

**For the Record – Press Statements**

<b>Publication</b>	Express & Star
<b>Date of article</b>	Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2014
<b>Reporter</b>	Tim Spiers
<b>Headline</b>	<b>Fewer A&amp;E patients but staff still struggle</b>
<b>First paragraph/s of article</b>	Fewer patients are turning up to under-pressure A&E departments in Midlands hospitals – but staff are struggling more than ever to cope.
<b>Paragraphs relating to The Dudley Group</b>	<p>The worst drop in performance was seen at Russells Hall Hospital, where despite marginally fewer patients going to A&amp;E during winter just gone - compared with the same three months for 2012/13 - just 91 per cent of people were seen within four hours.</p> <p>That was a drop of four per cent from a year ago, and bosses there said an increase in elderly people who have more complicated needs was one of the factors for the reduction in performance.</p> <p>Chief executive Paula Clark said: “This inevitably puts pressure on the whole health and social care system.</p> <p>“In order to address the increasing demand we are continually developing new ways of working within the hospital and with colleagues.”</p>
<b>Press enquiry</b>	<p>Tim Spiers from the Express and Star contacted the Trust regarding A&amp;E waiting times. According to figures published by NHS England, Dudley saw 23, 576 patients in December, January and February in 2012/13 and saw, admitted, transferred and discharged 95.5% of these within the nationally set target of four hours. In 2013/14 slightly fewer patients came to A&amp;E (23,444) in the same period and 91.2% of these were seen within the four hour target.</p> <p>The Trust was asked to comment on this year’s performance in comparison to last year’s.</p>

## Trust response

### **COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

We are committed to ensuring patients who arrive at our Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department are seen, treated, admitted or discharged within four hours. Striving to meet this national target was a real challenge during the busy winter months.

The percentage of patients who were admitted or discharged in under four hours from December 2013 to February 2014 was 91.4 per cent.

Although the number of patients who visited our A&E Department compared to the same period last year reduced slightly, we have seen an increase in attendances from the older population who have more complex health needs requiring further assessment and treatment within a hospital setting. This inevitably puts pressure on the whole health and social care system. In order to address the increasing demand on hospital services we are continually developing new ways of working within the hospital and with colleagues from the wider health economy including Dudley CCG and Dudley Council.

The Trust operates a robust triage system to identify the patients requiring the most urgent medical attention. The average time to triage for patients attending the department during Quarter 4 of 2013/14 was 14 minutes.

We continue to work with our colleagues across the health economy to improve performance against the 4 hour target and ensure patients attending our Accident and Emergency Department receive the care they require in a timely and appropriate way.

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

For more information, please call Alice Ford, Communications Assistant for The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, on (01384) 456111 extension 1419.