

Stafford A&E Temporary Overnight Closure

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does this mean that A&E at Stafford is closing permanently?

A: No, as soon as the Trust is sure that it is safe to reopen A&E 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it will do so.

Q: Is this about saving money?

A: No, this is about keeping patients safe - which is our number one priority. This will in fact cost us more money as we will be losing income.

Q: How can patients be safer if they have to travel further?

A: It is safer to go to a fully staffed Emergency Department than to attend one which may not have the correct complement of staff with the right skills.

Q: Will I be safe if an ambulance has to travel much further to another hospital?

A: Yes. West Midlands Ambulance Service staff are able to manage a range of medical and traumatic emergencies so you will be safe. It is worth noting that there are already a number of cases where patients suffering from conditions such as a stroke or a heart attack are taken directly to the other hospitals like New Cross in Wolverhampton and University Hospital North Staffordshire in Stoke for specialist care.

Q: Will I have to wait longer if I go to one of the other A&E Departments because they will be busier?

A: At the moment we have on average 27 patients each night at Stafford A&E. Of those 27 about 15 patients each night need A&E care and these patients will be taken to the nearest appropriate A&E for their care. We are working closely with the West Midlands Ambulance Service and with our neighbouring A&E departments to make sure that all patients are cared for appropriately and safely. We are also working with the PCT and GPs to make sure that other facilities are available for the 'non-emergency' patients.

Q: What happens to patients who are taken to A&Es at other hospitals?

A: Once patients are stable and are able to travel, they will be brought back to Stafford Hospital.

Q: What will you do if you can't recruit the right staff by March?

A: We will reopen once we have achieved all of the targets which we have identified which include having the right medical staff in place. It is possible that this will take

longer than three months however we are doing our best to make sure these targets are all met as quickly as possible.

Q: Will you turn people away if they turn up just after 10pm?

A: The doors of our A&E department will close at 10pm and will not reopen until 8am next morning.

Q: How will people know what they should do instead?

A: There is information on our website www.midstaffs.nhs.uk and we have produced an information leaflet which is being distributed to all households in the area <http://www.midstaffs.nhs.uk/images/content/PCT-114-Stafford-Hospital-A-E-V3-Leaflet.aspx>