Kent & Canterbury Hospital is one of three acute district general hospitals in the East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT). The Emergency Care Centre (ECC) at Kent & Canterbury Hospital provides a new model of care in the NHS. This was established in February 2005 as a result of reconfiguration of patient services within the East Kent Hospitals University NHS Trust (EKHUT). The ECC and its development is in keeping with the Department of Health policies (Reforming Emergency Care Agenda and the NHS plan) (1).

The ECC at Kent & Canterbury hospital takes acute admissions for medicine, vascular surgery, and urology as well as providing a minor injuries unit. The focus of the ECC is to deliver effective high quality patient-centered care through an integrated team led by senior medical and nursing staff.

The acute medical admissions at Kent & Canterbury account for about one third of the total EKHUFT medical work load whilst A&E services continue to be provided at Margate and Ashford. The major difference between the previous Kent & Canterbury A&E and the current ECC is that staff (medical and nursing) is medically orientated and patients are assessed rapidly by introducing the concept of a single clerking proforma. Kent & Canterbury Hospital provides patient access to critical care, non-interventional coronary care, diagnostic radiology, laboratory services, and other specialties (such as renal, neurology, hematology, oncology, rheumatology, and dermatology).

The Emergency Care Centre at Kent & Canterbury Hospital has available a wide range of facilities including:
- A Resuscitation area with four beds.
- A Majors Bay with twelve beds.
- A Short Stay Ward of eighteen beds.
- An Ambulatory Care Centre
- The Minor Injury Unit (MIU).

The Acute Physicians in the ECC currently provide cover Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and have developed regular medical review clinics. The Medical and Elderly Care consultants each lead three ward rounds in every twenty-four hour period. Through the implementation of the variety of measures outlined above the ECC has achieved over 98% audited compliance over the past 10 years. Patients needing with a period of observation and/or assessment overnight are transferred to the adjacent ward within the ECC under the care of the on-call team and are the either discharged admitted to appropriate wards in the hospital.

There are increased benefits in the constant supervision of FY2 doctors which has improved their medical training in important skills including assessment, investigations and treatment of patients in the ECC. It is also possible that at the supervisor level the practical procedures to be taught under their supervision. The ECC is pivotal in junior doctor training as outlined in Modernizing Medical Careers curriculum. A significant innovation has been the DVT-3clinics (Ambulatory Care Centre) which is a nurse-led service developed at Kent & Canterbury Hospital for the assessment and management of deep venous thrombosis (DVT). The service has been developed by close collaboration of Senior Nursing staff, Physicians in the ECC, and Hematology Department. The clinic assesses and treats patients within two hours. A patient care pathway with a predicted probability score for DVT has been developed. Patients are assessed, investigated (including blood test sand Doppler scan), and treated in a single visit. Medical review is constantly available if deemed necessary. Through the set patient group directions (PGDs) the nursing staff are able to prescribe the appropriate medications.

**FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS**

The services provided in the ECC are being constantly reviewed to assure maintenance of high standards of quality care in a safe setting. Regular meetings and audits are in place to address clinical governance issues:

- Develop and enhance nursing staff skills to assess patients, request investigations, initiate treatments and implement nurse-led discharge of patients via the Ambulatory care center
- Protocol developed and being used to treat pulmonary embolism as out-patient in the group of patients meeting appropriate criteria (Ambulatory Care Centre)4,5
- Protocol for cellulitis management in Ambulatory care is being developed, and patients are treated at their home by intra-venous antibiotics by 'Hospitals at home' team, thus reducing pressure on hospital beds6-8
- Stroke thrombolysis in ECC using telemedicine 24/7 has been commenced
- All healthcare professionals to document in the same section of patients' notes and not in individual sections.
- Implementing electronic records (CRS Project), and the development of electronic discharge summary thus transferring medical information about patients in real-time.
- Encourage research and development in a clinical setting.

The ECC at Kent & Canterbury hospital is a new, exciting, innovative and effective unit which has attracted wide-spread attention from visitors which include clinicians and mangers...
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across the NHS. Similar models are likely to be implemented across the country. We believe that we have established a good team in the ECC and this has been reflected in delivering high standards of care for our patients. Currently a redesign of E.C.C is underway.

Our aim is to continue to deliver world-class medical care speedily, expertly, and efficiently for both our local population and the millions of tourists who visit Canterbury every year.

APPENDIX

The Concept of Single Emergency Care Centre Team Introduced, Consisting of:

1. Acute Physicians
2. Medical/HCOOP Consultants On-Call
3. E.C.C. F2 SHO’s
4. Medical Registrar On-Call
5. Medical and HCOOP SHO On-Call
6. Surgical SHO On-Call
7. Nursing Team

TheEmergencyCareCentreattheKent&CanterburyHospital

The Emergency Care Centre at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital is a new development within the NHS.

The Emergency Care Centre comprises of:

- Resuscitation Area
- 18-Bed Short Stay Ward
- E.C.C.
- Medical and HCOOP SHO On-Call
- Surgical SHO On-Call
- Minor Injury Unit

**Key Points:**
- Formation of Single Emergency Care Centre Team
- Concept of Single Clerking introduced
- Availability of Senior Leadership (Acute Physicians)
- Early review of patients by seniors
- Two E.C.C. Medical Review Clinics developed

**Emergent assessment: admissions for all medical problems, as well as for vascular surgery and urology, Urology/Vascular Surgery SHO on site and if required, Emergency Surgery cases transferred to William Harvey Hospital or the Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother Hospital.**

Availability of senior leadership (Acute Physicians), the concept of single clerking introduced in the Emergency Care Centre and two Review Clinics set per week.

**REFERENCE**