

Rotherham Health Select Commission

The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust Update on Urgent and Emergency Care and Trust wide pressures

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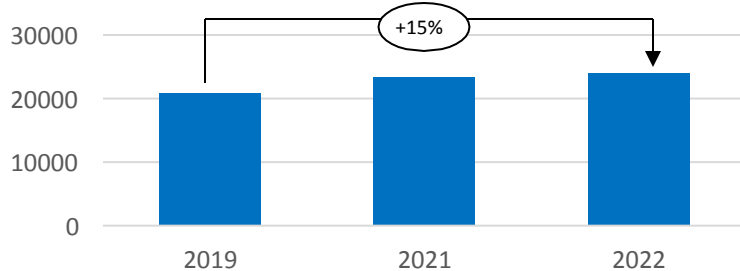
NHSE Field Test Standards

- TRFT is one of 14 field test sites that piloted the new standards to replace the 4 hour target. Commenced 22nd May 2019
- Agreed with commissioners & NHSE/I daily reporting against 4 key indicators:
 - Time to initial assessment
 - Mean total wait
 - Time to be seen by a clinician
 - 12 hours waits in department
- This resulted in the need to change how Emergency Care is managed with patient risk being a key focus.
- The latest NHS planning guidance has confirmed that all Trusts will work to the four hour standard, with the expectation that all Trusts will achieve 76% by the end of 2023/24.

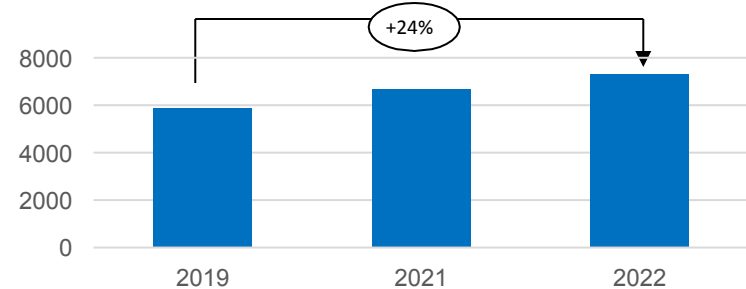
Update on Recent Operational Pressures

- Demands on urgent care were particularly challenging in October and November, with the Trust being on level Operational Pressures Escalation Level (OPEL) 4 for a number of weeks during this period which continued into December.
- Attendances in UECC across Q3 (October to December) were just slightly up on 2021 levels but 15% up on 2019/20, with admissions 9% higher than last year and 24% above 2019/20 levels for those three months. However, the vast majority of the increase in admissions was driven by zero length of stay activity.
- There was a significant increase in the number of children attending UECC in November and December – almost a 40% increase on the same months in 2019, and more than a 20% increase on 2021.

Number of UECC attendances, October-December

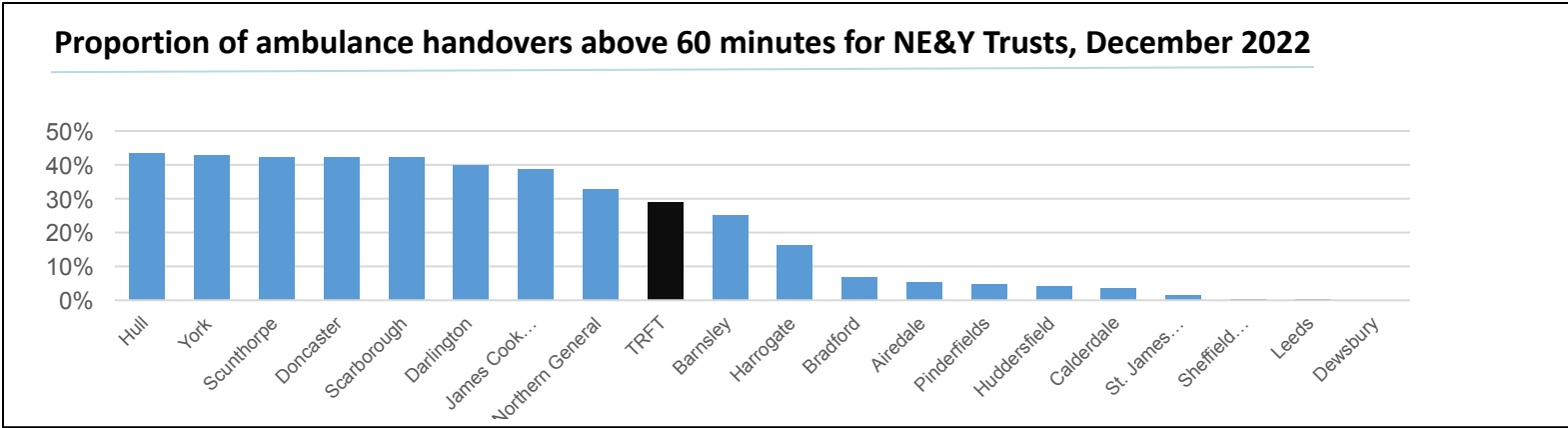


Number of Admissions from UECC, October-December



Ambulance Handovers

- The proportion of ambulances exceeding a one hour handover in November exceeded 21%, equating to more than 11 ambulances a day waiting more than 60 minutes in the month. This compares to 17% in the same month in 2021. In December, pressures increased further at the front door, with 29% of ambulances waiting more than an hour to handover.
- It is worth noting that the Trust was still in the middle of the pack within North East and Yorkshire for ambulance handover delays despite this deterioration, through the combination of high demand at the front door, the ongoing Covid-19 demand, new flu-demand and high levels of staff sickness.



Discharges and Length of Stay

- The numbers of long length-of-stay (21+ day) patients fell slightly in Q3 to just over 60 patients at the end of November, but remained at the equivalent of two wards of patients. This is a similar level to 2021. A slightly higher number of patients currently have 'no right to reside', so are ready for discharge.
- The most recent benchmarked data (January 2023) shows that the proportion of patients in the Trust for more than 21 days has now increased to 17%, compared to a national average of 21%.
- Additional bridging services (social care) and resource in the community came on line in November 2022, with Discharge to Assess gradually coming on stream
- Regular meetings with partners including social care have taken place, to escalate key issues and take action to support discharge challenges.

Covid-19 and Flu Update

- As at the 17th January 2023, the Trust had 17 COVID-19 positive inpatients and has cared for 5,966 COVID-19 positive inpatients since the start of the pandemic. The Trust was one of the most highly COVID-19 impacted Trusts in the country.
- The Trust was also saw high numbers of inpatients suffering from flu. At the peak in December, there were over 50 inpatients being treated for flu.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) was also a challenge for the Trust.
- Strep A concerns resulted in significant numbers of children attending UECC in December. Similarly, Sheffield Children's Hospital saw record attendances in December.

Waiting Times in the Urgent & Emergency Care Centre (UECC)

- Despite all of these increased challenges, the proportion of patients waiting over 12 hours in A&E remained at similar levels to previous months in November, although this was an increase on 2021 levels, with an additional approximately 230 patients waiting over 12 hours in department before being discharged or admitted.
- The figures demonstrate the intense challenges experienced in the Trust in recent months, through the combination of high demand at the front door, the ongoing Covid-19 demand, new flu-demand and high levels of staff sickness.
- These led to increasing complexity around cohorting of patients within the Trust, in order to minimise the cross-infection risk to both staff and other patients, particularly given the two strains of Flu that we are managing for.

Actions Taken

- A number of actions have been taken to alleviate the current pressures within the Urgent and Emergency Care Centre, including:
 - Relocation of primary care to a separate area to alleviate pressures in the waiting room and release room capacity to see more patients
 - Chief Executive led weekly acute performance meeting with teams to deliver improvements
 - Chief Executive led Acute Care Transformation Programme to drive more significant changes in a sustainable way, including changes to pathways, workforce planning, patient experience
- We took a number of actions to specifically address increased demand in paediatric attendances including additional support, nursing and medical staff on the ward

Industrial Action

- Nursing colleagues at the Trust did not taken strike action in Rotherham
- The Trust responded to Industrial Action taken by Ambulance services on the 21st Dec and 11th January. The Trust set up a Gold command in response to the action. On the dates, Ambulance conveyancing reduced by 30%
- The key challenge for the Trust was to achieve 15 minute ambulance handovers. In the main, this was achieved
- Elective activity levels at the Trust were not adversely impacted as a result of the industrial action.

Workforce Challenges and Actions

- The workforce has delivered patient care whilst managing the impact of the pandemic for almost 3 years
- Staff sickness has increased over the pandemic period, although did reduce in the final months of 2022. At the peak, just over 9% of colleagues at the Trust were absent from work due to sickness including COVID. More recently, this has reduced to 5.8%
- A number of actions have been taken to improve health and wellbeing of colleagues at work.
 - Introduction of Health & Well-being Champions
 - Introduction of a Workplace Disability Advisor to support with reasonable adjustments process
 - In 2021/22 the Trust spent £555k on staff wellbeing projects including a number of refurbished kitchens, rest rooms and new locker facilities

This year, the Trust has committed £300k on further staff wellbeing projects, including staff room upgrades and staff shower and changing facilities

- The National Staff Survey is the prime tool for measuring how the workforce feels. The results for the Trust along with how the Trust compares nationally will be published in the coming weeks.

Conclusion

- A very difficult winter so far with higher demand than previous years, as well as infection, prevention and control challenges to manage and increased staff sickness
- A number of actions taken to improve patient care and waiting times, focussed on managing the greatest clinical risk
- Focus given to tangible changes which will improve the health and wellbeing of staff