

A photograph of a female nurse with curly hair, wearing a dark uniform with a stethoscope, smiling and gesturing with her hands. The background is a blurred clinical setting. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Nursing and Urgent Care

Urgent care and
patient flow



MLCSU
Clinical
Nursing and Urgent Care

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Introduction

I am delighted to introduce NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit's (MLCSU's) Nursing and Urgent Care team (NUCT) – your trusted partner for specialist, independent, clinical and analytical guidance on a regional, national and international scale.

Our mission is to enhance the patient experience and outcomes by supporting your decision-making processes at strategic, tactical, and operational levels.

With a wealth of senior clinical and operational experience, our team is uniquely positioned within the NHS and broader health and care systems to serve as your independent ally. We're committed to driving improvements in your key areas – offering a critical, friendly perspective to facilitate positive change.

Our expertise extends beyond clinical care and governance. We specialise in pathway and system transformation, urgent care flow and redesign, discharge optimisation, and capacity management. We offer expert insights and solutions to address your unique challenges and enhance your system's efficacy – improving outcomes for patients.

We pride ourselves on our proven track record in enhancing urgent care pathways. We support evidence-based understanding and decision-making for a variety of providers, including new and existing integrated care providers ('place'), integrated care boards (ICBs), integrated care systems (ICSs), and NHS England (NHSE).

Plus... as part of one of England's four commissioning support units (CSUs), we have the backing of thousands of experts in areas as diverse as data, analytics, transformational change, workforce planning, finance, and communications, engagement and behavioural insight. This adds unique value to our support.

At NUCT, we transform data and insight into action. Leveraging our expertise, we develop clinically-led solutions for system-wide improvements.

Our passionate and dedicated team doesn't just provide solutions; we join you on your journey towards unparalleled patient care and system efficiency. We partner with you, work hand-in-hand, sharing your vision and commitment to delivering excellence.



Allison Cape
Deputy Director of
Nursing and Urgent Care



Our principles

Our values, fuelled by passion and commitment, lay the foundation for everything we do:

1

Enhancing patient experience – we are relentless in our mission to level up patient outcomes and enrich their experience

2

Data-driven decisions – clinical data and insights aren't just tools; they guide everything we do. We rely on them to direct all our actions and decisions

3

Of the NHS, for the NHS – we share the values of our customers and are united with you in purpose

4

Trust and collaboration – as your trusted system partner, we commit to sharing our expertise and knowledge for better decision-making that endures.

Urgent care and patient flow



Right treatment, right time, right team – our approach to enhancing patient care and experience

Working alongside you, we'll bring rapid improvements to reduce length of stay and improve patient outcomes. We do this by tailoring innovative best in class solutions for your unique healthcare environment. Our expertise improves patient experience, saves costs, and accelerates patients' access to the treatment they need. Put simply – we help you to minimise the time patients stay in hospital so that care is safer and overall outcomes are much improved.

As your independent, trusted partner, we provide comprehensive diagnostic reports, facilitate staff development, and foster a collaborative work culture that's firmly rooted in data and clinical evidence. We know the challenges faced by today's NHS and the strain placed upon our healthcare colleagues.

Bringing about immediate improvements and enduring change is what drives us.

We know colleagues perform at their very best when they have the required amount of time to care; the right resources and support, and when they can see real improvements in the care being provided.

We communicate transparently, ensuring understanding and engagement from frontline teams and patient groups. Our commitment is to sustainably and appropriately reduce length of stay, remove unwarranted variation and cultivate an efficient workforce, reducing stress and optimising skill utilisation. We work hand-in-glove with your teams to maintain their commitment, passion and contribution throughout.

Leveraging our experience, we act as your confidant and enabler, driving quality improvements and better outcomes.

Let's transform healthcare together – urgently and compassionately.



“Your work provided clear and impressive improvement in our Emergency Departments performance and a significant reduction in patient overcrowding both on the days of the RESET events and for several days afterwards, which really helped us get through this winter.”

Director of Unscheduled Care, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Three healthcare professionals looking at a file



Why work with us:

- ✓ Expert, registered senior clinicians with decades of combined experience
- ✓ More than a computer programme, we analyse the data and provide insight to drive improvement
- ✓ We supplement your team's experience and knowledge with our own, ensuring change and impact endures
- ✓ Always compliant with regulations, standards and good practice
- ✓ Proven to improve patient experience, outcomes and satisfaction
- ✓ A critical friend working as an independent, collaborative partner
- ✓ From the NHS, with decades of collective experience working with the NHS for the NHS
- ✓ Tailored bespoke service to meet your trust's or system's needs
- ✓ Access to bespoke analytical tools and analysis.

Our services:

Urgent Emergency Care (UEC) and Flow Improvement

This supports significant advances in performance across the full UEC pathway, including admission avoidance, ambulance handover, Urgent Treatment Centres, Emergency Departments, whole system flow and discharge – all to optimise the outcome for patients and increase efficiencies for the health and care system.

We offer expert guidance in urgent care, pathway design, capacity management, and more. Our team works alongside clinicians to understand and address your challenges.

We analyse and enhance current systems for maximum results, whether it's implementing 'red to green', 'right to reside', or complex discharge pathways.

This targeted expertise enables both organisational and system-driven improvement where it is needed most. We work in partnership to co-design solutions, including working alongside wider MLCSU partners and stakeholders to develop and deliver multi-disciplinary support.





Case study: Patient Flow Efficiency and Effectiveness

The Northern Ireland National Health Board brought in NHS MLCSU's Nursing and Urgent Care Team (NUCT) to increase patient flow efficiency in five acute and community trusts.

NUCT deployed data and analysis to devise innovative strategies that resulted in tangible improvements. They offered clinical and operational guidance, pinpointed recurring issues, and created cross-pathway solutions to system hurdles. Over three days per trust, they worked with clinical and operational teams, offering real-time information support for crucial decision-making. Senior nurses assumed coaching roles to improve patient flow in emergency departments, wards, and discharge pathways, advocating a uniform approach to demand and capacity management across hospital and community teams.

The result

The team achieved zero ambulance delays, improved handover times, and timely crew shift completions through on-site presence. They set up hospital operation centres that used data to create an actionable unified view for decision-making. By increasing early discharges and utilising discharge lounge capacity, hospital flow started three hours earlier daily, resulting in aligning capacity with demand and preventing delays. Every cooperative action led to enhanced safety and patient outcomes, demonstrating that quality care goes beyond merely meeting targets. NUCT also collaborated with trust staff, recognising the necessary culture shift for the safe and successful implementation of change. They managed out-of-hospital information flows, speeding up hospital discharges and reducing unnecessary stays.



Their contribution was excellent. Their expert, patient-focused challenge and support enabled the team to reflect on issues differently and to introduce improvements in practices and processes which remain in place today.

*Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery, AHPs and Patient Experience/
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust*

Targeted Reduction in Length of Stay (LoS) programme

Our programme harnesses data and clinical insights to pinpoint and rectify **unwarranted variation** in length of stay – thereby enhancing patient outcomes, optimising efficiencies, and ensuring maximum utilisation of every resource.

Our expert team interrogates condition-specific data – understanding current patient flows and benchmarks these against comparative measures and best practices. Using this data, coupled with **taylor-made analytical tools**, hands-on expertise and process mapping, they can identify key lines of enquiry and opportunities for incremental gains.

Using these insights, our team initiates open, **clinician-to-clinician discussions** to devise and agree upon actions for driving and anchoring sustainable changes in pathways and processes – working with operational partners to implement and embed. They assess areas of the highest success and execute initiatives with the most substantial impact.

Our extensive experience imparts the assurance you need to ensure recommendations are implemented in the **safest manner for patients while also supporting and empowering staff**. This can be achieved by facilitating safety and executive summits to review findings and implementations. We can develop a peer-review structure to perpetuate the co-design of solutions.



Workforce productivity and sustainability

Working smarter not harder: solutions to meet the workforce challenges

The NHS England UEC Recovery Plan encourages organisations to identify sustainable workforce models. In response to this, our workforce review evaluates the current team skills alongside the potential of digital technology to enhance patient care.

Our expert clinical team collaborates closely with providers and systems to gain an in-depth understanding of their existing workforce models, patient experiences, and the balance of demand and capacity. Our aim is to pinpoint solutions that address the escalating demands on urgent care.

Rooted in data, our comprehensive review is conducted by a registered clinical team, well-versed in the complexities of a UEC environment. We consider the environment holistically, with the recognition of potential risks of intervention central to our approach. We also consider the impact of an active clinical environment on care delivery.

We believe that our workforce is our most valuable resource, so it is paramount to provide them with the right support. This involves optimising the use of their skills and assisting them in making the best decisions. When we discuss productivity, our emphasis is not on increasing workload, but on helping our teams maximise resource.

We deliver two offers that are tailored to specific needs:

1. Refocus and review in the post-COVID-19 workplace

The COVID-19 pandemic had profound effects on all facets of health and care systems, particularly within UEC environments. It spurred some temporary changes, but many have now become standard practice.

Our system productivity review focuses on these transformations. We examine provider data from clinical reporting systems, comparing post-pandemic productivity with the 2019/20 benchmark to gain a comprehensive understanding of the shifts.

Our team expertly analyses this data, collaborating with the department to pinpoint opportunities for enhancing productivity. This process allows us to tailor solutions that build upon the lessons of the pandemic, driving forward with more efficient, robust healthcare services.

2. Making sure the workforce meets the demand

After conducting a comprehensive review of activity within the UEC environment, our expert team gains a deep understanding of the skillsets necessary to optimise patient outcomes.

We explore opportunities for new roles, diverse skill mixes, and the implementation of digital innovation. Our approach aims to tailor urgent care delivery based on current population needs – transcending the constraints of traditional workforce models.

This forward-thinking strategy ensures we are always prepared to offer the highest standard of care in an ever-evolving healthcare landscape.



Optimising discharge

Let our team of seasoned clinical and operational experts guide you in creating and applying sustainable discharge models. We're all about helping achieve the best results for your patients and services.

We start with a discovery phase, closely reviewing your existing care pathways. This deep-dive analysis of demand and capacity allows us to identify areas for change and put them into action. Our approach is a mix of data, specialist insight, and teamwork, supporting you from admission through to, and beyond acute discharge.

This investigation sets the stage for our improvement plan. We prioritise actions with the highest impact, while promoting new, sustainable work methods that ensure better patient outcomes, boost independence, and deliver care exactly when and where it's needed.

We pride ourselves in offering personalised support tailored to your system's unique needs.

Using insights gained from the investigative phase, we design high-impact interventions that benefit your patients and boost system effectiveness.

We're here to:

- ✓ Offer assistance for immediate discharges, apply small changes for big gains, and instill primary drivers for improvement.
- ✓ Develop a blueprint that paints a picture of your future care models, spanning bed-based, home-based, community, and acute hospital pathways.
- ✓ Coach, empower, and facilitate to nurture and establish all new work methods.

Let us help you on this journey to optimising your discharge process.

Contact details

Justine Howe, Head of Urgent Care

☎ 07823 808080

✉ justine.howe4@nhs.net



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