



Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Spring 2010

Prevent stroke - know your blood pressure

Special health fairs to be held across London in April

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A day in the life

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Ready to run

A GROUP of staff are limbering up to raise thousands of pounds for the Chief Executive's charity.

They are all in training to run the Virgin

London Marathon in April in aid of MERU, which designs and makes specialist equipment for disabled youngsters living in and around London.

Some of the runners recently visited the charity in Epsom to find out more about its work and the children and young adults who it helps.



Tottenham paramedic, Romana Skotzen, who will be running the marathon with her crewmate Arron

Bonning, said: "We're really excited to be

running for such a great cause.

"I was amazed at the design process the engineers go through - from simple controls to help children move their own wheelchairs, to helping an 18-year-old to participate with his brothers in a sport he loves."

The runners also saw the trailer, kitted out with a special seat, which emergency medical technician Ben Laws will use to take his son Ewan with him when he competes in a triathlon later this year.

Ewan was born three months premature and later diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

"We are really excited to be running for such a great cause."

Chief Executive Peter Bradley said: "We all wish the runners the best of luck both with the marathon and their

fundraising efforts. I know that the money they raise will make a real difference to the lives of the children and their families."

MERU Chief Executive Susan Brumpton added: "To be chosen by the Service as its charity is a wonderful opportunity for us, and their fundraising efforts and support are very much appreciated.

"We'll be cheering the runners on every step of the way!"

Anybody wishing to sponsor the marathon runners as a group can make a donation by visiting www.justgiving.com/lasmarathon

Welcome

THIS is the second edition of Ambulance News, which is published four times a year to update people in London with news on their ambulance service.

In this edition, read about improvements in survival rates for people suffering cardiac arrests, and an initiative to raise awareness of stroke which will encourage people in the capital to get their blood pressure checked.

Air ambulance goes 24/7

TEAMS of doctors and paramedics who work on the London air ambulance will now be available around the clock.

Previously, they have only been available for 24 hours a day on Fridays and Saturdays, when they attend after-dark calls in specially-equipped cars.

This will now be extended to all other days of the week as part of a new system being introduced in the emergency control room to help the Service manage calls to seriously ill and injured patients.

Service starts 'tweeting'

THE Service is now 'tweeting' messages to the world via its Twitter page on the internet.

Posts on the social networking site include advice on how to use the Service, incidents staff have been to, job vacancies and links to news and photographs.

To find out more, visit twitter.com/ldn_ambulance



Photo by Tim Saunders

Spelling it out: some of the runners who will be taking part in the Virgin London Marathon for MERU

Survival chances increase for heart patients

LONDONERS whose hearts stop beating in public are over six times more likely to survive than 10 years ago, according to the Service's latest figures.

Just under one in six people who suffered a cardiac arrest outside of hospital which was seen by someone else survived last year.

This survival rate of 15.2 per cent is up from 2.5 per cent in 1998/99 and reflects a wide range of developments in the care and treatment of cardiac patients in the capital.

Clinical Practice Manager Mark Whitbread said: "Many factors have contributed to

the improvement, including our staff reaching patients in a life-threatening condition faster than ever before and giving a high quality of care.

"The most important thing to remember is that if you see someone collapse and stop breathing you need to call 999 for an ambulance as quickly as possible and begin chest compressions while the ambulance crew is on the way. This will give the patient the best chance of survival.

"When someone's heart stops beating every second is vital, and to have seen such tremendous improvements in these survival rates is a great achievement."

Case study

Twenty-eight-year-old Mary Cook is reunited with the police and ambulance staff who saved her life last May when she collapsed and stopped breathing as she

was walking near London Bridge.

Ahead of the ambulance crews arriving, British Transport Police Officer Noel Harmsworth (left)

and his colleague started cardiopulmonary resuscitation which involves giving chest compressions to keep blood and oxygen moving around the body.



Reunited: PC Noel Harmsworth, Emergency Medical Technician Paul Saddington, Paramedic Alan Hedger, Emergency Medical Technician Justin Langan and Mary Cook

LINK-in with your community

LONDONERS are being invited to help give their community a



trust, the London Ambulance Service will work with its Council of

stronger voice on issues to do with health and social care.

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) support and promote the involvement of patients, the public and community groups. They are responsible for finding out what people want, monitoring local services and using their powers to hold them to account.

As an NHS foundation

Governors and LINKs to ensure it is more accountable to Londoners.

Anybody interested in becoming a member of a LINK should contact their local council.

LINK members can attend meetings held by the London Ambulance Service Patients' Forum. To find out about the forum email patientsforumlas@aol.com

What does it mean to be a governor?

GOVERNORS of NHS foundation trusts are elected members of the public or staff who ensure members' views are heard and help influence the development of the organisation.

The Service will have 13 public governors and three staff governors on its Council of Governors when it becomes an NHS foundation trust.

Here, Ambulance News talks to Paul Murphy (pictured right) – a public governor at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – about the role.

Q. Why did you become a governor?

A. I got involved through being a patient at the hospital. I seemed to be there all the time and decided to take it a bit further so I could use my experience to help the hospital progress.

Q. What does the role involve?

A. A range of things – from speaking to members, to

representing them at meetings and other ad hoc tasks, such as sitting on interview panels.

Q. What is your background?

A. I am now semi-retired but have worked as a lawyer and city trader and have a lot of experience of working with regulators, which is experience I feel I have brought to the hospital.

Q. Do you enjoy it?

A. Yes, very much. I've been doing it for over four years now, and have just been re-elected. I like to think I bring in a different perspective, with my experience outside of the NHS. It's also good to bring a 'joe public' view to the table.

Q. How much time do you give?

A. I am quite heavily involved and sit on two steering groups and two committees. It's probably about four hours a week on average. You don't have to give as



much time but I like to be quite involved and read up on everything that is going on. You could certainly combine being a governor with a full-time job.

Q. What's the most satisfying part of the role?

A. Being able to pick things up and saying it could be better, and then going about making it better. It's very rewarding and I really feel I am making a difference. The hospital has done a lot for me and this has been my chance to give something back.

• Any members who are interested in standing as governors should contact the membership office on 0800 7311 388 or email membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk

SIGN UP A FRIEND

Invite your friends who live or work in London to sign-up to become a member of the London Ambulance Service.

Benefits include:

- quarterly newspaper updates
- taking part in focus groups and surveys
- helping to develop future plans
- standing as a governor to represent your community's views

Sign up online or by contacting the membership office:

Freephone: 0800 7311 388

Email: membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk

Website: www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/ft



Charity link-up gives lessons in life



Team effort: Richard Chow (centre) with the young people on the course

IT WAS back to the classroom for some staff when they joined forces with the Prince's Trust scheme.

The Service set up a link with the charity last year and 20 people have already taken up secondments, varying between 20 days and 18 weeks.

They have helped out on courses for 16 to 25-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law.



Prince's Trust

Richard Chow, who works on the Service's new system for call-taking and sending ambulance staff to incidents, was a co-team leader on a 12-week course in west London.

He said: "I had done some volunteering before with the Samaritans, but this was far more challenging than I first thought. We had a very diverse team – some with very strong characters and some who were quite shy."

The group got to know one another before going on a residential week, which involved wall climbing, canoeing, rope courses, and night walking. The rest of the time was spent on a community project, a two-week work placement and a team challenge.

Richard added: "The project made me realise just what some young people have

had to go through."

One of those who took part was Tanisha Kaler, aged 17, who dropped out of

"It has taught me a huge amount about dealing with young people and realising what some of them have had to go through."

college and, after working for a high street clothes store, struggled to get another job.

She said: "I think I've matured as a result of the course and this is the only thing I have ever stuck at. It was hard work because you have to work on your weaknesses."

InBrief

Charlie's an angel

AN 11-year-old boy was hailed a hero after helping to save the life of his nan.

Charlie Tsangarides and three of his young cousins were being looked after by Gail Turner when she went into anaphylactic shock last November. Charlie put her in the recovery position, called 999, asked his neighbour to look after the other children and helped the crew find her medication.

They were so impressed with what he did that they met with Charlie and Gail to give him a certificate for his actions.

Gail said: "Charlie was a hero. I dread to think what might have happened if he hadn't been there."



Paramedic praised by police

AN OFF-DUTY paramedic has been commended for the help he gave to the victim of a car crash.

Adam Panter, who is based at Brent station, was heading home after a night shift when he stopped at the scene of a five-car collision last August.

He recently received a commendation from Hertfordshire Constabulary for the 'professionalism and calmness' he showed while treating the patient, who sadly later died in hospital.

Adam said: "I was very proud to receive the commendation, although all things considered, I was just doing my job."

Patients have their say

DEBATES and discussions were on the agenda at this year's patient care conference.

Around 150 people attended the event in January and delegates found out more on becoming an NHS foundation trust governor and why it is important for the public to respond to consultations.

Also discussed was how the Service measures the quality of the care it provides to patients.

Londoners urged: Know your blood pressure

HEALTH fairs are to be held after Easter for Londoners to raise their awareness of strokes.

The Service will be running events across the capital on Saturday 17 April where staff will offer free blood pressure and pulse rate checks, basic lifestyle advice, and provide information about how to recognise a stroke using a simple test.

High blood pressure increases the chance of having a stroke – a brain attack that happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. In many cases someone suffering a stroke can be left with long-term disabilities, while in some cases

they can even die.

The Stroke Association, which is working with the Service on the initiative, says that around 40 per cent of all strokes could be prevented if people with undiagnosed high blood pressure were identified and treated.

The FAST test can help identify if someone is having a stroke and can be carried out by anyone.

Standing for Face, Arms, Speech, Time to call 999, the test involves checking movement in someone's face and arms and identifying whether a person's speech is slurred.

Assistant Medical Director Neil Thomson explained:

"Early recognition and action means you can get medical help to someone quickly, and ensure they are taken to a specialist centre for treatment."

Since February this year, eight specialist stroke centres have been operating around the clock in London. Patients who are taken there by ambulance crews will receive quick access to a specialist scan and expert treatment, which will increase their chance of survival and cut the risk of long-term disability.

To find out where your nearest health fair will be held, check our website at www.londonambulance.nhs.uk or call 020 7921 5113. Venues will be published from mid March.



FACT: High blood pressure is the single biggest risk factor for stroke.

FACT: A stroke is a brain attack which happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off.

FACT: Stroke is the third leading cause of death and the largest single cause of disability in England.

FACT: Being able to recognise a stroke can save lives.



Adverts urge public to 'choose well'

EYE-CATCHING adverts have begun appearing on the side of the Service's new ambulances.

They tie in with the NHS Choose Well campaign to encourage people to use the right service for their medical needs, which will help save them time and free up ambulance crews to respond to patients who need them.

The options available include:

- Calling NHS Direct on 0845 4647 for advice.
- Seeing a pharmacist or GP.
- Visiting a local walk-in centre, urgent care centre or minor injuries unit.
- Making their own way to hospital, as arriving in an ambulance will not mean that they will be seen more quickly.

Medical Director Fionna Moore said: "We don't want to put anyone off from calling us in an emergency, but it is in everyone's interests for patients to 'choose well' when they need treatment or advice."

Full details of the NHS services available across London can be found at www.nhs.uk



How to contact us

In an emergency

Call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured.

Examples of medical emergencies include (but are not limited to) chest pain, difficulty in breathing, unconsciousness, severe loss of blood, serious injuries and choking.



About the care you have received

Our patient experiences team is your first point of contact if you have any comments, feedback or complaints about the service you have received from us. Call the team on 020 7887 6678 (9.30am - 4.30pm, Monday to Friday) or email patientexperiences@londonambulance.nhs.uk

About membership

We always welcome new members. If you would like to speak to someone about membership or update your details, please contact the membership office on 0800 7311 388 or email membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk

About Ambulance News

We are keen to hear your comments on Ambulance News. Please call us with your views on 020 7921 5113 or email communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk

www.londonambulance.nhs.uk

A day in the life of a single responder

Karen Carr is based at Barnehurst Ambulance Station in south east London and uses a fast response car to attend patients.

Single responders normally arrive at more serious incidents before ambulance crews, and will carry out a first assessment and begin treatment. They will then hand over the care of the patient to the crew, or cancel the ambulance if one is not required. Here Karen explains what a typical day is like.

A shift from 6.30am to 6.30pm

6:00AM I arrive at the station, say hello to a few colleagues and check my vehicle. The checks cover everything from tyre pressure to medical supplies.

6:50AM I'm off to my first job. An elderly man has fallen at home – his wife is worried because he's not fully conscious. I arrive at the

address in just under six minutes and check the patient, who is awake but confused. He has type two diabetes and his blood sugar levels are very low. Once the ambulance crew arrive, we help him take some of his own medication, which is washed down with some sugary tea and a jam sandwich. I leave him with the crew and drive to my stand-by point.

9:10AM I get sent to an 'unconscious female' but the call is quickly downgraded

from the most serious category to a lower priority call when the patient recovers after fainting.

The morning continues to be steady, and I see several patients. Some need hospital treatment, while others refuse my help.

Towards lunchtime I get the chance while out in the car on stand-by to do some studying to further my career.

1:40PM I'm called to an 18-year-old man who's been having nosebleeds for the past few weeks and his mum is worried because they're getting more frequent. The patient doesn't want to go to hospital and after a thorough examination

there was nothing to suggest he needed immediate attention. We agree that he should see his GP and I manage to arrange an appointment for the next day.

2:55PM Not long after letting our control room know that I'm available for calls, I'm sent to a road traffic collision. A 68-year-old woman has been hit by a motorcycle – no further details available. Arriving on scene I find her to be conscious and alert, even though she's lying in the

middle of the road. It turns out the motorcyclist had swerved to miss her and just caught her left-hand side. She'd lost balance and fallen over. Because she's complaining of shoulder pain I help to immobilise her with an ambulance crew who've arrived on scene. She was taken to hospital for a thorough check-up in the A&E department.

5:15PM My last call of the day, and it's a high priority one: a 54-year-old man with chest pains. He was in a supermarket and after I've had a chat with him it turned out he has angina. When an ambulance arrives, the crew use a machine to check his heart rate and he is taken to A&E for further tests.

6:15PM I get back to station and finish my paperwork, then it's home for the night. It all starts again tomorrow.



Karen Carr
Single Responder

