

NHS England's winter health check

The latest position on A&E, winter pressures and influenza for the week ending 7 February 2014 by NHS England

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

Overview

Dr Sarah Pinto-Duschinsky, Director of Operations & Delivery for NHS England said:

“I am pleased to report patients going to A&E continue to get a good service. This week 95.3 per cent of those attending A&E were transferred, admitted or discharged within four hours during the week ending 2 February. This is a fantastic achievement and staff deserve a great deal of credit for the way they have delivered for patients.

“I am particularly pleased the service has retained such good standards despite the rise in emergency admissions. There were 105,053 patients admitted last week, this is 1,415 more emergency admissions than the week before and 2,629 in the same week last year. The figures show attendances at A&E have also risen, but remain at the levels expected during winter.

“The numbers cancelled operations and delayed discharges of care remain stable. Compared to last week ambulance handover delays are up slightly by 711, but down by 1,823 when compared to the same week last year.

“NHS 111 continues to provide a good service for those needing help or advice. There were 6,860 more call to the NHS 111 service this week, with 97.07 per cent of the 205,387 calls received answered within 60 seconds.

“I would urge anyone who is feeling unwell to seek early help or advice by calling 111 or visiting their local pharmacy. Both offer expert advice but if your symptoms don't go away, please visit your GP or A&E if it's an emergency, before more serious problems develop.

“The NHS is in a strong position to continue to deliver for patients and we are monitoring the situation with great care to make sure the NHS move quickly if it needs to.”

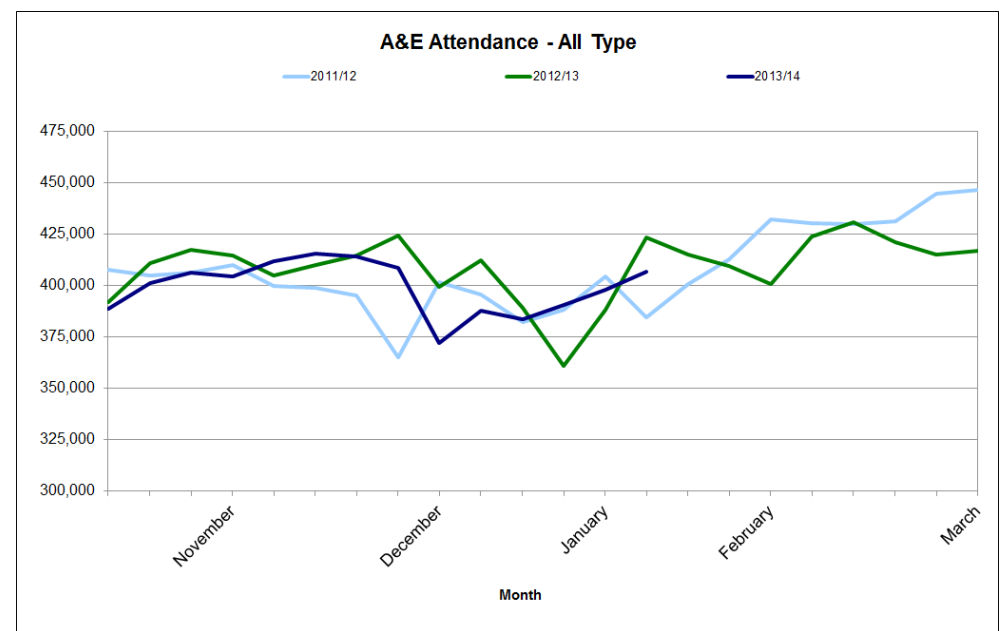
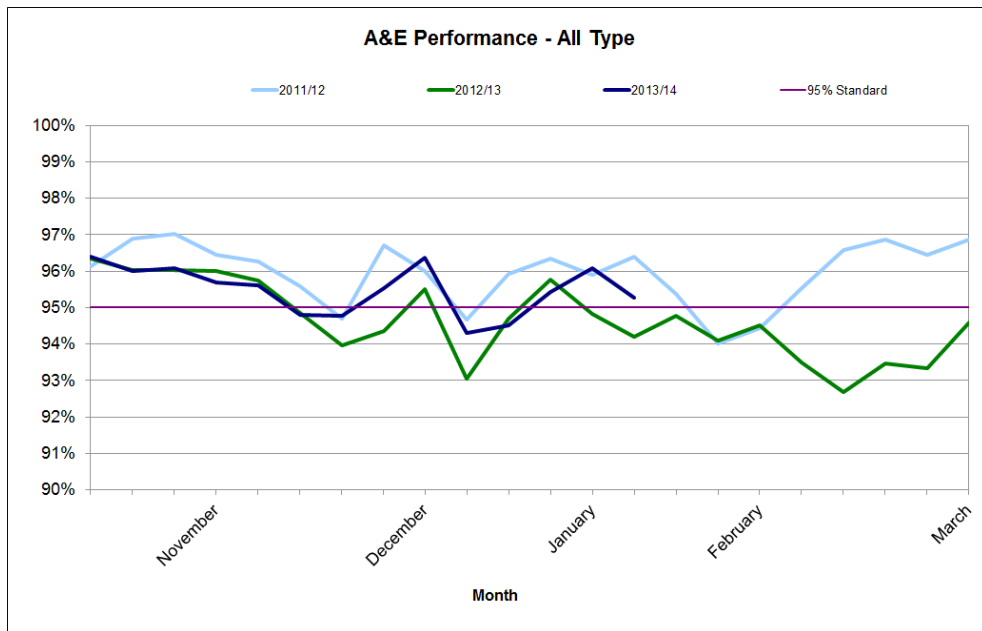
Weekly A&E standard

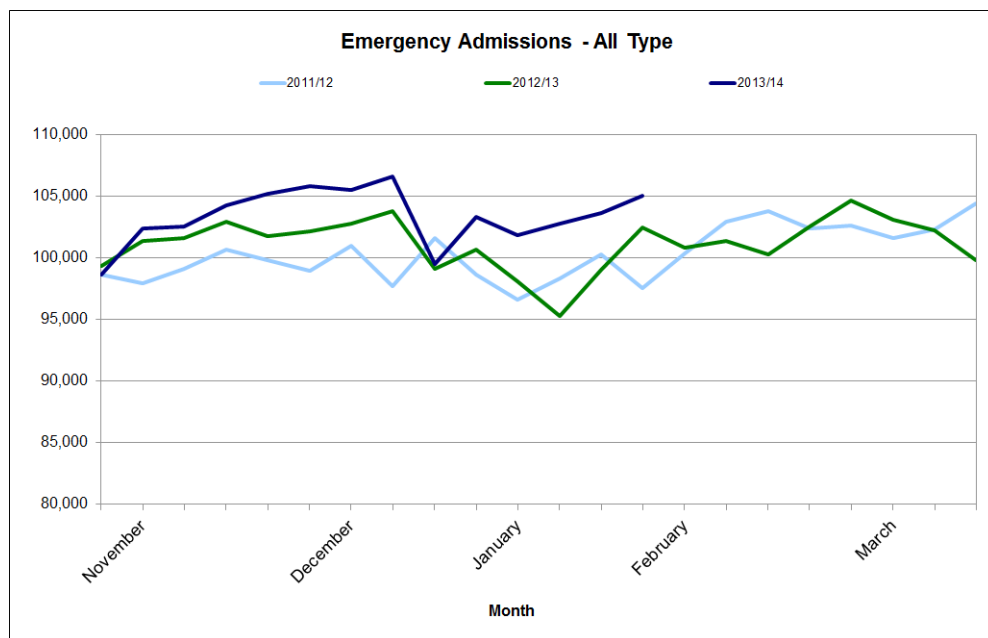
Summary

The percentage of patients spending under 4 hours in A&E last week was 95.3%, which although lower than the previous week, is an improvement on the same period last year. Attendances at A&E have again risen, but remain at the levels expected during winter and are lower than the same week last year. Emergency admissions increased again last week and remain at a higher level than previous years.

Indicator	w/e 2 Feb 2014	w/e 26 Jan 2014	w/e 3 Feb 2013
Total A&E attendance	406,931	397,759	423,114
A&E 4 hour standard (from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge)	95.3%	96.1%	94.2%
Emergency admissions	105,053	103,638	102,424
Number of 12 hour waits for admission	0	0	4
Number of 4 hour waits for admission	3,976	3,202	4,909

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





Situation reports (SITREPs)

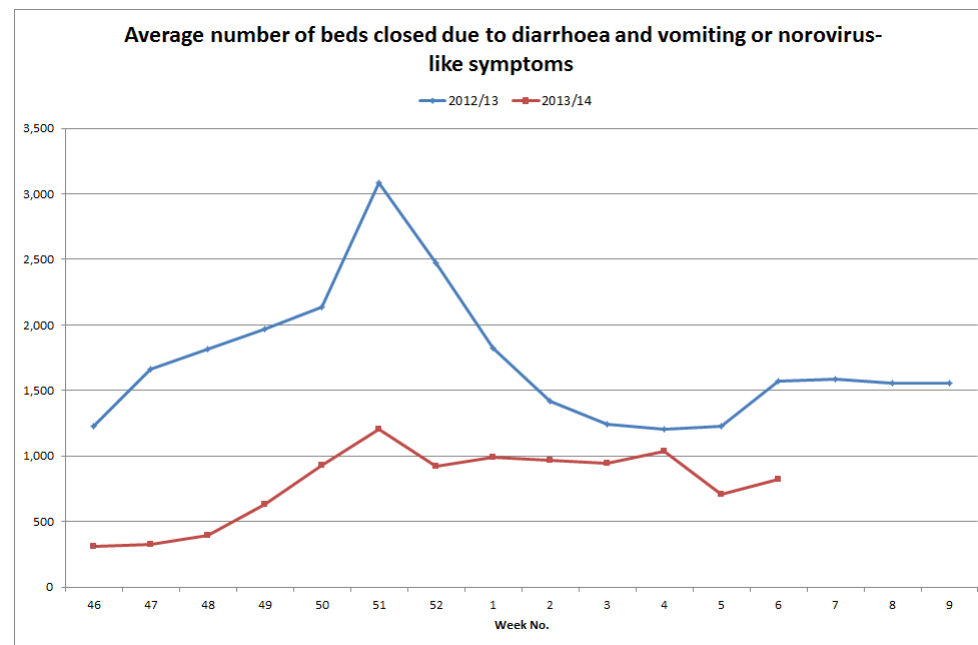
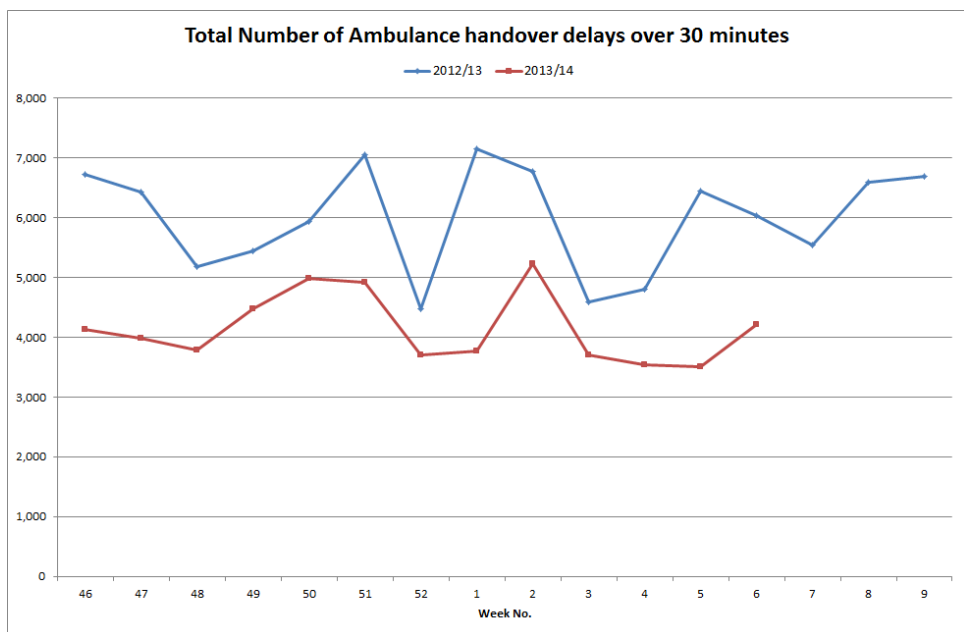
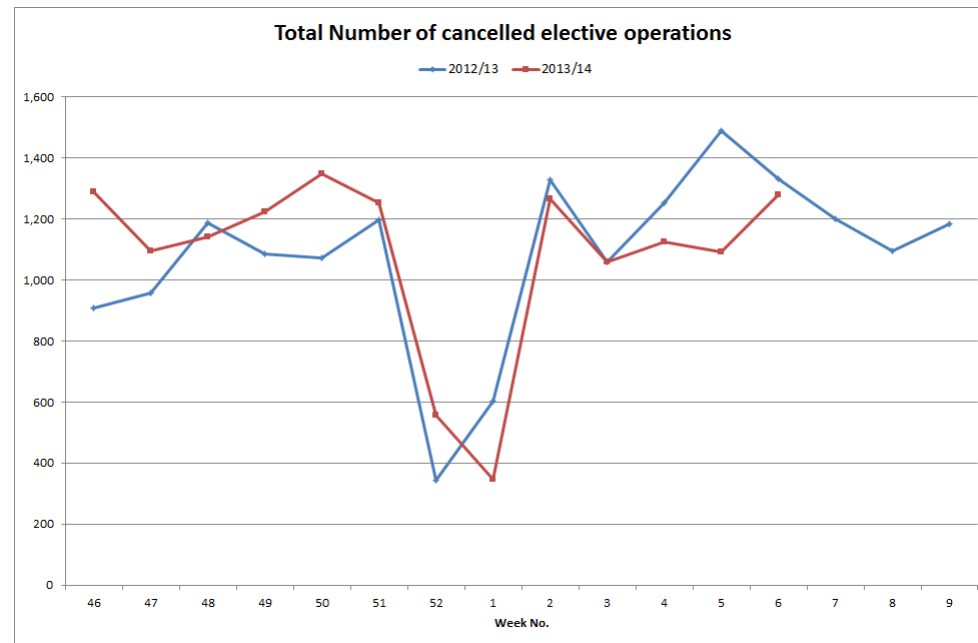
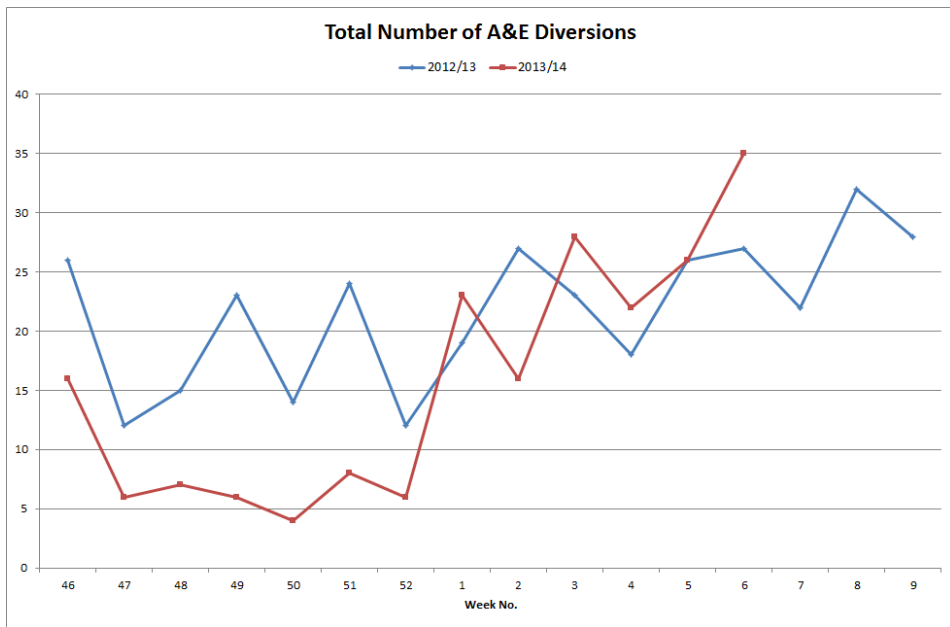
Daily situation reports, or SITREPs, are collected from all hospitals during winter and indicate where there are any winter pressure on the service, such as A&E closures, cancelled operations, bed pressures or ambulance delays. Collection for this year started on 4 November and the reporting requirement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

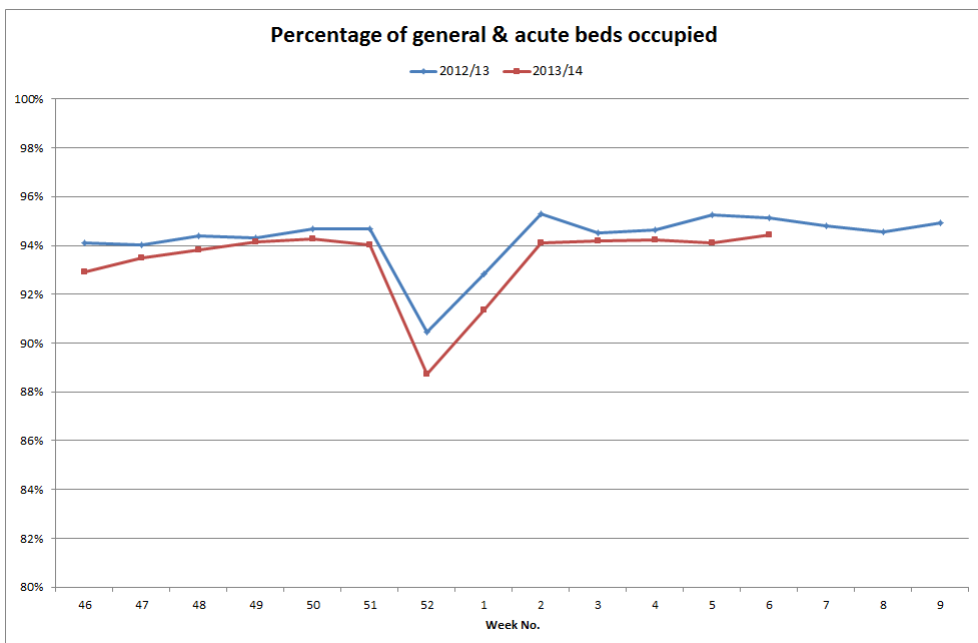
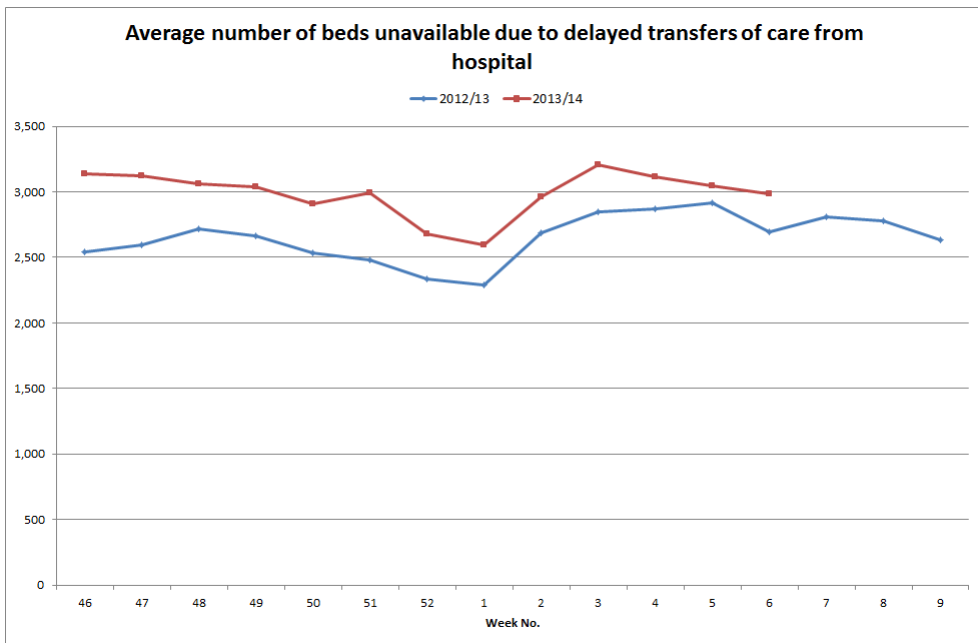
The NHS never shuts but it does sometimes have to alter the way it delivers services. Hospitals sometimes close their accident and emergency departments for short periods of time to walk-in patients but remain open to those people who need its services. This can happen for many different reasons which 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

Daily situation reports for last week show that winter pressures have been increasing, although the situation overall remains favourable when compared to last year. Last week saw a large number of A&E diverts with a total of 35 reported in 12 trusts, and an increased number of delayed ambulance handovers, although this remains at a significantly lower level than last year. Cancelled operations have also increased on the previous week, but are slightly lower than last year. The number of beds closed due to Norovirus like symptoms has increased slightly but remains at a relatively low level, and beds unavailable due to delayed transfers reduced, although these remain higher than last winter.

Indicator	Measure	Week 5, 2014 (w/e 8am 6 Feb)	Week 5, 2013 (w/e 8am 7 Feb)	Cumulative since week 45 (4 Nov)
A&E diverts	Total number of diversions during the week	35	27	212
Ambulance handover delays of over 30 minutes	Total number of delays during the week	4,214	6,037	55,762
Cancelled operations	Number of elective operations cancelled at last minute during the week	1,280	1,331	14,816
Number of beds closed due to diarrhoea and vomiting or norovirus-like symptoms	Average number of beds closed per day	825	1,568	
Number of beds unavailable due to delayed transfers of care from hospital	Average number of beds unavailable per day	2,982	2,695	
General and acute beds occupancy rate	Percentage of beds occupied	94.4%	95.1%	
A full breakdown of the data can be found at here				





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 205,387 calls to NHS 111, compared to the 198,527 calls received last week. The number of callers satisfied with the service remains high at 89 per cent.

Indicator	Week Ending 05/02/2014	Cumulative since 4 Nov
Percent of calls answered in 60 seconds	97.07%	96.16%
Percent of calls abandoned	0.65%	0.75%
Percent of answered calls transferred to clinical advisor	22.39%	22.05%
Percent of calls triaged	86.12%	84.91%
Percent of calls offered a call back	8.33%	7.07%
Percent of calls offered a call back where call back was within 10 minutes	48.57%	55.47%
Percent of calls triaged where ambulance called	10.95%	11.03%
Percent of calls triaged recommended to A&E	7.36%	6.98%
Percent of calls triaged recommended to primary care	62.44%	63.21%
Percent of calls triaged recommended to another service	4.28%	4.49%
Per cent of calls triaged not recommended to another service	14.99%	14.42%

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.