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## News

### News releases and statements

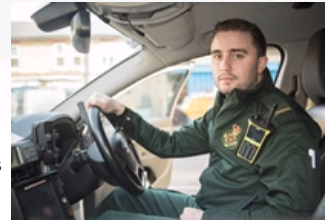
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## New spit kits issued to track down offenders who spit at London's life savers

**20 March 2017**

### Ambulance crews across London are being issued with DNA kits so police can trace patients who spit on them.

The introduction of 'spit kits' into every London Ambulance Service vehicle in the capital comes as emergency service staff are more at risk of assault than ever.



East London-based paramedic Andy Whitehouse was on duty in a fast response car last year when he attended reports of a woman having a seizure on the street. After Andy had treated the woman at the scene and an ambulance had arrived to transport her to hospital, the woman turned to Andy, said 'this is what I think of you lot', and spat in his face.

Andy said: "It was the most disgusting thing anyone had ever done to me and it was the most angry I've ever been in my life. I would rather be punched in the face."

The woman was arrested and charged following the incident and a warrant is currently out for her re-arrest.

The spit kit, which London Ambulance Service has developed with the help of the Metropolitan Police Service, will allow medics to take swabs of saliva which will be passed on to the police to track down the offender. The swabs can also be tested for disease.

Andy added: "I think the spit kits are a great idea and it would have provided useful additional evidence at the time. Anything that increases our chances of prosecuting people who commit this kind of revolting act is really welcome."

There were 456 physical assaults against crews last year. Of these around 50 included spitting.

Assistant Director of Operations Ian Johns said: "The act of spitting on someone is degrading and disgusting and will not be tolerated. We will do everything in our power to make sure those responsible are dealt with through the courts.

"Our staff should not be expected to tolerate abuse while responding to emergency calls and treating patients. We're the first ambulance service to introduce these kits and I hope it will act as a deterrent."

It is hoped the DNA kits, made up of swabs, gloves and special evidence bags for collecting samples, will increase the number of prosecutions of people who assault frontline ambulance crews.

**ENDS**

#### Notes to editors:

A total of 456 London Ambulance Service staff were physically assaulted last year (2015/16) compared to 391 the year before (a 16 per cent increase).

Many Transport for London staff, including Tube and bus drivers already have access to the kits, which has dramatically increased the number of offenders identified.

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is the busiest emergency ambulance service in the UK that provides healthcare that is free to patients at the time they receive it.

Service joins 100 black taxis on the Children's Magical Taxi Tour

Annual public meeting Tuesday 27 September

London Ambulance offers viewers unprecedented access in new TV series

Lennard Road - Road Traffic Collision, 31 August 2016

Over 1000 people treated at Notting Hill Carnival

Fire in Harrow

Hundreds more clinical staff on the frontline but not enough people from BME backgrounds

Paramedics praise five year old boy for helping to save his nan's life

Hundreds more emergency calls in London because of hot weather

Paramedic features in latest Historic England exhibition

Thief steals London Ambulance Service bike

Remembering 7 July 2005

Chief Executive speaks at launch of Living on the Edge report

Eat, Drink and Be Safe as Euro 2016 kicks off

Paramedic honoured at Buckingham Palace

Incident in Russell Square, WC1

Smartphone app alert helps volunteer first aiders save a life

Ealing butcher praises London Ambulance Service medics for excellent care

Fire in Shepherds Bush

Increase in assaults on London Ambulance Service staff

Hero ambulance medic stops moped muggers in their tracks

London Ambulance Service gets ready for Notting Hill Carnival

Medic's bright idea makes ambulance crews even more accessible to blind patients

Incident at London City Airport

Incident at London City Airport

London Ambulance Service gears up for this weekend's Mad Friday

Skip the dreaded tinsel-itis and have your medication ready this

We have over 5,000 staff, who work across a wide range of roles based in 70 ambulance stations.

We serve more than nine million people who live and work in the London area. We take over 1.8 million emergency calls a year.

For more information, media enquiries or interview requests please contact the Communications Team on 020 7783 2286 or [communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

Christmas

Ten years in the hot zone

Busiest night ever predicted for London Ambulance Service this New Year

Technical issues in our control room

London Ambulance medic honoured with Queen's Ambulance Service Medal

Don't get caught out in the cold, warns London Ambulance Service

Medics to provide life-saving support to refugee camps

Statement on incident in Southend Arterial Road

Prince Harry visits London Ambulance Service to launch Time to Talk Day

Innovator behind London's cycle paramedics praised at Healthcare Heroes exhibition

Fate brings man together with paramedic who helped save his life

Leadership team strengthened with two new non-executive directors

London Ambulance Service responds to Storm Doris

Card launched to improve safety of expectant mothers

Banker thanks life savers with charity run

[New spit kits issued to track down offenders who spit at London's life savers](#)

Prince William visits ambulance staff who treated patients in Westminster attack

Stock up on medication ahead of the long weekend, warns ambulance service

Statement following an incident on Warburton Road, E8.

London Ambulance Service appoints new Chief Executive

London Ambulance Service medic honoured at Buckingham Palace

Firefighter grants paramedic a final goodbye with fiancée

Paramedic who apprehended a violent criminal is awarded police commendation

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