



Emergency Department

Safer Nursing Care Tool (ED SNCT)

The National Quality Board (NQB) publication '[Supporting NHS providers to deliver the right staff, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time: Safe, sustainable and productive staffing](#)' (2016) outlines the expectations and framework within which decisions on safe and sustainable staffing should be made to support the delivery of safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led care on a sustainable basis. This is further support by NHS Improvements' publication '[Developing workforce safeguards - Supporting providers to deliver high quality care through safe and effective staffing](#)' in 2018.

The Emergency Department Safer Nursing Care Tool (ED SNCT) has been developed to help NHS hospitals in England measure patient acuity and/or dependency to inform evidence-based decision making on staffing in the Emergency Department, including paediatrics. The tool will also offer nurses a reliable method against which to deliver evidence-based workforce plans to support existing services or the development of new services. It has been adapted to consider the implications of COVID-19 on staffing.

Ensuring safe, sustainable and productive staffing

The Emergency Department Safer Nursing Care Tool (ED SNCT) is:

- ◆ Able to help staff measure patient acuity and dependency to inform evidence-based decision making on staffing and workforce.
- ◆ Appropriate for use in all emergency departments, including those with major trauma centres as well as district general hospitals.
- ◆ Used in conjunction with quality indicators including patient outcome measures, process measures, patient and staff experience and staffing metrics as well as professional judgement.

The ED SNCT also provides:

- ◆ Establishment set by Annual Attendance as well as Acuity and Dependency.
- ◆ Care Hours to Contact metrics on the current and recommended establishments.

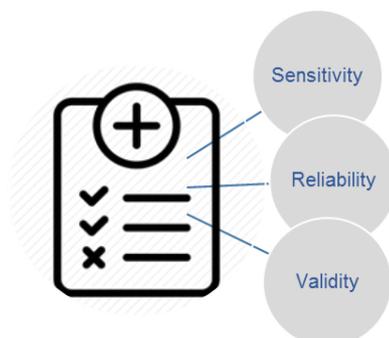
Benefits of the Emergency Department SNCT (ED SNCT)

- Demonstrates how acuity and dependency are measured in emergency department settings.
- Ensures that accurate data can be collected.
- Uses staffing multipliers to support professional judgement in reviewing and setting nursing establishments.

The development process

The ED SNCT was developed and validated by NHS emergency department experts. This included large acute trusts, including those with major trauma centres, and district general hospitals caring for adults only or adults and children. It is therefore suitable for determining nurse staffing establishments for all emergency departments (ED).

An assessment of the ED service-quality was completed using the Stockport Audit Tool. This was important to ensure the staffing recommendations derived from the data were not perpetuating poor practice standards. The tool is based on six acuity and dependency levels to distinguish between the needs of patients attending the ED. Each acuity and dependency level has an associated descriptor to enable clinical staff to score patients receiving care in their department. These descriptors were developed by expert reference groups during the ED SNCT project



Data collection exercise

The ED SNCT was developed and validated by NHS emergency department experts.

The ED database included 50 best practice sites with 173,071 recorded interventions (direct care, indirect care) and delivered by ED staff, with a total of 2032 hours of care observed, and included the responses of up to 9,600 service quality questions.

The opportunity

To license the Emergency Department Safer Nursing Care Tool (ED SNCT).

The ED SNCT can be Licensed via Imperial College NHS technology here:

www.innovahealthtec.com

The Tool was formally approved by the Shelford Group Chief Nurses in 2021.

Other available tools

- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): Adult In-Patient Wards](#)
- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): C&YP Inpatient Wards](#)
- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): Acute Assessment Unit](#)
- ◆ [Mental Health Optimal Staffing Tool \(MHOST\)](#)

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