

# Now the NHS wants another £350m to avoid 'winter crisis'

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SUMMER is barely over, but NHS campaigners are already demanding extra cash to cope with what they fear will be a disastrous winter.

NHS Providers, a trade association which represents hospital trusts, yesterday called for an emergency cash injection of up to £350million to help the health service get through the winter.

Its chief executive, Chris Hopson, said the NHS is facing its worst winter in recent history if it does not receive an immediate cash boost. And he said patients would be put at risk and waiting lists would soar unless action was taken.

Mr Hopson said: 'Last winter the health service came under pressure as never before. At its height, the NHS had to provide 4,500 additional beds a day - equivalent to more than eight extra hospitals.'

'Patient safety was compromised as local services struggled to cope with the pressures. At times, in some places, the NHS was overwhelmed.'

'We must act now to prevent the situation becoming even worse this winter.'

He added: 'The overwhelming view of NHS trusts is that without immediate extra funding they will not have sufficient capacity to manage this winter safely.'

'The only way to mitigate these risks is through an urgent NHS cash injection to ensure the NHS has the necessary capacity this winter.' The NHS, which has an

## 19,000 hospital deaths 'ignored'

MORE than 19,000 'unexpected deaths' in NHS hospitals over the past five years have been ignored because officials have 'fudged' the figures, an expert has claimed.

Professor Sir Brian Jarman said the systematic exclusion of the deaths by NHS chiefs means 'potentially unsafe' hospitals could be overlooked because high death rates are not showing up.

He calculated that there had been 32,810 deaths above the expected level in English hospitals over the past five years.

But using the NHS's preferred method, only 13,627 were classed as such in offi-

cial statistics - meaning 19,183 unexpected deaths were not logged.

Using Professor Jarman's method, 34 NHS trusts would have been flagged as having significantly high death rates last year. The NHS method counted only ten trusts.

Professor Jarman, emeritus professor at Imperial College London, was ignored a decade ago when he raised concerns about deaths at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust, which became a scandal.

Yesterday he said: 'Because the NHS is using what might be called a "fudge factor", they are only identifying ten [hospital trusts]. As a result, we don't know if anybody is

taking any notice of these other 24 potentially unsafe hospital trusts.'

His method of calculating a hospital's level of unexpected deaths was used by NHS chiefs until 2012. It flags up hospitals with a rate of unexpected deaths more than 6 or 7 per cent above the national average.

NHS Digital statisticians say the approach they have used since then is more suitable as it 'better reflects' the difficulties in comparing death rates among hospitals which serve very different areas.

This flags up hospitals with an unexpected deaths rate 12 per cent above the national average.

annual budget of £110billion, was in 2015 promised an extra £8billion by 2020, a sum which later increased to £10billion.

Last year, 2016/17, the NHS received a 'kick-start' - an extra £3.8billion, equivalent to 3.7 per cent increase. This year the NHS will receive an extra 1.3 per cent,

and in 2018/19 only 0.4 per cent. Yesterday's demand comes after long-term accusations that health chiefs waste taxpayers' cash.

A Department of Health spokesman said: 'The NHS has prepared for winter more this year than ever before.'

But, according to NHS Provid-

ers, the latest figures show A&E waits and bed shortages remain 'stubbornly' bad.

Niall Dickson, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, which also represents health organisations, said: 'As [this report] makes clear, NHS trusts are likely to struggle this winter. The truth is

that the whole system, including those who commission care, as well as those who provide both health and care services are facing very difficult choices.'

Officials said the NHS is fully prepared and hospitals have put an extra 3,000 beds in place.

Pauline Philip, NHS England's national director for urgent and emergency care, said: 'The NHS will face challenges this winter but, as NHS Providers have stated, winter planning is more advanced than it was last year and special attention is being paid to areas where pressures are likely to

### 'Facing very difficult choices'

be greatest. We are in the process of assessing how many extra beds trusts are planning to open over winter and early returns indicate that this will be more than 3,000. This is something we will continue to review on the basis of evidence rather than arbitrary estimates.'

She said the Government had put £1billion into extra social care, to tackle bed blocking and get people out of hospital quickly.

'If the expectations for reduced delayed transfers of care [bed blocking] outlined by the Government are achieved, this would free up a further 2,000-3,000 beds over the winter period,' she added.