

For the Record – Press Statements

Publication	Express and Star
Date of article	Sunday 15 th June
Reporter	Jon Pritchard
Headline	Thousands of hospital operations in West Midlands cancelled on the day patients go in
First paragraph/s of article	<p>Thousands of operations at hospitals across the West Midlands are being cancelled on the day they are due to take place, it has been revealed. 15th June 2014</p> <p>Almost 3,500 procedures were cancelled on the same day at five hospitals in the region in the last year, figures obtained by the Express & Star have shown.</p>
Paragraphs relating to The Dudley Group	<p>Almost half of those cancelled - 1,657 - were in Dudley, with just 147 of those taking place in the next seven days...</p> <p>Paula Clark, chief executive at Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, said: "The Dudley Group always makes every effort to carry out operations on the day they are planned; however, there are some occasions when this is not possible and surgery has to be postponed.</p> <p>"Postponing operations is never ideal and we always apologise to our patients for any distress or inconvenience this may cause.</p> <p>"We do appreciate the lengths people go to when they make arrangements when they come into hospital and we don't take these decisions lightly.</p> <p>"This small increase in cancellations is due to an increase in emergency admissions prompting a greater demand on beds."</p>
Press enquiry	Following a Freedom of Information request reporter Jon Pritchard has asked questions relating to the reasons for cancelled operations in hospitals across the region.

Trust response

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

The Dudley Group always makes every effort to carry out operations on the day they are planned; however, there are some occasions when this is not possible and surgery has to be postponed.

In 2013/14, 75 per cent (1236) of cancellations were initiated by the patient for a variety of reasons, including failing to attend for a procedure (on 379 occasions during the year).

Other reasons patients' operations may have been cancelled include being acutely unwell (372), for example, they may have been suffering from a cough or cold where undergoing anaesthetic would have put the patient at risk. Our third highest number of cancellations was due to the patient being chronically ill (142), for example, they may have had an underlying medical condition such as coagulation (blood clotting) issue.

During 2013/14 the remaining percentage of cancellations (421) were initiated by the hospital for reasons such as lack of bed availability, lack of availability in the high dependency unit or complications or emergency during surgery, or surgeon sickness.

Postponing operations is never ideal and we always apologise to our patients for any distress or inconvenience this may cause. We do appreciate the lengths people go to when they make arrangements when they come into hospital and we don't take these decisions lightly. We work hard on our pre-operative assessment processes to ensure operations go ahead as planned and this includes ensuring patients are fit for surgery and still in need of surgery.

The percentage of cancellations (of those planned or emergency operations due to take place) was 6.3 per cent (2011/12); 6.6 per cent (2012/13) and 6.8 per cent in 2013/14. This small increase in cancellations is due to an increase in emergency admissions prompting a greater demand on beds.