



Nursing Home Engagement

Following the Transforming Your Care Report, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) were commissioned to deliver 10 new Appropriate Care Pathways (ACPs) which would offer patients a choice as to the care they received instead of always being transferred to the Emergency Department (ED). Patients in nursing / residential homes are able to benefit from these pathways which include:

Falls

Patients over 65 who fall but are uninjured and do not require ED assessment are referred to a Trust falls team. Building on this pathway, the NIAS Transformation team also worked with the RQIA to develop guidance for nursing homes regarding when it is appropriate to call an ambulance for patients who have fallen

Diabetes

Patients who have had an episode of hypoglycaemia but who are successfully treated on scene are referred to a Trust diabetic specialist nurse

Frail / Elderly

There are a number of frail / elderly pathways available. This includes pathways to the Enhanced / Acute Care at Home teams or transport to alternative destinations such as the Antrim Direct Assessment Unit or BCH Direct.

Cardiac

Patients having a heart attack are transported directly to a cardiac cath lab in either Altnagelvin Hospital or the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Minor Injuries

Patients with minor injuries can be transported directly to one of the minor injury units across Northern Ireland. These units require patients to be ambulatory and are therefore not commonly used by patients from nursing / residential homes.

Community Nursing

This pathway involves referral to community nursing services for patients with blocked catheters; Hickman or PICC lines

Epilepsy

Patients who are known to be epileptic and have had a seizure but have fully recovered are referred to their GP.

COPD

Patients who are known to have COPD and have an exacerbation are referred to their COPD nurse.

Palliative Care

Patients who have palliative or end of life care needs are referred to one of the Trust community nursing or palliative care teams.

Safeguarding

Vulnerable or at risk patients can be referred to the Trust safeguarding teams.

Heart failure

Patients who are known to have heart failure and have an exacerbation are referred to their heart failure nurse.

Clinical Support Desk

The Clinical Support Desk is staff by experienced paramedics. These paramedics offer additional triage / advice following a 999 call to the ambulance service. They use a clinical support tool known as Manchester Triage to assist with their decision making. The team triage calls from nursing homes which helps ensure that patient gets the most appropriate care or the most appropriate transport to a place of definitive care.

Engagement / Training

In addition to the above pathways, there has been significant engagement with nursing homes across Northern Ireland. This has included presentations at nursing home forums and joint training sessions for nursing staff which was co-facilitated with a geriatrician. An infographic was developed following this engagement which has been widely circulated.