Appendix B: OPEL 2024 to 2026 Acute parameters V1.0

Acute OPEL 2024-2026 – Parameters

This guide defines each parameter within the acute trust pillar of the Integrated OPEL Framework 2024 to 2026, to ensure they can be consistently applied across all relevant processes and activities.

Please note that it must be read in conjunction with the Integrated OPEL Framework 2024 to 2026, which provides the overarching structure and context within which these parameters need to operate.

For queries relating to this guide, please contact the iUEC national team at:  
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Acute-OPEL parameter and scoring thresholds table

| **Parameter** | **0 points** | **1 point** | **2 points** | **3 points** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Average ambulance handover since midnight (minutes) | <15 | 15-30 | >30-60 | >60 |
| 1. Current 4-hour ED performance percentage (percentage) | >95% | >78-95% | >60-78% | ≤60% |
| 1. Current ED majors and resus occupancy (percentage) | ≤80% | >80-90% | >90-100% | >100% |
| 1. Current median time to treatment since midnight (minutes) | ≤60 | >60-120 | >120-240 | >240 |
| 1. Patients in ED over 12 hours (percentage) | ≤2% | >2-5% | >5-10% | >10% |
| 1. Patients in ED referred to service (percentage) | ≤2% | >2-5% | >5-8% | >8% |
| 1. Bed occupancy (percentage) | ≤85% | >85-92% | >92-98% | >98% |
| 1. Patients no longer meeting Criteria to Reside (percentage) | ≤10% | >10-15% | >15-20% | >20% |
| 1. Patients discharged (percentage) | >30% | >20-30% | >10-20% | ≤10% |
| 1. Beds closed due to infection prevention control (percentage) | ≤0.5% | >0.5-2.5% | >2.5-5% | >5% |

Acute OPEL normalised score thresholds

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Acute OPEL** | **Acute normalised OPEL score** |
| OPEL 1 | 0 – 15 |
| OPEL 2 | >15 – 40 |
| OPEL 3 | >40–70 |
| OPEL 4 | >70-100 |

1. Average ambulance handover since midnight (minutes)

This is the average time from arrival to handover for all patients conveyed by ambulance since midnight, at time of OPEL assessment. The cadence of the OPEL assessment depends on the OPEL, as outlined in the acute OPEL actions.

This parameter should be expressed in minutes and include all completed handovers since midnight and any patients waiting for handover at time of OPEL assessment, including patients in the care of ambulance staff **or** being cohorted by ambulance service clinical colleagues. It should also include patients who arrived before midnight if their wait to be handed over runs into the current day.

Cohorting the handover of a conveyed patient’s care to other ambulance service clinical colleagues at the hospital, before the formal handover to the hospital. It is not cohorting by the hospital. The ambulance service clinical colleagues usually provide this care inside the hospital and may look after several conveyed patients simultaneously. Cohorting allows the release of the arriving ambulance staff to attend other incidents, and is only applicable where patients are transferred between ambulance staff (or sub-contracted ambulance service provision). This mirrors the definition within the [Urgent and emergency care winter incentive – operational measurement guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/urgent-and-emergency-care-winter-incentive-operational-measurement-guidance/#:~:text=This%20type%20of%20cohorting%20is,care%20transferred%20to%20a%20hospital.)).

* <15 minutes 0 points
* 15-30 minutes 1 point
* >30-60 minutes 2 points
* >60 minutes 3 points

1. Current 4-Hour performance (percentage)

This is the percentage at time of OPEL assessment of all-type attendances who have been admitted, discharged or transferred within 4 hours since midnight, excluding booked appointments.

Patient journeys that span midnight should be counted in the subsequent day’s performance in line with [urgent and emergency care (UEC) SitRep guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/process-and-definitions-for-the-daily-situation-report/).

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, (Number of all-type attendances admitted, discharged or transferred within 4 hours of arrival since midnight) + (number of all-type attendances currently in the department waiting for less than four hours since arrival) at time of assessment.

**Denominator:** (Number of all-type attendances since midnight) + (number of all-type attendances currently in the department at time of OPEL assessment).

* >95% 0 points
* >78-95% 1 point
* >60-78% 2 points
* ≤60% 3 points

1. Current ED majors and resus occupancy (percentage)

This is the percentage at time of OPEL assessment of adult majors and resus occupancy within the Type 1 ED within the trust. The cadence of the OPEL assessment depends on the OPEL, as outlined in the acute OPEL actions.

This parameter is inclusive of patients in EDs at major trauma centres. For general Type 1 sites measure adult occupancy and capacity, and for paediatric only units use paediatric ED and resus occupancy and capacity.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, Sum of all adult patients in ED who require a majors ED space, regardless of whether they are receiving care in a traditional space, which includes the waiting room, ambulance cohorting and ambulances outside ED, or in an escalation area, which includes corridor care.

**Denominator:** Maximum number of adult patients who can be cared for in majors and resus areas. This number must be set based on current ED capacity and updated should the ED estate be reconfigured.

* ≤80% 0 points
* >80–90% 1 point
* >90–100% 2 points
* >100% 3 points

1. Current median time to treatment since midnight (minutes)

This is the median time, at time of OPEL assessment, between arrival at ED (defined as post ambulance handover or self-presenting at reception) and being seen by a clinical decision-maker for all patients who have been seen since midnight. This should include those patients who arrived before midnight if they receive treatment in the current day. Include all type attendances for that site where type-1, 2 or 3 are collocated.

A clinical decision-maker is a healthcare professional who can define the management plan and discharge the patient or diagnose the problem and arrange or start definitive treatment as necessary.

* ≤60 minutes 0 points
* >60–120 minutes 1 point
* >120-240 minutes 2 points
* >240 minutes 3 points

1. Patients in ED over 12 hours (percentage)

This is the percentage of all patients in the ED at time of OPEL assessment who spend >12 hours in the ED from time of arrival to time of review. Include all type attendances for that site where type-1, 2 or 3 are collocated.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, Number of patients spending >12 hours in ED from time of arrival (handover/reception). This should include those patients who arrived before midnight if they remain in the ED into the current day.

**Denominator:** At time of OPEL assessment, the sum of all patients who are the clinical responsibility of the ED.

* ≤2% 0 points
* >2–5% 1 point
* >5–10% 2 points
* >10% 3 points

1. Patients in ED referred to service (percentage)

This is the percentage of adult patients in the ED who have been referred to a service and are waiting at time of OPEL assessment. The cadence of the OPEL assessment depends on the OPEL, as outlined in acute OPEL actions. The definition of a patient who has been referred to a service is in line with the [NHS Data Dictionary](https://www.datadictionary.nhs.uk/data_elements/referred_to_service__snomed_ct_.html). Include all type attendances for that site where type-1, 2 or 3 are collocated.

For paediatric hospitals, this metric should be applied to paediatric patients and paediatric beds, noting that it is unlikely to report high scores for paediatric sites.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of adult patients in ED referred by a clinical decision-maker (for example, an advanced care practitioner, emergency nurse practitioner or doctor) to a clinical specialty for further review. This should include patients who arrived before midnight if they are referred to service in the current day.

**Denominator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of open general and acute (G&A) beds, excluding those in escalation areas.

* ≤2% 0 points
* >2-5% 1 point
* >5-8% 2 points
* >8% 3 points

1. Bed occupancy (percentage)

This is the acute trust’s percentage adult bed occupancy at time of OPEL assessment. The cadence of OPEL assessment depends on the OPEL, as outlined in the acute OPEL actions.

For paediatric hospitals, this metric applies to paediatric beds, not adult.

Within OPEL, bed occupancy is now calculated from the number of patients occupying core G&A and escalation beds, in line with the definitions in the [UEC SitRep guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/process-and-definitions-for-the-daily-situation-report/), at time of OPEL assessment. This can exceed 100% when escalation beds without bedhead services are being used to care for patients.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of beds occupied by a patient regardless of bed classification.

**Denominator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of G&A + escalation beds of any bed classification and location in the hospital and anywhere in the hospital, as per the [UEC daily SitRep definitions](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/process-and-definitions-for-the-daily-situation-report/).

* ≤85% 0 points
* >85–92% 1 point
* >92–98% 2 points
* >98% 3 points

1. Patients no longer meeting criteria to reside (percentage)

This is the percentage of open beds at the time of OPEL assessment occupied by patients who [no longer meet the criteria to reside](https://archive.datadictionary.nhs.uk/DD%20Release%20July%202024/attributes/criteria_to_reside_code_for_hospital_provider_spell.html?hl=criteria%2Creside). The cadence of OPEL assessment depends on the OPEL, as outlined in the acute OPEL actions.

For general Type 1 sites, measure adult only. For paediatric only sites, apply this metric to paediatric patients and paediatric beds, noting that for paediatric sites this is unlikely to report high scores.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of patients no longer meeting criteria to reside.

**Denominator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of G&A + escalation beds of any bed classification and location in the hospital and anywhere in the hospital, as per the [UEC daily SitRep definitions](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/process-and-definitions-for-the-daily-situation-report/).

* ≤10% 0 points
* >10-15% 1 point
* >15-20% 2 points
* >20% 3 points

1. Patients discharged (percentage)

This is the percentage of discharges achieved in the previous 24 hours, from 00:00 to 23:59.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of adult discharges across all pathways as per the [acute discharge SitRep](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/acute-discharge-situation-report-technical-specification) achieved in the previous 24 hours from 00:00 to 23:59.

**Denominator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of G&A + escalation beds of any bed classification and location in the hospital and anywhere in the hospital, as per the [UEC daily SitRep definitions](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/process-and-definitions-for-the-daily-situation-report/).

* >30% 0 points
* >20-30% 1 point
* >10-20% 2 points
* ≤10% 3 points

1. Beds closed due to infection prevention and control (percentage)

This is the percentage of beds closed due to infection prevention and control (IPC) restrictions at time of OPEL assessment. The cadence of OPEL assessment depends on the OPEL as outlined in the acute OPEL actions.

**Numerator:** At time of OPEL assessment, number of beds closed for any of the IPC considerations listed in the [daily SitRep process and definitions](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/process-and-definitions-for-the-daily-situation-report-web-form/). This should include both adult and paediatric beds and both empty and occupied beds but exclude any beds closed for estate or other non-IPC reasons.

**Denominator:** At time of OPEL assessment, as per the bed occupancy denominator above – number of G&A beds + escalation beds, of any variety, anywhere in the hospital as per the daily UEC SitRep.

* ≤0.5% 0 points
* >0.5-2.5% 1 point
* >2.5-5% 2 points
* >5% 3 points