Emergency Bed Service

Our Emergency Bed Service helps NHS healthcare professionals find hospital beds for seriously ill patients.

We arrange for around 10,000 patients to be admitted to hospital or transferred between hospitals every year.

We also provide a number of other services.

We can:

- help to get GPs’ patients admitted to hospital
- provide advice on the availability of intensive care beds
- arrange hospital transfers for new-born babies
- provide advice on the availability of children’s beds and cubicles
- help identify local mental health units
- notify hospitals and other organisations of casualty information during major incidents
- provide information about MedicAlert patients

Helping to get patients admitted to hospital

We can help London GPs to make arrangements for seriously ill patients to be admitted to hospital. We take case histories, clinical details, and notes on the patient’s circumstances before negotiating with hospital bed managers or on-call specialists to find an appropriate bed.

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Providing advice on the availability of intensive care beds

We collect information on the availability of intensive care beds for adults and children across three-quarters of England.

We contact intensive care units several times a day to determine their capacity. Using this information we can direct hospital-based clinicians to the nearest available intensive care bed for their patient.

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Arranging hospital transfers for new-born babies

We coordinate the service that transfers new-born babies (neonates) between hospitals in London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

By monitoring the availability of neonatal intensive care cots, we are able to identify a suitable cot for a sick baby and arrange for one of the Neonatal Transfer Service’s transport teams to transfer the baby between hospitals.

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Providing advice on the availability of children’s beds and cubicles

We monitor which hospitals in and beyond London have paediatric beds and cubicles available, and can help clinicians find beds when their children’s wards are full.

Demand for this service tends to be high in November and December when there is an increase in conditions such as bronchitis and pneumonia amongst children.

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Identifying local mental health units

We can provide health professionals with information about the units available for mental health patients in their local area.

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Keeping hospitals and health organisations informed during major incidents

We alert key health agencies in London when a major incident is declared.

During the incident we collate information about the casualties that have been treated by our ambulance staff—this includes numbers and the types of injuries patients have suffered. We then pass this information on to hospitals, specialist units and other relevant organisations.

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Providing information about MedicAlert patients

MedicAlert is a global charity which provides lifesaving services to its members.

By wearing their MedicAlert bracelet or necklace which is marked with an identification number and emergency telephone number, emergency professionals can access members’ details from their secure, electronic record about their medical condition, medication, allergies or individual wishes.

Our team provide 24/7 assistance via a dedicated emergency telephone line, which is engraved on member’s jewellery discs. This means MedicAlert members can be reassured their vital information is always available and will help them get the right help at the right time.

For more information, call 01908 951045.

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