

# NHS England's winter health check

The latest position on A&E, winter pressures and influenza for the week ending 14 March 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 Barbara Hakin, Deputy Chief Executive for NHS England, said:**

“Last week was the busiest week so far this winter, with 438,616 attendances at A&E. Despite the challenge this brings, the NHS continues to provide patients with a good service. This week 95 per cent of those attending A&E were transferred, admitted or discharged within four hours during the week ending 9 March.

“The daily situation reports show the number of A&E diverts and cancelled operations are down compared to last year. The number of ambulance handover delays is down by 634 compared to last week, and delayed transfers of care are also down, which is encouraging.

“The NHS 111 service continues to provide a good service for those needing non-life threatening help and advice, with 220,893 call last week. I am pleased to see 94.56 per cent of calls were answered within 60 seconds and the number of callers satisfied with the service remains high at 89 per cent

“I want to thank all NHS staff for pulling out all the stops for patients this winter. Whilst we still have a way to go, I am very encouraged by how the NHS has responded. The service is in a strong position to continue to deliver for patients and we are monitoring the situation with great care.”

## Weekly A&E standard

### Summary

The percentage of patients spending under 4 hours in A&E last week was 95.0%, up slightly from 94.8% in the previous week, and higher than the same period last year when performance was unusually low. Attendances at A&E have increased again on the previous week, and the figure represents the highest weekly attendances since last summer, although this increased level is consistent with figures in early March in the last two winters. However, emergency admissions decreased in the last week, although they remain at a higher level than last year. The number of longer waits for admission also fell, indicating a slight easing of pressure across the system.

Indicator	w/e 9 Mar 2014	w/e 2 Mar 2014	w/e 10 Mar 2013
Total A&E attendance	438,616	429,998	430,769
A&E 4 hour standard (from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge)	95.0%	94.8%	92.7%
Emergency admissions	105,736	106,043	104,648
Number of 12 hour waits for admission	4	4	13
Number of 4 hour waits for admission	4,115	4,720	6,399

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



## Situation reports (SITREPs)

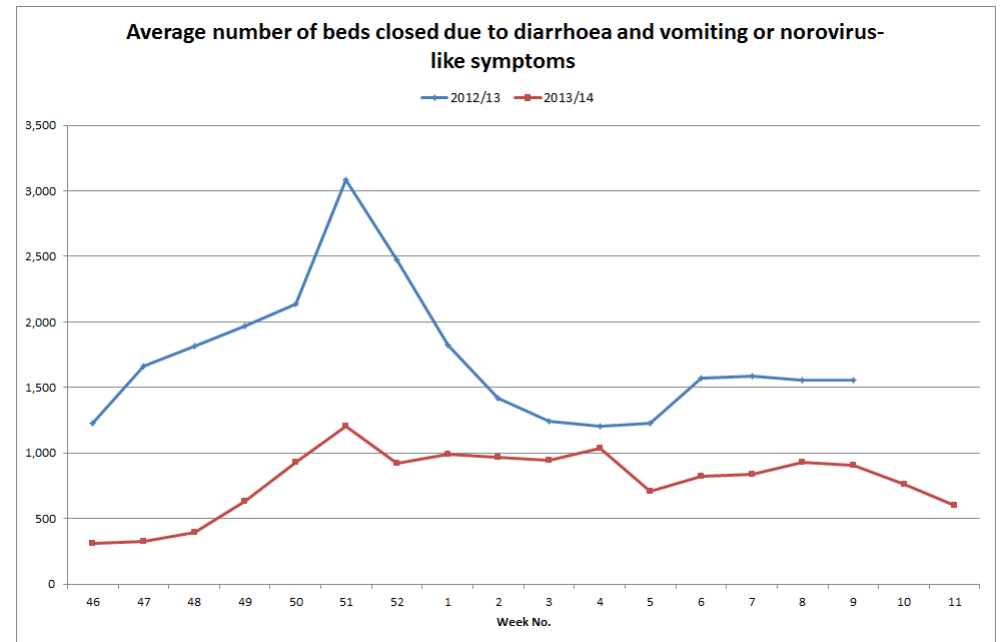
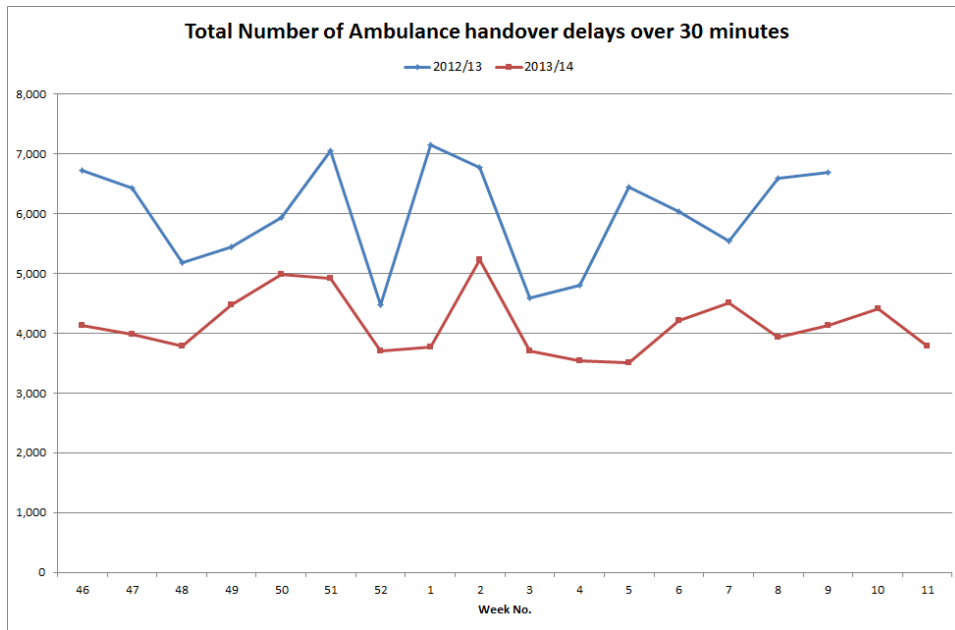
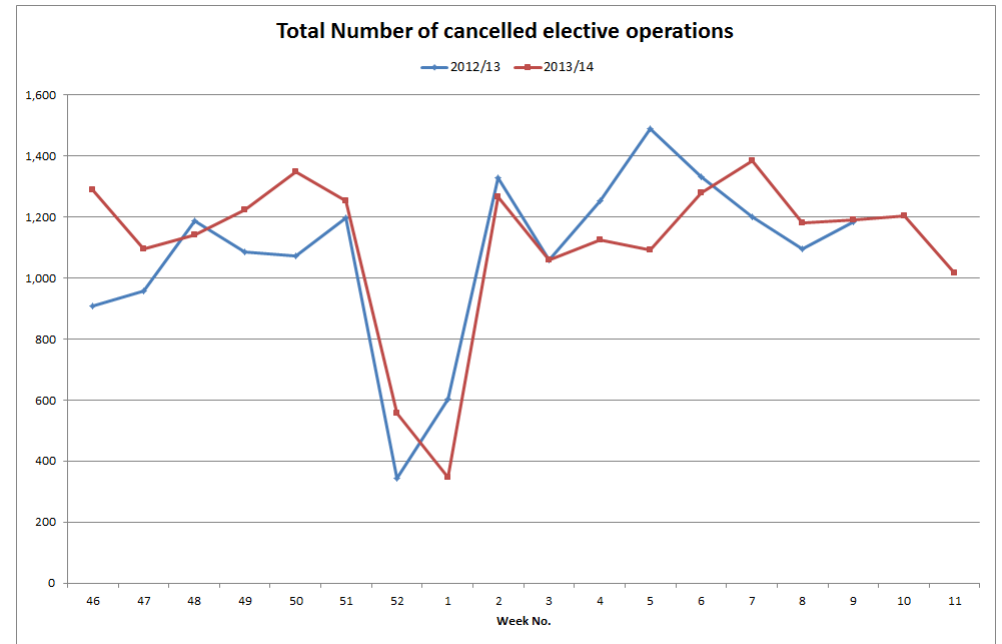
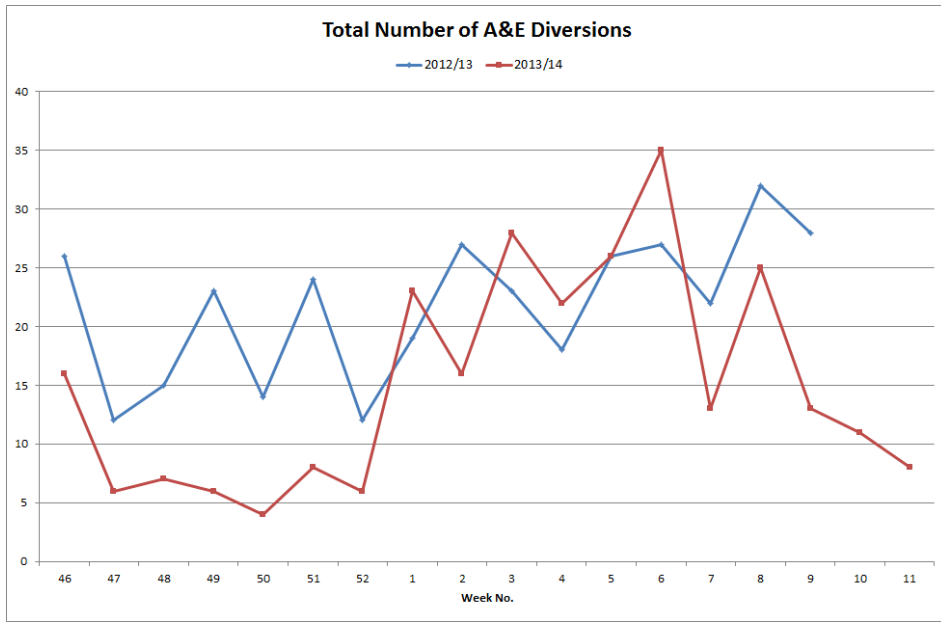
Daily situation reports, or SITREPs, are collected from all hospitals during winter and indicate where there are any winter pressures on the service, such as A&E closures, cancelled operations, bed pressures or ambulance delays. Collection for this year started on 4 November and this year will continue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

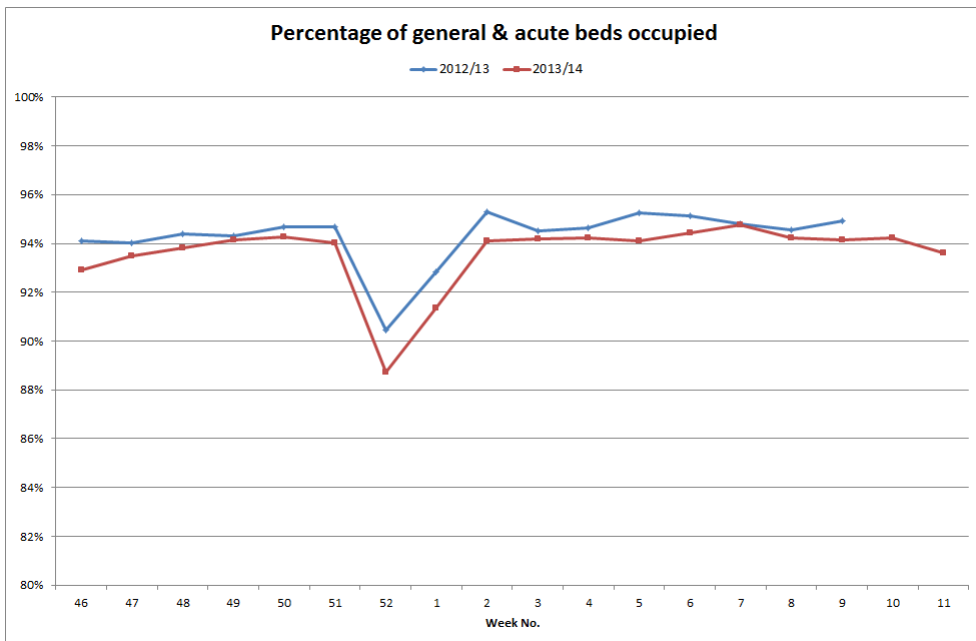
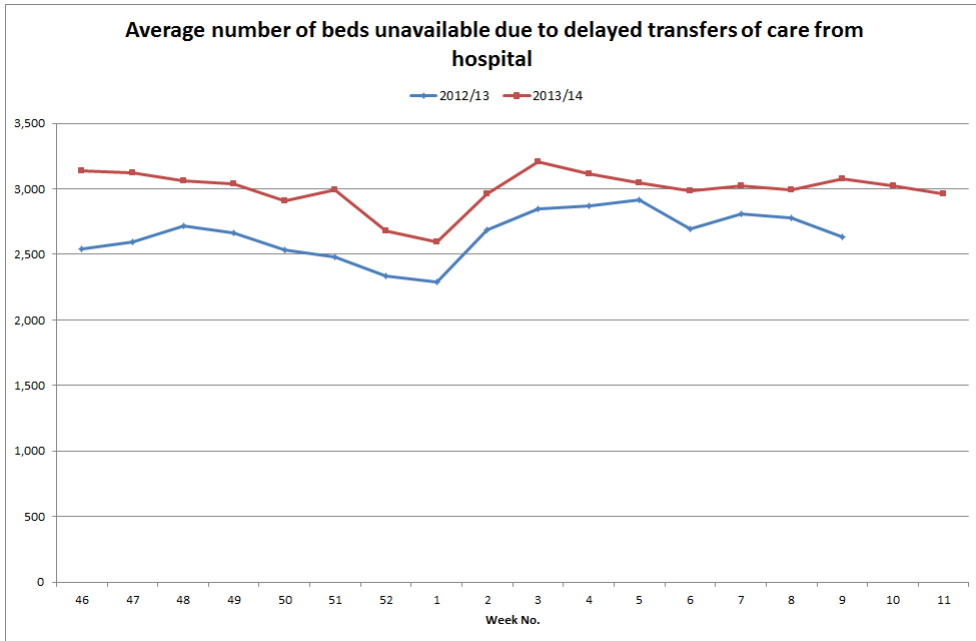
The NHS never shuts but it does sometimes have to alter the way it delivers services. Hospitals sometimes close their accident and emergency departments for short periods of time to walk-in patients but remain open to those people who need its services. This can happen for many different reasons which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

We no longer have the comparison to last year, when daily reporting ceased at the end of February, but data from situation reports for last week show that winter pressures are showing signs of easing. Last week saw falls in both delayed ambulance handovers and cancelled operations, and the number of beds closed due to Norovirus like symptoms have reduced again to the levels seen in early winter. Beds unavailable due to delayed transfers have also fallen, although these are at higher levels than last winter.

Indicator	Measure	Week 11, 2014 (w/e 8am 13 Mar)	Week 10, 2014 (w/e 8am 6 Mar)	Cumulative since week 45 (4 Nov)
A&E diverts	Total number of diversions during the week	8	11	282
Ambulance handover delays of over 30 minutes	Total number of delays during the week	3,782	4,416	76,540
Cancelled operations	Number of elective operations cancelled at last minute during the week	1,018	1,204	20,794
Number of beds closed due to diarrhoea and vomiting or norovirus-like symptoms	Average number of beds closed per day	602	762	
Number of beds unavailable due to delayed transfers of care from hospital	Average number of beds unavailable per day	2,963	3,020	
General and acute beds occupancy rate	Percentage of beds occupied	93.6%	94.2%	
A full breakdown of the data can be found at <a href="#">here</a>				





## 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 220,893 calls to NHS 111, compared to the 219,577 calls received last week. The number of callers satisfied with the service remains high at 89 per cent.

Indicator	Week Ending: 12/03/2014	Cumulative since 4 Nov
Per cent of calls answered in 60 seconds	94.56%	95.79%
Per cent of calls abandoned	1.16%	0.84%
Per cent of answered calls transferred to clinical advisor	21.37%	21.81%
Per cent of calls triaged	85.22%	84.72%
Per cent of calls offered a call back	8.64%	7.54%
Per cent of calls offered a call back where call back was within 10 minutes	44.03%	53.06%
Per cent of calls triaged where an ambulance was called	10.73%	11.01%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to A&E	7.57%	7.07%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to primary care	62.21%	63.01%
Per cent of calls triaged recommended to another service	4.11%	4.35%
Per cent of calls triaged not recommended to another service	15.52%	14.66%

## 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.