

Test of Change – NHS24 Incidents 26/09/2025

We will be undertaking a test of change for NHS24 calls received by the Service for an Emergency or a Timed Admission response, ILT calls will be excluded. We know from feedback from both Integrated Clinical Hub clinicians and frontline crews that in many cases an ambulance response may not have been the most appropriate response for these patients (in July 2025, 50.8% NHS24 incidents were not conveyed to hospital).

This weekend (26 – 29 September) incidents transferred from NHS24 will be reviewed by clinicians in the Integrated Clinical Hub to improve the outcomes and experience for these patients. If you are a frontline member of staff, you will see less NHS24 incidents which have not received clinical intervention and a reduction overall as we maximise our use of pathways, referral options and self-care advice at point of consultation. For those NHS24 incidents that have been assessed and still need a response, you will be allocated this as an integrated Clinical Hub outcome or Timed Admission at the right response level determined by our clinicians.

We will review the learnings from this weekend and share the findings with you. We will also continue to work with our colleagues at NHS24 to ensure that we get the right response to all our patients and improve our services across both organisations.

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The recent test of change, which ran over a weekend in late September, trialled routing NHS24 calls through the Integrated Clinical Hub (ICH) to assess patients before dispatching an ambulance. The results were very positive: over half of the 1,007 NHS24 incidents managed in the ICH did not require an ambulance, saving 520 journeys and around 700 conveyances to emergency departments were avoided. We were also able to identify some patients who needed an immediately life-threatening response.

Colleague feedback highlighted the benefits of reduced ambulance demand and improved patient flow, though also noted increased pressure on ICH and SOC teams due to high call volumes. With improved staffing and clearer patient expectations, this model could be a sustainable and impactful approach for winter and beyond.

My huge thanks to everyone who supported this Test of Change across the weekend and to everyone who played a part in making it happen.