



# Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Winter 2013

## Flight control

A look at how London's Air Ambulance is sent to calls

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## On camera

Service stars in Channel 4 documentary series

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# Reunited with Thusha

AN ambulance crew were among the medical staff to be reunited with Britain's youngest gun crime victim for a TV programme about her recovery.

Emergency Medical Technician Sheridan Best and Paramedic James Lafferty were first to arrive at the scene to treat Thusha Kamaleswaran, who was just five-years-old when she was shot at her uncle's shop in south London in March 2011.

A doctor from London's Air Ambulance then performed emergency surgery at the scene before she was rushed to King's College Hospital.

Meeting her for the first time since the incident, James and Sheridan greeted Thusha with a card and teddy bear.

The reunion – with representatives of the teams involved in her treatment – was filmed for a special ITV programme broadcast in October, which followed Thusha's ongoing recovery and revealed that she now has regained feeling in both legs after initially being paralysed.

Describing Thusha as a 'true miracle', Sheridan said: "I really pray that she can dance again – as that's what she wishes for. James and I will always remember that night and Thusha's story."

James added: "Everyone at the ambulance station knew it was us who attended that night and colleagues would leave newspaper cut outs for us with information of her recovery."

"To have the opportunity to see her again will stay with me for the rest of my life."



All smiles: James and Sheridan, and London's Air Ambulance doctor Vidar Magnusson and Paramedic Caroline Appleby, meet with Thusha

## InBrief

Stepping in to 111



when it's less urgent than 999

THE Service has taken over the running of the NHS 111 system in south east London after NHS Direct withdrew from the contract.

Around 120 former NHS Direct staff have joined the organisation as part of the transfer, which took place in mid-November.

NHS 111 is a freephone number for people who need medical help or advice when not in a life-threatening situation.

Chief Executive Ann Radmore said: "This is a good opportunity for us to help develop NHS 111 and make it as effective as possible."

The contract will run through to March 2015.

## Winter working

MOST Londoners who call 999 with minor conditions like toothache or cut fingers won't be sent an ambulance this winter.

People with these and other less serious illnesses and injuries will be referred to their GP, pharmacist or NHS 111 as part of the Service's plans to cope with an expected big increase in life-threatening calls.

However, an ambulance response will continue to be sent to any patient under the age of two or over 70.

Director of Operations Jason Killens said: "These measures will save up to 150 ambulance responses a day to attend those who really need our help."

Photo courtesy of Lynn Hilton

## Keeping well this winter

AS temperatures continue to drop, people are reminded to keep warm and look out for their elderly neighbours this winter.

Director of Nursing and Quality Steve Lennox said: "In colder weather, keeping yourself warm is essential to staying healthy, especially for the very young, older people or those with a chronic condition such as heart disease or asthma.

"During the winter months our ambulance crews treat more patients who have slipped or tripped in the wintry conditions as well as those suffering the effects of the cold. It's crucial that we all find time to check in on those who may be vulnerable and in need of help."

### Top tips

- \* Keep warm by setting your heating to the right temperature (18 to 21°C).
- \* Have your flu jab to protect yourself and others from influenza.
- \* Look out for friends, relatives and neighbours who may be vulnerable to the cold.
- \* Stay tuned to the weather forecast and plan ahead with supplies.
- \* Have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day and keep active to help your body stay warm.
- \* Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer, and when you need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles.
- \* Check if you can get financial support to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.



## A day in the life of a paramedic dispatching London's Air Ambulance

Lee Parker

AROUND 4,500 emergency calls come in to the Service's control rooms every day. On average five of these will get a response from the doctor and paramedic team on board London's Air Ambulance, which is a registered charity based at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel.

It is sent to the most critical incidents alongside other ambulance staff, with the helicopter flying in daylight hours and a response car running at night.

Paramedics seconded to London's Air Ambulance work four different 12 hour shifts - either a day or night shift in the control room where calls are received, a day on the helicopter, or nights in a car.

Paramedic Michael Casizzi (pictured right) describes a typical day in the control room, when he uses his knowledge to decide which 999 calls would most benefit from the team's expertise.

**6:50AM** I arrive to start my shift, check flying conditions and call the air ambulance dispatch desk at other ambulance services outside of London. They may be needed if there is a major incident.

**7:10AM** I start monitoring a screen on my desk which is constantly updating with details of all the 999 calls that are coming in.

**10:35AM** I send the team to a patient trapped under a bus. I try to ring the person who made the 999 call to get more details but she doesn't answer. I also radio the helicopter with the details and the map reference, and we discuss the best landing spot. The patient has suffered a head injury and the team travel in the ambulance with her to hospital.

For the next few hours I continue to monitor calls for any further incidents that the helicopter could be sent to.

**3:57PM** I notice lots of calls coming in for a man stabbed in Islington. I try to get as much information as possible before dispatching the team. I speak to the 999 call taker who says the patient had a stab wound in their back. He is treated and taken to the Royal London Hospital.

**4:44PM** A motorcyclist has been knocked off his bike and a witness is speaking to one of our 999 call takers. I hit a button on my telephone which allows me to listen in to the call to hear how seriously injured he is. I'm reassured he doesn't need the air ambulance when I

hear he is up and walking around with his crash helmet still intact.

**5PM** A call comes in for a man who has been crushed by machinery on a building site. An ambulance is already on the way but I decide to ring

the person who made the 999 call to find out if the patient is still trapped.

I'm told he has now stopped breathing so I hang up and immediately send the team by car as the helicopter doesn't fly when it's dark, and the paramedic radios me to say they'll be on scene in 15 minutes. Sadly, despite extensive treatment, the doctor later pronounces the man dead at the scene.

**7PM** I finish my shift and head home. Tomorrow I'll be flying on the helicopter and one of my colleagues will be dispatching us from the control room.



### Michael's day in numbers

6

Number of incidents the air ambulance team is sent to

2

Number of times they are cancelled after receiving further information

## Lifesaving plan

THE Service has launched the first scheme of its kind in the UK to encourage the use of more defibrillators to help restart a person's heart when it stops beating.

Organisations across the capital will be given advice on buying, storing and using the machines in return for providing contact details so that they can be contacted if someone collapses and stops breathing nearby.

Deputy Mayor of London Victoria Borwick, who attended the scheme launch at the Tower of London in October, said: "I would encourage all London's businesses and public buildings to join this scheme and invest in a defibrillator and the staff training required to use it - you never know when it might save a life."

More information can be found at [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/defib](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/defib)



Landmark launch: Resuscitation Training Officer Malcolm Ritchie with a Beefeater and Deputy Mayor Victoria Borwick

# Cameras capture real life drama

TV viewers have had the chance to go behind the scenes with the Service during a six-part Channel 4 series.

999: What's Your Emergency followed the work of control room and frontline staff in dealing with emergency calls.

Each episode had its own theme, ranging from the treatment provided to young people through to the care of the elderly.

The East of England and East Midlands ambulance services were also featured in the series, which attracted up to two million viewers each week.

Among the staff from the capital to be filmed was Islington Paramedic Kirsten Harper, who spoke movingly about her late mother's death during a programme which looked at the impact of mental health issues.

Waterloo Paramedics Tommy Lemon and Jo Pugsley also appeared in four episodes.

Tommy said: "I hope the series showed the viewers how busy we are and maybe what constitutes an emergency and the types of incidents that could perhaps be dealt with somewhere else."



On screen: Paramedics Tommy Lemon and Jo Pugsley

## Awards for bravery and long service

TWO paramedics, an emergency medical technician and a St John Ambulance volunteer have been commended for their actions in going above and beyond the call of duty.

They were among more than 30 people recognised at a special ceremony in October, which also celebrated the work of long-serving and recently retired members of staff.

Paramedic Paul Kelly, who is based in Kenton, had put himself in danger to treat police officers who had been attacked in a butchers shop in Harrow despite the attacker still being there.

Edmonton crew Grayham Street and Michael Gallagher had rushed to the aid of a

patient who was drowning in a canal in Enfield, while Phil Hull used his St John Ambulance training after stopping at the scene of a serious traffic collision whilst off duty and providing first aid until an ambulance arrived.

The event also saw 21 retirees with a combined total of 627 years' service presented with glass blocks, commemorative ambulance bells and certificates, while six members of staff who have been with the organisation for more than 20 years were presented with Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and London Ambulance Service Medallions.

Chairman Richard Hunt said: "I was proud to recognise these members of staff for



Commended: Grayham Street, Phil Hull, Paul Kelly and Michael Gallagher

their bravery and dedication.

"Their commitment throughout the years has ensured that Londoners

continue to receive the very best medical care when they need it most and it was an honour to praise their loyalty."

### InBrief

#### Early arrival



A PARAMEDIC only made it as far as a hospital car park before giving birth to her first child.

Helen Pierce, who is based at Oval ambulance station, didn't reach the doors of Epsom Hospital with husband Nigel before baby Emily was delivered with the help of some bystanders and an emergency medical technician from South East Coast Ambulance Service.

Helen said: "It was the kindness of strangers that made it all happen – they were taking off their shirts and cardigans to wrap the baby in."

#### Pedalling to a prize

A TEAM of staff who respond to 999 calls on pushbikes have won a prestigious health service award.

The cycle response unit was a winner in the NHS Innovation Challenge Prizes competition announced at the end of November.

As well as reaching calls quickly in congested areas such as the West End and Heathrow Airport, staff are able to manage about half of the incidents they attend without the need for patients to be taken to hospital.

Professor Malcolm Grant CBE, Chair of NHS England said: "It is tremendously encouraging to see innovations like this from frontline staff making a real difference to the NHS and patients."

#### AGM report

MINUTES of the Service's annual general meeting held towards the end of September can be found at [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/trustboard](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/trustboard)

Papers for all public meetings of the Trust Board are also published on the site.

# Back in time

A VINTAGE ambulance took to a race track as part of a special motoring meeting.

The 1949 Daimler (pictured right) was one of two from the Service's collection of historic vehicles taken by a group of volunteers to the Goodwood Revival Festival in September.

Media Resources Technician Tim Saunders said: "Visitors really enjoyed looking round the ambulances, and we also met a lot of people who had either worked on or been treated in similar ones."

A history society is now being set up to look after the range of vehicles and artefacts that the Service owns.

Anyone who would like more information, or may be interested in getting involved, should email [LASHistory@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:LASHistory@londonambulance.nhs.uk)



**Pole position: The Daimler ambulance at Goodwood**

## How to contact us



## In an emergency

**Always call 999 if somebody is seriously ill or injured.**

## About the care you have received

Contact our patient experiences department if you have any comments, feedback or complaints about the service you have received from us.

Call the team on 020 3069 0240 or email [patientexperiences@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperiences@londonambulance.nhs.uk)



## About membership

To speak to us about membership or update your details, call our membership office on 0800 7311 388 or email [membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

## Online

Go to our website at [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk), search for [ldn\\_ambulance](#) on Twitter or [londonambulanceservice](#) on Facebook.



Want to see a particular issue covered in Ambulance News? Call 020 7783 2286 or email [communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

# Choose the right treatment

If you are injured or ill, the NHS provides a range of services to help you get well. You can get faster and better treatment by choosing the NHS service that can best treat your symptoms.

**Remember:** 999 and A&E is for life threatening illnesses and injuries only.

**Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) for more information.**

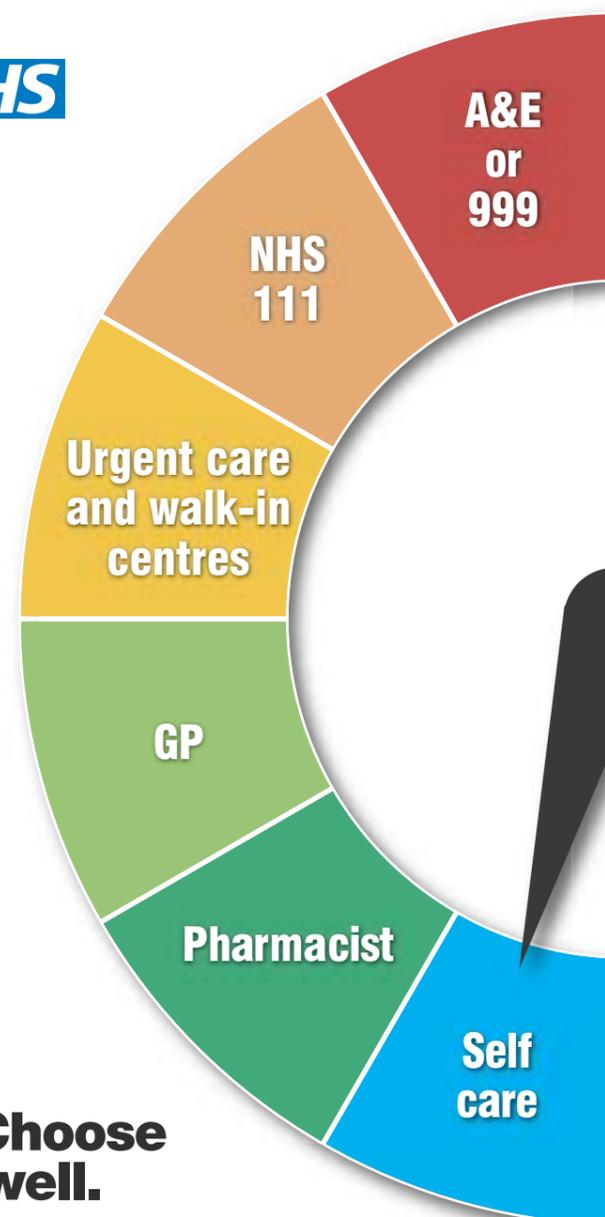


Image courtesy of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey CCGs

