

PRESS RELEASE - Thursday 10 January 2019

Thanks for South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS staff after exceptionally busy festive period

NHS leaders in South Tyneside and Sunderland have praised frontline staff for their ongoing hard work and tremendous efforts caring for patients after recording one of the busiest festive periods on record for local hospital services.

Latest performance data published by NHS England today* shows both Trusts continue to successfully treat the overwhelming majority of patients within four hours of arrival in emergency care, despite seeing an increase in overall attendances during the busy festive period**.

In the three week period covering Christmas and New Year**, Sunderland Royal Hospital saw a significant increase (16%) in the number of seriously ill patients arriving by ambulance, receiving more patients than the region's two major trauma centres in Newcastle and Middlesbrough with an average of over 100 ambulance arrivals every single day. For the same period in South Tyneside, there was a 12% increase in ambulance arrivals and an average of 45 ambulance attendances a day.

During the same three week period, there were over 13,500 total emergency attendances across the two Trusts, 4,259 at South Tyneside District Hospital and 9,484 at Sunderland Royal Hospital, representing an overall increase of 2.8% across both hospitals compared to last year.

Despite the continued rise in demand, both Trusts continue to perform amongst the best in the NHS, with 92.10% of patients in South Tyneside and 88.52% of patients in Sunderland being seen and treated or discharged within four hours of arrival during December. Across England, the NHS achieved 86.4% for December.

Ken Bremner Chief Executive of South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts expressed his sincere thanks to staff. He said: "Having visited

and spoken to staff in our hospitals over the past week, it is clear that we have experienced one of our busiest festive periods on record for both South Tyneside and Sunderland.

“Over the holidays we had very high numbers of attendances and a big rise, particularly at Sunderland Royal Hospital, in the number of ambulances arriving with very seriously ill patients in need of emergency hospital admission.

“As always, our teams have been fantastic, pulling out all the stops and working together to care for these very poorly patients and effectively manage the additional pressures that winter always brings for the NHS. I would like to thank all staff across South Tyneside and Sunderland for their efforts during what continues to be an exceptionally busy time for our services.”

Everyone can help reduce the pressure on the NHS this winter by looking after themselves, keeping a well-stocked medicine kit at home, using local pharmacists for expert advice and treatment for common illnesses or by **calling NHS 111** for urgent advice **before** attending hospital. Hundreds of extra GP appointments are also available on an evening and weekends by contacting your GP practice in the usual way or calling NHS 111 which is available 24/7.

Parents can also search for the 'NHS child health' in the app store to get a free app developed by local doctors and nurses for advice on common childhood illnesses. For detailed information of all available services visit www.urgentoremergency.co.uk.

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Notes to Editors

*NHS England - December 2018 performance data:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/ae-waiting-times-and-activity/ae-attendances-and-emergency-admissions-2018-19/>

** Three week festive period which data covers is 17 December to 6 January.

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