# Press Release | 16 September 2025

**Hospital’s Frailty Unit supports over 3,000 patients in first year transforming emergency care for older people**

**A group of people posing for a photo

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**The QEH is celebrating the one-year anniversary of its Frailty Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) Unit – a service that has already helped more than 3,000 older and frail patients receive timely, tailored care closer to home.**

Launched on 16 September 2024, the innovative unit has significantly improved outcomes for older patients, with over 80% discharged home the same day, avoiding the need for hospital admission. Patients receive rapid, proactive assessments from a dedicated multidisciplinary team including frailty nurses and the Rapid Assessment and Frailty Team (RAFT), ensuring compassionate, person-centred care.

The average length of stay for patients requiring admission from the unit is five to seven days – a significant improvement compared to the national average of 10 to 13 days for frail patients. This not only improves recovery and wellbeing for patients but also reduces pressure on hospital beds and resources.

A growing number of patients – now one in three – are referred directly from the community into the unit, bypassing the hospital’s Emergency Department entirely. This helps to ease pressure on the hospital’s Emergency Department and ensures that patients get the right care in the right place, at the right time.

Dr Mathew Gilbert, Consultant Geriatrician and Interim Clinical Director for Integrated Care of the Older Person at The QEH, said: “The success of the Frailty SDEC service over the past year is a testament to the dedication and innovation of our team. By focusing on holistic, same-day care, we are not only improving patient experience and outcomes but also making a real impact on system pressures. Avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions allows our patients to stay independent for longer and ensures we are using our resources efficiently.”

The Frailty SDEC service follows NHS England best practice and plays a key role in managing the increasing demand from an ageing population. By supporting earlier discharge and reducing avoidable admissions, the unit also contributes to significant financial efficiencies – helping ensure the Trust delivers sustainable, high-quality care.

Medical Director, Rebecca Martin, added: “This service exemplifies what great care should look like – timely, joined-up, and focused on what matters most to our patients. The feedback from patients and families has been incredibly positive, and it’s clear this model is not only delivering better outcomes but doing so in a more efficient and compassionate way.”

A group of people standing in a room

AI-generated content may be incorrect.The service has been warmly praised across the region, including by Dr Frankie Swords, Chief Medical Director for the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board, who called the unit “a winner” for helping patients remain active and independent.

As the population continues to age, services like Frailty SDEC will be vital in helping people live well for longer, while also supporting the NHS to manage demand more sustainably. The Trust is exploring plans to extend the unit’s operating hours to seven days a week in the future, ensuring even more patients benefit from this modern, effective approach to frailty care.

**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.

Photo captions:

Photo 1

Photo 2: Dr Frankie Swords visiting Frailty SDEC with Dr Katie Honney and Dr Matthew Gilbert