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Freedom of Information Act Disclosure log - Reply Extract

You asked

My request relates to the amount of times Derriford Hospital has been at Operational Pressures Escalation Level 4 (OPEL 4) over the past six months.

I would like to request the figures from January 01 2017 up until the current date (June 21 2017. Please could this be presented in a monthly breakdown as to how many times the hospital had to escalate each month?

I would also like to compare this with the amount of times the hospital was at OPEL 4 last year from dates January 01 2016 to December 31 2016 with a half year figure from January 01 to June 30 2016 to compare whether this year has been at a higher operational risk level compared to last.

If it is possible, could we have information on what pressures were put on the hospital on each occasion to escalate the level to OPEL 4 this year so far.

Our response

PHNT has declared OPEL 4 on 8 occasions in 2017:

January 2017	1
February 2017	2
March 2017	3
May 2017	1
June 2017	1

NHS England introduced the Operational Framework Escalation Levels in October 2016. Therefore, for the corresponding period in 2016 OPEL 4 was not declared. However, under the previous system, 'Black Alert' was declared on 3 occasions:

January 2016	1
April 2016	2

Derriford Hospital experienced similar operational pressures on each occasion due to:

- Marked increase year on year in the number of patients attending the Emergency Department for treatment
- Higher acuity of patients needing to be admitted or to remain in hospital and not medically fit for discharge/transfer
- Delayed transfers of care
- Staffing at ward level