

For the Record – Press Statement

Publication and reporter	Express & Star, Alex Ross
Date of article	12.01.18
Headline	One in five patients left waiting more than four hours at A&E
Opening paragraph	<p>One in five patients arriving at A&E at hospitals in the Black Country and Staffordshire wait more than four hours to be seen, according to latest figures published this week.</p> <p>The worse in the region is University Hospitals of North Midlands, which runs Royal Stoke University Hospital and County Hospital in Stafford.</p> <p>Out of 19,743 patients arriving at A&E at the trust’s two hospitals, just 14,124 were seen within four hours – 71.5 per cent. This compares to 77.8 per cent in November, and 73.5 per cent in December 2016.</p>
Paragraph/s relating to The Dudley Group	Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, saw 11,414 out of 14,461 patients in four hours – 78.9 per cent. This compares to 83.9 per cent in November and 90.8 per cent in December 2016.
Press enquiry	<p>The Express & Star contacted the Trust in relation to A&E waiting times for December as the Trust’s figures had dropped in comparison with November’s performance.</p> <p>They also picked up a tweet posted from HSJ Senior Correspondent Shaun Lintern in relation to a ‘leaked’ letter to the Prime Minister around trusts being underfunded signed by A&E doctors including a doctor from The Dudley Group.</p> <p>They asked the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why have the figures dropped? • What is the hospital trust doing in response to the drop in performance? • Is the target achievable? • Can the trust respond to the leaked letter about underfunding?
Trust response	
<p>COMMENT FROM DIANE WAKE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST</p> <p>The emergency access standard (95% of patients to be seen, treated, admitted or discharged within four hours) is not a measure of individuals or teams but one of the</p>	

whole health and care system.

The Dudley Group has had variable performance towards this standard as have many trusts across the country and the challenge to meet this standard is not unique to Dudley.

The Trust has seen an increase of 13% in patients arriving by ambulance. Over recent years an average number of ambulances per day was 120; we are now seeing up to 170 per day. This increase in ambulances puts huge pressure on the emergency department as the patients are acutely unwell and often have many co-morbidities. At times we are struggling with the numbers of ambulances as we have experienced ambulances arriving in clusters which can cause delays in handover, but everyone is doing their utmost to ensure we look after the patients and that we work as a healthcare system together.

We are also seeing more out of area patients from South Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Sandwell which culminates in further delays in the system when these patients are well enough to leave hospital. We continue to work very closely with our social care partners in all local authorities to ensure patients are discharged.

The health economy winter plan is designed to help us deal with these pressures such as making more GP appointments available. We have also made 60 additional beds available and increased our ED staffing of both nurses and doctors to help us cope with the increase.

We have unfortunately had to cancel all non-urgent operations until February and we are only running outpatient clinics where the clinical need means patients may end up as emergencies if they are not seen. This will help ensure senior decision makers can focus on our urgent care patients and in reach into ED. This is in line with other Trusts.

The Dudley Group, and all its staff, is absolutely committed to providing the safest possible care to all of our patients and wish to thank all of our staff who are working incredibly hard in the most intense circumstances.

We urge patients who do not have a serious or life threatening condition to use alternative health services as we will always see patients in order of clinical need and patients with minor injuries or ailments may have longer waits.

Regarding the letter to the Prime Minister about NHS underfunding, Dr Jo Taylor was acting in a personal capacity.

***** ENDS *****

Notes for editors

For further information please contact Jackie Dietrich, communications manager for

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