

WHERE HAVE ALL THE BEDS GONE?!

If you have come to this article, you may have already been informed of the recent changes to the NHS and want more details. You've read Sinead O'Sullivan's article, you know the facts and statistics but you're still unsure. How will this affect you? Will you get any say in what is happening around you?

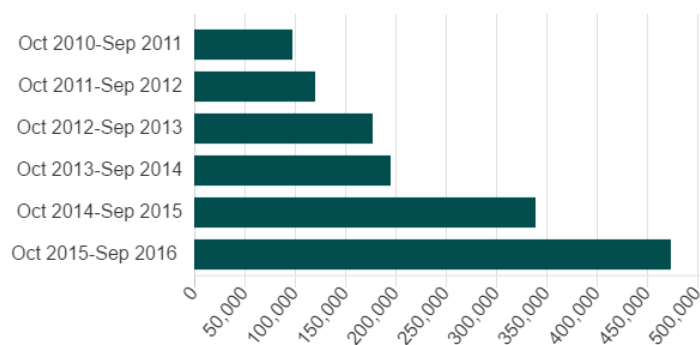
So, you've had an accident, you need urgent help and have gone to A&E. You've explained your injury and they have informed you to be seated and a doctor will see you soon. 'Soon' can now be anywhere from 4 – 12 hours. That's right. The number of patients waiting four or more hours has risen more than 300% at some hospitals. The overall target percentage of the amount of patients seen within 4 hours is 95%, however, across England in 2015-16, only 85% of patients were seen. The lowest level was at The Hillingdon Hospitals in London at 68%.

So you've waited hours and have finally been admitted to the hospital and they've decided you have to wait longer on a

chair in a corridor because there aren't enough beds. This is a serious problem that has been admitted by the hospital staff.

NHS figures (shown by year on the right) show that nearly 475,000 patients waited for more than four hours for a bed on a ward in 2015-16 - almost a

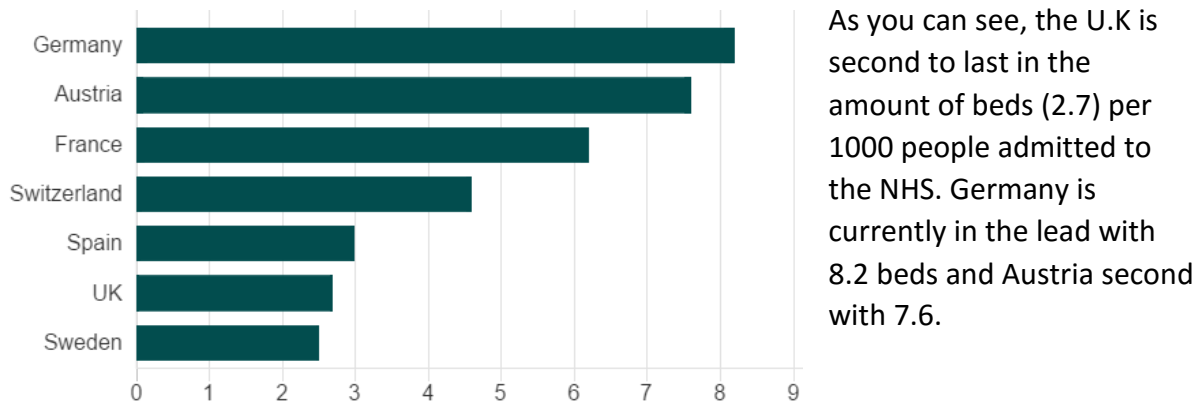
five-fold increase since 2010-11. This increases the risk of infection, transmitted by awaiting patients, ward mishaps/mix-ups and overall a negative experience. Many people have already complained about their negative experiences on the wait and disorganisation of the Accident & Emergency department.



Rupert Nathan, 55, is one of these people. Rupert was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance suffering from chest pains in June. He had previously had two angioplasties – one in 2000 and one in 2001 – because of angina and it was feared he was having a heart attack. He was taken by ambulance to Barnet Hospital in London and was given blood and heart tests. At this point, the hospital staff decided to admit him for further tests. However, Rupert reports that that he spent more than 5 hours waiting for a bed, left in pain in a waiting room with his girlfriend and with little to no contact with any other staff or doctors. He says it wasn't until after midnight that he was told they had a bed for him. When questioned why there was such a delay Nathan told us "I was told the delays were due to the hospital being very busy. I could see that" he says "but it is still not acceptable."

Rupert Nathan is just one of many displeased patients complaining about the care and attention they received upon being admitted to A&E. However, Doctors also share patients concerns, speaking up about how the overcrowding is dangerous and can lead to worse outcomes for patients. A spokesman for NHS England said “growing demand” was putting pressure on the system and that the number of emergency admissions had risen by more than 500,00 in five years to 4.2 million.

The graph below shows exactly how many beds the NHS has per 1000 person compared to other countries in Europe.



Jeremy Hunt has spoken out about this unacceptable development and demanded that the NHS get back to meeting the target for seeing patients swiftly in the A&E. This is supported by Chancellor Phillip Hammond announcing an extra £2 billion over the next 3 years for Social Care. So should we see how this unravels? Or should we take a stand?

Written by Paisleigh Wilson-Thomas

Sources:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-39217595>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-38757708>

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