



Fourth Patient Report of the National Emergency Laparotomy Audit (NELA)

Recommendations for Commissioners

It is clear from the NELA data presented in this report that there remain some crucial areas of care which must be improved if all patients undergoing emergency laparotomy are to receive the right care, by the right people, at the right time. In this 4th report there are six key themes which cover the standards against which NELA measures delivery of care for patients undergoing emergency laparotomy. For each theme there are associated actions allocated to specific owners; all are underpinned by the principles of quality improvement being specific, using measurable data from NELA, and are intended to be achievable tasks that are relevant and realistic to teams and patients within the defined time frame.

The six key NELA themes are:

- 1 improving outcomes and reducing complications
- 2 ensuring all patients receive an assessment of their risk of death
- 3 delivering care within agreed timeframes for all patients
- 4 enabling consultant input in the perioperative period for all high risk patients
- 5 effective multidisciplinary working
- 6 supporting quality improvement.

Some actions are applicable to more than one area.

	Detailed Action and Owner	Timeframe
3 Delivering care within agreed timeframes for all patients		
Theatre capacity		
3.7	Commissioners, Provider Executive Boards and Medical Directors: review adequacy of theatre capacity based on estimation of emergency surgical caseload, and work to address any shortfall. Capacity needs to be sufficient to allow patients to receive surgery within defined timeframes. The area that needs particular attention is those requiring surgery within two hours. Improvement teams should use QI methodology such as process mapping to understand where change is required	January 2019
4 Enabling consultant input in the perioperative period for all high risk patients		
4.1	Commissioners, Provider Executive Boards and Medical Directors: Review adequacy of consultant staffing based on estimation of emergency surgical caseload and work to address any shortfall. Capacity must be sufficient to allow high risk patients to receive care directly delivered and supervised by consultant surgeons and consultant anaesthetists	January 2019
5 Effective Multidisciplinary Working		
Radiology		
5.1	Commissioners, Provider Executive Boards and Medical Directors: scope requirements to deliver a radiology service that provides a reported CT within a timeframe that does not delay surgery, has low discrepancy rates, and provides opportunity for meaningful senior discussion between the surgery and radiology. The NELA data suggests that an in-house consultant service provides the lowest discrepancy rate. Consideration should be given to developing local networked solutions for 24/7 consultant radiologist reporting to overcome high vacancy rates in the specialty as reported by the Royal College of Radiologists	April 2019
Critical Care		
5.6	Commissioners, Provider Executive Boards and Medical Directors: review adequacy of critical care bed capacity, based on estimation of high risk patients and emergency surgical caseload, and work to address any shortfall. Capacity needs to be sufficient to admit all high risk patients (predicted mortality $\geq 5\%$) and minimise premature discharge from critical care	January 2019
Elderly Care		
5.11	Commissioners, Provider Executive Boards and Medical Directors: scope requirements for Elderly Care input into patients undergoing emergency laparotomy, based on estimation of emergency surgical caseload, and work to address any shortfall	April 2019