.SMH@nhs.net
- Charing Cross Hospital:
imperial.opat.CXH@nhs.net

3 Frailty service

Our frailty service offers both urgent advice via our A&E departments and outpatient appointments via the older person's rapid access clinic (OPRAC).

For urgent frailty advice or a review of frail older patients, you can contact the acute frailty teams at Charing Cross and St Mary's hospitals, Monday – Friday, 9.00 – 17.00.

The older person's rapid access clinic (OPRAC)

OPRAC at Charing Cross Hospital is for frail, older patients who are at risk of admission to hospital and need urgent assessment. The service provides rapid access to a consultant geriatrician and therapist review and diagnostic tests in an environment designed especially to meet the needs of complex, frail, older patients. The clinic is on the ground floor of Charing Cross Hospital. Clinics run Monday to Friday from 09.00 – 17.00.

Transport can be organised for patients to and from hospital. Relatives are welcome to attend the clinic with patients.

How do I get urgent frailty advice or a review?

- Acute frailty team at St Mary's, bleep: **1009**
- Acute frailty team at Charing Cross, call ext: **30203 / 15451**

How do I refer a patient to OPRAC?

For urgent referrals and advice, call ext: **15162** or email: **ICHC-tr.adviceelderlymedicine-imperial@nhs.net**

For more information about the frailty support available across our hospitals email: **imperial.frailty-education@nhs.net**

4 Urgent specialist referrals

a. Urgent general medical referrals

Our urgent general medical referral line for Trust clinicians and GPs is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

How do I make an urgent general medical referral?

Call ext: **18888**

b. Urgent surgical referrals

Our surgical assessment units at Charing Cross and St Mary's are open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

How do I make an urgent referral to the surgical assessment unit?

Dial: **0** for Trust switchboard, or from outside the Trust call: **020 3312 6666** and ask to be put through to the relevant surgical assessment unit.

c. Other urgent specialist referrals

There are different pathways for other specialist referrals.

How do I make an urgent referral to another specialty?

Dial: **0** for Trust switchboard, or from outside the Trust call: **020 3312 6666** and ask to be put through to the relevant surgical assessment unit.

