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Ambulance system lets so many down

YET again NHS England, which funds and commissions our NHS services, is trying to persuade us that is thinking clearly. It says cutting what it calls "routine" surgery – in reality, urgent and desperately needed by patients – is the short-term solution to the "winter crisis" of the NHS.

Patients queue in ambulances outside many A&E departments and will then wait a few more hours to get the right care. These are often vulnerable people needing urgent care who suffer as a result of an appalling system which allows ambulances to queue – sometimes for hours – instead of responding to another emergency..

We have repeatedly raised this issue with NHS England, the clinical commissioning groups and the Mayor of London but all we get is a polite pat on the head and assurances that everything is getting better.

Well, it is not – the lack of hospital capacity for patients is a disgrace. We need action not reassuring words.

Malcolm Alexander

chair of the Patients' Forum for the London Ambulance Service



Waiting game: ambulances queue up at Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith