



Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Autumn 2013



Tim Saunders

Don't look down...

Members of the Service's Hazardous Area Response Team were on standby at the scene as Greenpeace protestors climbed The Shard in July. See page two for more about the team's work.

Stroke centres save lives

MORE than 400 lives have been saved in the capital since ambulance crews started taking patients to specialist stroke centres three years ago, a new study has found.

A life-threatening illness that reduces the flow of blood to the brain, stroke

needs treatment – which can include being given a clot-busting drug – as quickly as possible to give patients the best chance of survival.

Since 2010, staff have been taking suspected stroke patients directly to one of eight hyper-acute stroke units in London.

The research was carried out by UCL Partners, with support from a number of other organisations including the Service.

Medical Director Fionna Moore said: "Our crews will sometimes bypass local A&E departments on the way to one of the centres, and these

figures show how important this has been in helping to save lives."

As well as the increased survival rates, the system was also found to have saved £5.6 million a year since it was introduced because of patients needing shorter stays in hospital.

InBrief

Service set for primetime TV

A NEW Channel 4 series will be going behind the scenes with staff who handle and respond to emergency calls.



Filming for the six programmes took place over the summer, and they are due to be broadcast this autumn.

The series will also feature the work of two other English ambulance services and is being produced by the company behind Channel 4's 999: What's Your Emergency.



At the HART of the response

HART in numbers

2

HART teams in London, based in the west and east of the capital

42

specialised members of staff in each team. They attend around 200 calls a month

1,725

incidents responded to last year that were reported to have involved chemicals

INCIDENTS on the water, at the top of a crane or in a collapsed building can all be in a day's work for one group of the Service's staff.

The Hazardous Area Response Team – known as HART – is made of up paramedics and emergency medical technicians who have had advanced training to allow them to treat patients who, until a few years ago, wouldn't have been very accessible for ambulance staff to reach.

They also have specialist equipment – including breathing apparatus and gastight suits – to allow them to go further into the scenes of calls where there may be chemicals involved.

The team was the first in the country when it was

launched in 2007, and the scheme has since expanded to the point that there are now similar units based in each of England's 11 ambulance services.

Paramedic Andy Godfrey, who had worked as a paramedic for 17 years before joining HART three years ago, said: "Working with the team is very interesting and we face different challenges every day.

"As an example, we recently went to a call where two men had fallen about four floors down a lift shaft.

"We worked for around two hours with the fire brigade to try to free one of the patients who was trapped behind the lift and were finally able to rescue him by cutting a hole in the back of the wall."



Ad highlights road safety message



THREE staff have made their big screen debuts at cinemas across the capital – as part of a new road safety advert.

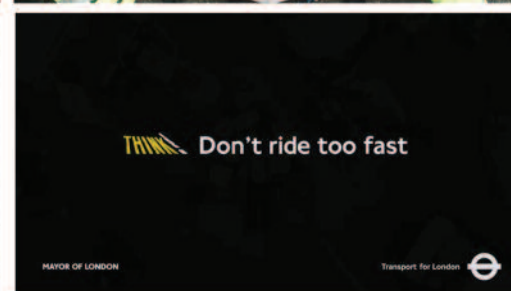
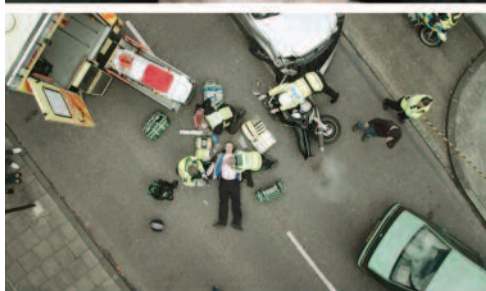
Team Leader James Heath and Paramedics Lee Parker and Rebecca Broad featured in the 30-second Transport for London (TfL) advert aimed at motorcyclists and reminding them to pay attention to their speed and surroundings.

Lee, who has worked on the Service's motorcycle response team for six years, said: "I've been to a fair few motorcyclists who've been badly hurt, and unfortunately a few fatalities.

"We all ride because we enjoy the feeling of freedom, but excessive speed in the wrong places can be very dangerous. The faster you go, the less time you have to anticipate what is going to happen in front of you."

As well as playing on around 100 London cinema screens, the advert – and behind-the-scenes video – can be seen at www.YouTube.com/transportforlondon.

Figures published by TfL in July showed that the number of people killed on London's roads in 2012 fell by 16 per cent, and that the overall total of casualties dropped by two per cent compared to 2011.



FREE
An evening with us
London Ambulance Service Emergency Heart Care

Stayin' Alive

Do you know the difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest? Have you ever had to use lifesaving skills when someone collapsed and stopped breathing?

Join us at a free event to find out more about how we care for these patients, and hear from a cardiac arrest survivor and the person who helped saved their life after calling 999.

When: Thursday 10 October 2013

Time: 5.30 – 7.30pm

Where: Robens Suite, 29th Floor, Guy's Hospital, Great Maze Street, London, SE1 9RT

Light refreshments will be served.

To find out more and book a place please contact us:

Web: www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/eveningwithus

Email: membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk

Phone: Call free on 0800 7311 388



Addressing staff safety

AMBULANCE staff are assaulted in the capital at a rate of more than one a day, new figures have revealed.

Last year 471 physical assaults were reported, with a further 737 cases of verbal abuse.

One measure taken to try and protect staff is alerting them about homes where their colleagues have previously been attacked or threatened. This information is given to crews if they are called to treat the patient at the same location.

At the time of going to print, there were 390 addresses on the 'location alert register' and of these, 226 were classed as serious with staff advised to wait for police assistance before entering.

All addresses are reviewed every 12 months, although they can be updated at any time when any new



Visual warning: A poster issued by NHS Protect, which leads on work to tackle violence against health service staff

information is received.

Ambulance Operations Manager Athar Khan said: "We're talking about a very small number of addresses out of over three million households in London. We have a duty to protect staff and let them know if they're about to be sent into a potentially violent situation."

"The important thing is that our staff always make a judgement when they get to the scene and only delay treatment if they believe they are in danger."

"We don't want to be in fear of being attacked"

Leo's story

Paramedic Leo Nakhimoff was last year hit with a fence post by a patient he was treating and suffered a broken hand.



He said: "It was completely unprovoked and it affected me quite badly at the time, and is now at the back of my mind when I get called to similar incidents."

"At the end of the day, we're here to help people and we don't want to be in fear of being attacked."

The patient also injured two other members of staff during the incident and was later jailed for two years.

Nigel's baby boom



AN emergency call taker helped to deliver five babies in just the first two months after starting his job.

Nigel Hayes (right) joined the Service in May and started taking 999 calls on his own in early June after completing his training.

His very first call was to help a woman who had gone into labour at home, and he has since dealt with four similar incidents.

He said: "I felt really nervous the first time, but now I think I'm a bit of an expert."

"I follow a set of instructions which keeps me calm on the surface, but inside I'm praying everything is going to be OK."

"It's really gratifying because you speak to the partners or husbands and initially they panic, but there's a level of trust between you both so they listen to you and try to stay calm."

"It's really amazing to be helping in that special moment."

Area controller Debbie Gallon said: "Some staff who have been here years have never taken a call to help deliver a baby, so for Nigel to have so many so quickly is unheard of."

Advice for mothers-to-be

Normal labour is not an emergency, so anyone who is due to give birth should think carefully before calling for an ambulance.

The Service's Consultant Midwife, Andrew Lingen-Stallard, said:

"You should call your midwife, birth centre or labour ward in the first instance for help and advice."

"During your pregnancy, it is important you discuss with your midwife the signs of normal labour and plan your transport to your chosen place for the birth."

"Initially any pregnancy or labour concerns should be raised with your midwife or birth centre. This includes

worries with fetal movements, or if feeling unwell, as they can advise you further."



On rare occasions an ambulance may be needed, such as:

- You are immediately about to give birth with a strong urge to push.
- Severe abdominal pain that continues and persists after a contraction.
- The baby's cord is noticeable.
- Significant blood loss.
- Other medical emergencies, such as breathing difficulties or chest pain.
- Any other condition on the advice of the midwife.

InBrief

Calls soar in hot weather

HIGH temperatures caused 999 calls to rise by 20 per cent.

As the thermometer reached 33 degrees celsius in July, call takers were handling up to 6,000 calls a day – around 1,000 more than normal.

Many were related to the weather, with increased calls to patients with breathing difficulties or who were fainting.

Frontline staff attended around 1,400 patients in a potentially life-threatening condition a day, an increase of approximately 200 on usual figures.

Emily is fighting fit

A STUDENT paramedic won three bronze medals at a taekwondo world championship competition.

Emily Reeson, who is in her first year of a paramedic course at Hertfordshire University, was one of five in the women's England squad competing in August.

She said: "It was a great feeling to win and I love doing the sport."

"It's getting a lot harder to fit in the practice now I'm training to be a paramedic, but I've always wanted to get into a medical career."

All welcome at AGM

THE annual general meeting of the Trust Board will be held on Tuesday 24 September.

It is open to the public, and will begin at 2pm in the Robens Suite on the 29th floor of Guy's Hospital, SE1.

Anyone who would like to attend is asked to contact Maureen Williams on 020 7783 2046.

Photo stories

PICTURES of staff at events and incidents are now being published on the photo-sharing website Flickr.

They can be found at www.flickr.com/londonambulance.



Pedal power



TWO staff raised over £1,000 for the Service's charity after completing a gruelling 100-mile cycle challenge.

HR Manager Greg Masters and Paramedic Gary Cohen were among nearly 16,000 people to tackle the Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100 event in August.

Their efforts raised funds for the Maypole Project, which supports children with life-threatening illnesses and their families.

Other staff were on duty for the weekend of races, and patients included Olympic cycling champion Joanna Rowsell who later publicly thanked the medical team who helped her at the scene of her crash.

Mission accomplished: Greg Masters after finishing the race

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

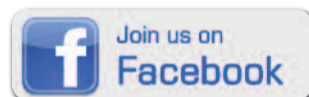


About membership

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

Online

Go to our website at 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



Are you flu safe? Get the jab!

“Flu can be a serious illness... are you at risk?”

Getting a flu jab can protect you all winter. It's free if you are pregnant, over 65, or have a health condition such as severe asthma, diabetes, a chest, heart, liver or kidney complaint, or lowered immunity.

It's quick, safe and free. To book your jab, speak to your GP practice today.



www.nhs.uk/flu

