

NHS Continues to Face Record Demand for Services, New Data Shows



NHS staff continue to face significant demand for urgent care, with new figures showing that A&Es in England managed their busiest ever month for attendances in May.

New monthly performance data also shows that it was a record April for the number of elective appointments delivered for hundreds of thousands of patients.

The latest statistics, published today, show that more than 2.4 million people (2,416,292) attended A&Es across the country in May – the highest number on record.

Across all types of A&E in May, there were almost 5% more attendances per day compared with April. Type 1 A&Es saw an average of 1,700 more patients per day compared with the month before.

It was the second busiest month on record for emergency admissions, with 564,693 admitted in May – second only to March 2024, which saw 567,456 emergency admissions.

Ambulance staff also contended with high demand, with the busiest May on record for Category 1 incidents (81,774), alongside a high number of Category 2 call-outs (392,275).

While the overall Covid backlog for routine treatment has increased – to 7.57 million in April, from 7.54 million the previous month – staff carried out a record number of elective procedures, appointments and tests for April (1,481,152), more than the previous high for that month of 1,363,439 in April 2019.

Data shows for each month over the past 10 months, more elective activity has been delivered compared with the same month pre-pandemic.

Waits of more than 52 weeks (302,589) are the lowest they have been since August 2021 (295,362), while waits of more than 18 weeks are the lowest in almost a year – 3,161,429 in April 2024, the lowest since 3,091,288 in June 2023.

Today's data shows it was the busiest ever April for diagnostic activity, with 2,328,986 tests, checks and scans carried out – 21% more than same month pre-pandemic (1,917,308 in April 2019).

In April, there were 260,108 urgent suspected cancer referrals seen, a record for that month, and up almost a third (31%) from April 2019 (199,217).

The number of people receiving a cancer diagnosis or having cancer ruled out within four weeks is also a record number for April – 194,504 –

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despite the increased demand for referrals.

The latest figures come as the NHS prepares for more strike action by junior doctors from 7am on Thursday 27 June. NHS advice will remain the same – people should continue to use 999 in an emergency and NHS 111 online in the first instance.

Professor Sir Stephen Powis, NHS National Medical Director, said : “As these figures show, demand for NHS services across the country remains high. May was a record month for urgent and emergency services, with the highest number of A&E attendances as well as being the busiest May for the most urgent ambulance call-outs, while staff delivered a record number of elective appointments for April.

“This is alongside viruses that are still causing concern, including whooping cough. Cases have been rising sharply in recent months, and there have sadly been eight infant deaths this year. We continue to urge all pregnant women to get vaccinated to help protect their babies in the first few weeks of their life, and ensure that their children get protected in the first few months after birth as part of the routine NHS vaccine offer.

“We are also encouraging those who are eligible to come forward for their Covid-19 vaccination before the spring booster campaign ends on June 30. This virus can still cause severe illness and hospitalisations in some cases, particularly among those most at risk. The vaccine gives the best protection against the virus and its different variants, and helps reduce the risk of serious illness.

“With junior doctors striking for five days starting from the end of June, the NHS is preparing for further disruption to services in coming weeks. We would remind people to continue to use NHS services in the usual way by using 999 and A&E in an emergency, and by using 111 online and community services like GPs and pharmacies which are open as usual for help and advice.”

This year's spring Covid vaccine programme ends on 30 June 2024.

Anyone currently aged 75 and over, or who will be aged 75 by 30 June 2024, is able to get the Covid-19 vaccine, along with older adult care home residents and people with a weakened immune system aged six months and over.

Source & Image Credit: [NHS](#)

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