

# Establishing and implementing best practice to reduce unplanned admissions in those aged 85 years and over through system change [Establishing System Change for Admissions of People 85+ (ESCAPE 85+)]: a mixed-methods case study approach

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## Plain English summary

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## Plain English summary

The number of unplanned hospital admissions has been rising steadily in England over the last decade, especially for people aged 85 years and over. However, across the country, rates of change in admissions for this age group vary widely, and in some localities have declined. It seems some places have been more successful than others in avoiding the need for admission, either by preventing medical crises developing or by offering alternative care at home or in the community.

In this study we focused on three sites where admission rates for people aged 85 years and over had risen most sharply and three where they had declined. We examined NHS data and conducted interviews with over 140 participants from health- and social care organisations to understand how strategies and services had been developed and implemented.

We found that sites that had been successful in reducing admissions had done so by providing alternatives to short-stay admissions, including better-developed community services which worked closely with each other, the hospital and general practitioner services. These sites had fewer problems with access to general practitioner services and less pressure on emergency departments. They had also been more successful in developing strategies to include a full range of health- and social care organisations and, most importantly, had consistent, strong leadership and shared values. The main output of our work is a set of recommendations aimed at commissioners of services for older people, and we have examined their impact in a site not previously involved in the research.

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