

For the Record – Press Statements

Publication	Stourbridge News
Date of article	August 14 th 2014
Reporter	Bev Holder
Headline	Cancer patients face long waits
First paragraph/s of article	Cancer patients have been kept waiting for up to five hours before undergoing gruelling chemotherapy sessions at the borough's main hospital, it has been claimed.
Press enquiry	<p>The Stourbridge News said concerns have been raised about the amount of time patients are waiting for chemotherapy treatment.</p> <p>The reporter has spoken to a patient who claims to have sometimes waited four to five hours before a three hour chemotherapy session could get underway</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a problem with waiting times in the chemotherapy ward currently – or staffing shortages due to summer holidays? 2. I'm also led to understand that patients having shorter, one-hour chemo sessions are being accommodated quicker than those attending for a longer session. Is this correct? 3. Can you provide a comment regarding these allegations?
Trust response	
<p>COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST</p> <p>We do sympathise with our patients who sometimes experience long waits for chemotherapy treatment at Russells Hall Hospital. Unfortunately, in common with chemotherapy units across the country, we have seen an increased demand on our cancer services due to more and more people being diagnosed and receiving treatment.</p> <p>The Georgina Day Case Unit has a limited number of treatment spaces but the</p>	

number of patients visiting the department continues to increase. Recently a new lead nurse was appointed and part of her role is to review the way in which delays can be reduced. For example we now offer Saturday appointments for patients receiving blood transfusions to take the pressure off the unit in the week; we are also exploring the possibility of offering chemotherapy in a community setting which means patients will not need to travel to hospital for their treatment.

Due to the nature of the treatment being delivered, patients are often on the unit for a considerable period of time, and can expect their visit to be between one and 12 hours depending on the type and complexity of chemotherapy required. We understand, therefore, that any additional waiting time can be a source of additional strain on patients.

Before any chemotherapy can be administered, patients receive a blood test the day before their appointment to ensure they are well enough to receive treatment. If blood test results show an abnormality, patients are re tested and the results are reviewed before treatment can start. This can also lead to an unavoidable delay for some patients.

Patients receive their treatment in time order. However, some complex treatments require the most senior nurses to administer while shorter treatments can be given by other nurses who can slot patients in to keep the flow of patients moving in the unit which, in turn, reduces delays.

We currently have only one vacant post and are recruiting into that post. Annual leave is planned in advance and so cover is arranged to ensure the unit is staffed appropriately at all times. In cases of sickness absence, we backfill by offering existing staff extra shifts via our own staff bank.

