

Hospital recovery times among best

Three of the region's hospitals boast some of the quickest recovery times for patients undergoing standard surgery, according to new research.

People having hip replacement operations at the James Paget Hospital, in Yarmouth, leave hospital almost three days earlier than the national average, spending 7.74 days recovering on ward compared to 10.39 days - the 10th best in the country.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in King's Lynn, is 12th, with patients leaving after 7.82 days.

And the West Suffolk Hospital is the 10th best for length of stay following bowel surgery with an average of 12.7 days compared to the national figure of 15.9.

Patients at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital also fare better than the national average, spending 13.87 days recovering after bowel

By LORNA MARSH

surgery and 9.88 days after hip replacement.

The data, just published in the Health Service Journal, shows that length of stay varied significantly across the country, with a 21-day difference between the longest and shortest following a hip replacement and a 16-day following bowel surgery.

Dr Andrew Webb, consultant in critical care and medical director at University College London Hospitals, wrote in the journal: "What is striking about this information is that neither geographical location, the size of the hospital, the type of trust it is nor the number of patients they operate on seems to affect the length of stay.

"The biggest influence on a patient's recovery time is the way they are

treated while they are in hospital."

Dr Webb said reducing length of stay is good for patients, clinicians, and the NHS.

"Patients would rather recuperate in more familiar and comfortable surroundings than a hospital ward and their families would also prefer to see their relatives leave hospital sooner if they are well enough to be discharged.

Andrew Stronach, spokesman for the N&N, said: "Last year we were the eighth busiest hospital trust in the country and had the 13th lowest average length of stay out of 172 hospitals.

"Having a low length of stay does help us run our hospitals efficiently but it's also about getting better clinical outcomes for our patients as shorter hospital stays reduce the risks of complications."