# Press Release | 24 March 2025

**QEH introduces streamlined referral process for faster recovery at home**

**The QEH has introduced an innovative new approach that helps patients receive the care they need and return home sooner, significantly improving their experience and outcomes.**

The hospital has successfully implemented a revamped ‘Discharge to Assess’ (D2A) model, which marks a major change in how patients are assessed for ongoing rehabilitation.

Instead of waiting in hospital for assessments, patients can now have their care needs evaluated at home through a more streamlined referral process. This process is made possible through close collaboration with community partners, including Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust (NCHC) and Norfolk County Council.

The D2A model, a national NHS initiative, supports patients by ensuring that their ongoing care – whether at home or within the community – begins as soon as it is safe for them to leave the hospital. By shifting the assessment process to the home, patients are not only discharged more quickly but also avoid the negative effects of prolonged hospital stays, which can hinder their recovery, particularly for older patients.

Since the launch of the pilot in August 2024, The QEH has seen promising results. Over 500 referrals have been processed, with more than 30% of patients discharged within 24 hours and over 50% within 48 hours. This rapid discharge process marks a dramatic improvement from July 2024, when the average length of stay was eight days, compared to under three days by December 2024.

This approach is having a positive impact not just on patient outcomes but also on hospital capacity. Shorter stays free up vital bed space for patients requiring more intensive care, enhancing overall patient flow, including in the Emergency Department.

Simon Illingworth, Chief Operating Officer at The QEH, said: “This initiative is a great example of collaborative working. By working closely with our partners at NCHC and Norfolk County Council, we’ve created a system that not only speeds up recovery but also improves patient outcomes. With this new referral process, we’re able to ensure that patients continue their rehabilitation at home, which is the best environment for many to regain their independence.”

This innovation, with The QEH being the first in Norfolk and Waveney to roll out this model, is a significant step forward in patient care, making a real difference in the speed of recovery and overall experience for patients and their families.

**Ends. Notes to editors;** For media enquiries only, please contact Communications Team, [media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk) or 01553 613216. For all other enquiries, please contact QEH Switchboard on 01553 613613.