

For the Record – Press Statements

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Date of article	Tuesday 12 th February 2013
Reporter	Daniel Wainwright
Headline	Inquiry over hospital death rates
First paragraph/s of article	A hospital trust in the Black Country is to be investigated by NHS bosses over high death rates in the wake of the Stafford Hospital scandal. Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which manages Russells Hall Hospital, is one of 14 trusts being probed across the country.
Press enquiry	In light of the announcement the trust is to be investigated, can the Express and Star please have a comment from the Trust?
Trust response	
<p>Given the publication of the Mid Staffs report, we completely understand that this is a time of high anxiety for patients. We welcome this review as we believe it will give further reassurance around the safety and quality of our services.</p> <p>Current independent analyses (including the HSMR) show that the Trust is not an outlier and is within the expected range.</p> <p>The Trust is committed to ensuring the best possible care of all patients. We take mortality indices very seriously and use them as a flag for further reviews of our care practices. This is one of a number of tools we use to assure ourselves of the quality of our care.</p> <p>The most recent data from Dr Foster (April – Sept 2012) shows the Trust mortality index as 100 which is well within the expected range. Similarly, the SHMI, the Department of Health’s own measures, which is more up to date than the published figure from Dr Foster, shows a continuing improvement over the last year and is within the expected range at 1.04 (July 2011 – June 2012).</p>	

Indeed the overall number of deaths continues to decline against the backdrop of an ageing population with complex health needs.

I would like to reassure our patients and their families that we do everything in our power to ensure patients are safe and well cared for.

From Board level to the ward and out into the community, we reassure ourselves of this by the measures we take to ensure their safety is our top priority:

- As a Board of Directors we have reports from our matrons and our clinical directors every month
- As a Board of Directors we carry out patient safety walkabouts and talk to staff on the frontline and ask how things feel for them; what's working well for them and what needs improving
- We also carry out a number of audits at ward level – like our Nursing Care Indicators which measures patient safety and care
- We have a whistle blowing policy which staff can use if they have concerns about patient safety
- We also take part in the regional patient Safety Thermometer audit which looks at patient harms on a census basis once a month and we are very much in the pack with other trusts.

We have a good safety culture and a very honest and open reporting system as we believe that's the best way to encourage learning and make improvements into patient safety.

We welcome all information that will help us with our efforts to continually improve our patient care.

We ensure we learn lessons from complaints and concerns raised by patients. We offer face to face meetings with complainants to help us understand how their experience made them or their families feel and we fully investigate all complaints to ensure we learn from them. We also ensure we feedback all comments we receive via the web and social media channels to the leads for those areas to ensure comments both good and bad are fed back to the people involved.

We encourage patients and their families to feedback their views after their stay in hospital and ask if they would recommend Russells Hall Hospital to a relative or friend and we are consistently higher than the regional average.