



## Situation Still Normal

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Much is being made in the main stream media of the pressures on the NHS, which is reported to be overwhelmed, or at least about to be overwhelmed. Grim images of ambulances stacked line the front pages, though this one, from the BBC two days ago, seems to have caught the moment when no one was at home. Dr No has lightened the image just a bit, the better to see inside the cabs, and all he can see is empty seats and head rests. Squads of medics and paramedics are on standby, ready to be interviewed on the detail in their corner of the NHS, and provide alarming predictions of imminent implosion. All this fits well with the Establishment/MSM mantra, that Coronageddon is just around the corner, but is it true? Is the NHS really about to implode?

The NHS this morning released the latest sit-rep, the daily numbers of general and adult and adult critical care beds available and occupied for acute trusts in England, covering the week from 21st to 27th December. Dr No has given them the same treatment as he gave last week's figures. What we find is

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Dr No is a medical doctor who has had over 35 years experience of medicine, both inside and outside the NHS. Bad Medicine is his blog in which he casts a sceptical eye on all aspects of medicine. Especially Bad Medicine.

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that, on average, general and adult bed occupancy in England is 83%, down from 89% in the previous week (this fall is normal, and due to Christmas), and still lower than rates (week 4 in this file) in 2019 (89%) and 2018 (88%). The picture for adult critical care beds is much the same: average occupancy is 76%, just down from 77% in the previous week, and down a bit or comparable to 2019 (79%) and 2018 (77%). These figures, the latest from only a few days ago, do not support the Establishment/MSM narrative. The NHS is not, or at least on 27th December, four days ago, was not, overwhelmed.

This is borne out again by Dr No's traffic light indicators applied to the daily trust general and acute bed occupancy rates. Again, for consistency with the previous week, a red cell means occupancies of 95% or more, amber cells mean occupancies between 90 and 95%, and green cells mean occupancies under 90%. Figure 1 gives the picture.

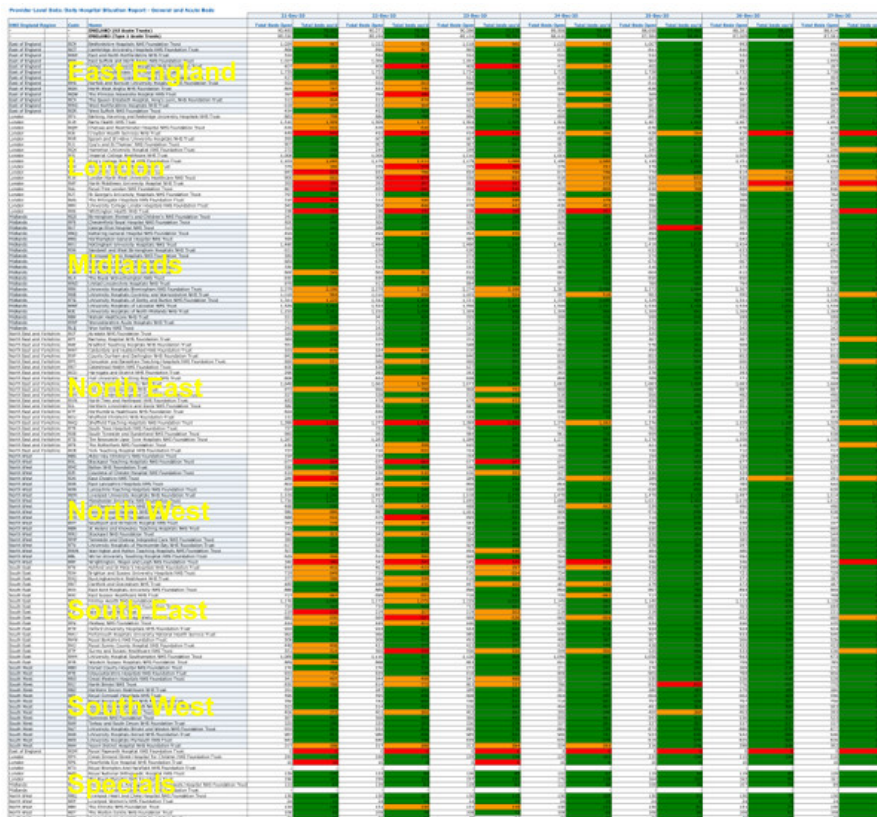


Figure 1: overview of daily occupancy by trust/region (yellow text). Specials are the oddball mostly ultra-specialist hospitals eg Papworth. See text above for meaning of the colours. Larger pdf version available here.

Just as every picture tells a story, so in Figure 1 does every cell tell a story. The story is very clearly that, apart from a small number of localised hot spots, the NHS has not been overwhelmed. Christmas Day and Boxing Day, as expected, were particularly 'situation normal'. Why, then, do the mainstream media continue pedal the myth of an overwhelmed, or about to be overwhelmed, NHS?

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