

Reducing admissions through at-home IV treatment in an inner London trust

Context

King's College Hospital is a major teaching hospital in Camberwell, South East London. The hospital serves a highly diverse and densely populated inner-city population, covering an area of approximately 4.5 million people. Many of the communities served by King's, experience entrenched health inequalities, high rates of long-term conditions, and barriers to accessing traditional models of care. There is significant pressure on acute beds and urgent care pathways, increasing the need for flexible, home-based alternatives.

The challenge

Patients requiring intravenous antimicrobial therapy (IV antibiotics) for serious infections traditionally need to stay in hospital for the duration of treatment, occupying inpatient beds even when clinically stable. This is resource-intensive and disruptive to patients' lives, especially for those able to safely continue treatment at home. For those receiving the treatment, frequent and lengthy trips to hospital can have a significant impact on their day-to-day living, putting pressure on families and people's ability to remain in work and education.

The approach

The Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT) service at King's was launched in September 2022. The service supports patients to receive IV antibiotics or complex oral antimicrobial treatments at home or in community settings. Eligible patients are assessed by a multidisciplinary team including infectious diseases specialists, pharmacy, and specialist nurses. Patients receive care at home either through self-administration or with support from community nursing partners. Robust governance processes are in place to monitor safety and outcomes.

Gianni Acuram, Lead Clinical Nurse Specialist for OPAT at King's College Hospital says:

"When we first launched the OPAT service at King's, our aim was straightforward: to support patients who were only in hospital to receive IV antibiotics, to complete their treatment safely at home instead. Many of these patients were clinically stable and didn't need to stay on a ward - just required ongoing IV therapy to manage infection.

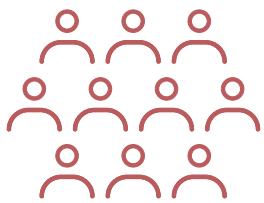
By enabling them to continue treatment at home, under the care of specialist nurses, infectious diseases and microbiology doctors, and pharmacists, we've seen a real improvement in patients' experience. They're able to return to their families, routines, and often their jobs, rather than spending days, weeks, or even months in hospital purely to finish their antibiotic course."

Delivering the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan

King's OPAT service is helping patients stay well in the community and avoid unnecessary hospital stays. Patients receive timely, clinically appropriate care at home while maintaining independence and avoiding disruption.

This is particularly valuable for people with work or caring responsibilities, and for those who may struggle with prolonged inpatient admissions. OPAT reduces demand on acute beds and frees up hospital resources for those with higher acuity.

Across the first two years (September 2022 - September 2024), in the OPAT service there were:



391

patients
treated



9,500

estimated **bed**
days saved



Equivalent to a
whole ward
operating year-
round



HIGH

levels of **patient**
satisfaction

Looking ahead, national modelling from NHS England suggests that expanding OPAT services could benefit more than **56,000 patients each year**, avoiding up to **one million inpatient bed days** across England.

The experience at King's demonstrates how this potential can be realised in practice – delivering safe, effective care at home, improving patient experience, and releasing vital capacity for the NHS.

Gianni Acuram, Lead Clinical Nurse Specialist for OPAT at King's College Hospital says:

“For the trust, the impact has been equally significant. OPAT has helped us discharge patients much earlier and, in some cases, avoid admission altogether which is fantastic - freeing up beds for those who need hospital care most. We've created capacity without compromising safety, and patients tell us they feel more in control of their recovery and pleased that this option is available. It's a service that benefits everyone: patients regain their independence, and the hospital can focus its resources where they're needed most.”