

# NHS England's winter health check

The latest position on A&E, winter pressures and influenza for the week ending 15 November 2013 by NHS England

This weekly summary offers an overview of the system and pulls together information on waiting times in A&E, ambulance response times, daily situation reports from the NHS, and information on flu rates.

## Overview

**Dame Barbara Hakin, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Chief Executive for NHS England, said:**

“This has been a week where we have made real progress in terms of addressing the longer-term issues. Sir Bruce Keogh’s report on urgent care has given us the blueprint for the future that we need. And the GP contract for next year is designed to improve care for patients through empowering GPs, freeing up more of their time to provide proactive personal care to people in the community and help reduce unnecessary emergency admissions.”

“Last Winter was a tough one for the NHS so this year we started preparing earlier than ever before. Those responsible for health and social care in every locality in England have worked together to produce a plan for handling the pressures in their area. Extra money has also gone in to help those areas with particular need.

“We know that our A&E departments are trusted by the public and we are determined to maintain the high standards that patients have come to expect. We will now keep a very close eye on the position so that we can ensure there is a quick response should any issues arise. We will share information with the public weekly through this report.

“The current position is that the NHS is achieving the operational standard in terms of 95 per cent of patients waiting less than four hours in A&E and our daily situation reports suggest that the current pressures are comparable with the same period last year.

“The cold weather has not yet fully started and the most testing periods are still to come. But we are ready for winter and we are monitoring tightly.”

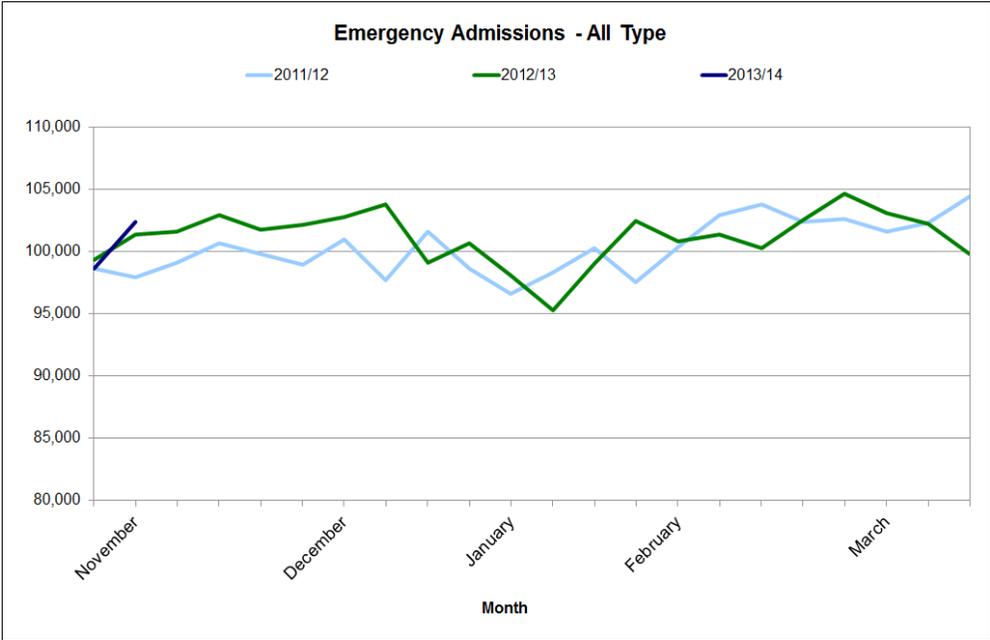
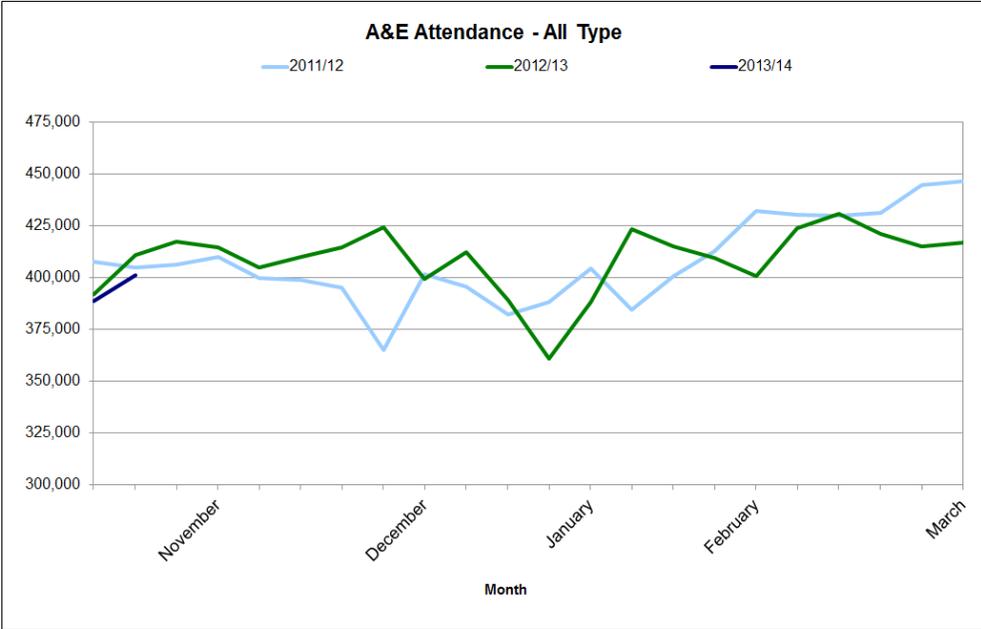
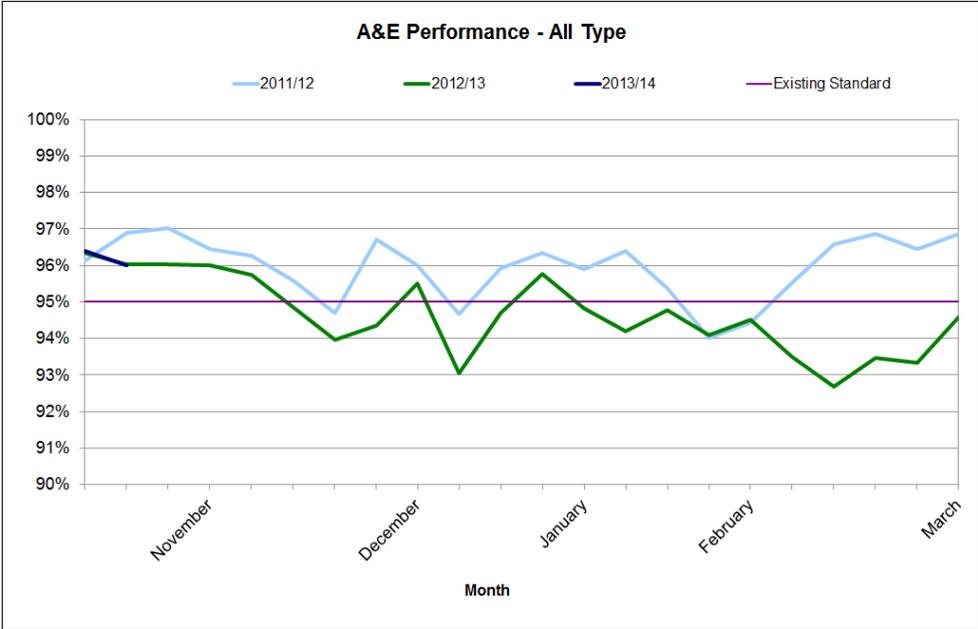
## Weekly A&E standard

### Summary

The percentage of patients spending under 4 hours in A&E stands at 96.0% this week. Attendances at A&E have increased since last week, although that was a 10 month low. There has been an increase in the number of emergency admissions, but these figures are in line with weeks prior to that.

Indicator	w/e 10 Nov 2013	w/e 3 Nov 2013	w/e 11 Nov 2012
Total A&E attendance	401,000	388,700	410,800
A&E 4 hour standard	96.0%	96.4%	96.0%
Emergency admissions	102,400	98,700	101,400
Number of 12 hour trolley waits	1	3	0
Number of 4 hour waits for admission	2,600	2,100	2,800

The full dataset can be found [here](#)



## Situation reports (SITREPs)

Daily situation reports, or SITREPs, are collected from all hospitals during winter and indicate where there are any winter pressure on the service, such as A&E closures, cancelled operations, bed pressures or ambulance delays. Collection for this year started on 4 November and the reporting requirement will be reviewed at the end of February. The data is published weekly on the NHS England website.

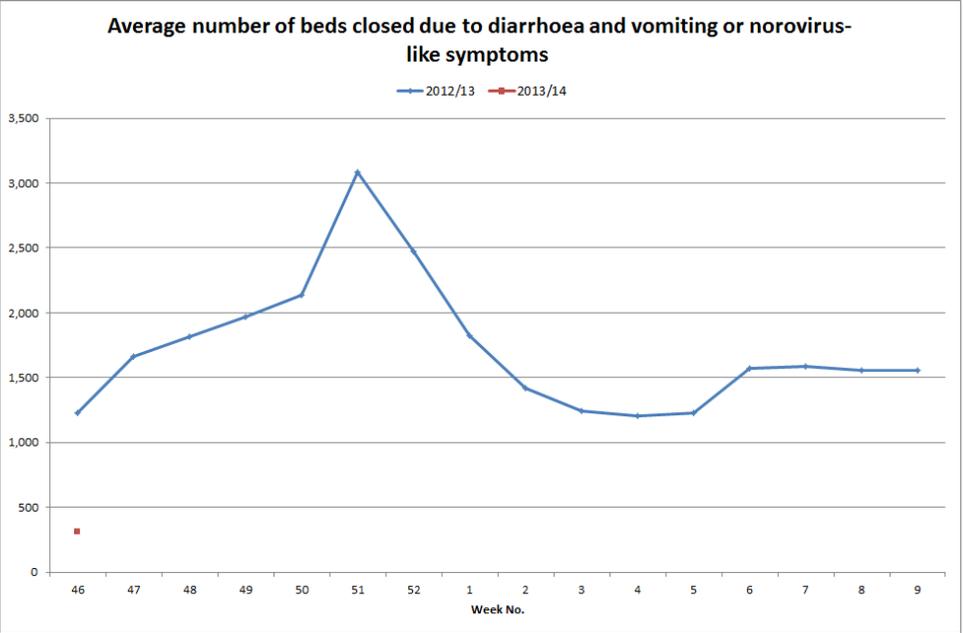
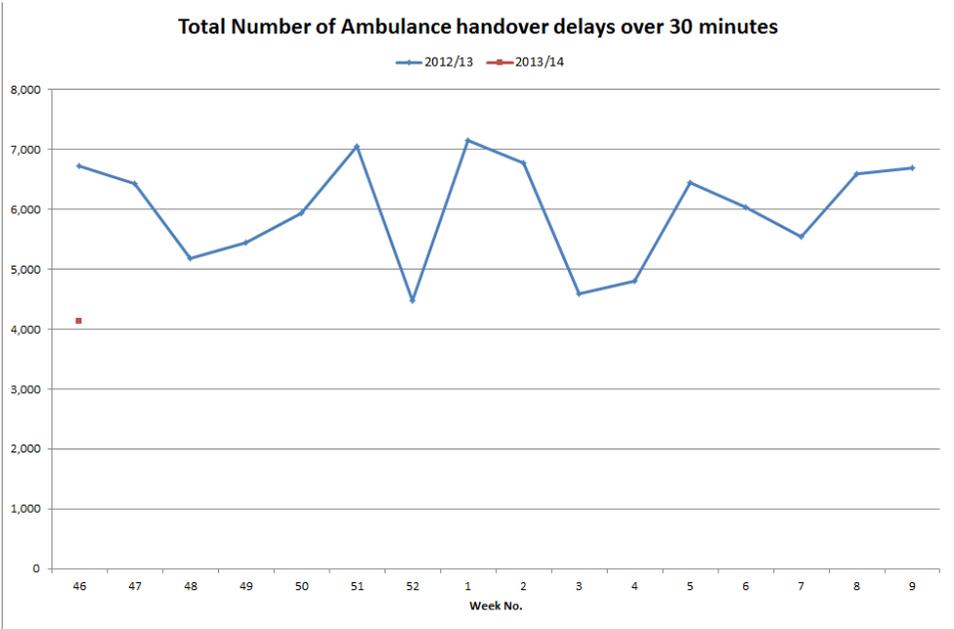
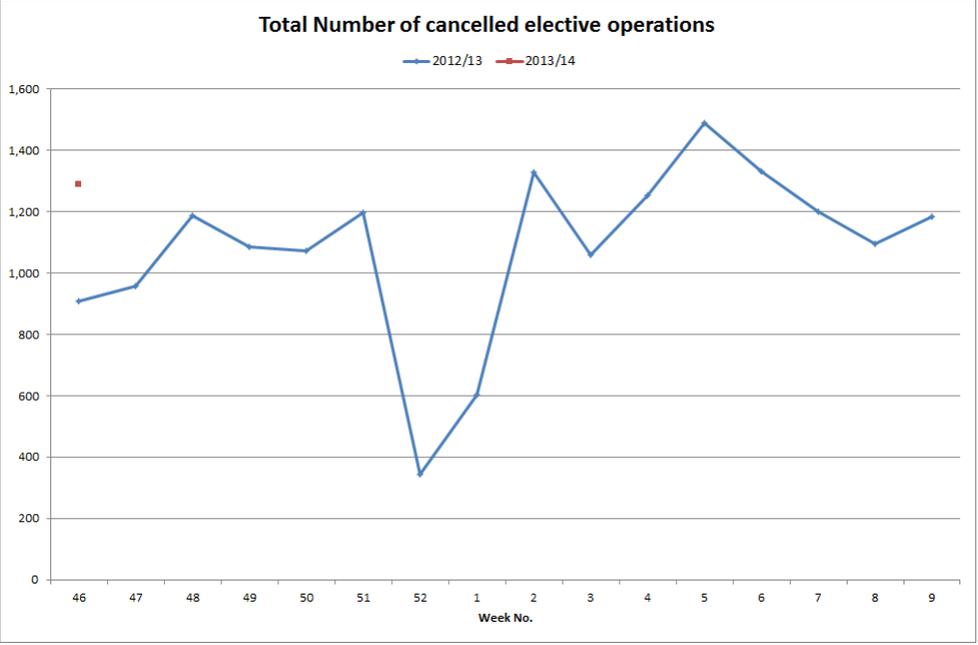
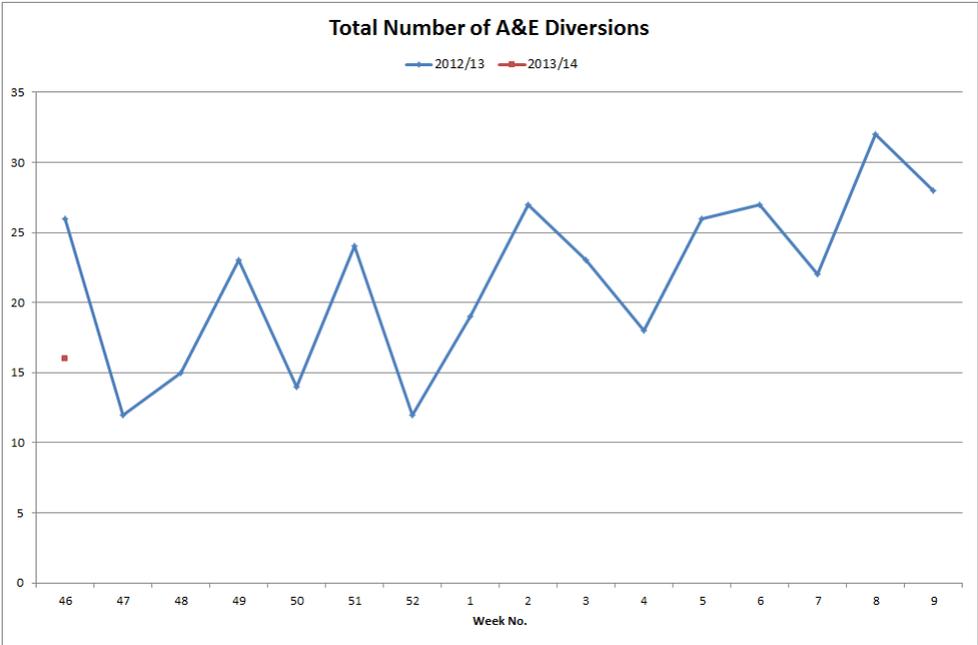
The NHS never shuts but it does sometimes have to alter the way it delivers services. Hospitals sometimes close their accident and emergency departments for short periods of time to walk-in patients and but remain open to those people who need its services. This can happen for many different reasons which might include a major incident in the local area such as a road traffic accident, a breakout of norovirus, or if the hospital is full. Local areas have robust plans in place to deal with temporary closures, which include ambulances directed to nearby hospitals.

### Summary

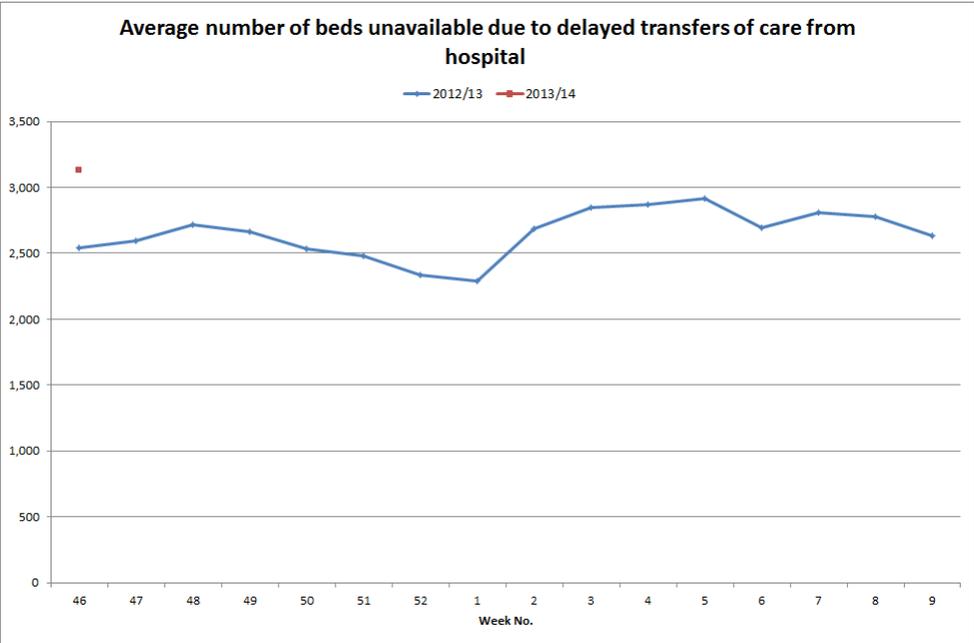
This week's figures suggest that the current pressures are comparable with the same period last year and that there are no major problems. Ambulance handover delays are lower than the same period last year, as are beds closed due to norovirus-like symptoms. However, cancelled operations are higher than the same week last year.

Indicator	Measure	Week 46, 2013 (w/e 8am 14 Nov)	Week 46, 2012 (w/e 8am 15 Nov)	Cumulative since week 45 (4 Nov)
A&E diverts	Total number of diversions during the week	16	26	25
Ambulance handover delays of over 30 minutes	Total number of delays during the week	4,125	6,727	5,923
Cancelled operations	Number of elective operations cancelled at last minute during the week	1,289	908	2,029
Number of beds closed due to diarrhoea and vomiting or norovirus-like symptoms	Average number of beds closed per day	313	1,225	
Number of beds unavailable due to delayed transfers of care from hospital	Average number of beds unavailable per day	3,135	2,542 <sup>1</sup>	
General and acute beds occupancy rate	Percentage of beds occupied	92.9%	94.1%	
A full breakdown of the data can be found at <a href="#">here</a>				

<sup>1</sup> Data quality issues remain with 2012 figures from daily return



**NHS 111**



The NHS 111 number is an easy to remember number to make it easier for the public to access urgent healthcare services. NHS 111 is free to call and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to respond to people’s healthcare needs when:

- you need medical help fast, but it’s not a 999 emergency;
- you don’t know who to call for medical help or you don’t have a GP to call;
- you think you need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service; or
- you require health information or reassurance about what to do next.

NHS England collects and publishes data on the NHS 111 service on a monthly basis. Over the winter months, this information will be made available weekly.

**Summary**

This week there were 171,700 calls to NHS 111. The number of callers satisfied with the service remains high at 92 per cent.

Indicator	Week 46, 2013 (w/e 13 Nov)	Cumulative since 4 Nov
Per cent of calls answered in 60 seconds	96.7%	97.1%
Per cent of calls abandoned	0.7%	0.7%
Per cent of answered calls transferred to clinical advisor	22.3%	22.7%
Per cent of calls triaged	83.6%	83.5%
Per cent of calls offered a call back	6.5%	6.4%
Per cent of calls offered a call back where call back was within 10 minutes	55.4%	54.8%
Per cent of calls triaged where an ambulance was called	11.1%	11.5%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to A&E	7.3%	7.6%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to primary care	62.3%	61.6%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to another service	4.9%	4.7%
Per cent of calls triaged not recommended to another service	14.5%	15.1%

## Public Health Surveillance

### Summary

The figures this week from Public Health England show indicators of flu activity are at minimal levels, suggesting no community transmission at this week. More information on mortality and syndromic surveillance, as well as circulating infections is available from Public Health England and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/winter-health-watch>

### Key facts

Key facts:

- Last year, there were over 21 million visits to A&E or nearly 60,000 attendances every day
- Attendances at hospital A&E departments have increased by more than two million over the last decade
- There were 6.9 million attendances at walk in centres and minor injury units in 2012/13, with activity at these facilities increasing rapidly since these data were first recorded a decade ago.
- The average number of consultations in general practice per patient rose from 4.1 to 5.5 per year between 1999 and 2008
- The number of calls received by the ambulance service over the last decade has risen from 4.9 million to 9.1 million
- Emergency admissions to hospitals in England have increased year on year, rising 31 per cent between 2002/03 to 2012/13 .