

NHS England's winter health check

The latest position on A&E, winter pressures and influenza for the week ending 28 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

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

"It is really good news that we have improved performance this week. We saw 95 per cent of those patients attending A&E transferred, admitted or discharged within four hours during the week ending [23 February](#). This is down to the hard work of frontline staff who continue to deliver for patients - I want to thank staff across the NHS who made this happen.

"The figures show there was a slight rise in attendances with 410,881 people visiting A&E this week. There were 3,712 more emergency admissions this week compared to the same week last year.

"This week 22 patients waited more than 12 hours from the time decision to admit them to there being a bed available. There were 11 waits at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, seven at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and four at the Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust. We have asked local healthcare leaders to make sure no patient has to wait longer than they should.

"Encouragingly, the number of A&E diverts and ambulance handover delays were down significantly compared to the same period last year. The number of cancelled operations remain stable. The number of beds closed due to diarrhoea and vomiting or norovirus-like symptoms are down on the same time last year. However, the number of delayed transfers of care were up by 441 on the same week last year.

"Taking a rounded view, the NHS has so far performed well over winter. But we are not out of the woods yet and we need to maintain our focus.

"With the temperatures forecast to get colder next week, I would remind people that if they are feeling unwell, please do get early help or advice. For those with respiratory problems or the frail elderly, colder weather can lead to more serious problems. I would like to remind the public that the local pharmacy and NHS 111 both offer expert advice and if your symptoms don't go away, please visit your GP or A&E if it's an emergency."

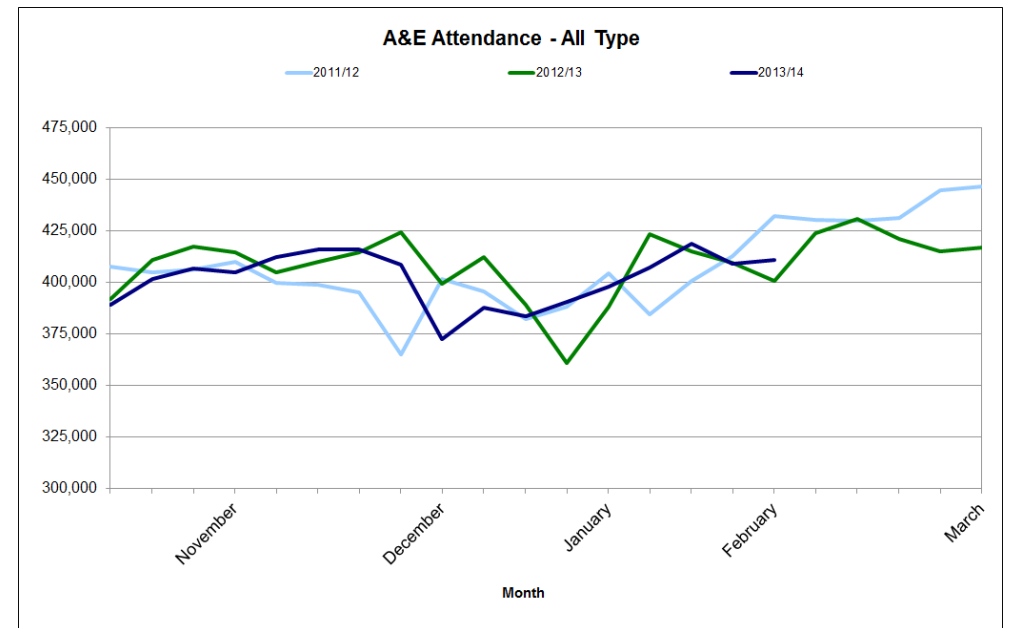
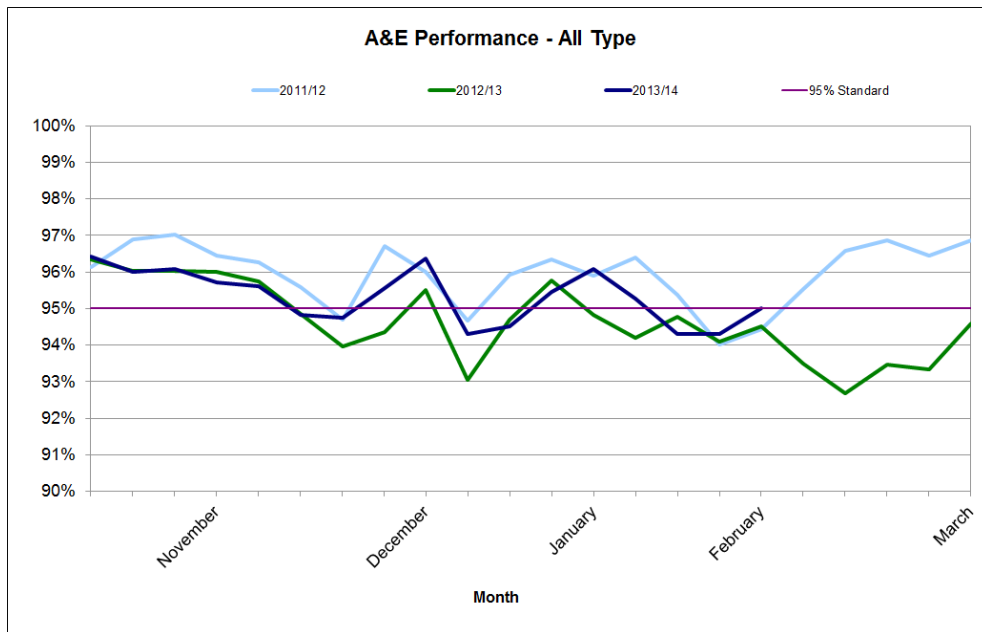
Weekly A&E standard

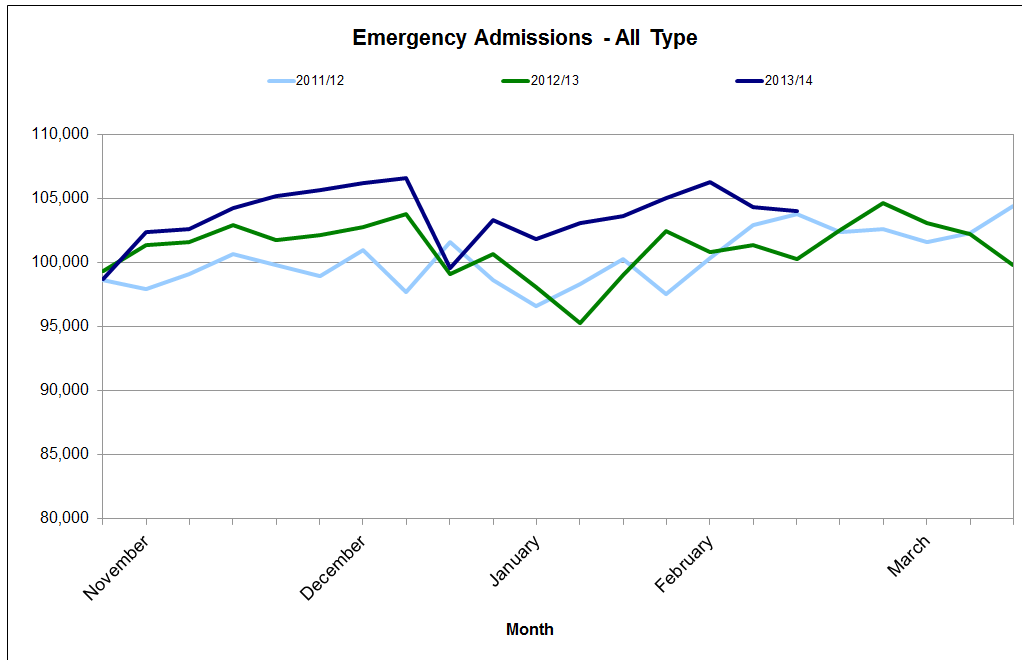
Summary

The percentage of patients spending under 4 hours in A&E last week was 95.0%, up from 94.3% in the previous week and higher than the same period last year. Attendances at A&E were slightly higher last week, but remain at levels broadly consistent with the same time in the last two winters. Emergency admissions fell slightly on the previous week, but remain at a higher level than last year. The number of longer waits for admission fell significantly this week, indicating reduced pressure across the system. However, there were 22 twelve hour waits in three trusts.

Indicator	w/e 23 Feb 2014	w/e 16 Feb 2014	w/e 24 Feb 2013
Total A&E attendance	410,881	409,001	400,726
A&E 4 hour standard (from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge)	95.0%	94.3%	94.5%
Emergency admissions	103,999	104,340	100,287
Number of 12 hour waits for admission	22	19	5
Number of 4 hour waits for admission	3,942	5,409	4,510

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





Situation reports (SITREPs)

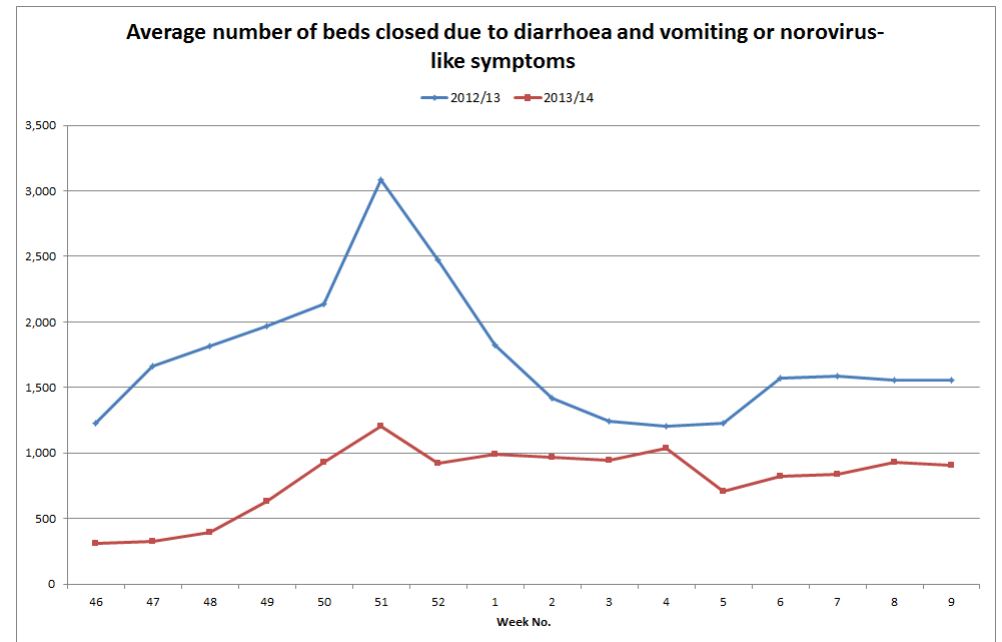
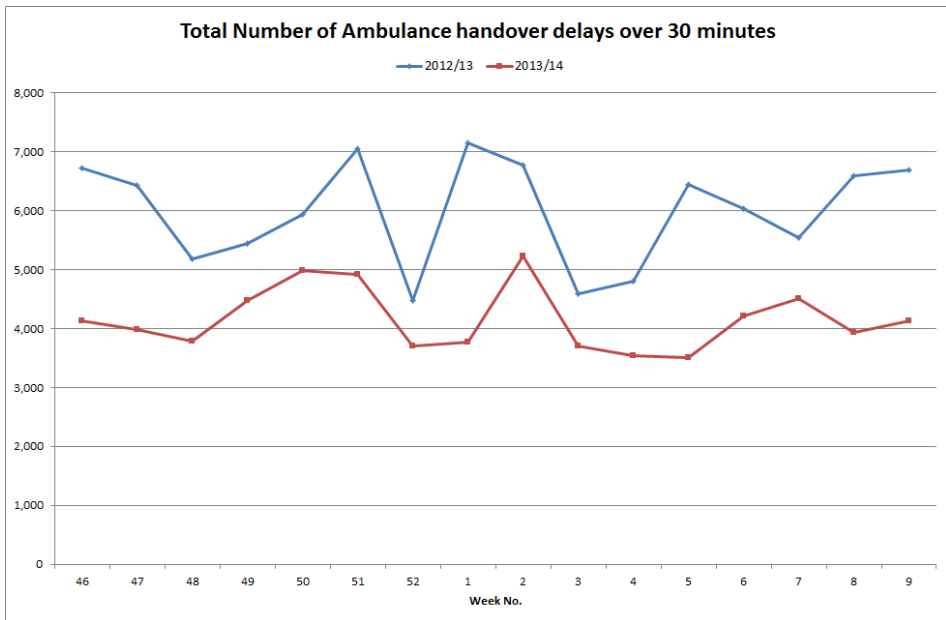
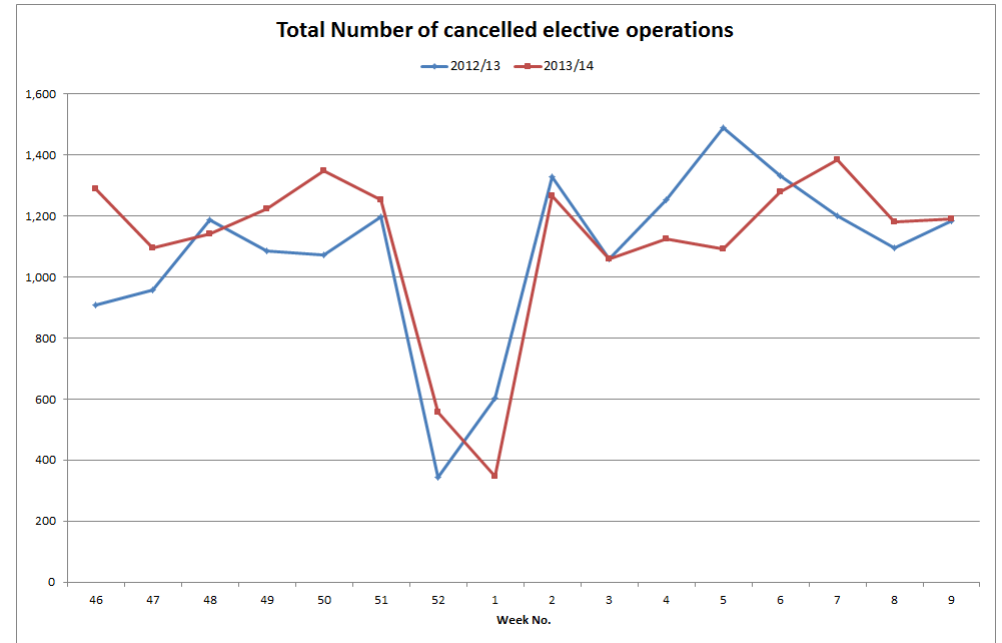
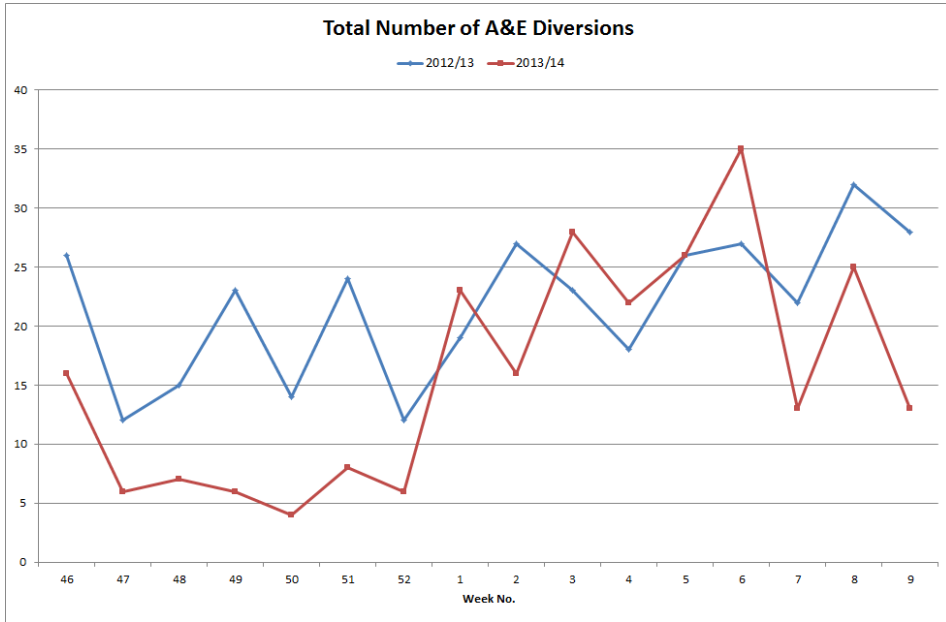
Daily situation reports, or SITREPs, are collected from all hospitals during winter and indicate where there are any winter pressure on the service, such as A&E closures, cancelled operations, bed pressures or ambulance delays. Collection for this year started on 4 November and this year will continue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

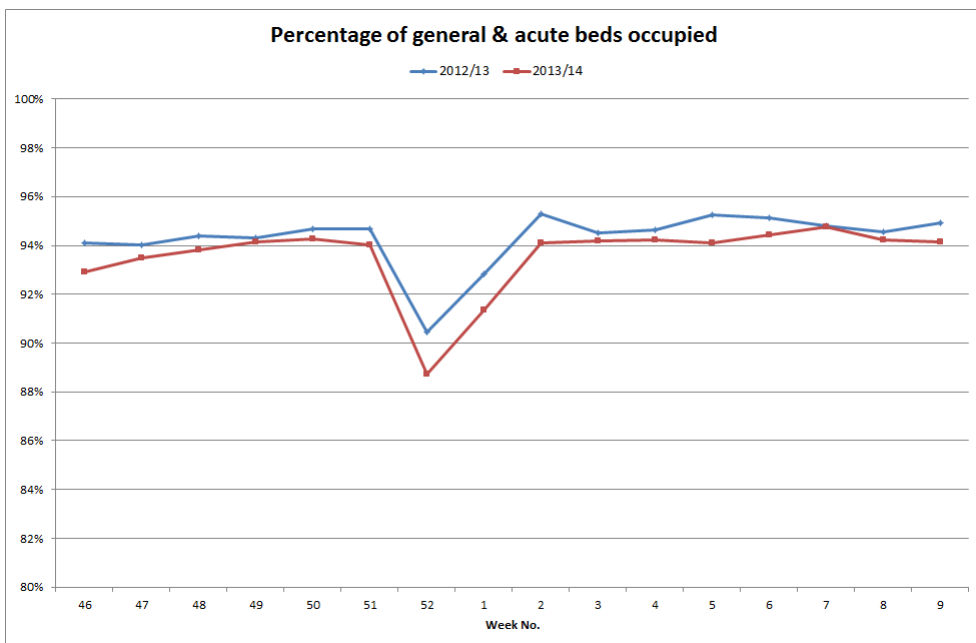
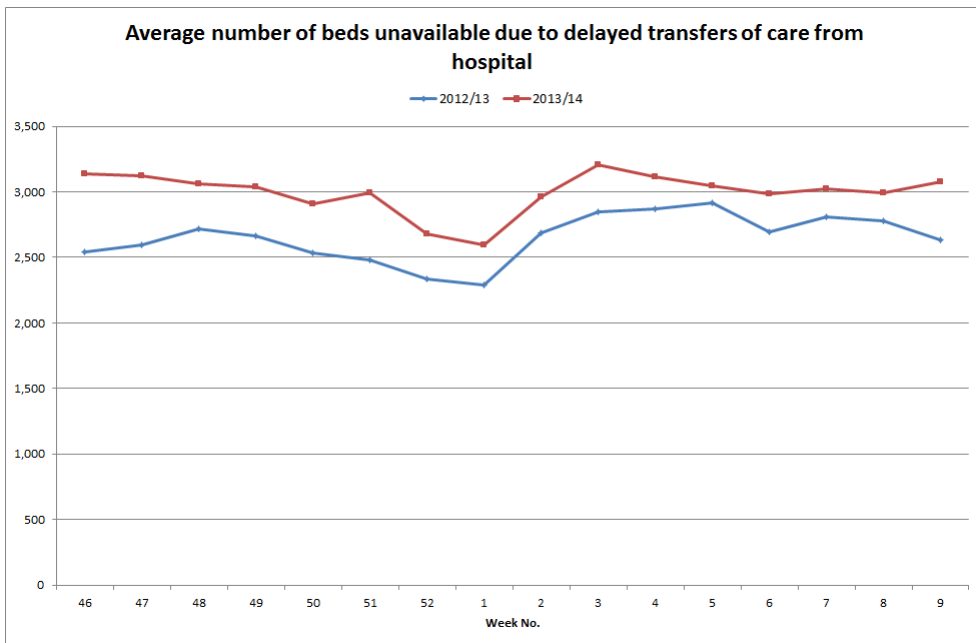
The NHS never shuts but it does sometimes have to alter the way it delivers services. Hospitals sometimes close their accident and emergency departments for short periods of time to walk-in patients but remain open to those people who need its services. This can happen for many different reasons which 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 remain relatively high, although the situation is still favourable when compared to last year. Last week saw a small increase in delayed ambulance handovers, although these remain at a significantly lower level than last year. Cancelled operations also increased, and these continue to closely follow the pattern seen last year. The number of beds closed due to Norovirus like symptoms remain stable at around 900 beds, but beds unavailable due to delayed transfers increased and are at higher levels than last winter.

Indicator	Measure	Week 9, 2014 (w/e 8am 27 Feb)	Week 9, 2013 (w/e 8am 28 Feb)	Cumulative since week 45 (4 Nov)
A&E diverts	Total number of diversions during the week	13	28	263
Ambulance handover delays of over 30 minutes	Total number of delays during the week	4,128	6,684	18,572
Cancelled operations	Number of elective operations cancelled at last minute during the week	1,191	1,183	68,342
Number of beds closed due to diarrhoea and vomiting or norovirus-like symptoms	Average number of beds closed per day	910	1,553	
Number of beds unavailable due to delayed transfers of care from hospital	Average number of beds unavailable per day	3,076	2,635	
General and acute beds occupancy rate	Percentage of beds occupied	94.2%	94.9%	
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 221,853 calls to NHS 111, compared to the 216,842 calls received last week. The number of callers satisfied with the service remains high at 89 per cent.

Indicator	Week Ending: 26/02/2014	Cumulative since 4 Nov
Per cent of calls answered in 60 seconds	94.72%	95.91%
Per cent of calls abandoned	1.09%	0.81%
Per cent of answered calls transferred to clinical advisor	21.09%	21.85%
Per cent of calls triaged	84.82%	84.66%
Per cent of calls offered a call back	9.43%	7.40%
Per cent of calls offered a call back where call back was within 10 minutes	46.68%	53.98%
Per cent of calls triaged where an ambulance was called	11.01%	11.04%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to A&E	7.17%	7.01%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to primary care	62.38%	63.12%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to another service	4.33%	4.37%
Per cent of calls triaged not recommended to another service	15.14%	14.56%

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.