

In the current climate of hospital anxiety, Chase Farm admits targets are a challenge, while a

'Absolute disgrace'

By Kim Brett-Richards

ENFIELD Primary Care Trust has admitted that it is a "challenge" to meet waiting time targets.

Nationally, more than half of NHS patients are waiting longer than the desired 18 weeks from GP referral to hospital treatment for orthopaedic and neurosurgery.

And Enfield PCT is in the top five worst trusts for meeting the deadline.

More than a quarter of patients wait longer than the ideal 18 weeks for treatment, according to Department of Health figures.

In a statement, a spokeswoman for Enfield PCT said: "The national target that by 2008 no one will have to wait more than 18 weeks from the time their GP refers them to hospital is challenging for everyone.

"The trust achieved all the interim targets on inpatient and outpatient waiting times for 2006/7."

Hospital campaigner and Conservative parliamentary candidate

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for Enfield North, Nick de Bois is appalled by these figures.

He said: "This is an absolute disgrace.

"Back in 2004, Labour ministers promised that no one would wait longer than 18 weeks for treatment by the end of 2008.

"This is looking pretty unlikely and action needs to be taken to give patients the treatments they deserve.

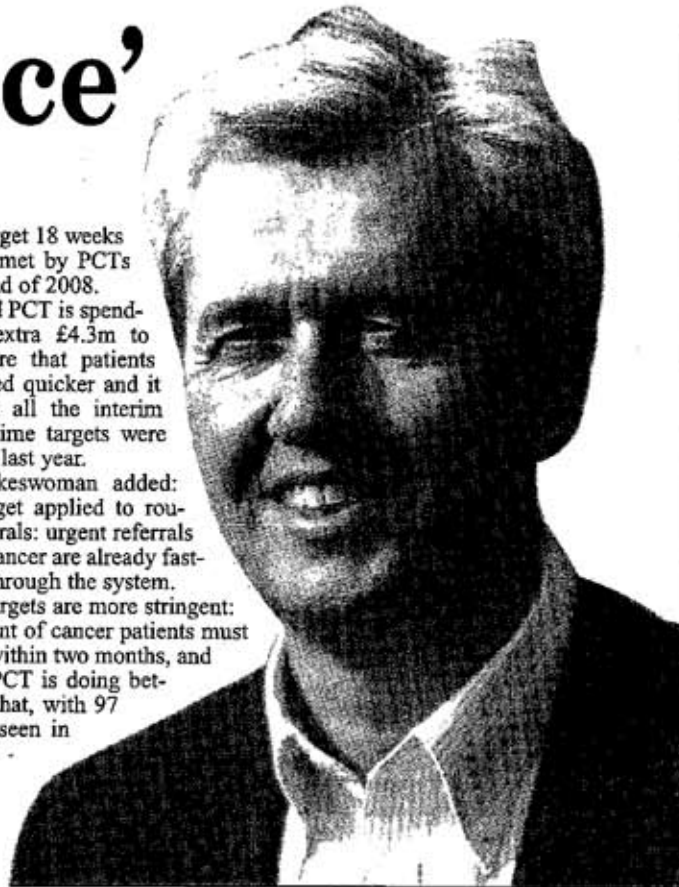
"The proposed closure of Chase Farm wards will only make this dire situation worse."

The target 18 weeks is to be met by PCTs by the end of 2008.

Enfield PCT is spending an extra £4.3m to make sure that patients are treated quicker and it said that all the interim waiting time targets were achieved last year.

A spokeswoman added: "The target applied to routine referrals: urgent referrals such as cancer are already fast-tracked through the system.

"The targets are more stringent: 95 per cent of cancer patients must be seen within two months, and Enfield PCT is doing better than that, with 97 per cent seen in 2006/7."



C.diff success

ENFIELD'S hospitals are "fully compliant" with national hygiene standards set by the government.

Both Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust and North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust meet the 44 standards outlined by the government's "hygiene code" that was imposed last year to tackle superbugs such as MRSA and Clostridium difficile.

This comes after the Healthcare Commission reported that a quarter of NHS trusts are failing to hit targets.

An additional 100 trusts have missed the targets.

A spokeswoman for Barnet and Chase Farm hospitals said: "We are delighted we've seen a significant reduction in the rates of C.diff.

"The trust has carried out a considerable amount of work based on the Health Protection Agency's good practice recommendations to reduce the incidence of C.diff infection.

"The measures we've taken include isolation wards on both sites, increased levels of environmental cleaning, introduction of a C.diff cleaning hit squad to deep clean all beds and cubicles and prudent antibiotic prescribing."