

plans are meeting the needs of patients. It will also improve patient care. For example, the fact that a patient has a long term condition, such as diabetes, would be shown automatically as they call for help. Achieving this will require changes to technology and the need to build relationships with other NHS organisations and stakeholders to develop new ways of handling urgent calls.

Creating Emergency and Urgent Care Assessment Centres will provide patients, carers and health professionals with a single point to call, where a patient's condition can be assessed and the appropriate care organised in a seamless and effective way.

We are already working towards this, developing our HEOCs to become more clinically focussed. These could also co-ordinate all primary out-of-hours services and support patients with long term conditions. We will ensure that in these Emergency and Urgent Care Assessment Centres patients are assessed and managed by the best clinical advice or referred to the appropriate care. Other initiatives that could be included are new technologies such as tele-monitoring, using machines that monitor a patient's condition in their own home.

Our Strategic Direction also considers how we will respond to a changing NHS, developing our ability to meet new challenges. Non-emergency patient transport services are a vital part of our work, providing patient transport to and from hospital outpatient and other clinics, often delivering care during the journey. We must respond to the increasing level of competition for these services, developing new ideas and service proposals and working closely with other parts of the NHS, particularly Primary Care Trusts. We must tailor our services in a businesslike way to meet new and changing demands.

One of the reasons for combining the three previous services was to realise benefits of a single organisation. We are, therefore, planning to look at the use of all our buildings such as depots and HEOCs and will consult further before any changes are decided.

Clinical Strategy

We will place our clinicians at the forefront of change. Improving patient assessment skills for staff in the HEOCs, community paramedics and Emergency Care Practitioners is a clinical priority. Together with an increased range of treatments, this will ensure patients who do not need to go to hospital can be treated immediately in the community or at home, while those who require hospital care receive it quickly and effectively.

Our long term vision, to provide Emergency and Urgent Care Assessment Centres, will evolve from this focus on assessment skills and developing new areas of expertise in out-of-hospital care, such as managing long term conditions like diabetes and asthma.

We are already involved in clinical research with the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and we are the only ambulance service to have its own Clinical Ethics Group.

Our Vision for the Future

We believe in creating an efficient and integrated health system, where each patient receives the right response, the appropriate care at the right time, in the right place and from the appropriately-trained health care professional.

To be able to play our part we are already carrying out work to prepare the organisation for application to become a Foundation Trust. This will allow us to manage investment independently, benefit from improvement in management processes and work more closely with stakeholders, members and Governors.

Whether your need is for some clinical advice, a call from a healthcare professional or treatment for a life threatening emergency, our aim is to provide the right response that delivers the right care and the best outcome for you as a patient. We believe the ideas and plans set out in our Strategic Direction will achieve this goal.

Please let us know your views and email, phone or write to us if you wish to be kept informed about our application for Foundation Trust status.

A general guide to the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust Strategic Direction

2007 to 2012

Introduction

Think about the ambulance service and you probably imagine vehicles with blue flashing lights speeding to help the victim of a heart attack or serious accident. In fact, only 10% of 999 calls are for life threatening emergencies. Most patients have other urgent needs, like older people who have fallen at home, often without injury, or patients with long-term conditions, such as diabetes or respiratory diseases.

Ambulance services have changed in recent years and are now part of the urgent care service as a whole. We at the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) have pioneered these changes, while continuing to provide a high quality 999 service, and now provide out-of-hours primary care service for more than a third of the region's population.

EEAST was formed in July 2006 by the merger of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, East Anglian and Essex services. We employ about 4,000 people and there are plans to grow significantly to meet new targets by April 2008. In addition, we are supported by more than 2,000 volunteers working in community response schemes and as non-emergency drivers. The Trust operates three Health Emergency Operations Centres (HEOCs, formerly control rooms) in Bedford, Chelmsford and Norwich.

In 2005 the Department of Health published Taking Health Care to the Patient, which sets out how ambulance services can be transformed to become the mobile NHS, with each patient receiving the right response to meet their need, whether that is clinical advice, a visit from a healthcare professional or a full emergency call. This will enable more patients to be treated in the community with, potentially, one million fewer unnecessary trips to A&E nationally.

We want to ensure we are ready to take advantage of these changes, offer patients more services and play a wider role in emergency and urgent care. In this leaflet we have set out our new Strategic Direction; now we need to hear your views to ensure that we deliver the right response to meet the needs of the population we serve. Further details

of our plans are available by visiting our website www.eastamb.nhs.uk, by emailing engage@eastamb.nhs.uk or by post or telephone from our headquarters at:

EEAST Headquarters

Regent House, 110 Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1HP
Tel: 01284 731800

Today's Ambulance Service

Today's ambulance service has changed. There have been big improvements in response times, the technology and equipment in our control rooms and ambulances, the training of our staff and the quality of care.

The modern paramedic is a highly trained and registered health care professional, able to give life-saving treatment such as clot-busting drugs to heart attack patients. Ambulances are equipped with technology which monitors patients and sends information directly to specialist doctors in hospitals. The emphasis is not just on speed, but on the clinical care of the patient.

In fact, treatment starts as soon as your call is answered in one of our control rooms. Our computers immediately trace your location and send the details to the satellite navigation system in the nearest ambulance or response vehicle. As you give details of the problem to our call-taker, help is already on its way. The call-taker can then give you advice while you wait for help to arrive. When the paramedics or emergency medical technicians reach you, they will assess your needs and begin treatment before taking you to the appropriate hospital.

But, as we have said, only 10% of 999 calls relate to life-threatening emergencies. Most patients have other needs. We need to place the patient at the centre of care, sending the right response to meet their need, give the right treatment and get the best possible outcomes, not just meet target response times.

This will mean a reduction in the calls listed as 'life threatening' and an increase in those which need other services, provided by different, highly trained, clinicians able to provide the right response to the individual patient's needs. We estimate by 2012 the pattern of calls will be 'turned upside down', as shown in this table.

	2007 %	2012 %
Cat A	30	15
Cat B	40	25
Cat C	30	60

Managing Change

To meet this change we have developed a Strategic Direction designed to ensure we are able to provide the right response to the needs of the individual patient, providing services close to their home, while retaining the best emergency service for those with life-threatening emergencies.

Our heritage in delivering one of the best 999 services, coupled with our unique medical experience in providing other out-of-hours care, gives us the opportunity to become the 'expert' in Emergency and Urgent Care and grow our influence in the region's health service. Our vision for the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust is simply to **be the recognised leader in out of hospital emergency and urgent care.**

At the heart of our Strategic Direction are two new developments: knowledge management and the creation of Emergency and Urgent Care Assessment Centres.

Knowledge management means using modern technology to collate a wide range of information to enable health services to improve and better meet the needs of patients. Collecting information from every patient contact, including location, time, reason for the call, care provided and care outcomes will help the NHS, as a whole, ensure its