

For the Record – Press Statements

Publication	Birmingham Mail
Date of article	Monday 15 th December 2014
Reporter	Anuji Varma
Headline	NHS in Crisis: Nursing facing a lack of staff shortage ticking 'timebomb'
First paragraph/s of article	A leading nursing figure has warned the profession is face a ticking “timebomb” because of the lack of staff, with an estimated 2,000 unfilled vacancies across the West Midlands.
Paragraphs relating to The Dudley Group	<p>A spokeswoman for the Dudley Group which runs Russells Hall Hospital, said: "Due to a national nursing shortage, The Dudley Group, like many other trusts, has been forced to look overseas to recruit qualified nurses with acute hospital experience.</p> <p>"We have recruited from Portugal and Spain and recently held a recruitment open day in Dudley to attract staff nurses and shift leads to work in the Emergency Department, Emergency Assessment Unit, short stay medical ward and in Surgery, Trauma and Orthopaedics and Elderly Care.</p> <p>"We have successfully interviewed 23 UK nurse graduates and 10 Portuguese nurses who are due to start in February 2015 and 12 more nurses are completing the interview process to take up posts next year.</p> <p>"As of February 2015, we will have no nurse vacancies."</p>
Press enquiry	<p>The Birmingham Mail contacted the Trust with a number of questions relating to how we will tackle pressures over the busy winter period.</p> <p>The Birmingham Mail asked the following:</p> <p>Bed shortages - the UK has the least number of hospital beds per person than almost any country in the western world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the situation at the trust - are the hospital/s operating at near full capacity?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many beds are there in total at each hospital? • Has the trust reached full bed capacity yet and/or declared a major internal incident in the past year. • What is the Trust's plan of action should a major internal incident be declared? • The QE was forced to open part of the old hospital last year to cope with demand. They still have this in place and it's created around 100 extra beds. Is there anything similar that the Trust is looking at? <p>A&E waiting times - some hospitals around the Midlands aren't performing as well as they should with many not hitting the four hour target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the trust doing to resolve the situation? • Could the problem become worse this Winter? • What message do the bosses at the Trust want to put out to people who maybe thinking of visiting A&E? <p>Nursing Shortages - there is a shortage UK-wide. Many hospitals seem to be running recruitment programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What recruitment drives is the trust carrying out. • I'm after numbers of nurses currently working at the Trust - and how many is the trust is looking to recruit (if any). • What cuts have been made or are being made to nursing staff in the past year? <p>Cancelled Operations –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the trust doing to reduce the number of cancelled operations. • Why is this a problem?
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Trust response

COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Bed shortages - the UK has the least number of hospital beds per person than almost any country in the western world.

- **What is the situation at the trust - are the hospital/s operating at near full capacity?**
Bed capacity fluctuates on a daily basis

- **How many beds are there in total at each hospital?**

732 at Russells Hall Hospital.

- **Has the trust reached full bed capacity yet and/or declared a major internal incident in the past year.**

On January 9th 2014 we experienced unprecedented pressure on our emergency services and asked patients to think twice before attending Accident Emergency at Russells Hall Hospital.

- **What is the Trust's plan of action should a major internal incident be declared?**

If the Trust needed to declare a major significant incident, staff would follow our Business Continuity Plan which sets out the process for responding to different types of incidents in order to manage disruptions to the delivery of services.

- **The QE was forced to open part of the old hospital last year to cope with demand. They still have this in place and it's created around 100 extra beds. Is there anything similar that the Trust is looking at?**

No.

A&E waiting times - some hospitals around the Midlands aren't performing as well as they should with many not hitting the four hour target.

- **What is the trust doing to resolve the situation?**

We recognise that in common with many trusts across the country we have struggled to meet the target to see, treat, admit or discharge patients within four hours of arrival in A&E. Demand for our services has increased significantly and we work hard with our social care partners to try to ensure patients who are medically fit leave the hospital as soon as possible. It is encouraging to see we are improving the amount of patients we see treat admit or discharge within the four hours.

We have a team of clinical site co-ordinators who have the overall responsibility for the co-ordinating of patient flow 24 hours a day. The team use a hospital escalation process to assist in managing pressures. This information is shared across the Black Country and West Midlands and is updated throughout the day and is shared with organisations providing care e.g. West Midlands Ambulance Service, walk in centre, local authority and clinical commissioning group. When the Trust is experiencing extreme pressures there are teleconferences with our partner organisations to implement appropriate actions.

We have a dedicated "capacity hub" that acts as a command centre and is aware of current waits, patient volumes in our Emergency Department, how many patients are being discharged from the wards etc. The Trust has daily predictions for ED attendances, ambulances, admissions and discharges, and

this information is used to ensure that the right resources are available.

- **Could the problem become worse this Winter?**

Yes

- **What message do the bosses at the Trust want to put out to people who maybe thinking of visiting A&E?**

Our message to patients is always to only attend the Accident and Emergency department if they have a genuine emergency needing immediate medical care or if they have a life threatening condition. Unless they have a genuine emergency or have a life threatening condition, they are asked to go to their walk in centre, GP or visit their local pharmacist.

Nursing Shortages - there is a shortage UK-wide. Many hospitals seem to be running recruitment programmes.

- **What recruitment drives is the trust carrying out.**

Due to a national nursing shortage, The Dudley Group, like many other trusts, has been forced to look overseas to recruit qualified nurses with acute hospital experience. We have recruited from Portugal and Spain and recently held a recruitment open day in Dudley to attract staff nurses and shift leads to work in the Emergency Department, Emergency Assessment Unit, short stay medical ward and in Surgery, Trauma and Orthopaedics and Elderly Care.

- **I'm after numbers of nurses currently working at the Trust - and how many is the trust is looking to recruit (if any).**

As of 1st December 2014 there is a headcount of 1,646 in the staff group 'registered nursing'. We have successfully interviewed 23 UK nurse graduates and ten Portuguese nurses who are due to start in February 2015 and 12 more nurses are completing the interview process to take up posts next year. As of February 2015, we will have no nurse vacancies.

- **What cuts have been made or are being made to nursing staff in the past year?**

None.

Cancelled Operations –

- **What is the trust doing to reduce the number of cancelled operations.**

The Dudley Group always makes every effort to carry out operations on the day they are planned; however, there are some occasions when this is not possible and surgery has to be postponed. In 2013/14, 75 per cent (1236) of cancellations were initiated by the patient for a variety of reasons, including failing to attend for a procedure (on 379 occasions during the year).

Other reasons patients' operations may have been cancelled include being acutely unwell (372), for example, they may have been suffering from a cough

or cold where undergoing anaesthetic would have put the patient at risk. Our third highest number of cancellations was due to the patient being chronically ill (142), for example, they may have had an underlying medical condition such as coagulation (blood clotting) issue.

Postponing operations is never ideal and we always apologise to our patients for any distress or inconvenience this may cause.

- **Why is this a problem?**
See above

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