



# Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Summer 2013

## What's your emergency?

A shift with a 999 call taker

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## Fun of the fair

Service hosts Croydon community event

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# Queen of hearts



## InBrief

### Double honour

TWO members of staff were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Medical Director Dr Fionna Moore received an MBE for services to the NHS and emergency services, while Paramedic Kevin Walker was awarded a BEM (British Empire Medal), which rewards local service.



Fionna, who was responsible for leading the implementation of the capital's network of specialist trauma centres and has more than 25 years' experience as a consultant in emergency medicine, said: "I was absolutely delighted, honoured and surprised. When I opened the letter it was one of those amazing moments, and a real struggle to keep it a secret from my family."

### Professionalism

Kevin spent the whole of his 46-year career based at Ilford ambulance station. He was the longest-serving member of frontline staff when he retired last year, but is still working one shift a week.



He is known by his colleagues for his compassion towards patients, commitment and professionalism.

"I'm just really fortunate to have been doing a job I enjoy," he said. "I'm nothing special – I just want to do my best to help people."

Oscar-winning actress Dame Helen Mirren (left) took on the role of award-giver at a ceremony to celebrate the work of the Service's Voluntary Responder Group. See page 3 for the full story.

## More staff on the way

FRONTLINE ambulance crew numbers are to be boosted in the capital thanks to additional funding.

Work to recruit 240 staff has already started and is being funded by an extra £7.1m from the Service's commissioners.

Chief Executive Ann

Radmore said: "This investment will help us ensure more staff are available to respond to 999 calls at a time when demand on us continues to rise."

Under new proposals A&E support staff, who currently attend lower priority calls, will receive additional training so

that they can respond to a wide range of emergency calls alongside paramedics.

Ann added: "This way of working will mean more patients will be treated by a paramedic, and it will increase ambulance cover locally so that patient waiting times are reduced."

The Service also needs to operate more efficiently in the future to help manage

anticipated increases in demand, and is planning to make changes to the way it responds to some 999 calls as well as introduce new working arrangements for its frontline staff.

The Service will receive a further £7.7m to help maintain levels of patient care through the year while staff are recruited and the changes are introduced.

Tim Saunders

A day in the life of an

# emergency medical dispatcher



MORE than 1.7 million emergency calls were handled in the Service's control rooms last year, and the figure continues to rise.

There are two elements to the work staff do – answering the calls that are coming in, and then ensuring that the right response is provided to patients.

Claudette McNaughton is part of a team of emergency medical dispatchers who answer 999 calls.

They enter the details of an incident on to a computer system which categorises the seriousness of the illness or injury, to ensure that the most critical patients receive the fastest response.

And not everyone needs emergency help, so could be

offered advice over the phone by one of the Service's clinical telephone advisors or be referred to NHS 111.

Here Claudette talks through some of the calls she dealt with during a typical shift:

**7:24am** I started my shift at 7.00am and this is my second call of the day. A woman who is 40 weeks' pregnant has gone into labour. Routine maternity incidents such as this aren't categorised as being among the most serious calls, but an ambulance is sent and the patient is taken to hospital.

**10:21am** A man with a history of heart problems calls as he is suffering from chest pain. This is a high priority and an ambulance crew are sent immediately while I continue to take details and give the patient advice. The crew arrive at his house in just over three minutes and he is later taken to a specialist heart centre.

**12:57pm** A man in his 20s has had his foot crushed by a truck and is in a lot of pain. I advise the caller that help will be there soon and for the patient to rest in the most

comfortable position. An ambulance crew are at the scene in less than five minutes and take him to hospital on blue lights and sirens.

It is a typical day so far and I have taken 34 calls since the start of my shift. They include a road traffic collision, a patient feeling unwell after landing at Heathrow Airport and another with stomach pain.

**4:33pm** A woman in her 90s has called with back pain after falling over. Although not life-threatening, the lady still needs help so an ambulance is sent.

## Claudette's day in numbers

59

Emergency calls handled

32

Number of calls after which the patient was taken to hospital

13

Number of calls prioritised as being immediately life-threatening

12

Number of minutes spent on the longest call

I advise her not to have anything to eat or drink and that help is on the way.

**5:26pm** A mum has called because her young daughter has swallowed a ring. The little girl isn't being sick or having any difficulty breathing so I arrange for one of our clinical telephone advisors to call back to carry out a further assessment as an ambulance is not likely to be needed.

## Hannah is a hero

**A**

little help for someone who's fallen. A cut. A cough. A boy with a broken arm. A scared mother. A bit too much to drink. A collapse. A fright. A moment when everything hangs in the balance. A word of comfort. A "Thank you".

A way to find out more:

**A&E Support team**  
londonambulance.nhs.uk

A seven-year-old girl was hailed as an "absolute star" after calling for an ambulance for her ill mum.

Hannah Philo dialled 999 when mother Maria suffered an asthma attack at their Dagenham home.

Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Katherine Parker, who took the call, said: "It was like speaking to a grown up, or even someone who was medically trained."

"I was completely stunned by how well she did. I didn't need to tell her what to do – she opened the door for the paramedics and put the light on so they knew which house to come to, before I asked her to."

"She was amazing – an absolute star."

Hannah, who wants to be a nurse when she grows up, visited the ambulance control room to meet



Face to face: Katherine meets Hannah

Katherine, who gave her a certificate.

Hannah said: "I felt very nervous when I made the call, but I knew I had to be brave and call for an ambulance to make mummy better."

Maria, who was taken to hospital after the attack in May, said: "I'm so proud of her – she kept calm and knew exactly what to do."

**E**

Everything you do will help people. Every call you respond to will be worthwhile. Every day you'll support people right across the Capital. Every minute and every second counts when you're doing this kind of work. Every time will be different. Every call matters.

Every reason to apply:

**A&E Support team**  
londonambulance.nhs.uk

# Patient protection is top priority

CARING for the elderly, mental health patients, homeless people and vulnerable children were all on the agenda of the Service's first safeguarding conference.

Director of Health Promotion and Quality Steve Lennox said: "We have an obligation to keep our patients as safe as possible, but there is more to do when the patient is particularly vulnerable."

"We have an important job to recognise when patients might be at risk, and then take appropriate action."

Delegates at the event in June heard that around 2,200 referrals are now made by the capital's ambulance staff to social services every month, compared to between 200 and 300 in 2009.

Many different organisations are involved in the safeguarding process – in

London this includes local authorities, hospitals, mental health trusts, police, and other health organisations.

Tracy Castle, a paramedic based at New Malden ambulance station, said: "What this job has taught me is that there's no such thing as a 'normal' life – just different ones."

"Often paramedics are the first healthcare professionals that people come into contact with and we go into their homes without making judgements."

"When I joined the Service I wanted to save lives, but it's not just about resuscitation and pumping hearts – it's about looking after people and making sure they're safe."

**Hands-on care: Homeless patients are among the most vulnerable**



## InBrief

### Rapper's ambulance experience



THREE staff were thrust into the media spotlight after a celebrity published a picture he had taken with them.

Rapper and singer-songwriter Professor Green put the photo on his Twitter account after he was involved in a road traffic collision.

The tweet – to his 1.7 million followers – was picked up by the national press.

### Mission to Mumbai

THE Service was part of a healthcare delegation that travelled to India in May.

Led by Cabinet Minister and the Prime Minister's trade envoy for healthcare, Rt Hon. Kenneth Clarke, the group met with officials and healthcare organisations to talk about potential joint working.

The visit provided the Service with a chance to discuss providing possible consultancy and training services.

### Artist's impression

THIS picture may be of a London ambulance – but it travelled from the other side of the world.

It was produced by Australian artist Adam Bain, who draws detailed pictures of cars and emergency vehicles both freehand and on a computer.

He created the image after seeing photos of the Service's vehicles and stations on the internet.



5 in 7

For every two referrals about vulnerable children, there are five for adults.

Over 97

per cent of referrals are made on the day of the incident

# NHS hits 65 Volunteers are recognised



THE National Health Service is celebrating its 65th birthday this summer.

Founded on 5 July 1948, its creation meant that for the first time free healthcare was available for all when they needed it, with it being paid for through taxes.

There was no single ambulance service in the capital at the time, but the impact of Londoners being able to request transport to hospital was felt very quickly.

A report from the Chief Medical Officer, as detailed in the Hospital and Social Service Journal in March 1950, said there was a "steady rise in demand throughout the rest of the year 1948, the number of patients removed daily by the end of 1948 being 35 per cent greater than at the beginning of the year."

DAME Helen Mirren presented awards to volunteer life-savers at a special ceremony at City Hall.

The event recognised the work of people who give up their time to help respond to patients alongside ambulance staff as part of the Service's Voluntary Responder Group.

Dame Helen became involved in the charity after a friend suffered a cardiac arrest at the premiere of one of her films two years ago and was resuscitated using a defibrillator.

"It was an honour to be in the presence of people who give their time to save the lives of others."



Recipients included Helen Drewett – pictured on the front page with her son Luke and Ambulance Operations Manager Chris Hartley-Sharp – who received a special award on behalf of her late husband



Winning line-up: Dame Helen Mirren with award recipients

Jason for his work in placing defibrillators in public buildings in Enfield.

Speaking after the ceremony in June, Dame Helen said: "It was an honour to be in the presence of people who give their time to save the lives of others."

Ambulance crews get to the vast majority of patients quickly, but volunteers can start giving lifesaving care to patients in their community almost immediately, giving them the best chance of survival.

The ceremony was supported by defibrillator manufacturer Physio Control and the seven winners were presented with glass trophies and defibrillators which they will donate to a public location of their choice.

55  
voluntary responder schemes in London, with a total of nearly 1,000 volunteers

# Healthy riders

THE chance to try out a paramedic's motorbike for size proved to be a popular activity at a health fair in New Addington.

More than 400 people attended the event at the end of May, which was hosted by the Service and supported by a range of other emergency and health organisations.

Head of Patient & Public Involvement and Public Education Margaret Luce said: "Having them there meant people could find out how to access the right healthcare for their needs."

As well as the opportunity to learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills, some of the more energetic visitors had the chance to have a go on a 'smoothie bike', which made the drinks as people turned the pedals.



**Young recruit:**  
Paramedic Richard Webb-Stevens with a visitor to the health fair

## 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)

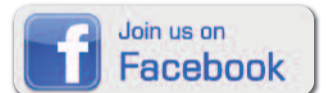


## About membership

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)

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# Stay cool this summer

Keeping cool in warm weather is common sense:

- Wear a hat and use sun cream
- Drink plenty of water
- If you have breathing problems keep your medication with you
- Avoid going out at the hottest part of the day

If you are worried about your health, contact your doctor or pharmacist, or call 111.

**In an emergency, dial 999 for an ambulance.**

