

Chapter 11 Social care extended access

Emergency and acute medical care in over 16s: service delivery and organisation

NICE guideline <number>

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Contents

11	Extended access to social care services	5
11.1	Introduction	5
11.2	Review question: Is urgent and/or routine extended access to social care services (for example, evenings or 7 day) more clinically and cost effective compared with standard access?	5
11.3	Clinical evidence.....	5
11.4	Economic evidence	6
11.5	Evidence statements	7
11.6	Recommendations and link to evidence.....	8
	Appendices	13
	Appendix A: Review protocol	13
	Appendix B: Clinical article selection	14
	Appendix C: Forest plots	15
	Appendix D: Clinical evidence tables.....	15
	Appendix E: Economic evidence tables	15
	Appendix F: GRADE tables	15
	Appendix G: Excluded clinical studies	16
	Appendix H: Excluded economic studies.....	17

1 11 Extended access to social care services

2 11.1 Introduction

3 At present access to social care differs throughout the country. Some areas have access to all
4 community services where as others have very limited access. All areas do have access to an
5 emergency social care system of sorts but in order for this to be effective we need to have 7-day
6 access to all community social care services.

7 At weekends at present we do not have the necessary collaboration and multi-disciplinary planning
8 between hospitals, community health services and therefore social care becomes increasingly
9 difficult and does have an impact on hospital admission for social care reasons and readmission.

10 NHS England have stated that support services in hospitals, primary, community and mental health
11 must be available 7 days a week. This will undoubtedly maintain patients in the community, facilitate
12 timely discharge of dependant patients consequently, promoting flow of patients through the
13 hospital.

14 Although this may have cost implications initially, NHS England is currently commissioning primary
15 care services and, they are encouraging improvement of quality of primary care and more integrated
16 out of hospital services.

17 11.2 Review question: Is urgent and/or routine extended access to social 18 care services (for example, evenings or 7 day) more clinically and 19 cost effective compared with standard access?

20 For full details see review protocol in Appendix A.

21 **Table 1: PICO characteristics of review question**

Population	Adults and young people (16 years and over) with a suspected or confirmed AME.
Interventions	Social care access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended access to social care/social worker (early mornings, evenings, and 7-day). • Urgent/emergency access (duty social worker, same working day).
Comparison	Social care access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard hours.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality (CRITICAL) • Avoidable adverse events (CRITICAL) • Quality of life (CRITICAL) • Patient and carer satisfaction or burden (CRITICAL) • Length of hospital stay (CRITICAL) • Admission avoidance (IMPORTANT) • Readmission up to 30 days (IMPORTANT)
Study design	Systematic reviews (SRs) of RCTs, RCTs, observational studies only to be included if no relevant SRs or RCTs are identified.

22 11.3 Clinical evidence

23 No clinically relevant studies comparing extended access social care with standard access social care
24 were identified.

1 **11.4 Economic evidence**

2 **Published literature**

3 No relevant economic evaluations were identified.

4 The economic article selection protocol and flow chart for the whole guideline can found in the
5 guideline's Appendix 41A and Appendix 41B.

1 **11.5 Evidence statements**

2 **Clinical**

3 No relevant clinical studies were identified.

4 **Economic**

5 No relevant economic evaluations were identified.

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1 11.6 Recommendations and link to evidence

Recommendations	-
Research recommendation	RR7. What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of providing extended access to social care services, for example during early mornings and evenings, and 7 days a week?
Relative values of different outcomes	The guideline committee considered mortality, quality of life, patient and/or carer satisfaction, length of hospital stay and avoidable adverse events as the critical outcomes for decision making. Admission avoidance and readmission were considered to be important outcomes.
Trade-off between benefits and harms	<p>No evidence evaluating the effectiveness of extended access to social care (early mornings, evenings and 7-days a week) compared with standard access was found.</p> <p>The committee were of the opinion that extended access to social care was an important component in maintaining patients in the community, facilitating timely discharge of dependent patients from hospital and consequently promoting flow of patients through the hospital system. These likely benefits would improve hospital performance and patient and/or carer satisfaction. Equity of provision across all days of the week might reduce the need for weekend admission to hospital, and facilitate discharge from hospital back to the community. However, given the lack of evidence for these outcomes, and the variety of methods for providing patient care in the community, the committee chose to make a research recommendation.</p> <p>The committee discussed existing guidance from NICE on social care and felt it was appropriate to cross reference the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition between inpatient hospital settings and community or care home settings for adults with social care needs (2015)¹⁵. • Older people with social care needs and multiple long-term conditions (2015)¹⁴. • Transition between inpatient mental health settings and community or care home settings (2016)¹⁶. • Home care: delivering personal care and practical support to older people living in their own homes (2015)¹³. • Intermediate care including reablement – expected publication date October 2017.
Trade-off between net effects and costs	<p>No economic evidence was identified for this question.</p> <p>The committee noted that enhancing access to social care would increase staffing costs but these might be offset by the hypothesised benefits of maximising independence, maintaining people in the community and reducing delayed discharges from hospital, thereby improving patient flow and releasing hospital beds. Increased investment in social care could therefore be cost-neutral, or even cost-saving. NHS England's Vanguard sites may provide some information on the cost-effectiveness of different methods of integrating social care with primary and secondary healthcare¹⁸. However, a recent report from the National Audit Office found that the initiatives focused on integrating care through the transfer of resources from secondary to social care (the Better Care Fund) has not (yet) resulted</p>

Recommendations	-
Research recommendation	RR7. What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of providing extended access to social care services, for example during early mornings and evenings, and 7 days a week?
	<p>in improvements for patients or created usable savings¹².</p> <p>Although not specifically addressing weekend and extended hours, the National Audit Office <i>Discharging older patients from hospital</i> has estimated that £640 million could potentially be saved if 2.7 million bed days were averted in older patients who are clinically ready for discharge (up to £94 per day in the community compared with £303 in hospital)¹¹. However, there are many supply constraints on the provision of care home places and social care services that would need to be addressed. Given the lack of research evidence for the current review, it cannot be deduced whether these hypothesised effects would indeed allow funding currently allocated to secondary care to be diverted more effectively to social care provision.</p> <p>A scenario analysis was undertaken using an original health economic hospital simulation model – see Chapter 41. The analysis explored reducing length of stay for patients being newly discharged to care home. This analysis did not take into account any resource use and costs for an actual intervention, so cost effectiveness cannot be assessed. Two scenarios were tested, a 1 day reduction and a 5 day reduction in stay. With the 5 day reduction, the number of medical outliers was more than halved and there were considerable survival benefits and cost savings. Even the 1 day reduction saw a significant reduction in the incidence of medical outliers.</p> <p>The results of the scenario analyses found that targeting a reduction in the length of stay for patients being discharged new to care home can have a positive impact on hospital flow, reducing the number of medical outliers, ward occupancy and breaches of the A&E 4 hour waiting time target. The results also found that positively impacting on hospital flow can also lead to better patient focused outcomes for the entire hospital cohort, reduced length of stay across wards, reduced mortality and increased quality of life.</p> <p>The committee noted that an intervention targeting the end of the hospital pathway and moving patients into the community earlier could significantly improve hospital flow and be more effective than interventions targeting other areas of the pathway. However, they were unable to conclude if extended access to social care would be able to achieve this in a clinically and cost effective manner. They decided that more research was needed.</p>
Quality of evidence	There was no evidence included in the review.
Other considerations	Access to social care is widely accepted as essential for maintaining independence and quality of life in the community for dependent people who might otherwise require hospital admission, and for promoting timely discharge of hospitalised but dependent patients back to the community. However, the administrative separation of health from social care combined with limited resources and rising demand from demographic change has created severe difficulties in maintaining social care provision while improving its quality. The current state of social care provision has been described as ‘at breaking point’ by the chairs of 3 parliamentary select

Recommendations	-
Research recommendation	RR7. What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of providing extended access to social care services, for example during early mornings and evenings, and 7 days a week?
	<p>committees in a letter to the Prime Minister on January 6th 2017² and ‘in crisis’ by the Local Government Association⁸ and by Age UK¹.</p> <p>In 2014 the government set up the ‘Better Care Fund’¹⁷ as a collaboration between NHS England, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Local Government Association. The programme aims to achieve improvements in social care provision by moving funds from secondary care to social care. However, an initial assessment by the National Audit Office found little evidence so far for improvements in services or efficiency savings¹². It is likely that additional funding will be required to pump prime social care and at the same time maintain the secondary care services that will be required for the initial period.</p> <p>The committee discussed the limited social care provision out of hours and at weekends within the NHS and also the wide variations in practice between areas. At weekends it is usually difficult to access and coordinate multi-disciplinary planning between hospitals and community health services; the lack of access to social care results in potentially avoidable hospital admissions and readmissions. Some areas have access to a range of community care services, others very little. These local and regional variations may lend themselves to research evaluation provided the care processes and the populations being served can be adequately characterised. The gap between weekday and weekend provision requires particular attention, including the impact on hospital services and the ‘weekend effect’⁹. Uniformity in the approach to delivering social care across England would also be helpful and would enable families and healthcare professions who may traverse between regions a greater ability to make informed decisions and so access the breadth of services possible.</p> <p>The lack of evidence and current policy initiatives in this area prevented the committee making a strong recommendation. Research evaluation will need to take into account the diverse range of interventions which constitute ‘social care’, the processes and behaviours involved in delivering each intervention, and the interplay between interventions in terms of outcomes. Contextual factors include the current disposition of health services, seasonal effects and population affluence, health and dependency. Quantitative measures taken from existing NHS data sources will need to be supplemented by qualitative analysis of patients and staff experience.</p>

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Review protocol

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Table 2: Review protocol for: Is urgent and/or routine extended access to social care services (for example, evenings or 7 day) more clinically and cost effective compared with standard access?

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Review questions:	
Is urgent and/or routine extended access to social care services (for example, evenings or 7 day) more clinically and cost effective compared with standard access?	
Objective	To determine if enhanced access to social care improves outcomes.
Rationale	-
Topic code	T3-1C
Population	Adults and young people (16 years and over) with a suspected or confirmed AME.
Intervention	Social care access. Extended access to social care/social worker (early mornings, evenings, and 7-day). Urgent/emergency access (duty social worker, same working day).
Comparison	Social care access. Standard hours.
Outcomes	Mortality (CRITICAL) Avoidable adverse events (CRITICAL) Quality of life (CRITICAL) Patient and/or carer satisfaction or burden (CRITICAL) Length of hospital stay (CRITICAL) Admission avoidance (IMPORTANT) Readmission up to 30 days (IMPORTANT)
Exclusion	Children and adolescents.
Search criteria	The databases to be searched are: Medline, Embase, the Cochrane Library, Social Policy & Practice. Date limits for search 2005. Language: English.
The review strategy	Systematic reviews (SRs) of RCTs, RCTs, observational studies only to be included if no relevant SRs or RCTs are identified.
Analysis	Data synthesis of RCT data. Meta-analysis where appropriate will be conducted. Studies in the following subgroup populations will be included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frail elderly. • People with mental health problems and AME. In addition, if studies have pre-specified in their protocols that results for any of these subgroup populations will be analysed separately, then they will be included. The methodological quality of each study will be assessed using the Evibase checklist and GRADE.

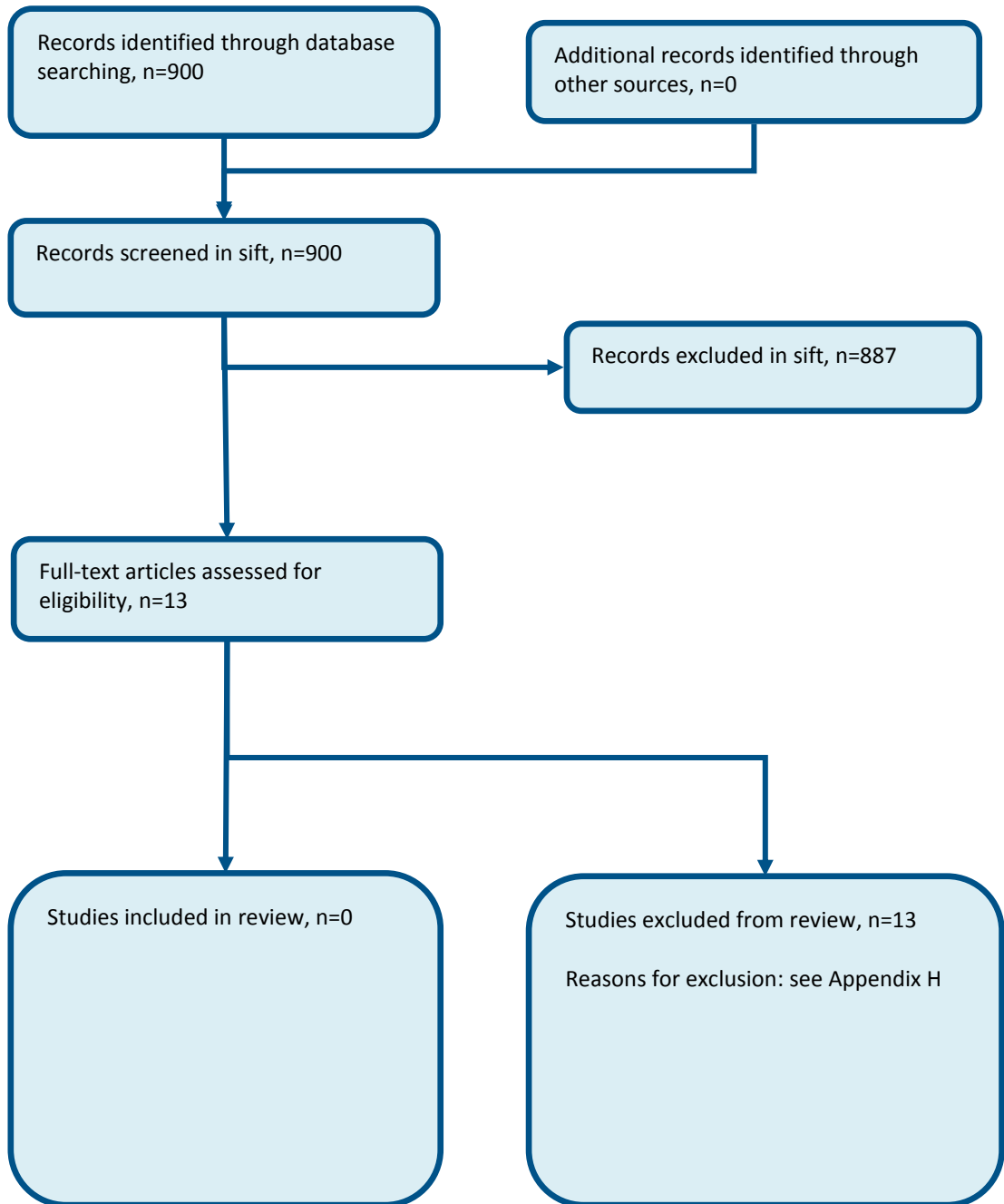
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Appendix B: Clinical article selection

Figure 1: Flow chart of clinical article selection for the review of social care extended access



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Appendix C: Forest plots

No relevant clinical studies were identified.

Appendix D: Clinical evidence tables

No clinically relevant studies were identified.

Appendix E: Economic evidence tables

No relevant economic studies were identified.

Appendix F: GRADE tables

No clinically relevant studies were included.

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Appendix G: Excluded clinical studies

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Table 3: Studies excluded from the clinical review

Study	Exclusion reason
Edmans 2013 ³	Conference Abstract
Farber 2011 ⁴	Intervention and comparator are a mobile acute care for the elderly team versus a static, unit-based team, both operating on weekends as well as regular working hours, so probably not the correct comparison, that is, not looking at standard versus extended access.
Gitlin 2006 ⁵	Non-AME population. Intervention was a program for caregiver wellbeing.
Jordan 2011 ⁶	Conference Abstract
Kue 2009 ⁷	Non-comparative study. Descriptive study of experiences implementing EMS follow-up program for referral by paramedics of patients with poor access to social care.
Moore 2014 ¹⁰	Usual care versus SWIFT-Acute. SWIFT-Acute is an ED social work intervention delivered by a social worker.
Routhier 2012 ¹⁹	Incorrect intervention. Comparison of standard versus extended hours access to social care - comparison of pre- and post- suicide attempt service utilization.
Sadowski 2009 ²⁰	Non-comparative study
Shier 2013 ²¹	Inappropriate comparison. Not a comparison of standard versus extended hours access to social care.
Walker 2005 ²²	Incorrect intervention. KWAH intervention was a screening tool in the form of a questionnaire, delivered by a community nurse and project coordinator. No mention of social worker.
Walley 2013 ²³	Non-AME population – social care service for opioid users.
Weiss 2005 ²⁴	Non-AME population. Does not compare extended hours with none.
Wierdsma 2007 ²⁵	Incorrect intervention. Compares neighbourhoods with and without a community-care network and their comparative use of emergency psychiatric services.

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Appendix H: Excluded economic studies

No relevant economic studies were identified.