



# Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Spring 2011

## On the road

A shift with an ambulance crew in west London

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## In his own words

Former patient talks at first free members' event

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# Quality control

## New performance measures to further improve care

THOUSANDS of people across London who dial 999 will from now on see the care they receive judged on its quality, not just how quickly ambulance staff arrive to treat them.

New clinical measures, which are intended to help better assess how ambulance services perform, came into effect at the beginning of April. They include the survival rate of people who collapse and stop breathing and the recovery rate of patients suffering heart attacks

or strokes (a type of brain attack). Another measure will be patients' overall experience of using their local ambulance service.

**We will now be able to focus more on the quality of care we provide, rather than just meeting a time target."**

As part of the changes introduced by the Government, the time-based target to reach people in a non life-threatening condition (Category B calls) has been removed. The Service had

previously been contracted to reach 95 per cent of these patients within 19 minutes of an emergency call.

Director of Operations Richard Webber said: "We know that the speed with which we respond to patients is important, and people who are critically ill or injured will still receive the same fast response. However, we will now be able to focus more on the quality of care we provide, rather than just meeting a time target that doesn't necessarily make a difference to how well they recover."

• More details about the clinical quality measures can be found at [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk)

### How 999 calls will now be handled:

- The target of reaching 75 per cent of patients in a life-threatening condition (Category A calls) within eight minutes will remain.
- All other calls will be put into one of four categories.
  - Patients in the first two categories will still be attended by ambulance staff. These patients

will have to be reached in either 20 or 30 minutes depending on their condition.

- Other categories of patients could be offered advice over the phone by trained ambulance staff or NHS Direct, as happens for some callers now. These patients could be referred to their GP or a walk-in centre, or sent an ambulance if it is decided they need one.

**Changing times: The Service will now be judged on the quality of care it provides and patients' experience of using the 999 system**

## Inside

IN the sixth edition of Ambulance News, find out how you can become a London Ambulance Service governor and read about our work to tackle knife crime in the capital.

### Medal ceremony

ALMOST 50 long serving members of staff have been honoured at a special ceremony in Westminster.

Chairman Richard Hunt and Chief Executive Peter Bradley presented 26 frontline staff with the Queen's Ambulance Service Long Service and Good Conduct medal, and nine support staff with London Ambulance Service medallion in March.

The recipients, who have each been with the Service for more than 20 years, were joined by 12 retirees at the ceremony with a total of 405 years' service between them.

### Date for 7/7 verdicts

THE Coroner at the inquests into the deaths of the 52 victims of the 2005 London bombings is due to give her verdicts on 6 May.

Lady Justice Hallett has heard evidence from more than 300 witnesses – including 32 from the Service – during the five months of the inquests, which were held at the Royal Courts of Justice.

### Web award

THE Service has been voted the best ambulance service in the country by readers of the PinkPaper.com, a leading gay news website, in their 2011 awards.



# A day in the life of an ambulance crew

MOST people who see an ambulance on blue lights think it's on the way to a dramatic life-or-death emergency. But in reality four out of every five emergency calls that the Service receives turn out to be non life-threatening.

Hillingdon Paramedic Nick Hill describes a typical day for him and his crewmate, Emergency Medical Technician Michelle Kirton.

**9am** Our shifts can be up to 12 hours long, but we're only working from 8am to 4pm today.

We check the ambulance is in order, sign out the medicines we'll need and fill a flask up with hot water – we won't be able to function without a good cup of tea – and then we're ready to respond to 999 calls.

We drive to a standby

point so we're ready for the first job.

**9.30am** We're sent to a primary school where a young girl has a high temperature. She doesn't need to go to hospital, but we check her over and give her a paracetamol. The girl's father, who wanted an ambulance to be called, will take her to see their GP.

The school staff are very apologetic but we tell them not to worry. Hopefully the family will consider other, more appropriate, options before dialling 999 in future.

**10.05am** A 42-year-old woman has collapsed at home.

When we arrive she's in good spirits but still on the floor, unable to get up. She tells us that she has multiple sclerosis, a disease that affects



999 team: Emergency Medical Technician Michelle Kirton and Paramedic Nick Hill

the central nervous system, and occasionally falls when her legs become weak.

We assess her and help her into a comfortable chair. She doesn't want to go to hospital but is very grateful for our help.

**12.12pm** We see a few more patients over the rest of the morning and we're kept busy.

Then we get our first potentially life-threatening call

and hurry to an elderly man who is struggling to breathe.

He has lung disease which means he is normally short of breath, but today it has become much worse. We give him some oxygen in the ambulance and then it's on to hospital. I help him relax on the journey simply by having a chat – it turns out we both married nurses.

**2.50pm** Our final call is to

Heathrow Airport, where a woman is reported to have collapsed inside the Terminal 5 building.

When we arrive she is being assessed by one of our airport cycle responders.

She has a history of heart problems so we explain to her that she should go to hospital for a full check up. Once inside the ambulance, we use a special machine to check her heart rate and then get her to hospital.

**FREE**  
*An evening with us*  
London Ambulance Service Stroke Care Event

## Stroke on the hour

In London, one person every hour is admitted to hospital suffering from a stroke – a type of brain injury caused by reduced blood flow to the brain.

Join us at a free event to find out how we've helped to increase the recovery rate of stroke patients in London.

Speakers will include Medical Director Dr Fionna Moore and Assistant Medical Director Neil Thomson.

There'll also be a chance to talk to our experts and hear some of our patient survival stories.

**When:** 24 May 2011

**Time:** 5.30 – 7.30pm

**Where:** Robens Suite, 29<sup>th</sup> Floor, Guy's Hospital, Great Maze Street, London, SE1 9RT  
Light refreshments will be served.

To find out more and book a place:

**Web:** [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/eveningwithus](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/eveningwithus)

**Email:** [membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

**Phone:** Call free on 0800 7311 388

## TV documentary goes behind the scenes

STAFF based at the Service's Waterloo complex in central London will soon be starring in a documentary television series.

The show, titled 'Soho Blues', will look at the response to a variety of 999 calls in and around the West End.

Over the past few weeks ambulance crews, single responders and members of the cycle response unit have been joined by film crews

as they cared for patients.

The programme will also feature the control room located in the headquarters building at Waterloo to explain how staff deal with 999 calls, allocate ambulance crews and ensure patients get an appropriate response.

The six-part documentary is scheduled to be broadcast on Channel 5 in May.



Candid camera: Student Paramedic Gary Edwards and Emergency Medical Technician Harry Humphreys being filmed during a shift

# Tackling knife crime in London

STAFF have visited all 12 secondary schools in one London borough as part of an initiative to tackle knife crime.

Paramedics and emergency medical technicians have been working with police officers, charities and bereaved families to teach thousands of youngsters in Haringey about the dangers of knife-related violence.

Edmonton Paramedic Peter Fisher said: "The feedback from the kids is always positive, and when you talk to them afterwards you can tell it's really made them think. It definitely has an effect."

The project in Haringey is just one of a number of similar types of schemes that the Service is involved in.

Paramedic John Wright speaks to school children and young offenders across the capital and said: "When you go to an incident where somebody has been stabbed – particularly a young person – it really sticks in your mind.

"We talk to them about what could happen if they



**Young lives lost: Paramedic Peter Fisher (left) with other speakers at a Haringey event**

carry a knife. There are no graphic photos or shock tactics, we just get them to think about what the result of

their actions could mean for them and the people around them."

Any organisations or

schools that would like to learn more about the knife awareness events can email [ppi@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:ppi@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

## Your vote, your voice

LONDONERS will have the opportunity to directly influence the future plans of the Service when the first Council of Governors is formed later this year.

Anyone who has signed up as a member will be able to stand as a governor candidate or vote for someone who they think will best represent their interests after the Service becomes an NHS foundation trust.

Governors will play a crucial role as they will be responsible for:

- ensuring the directors are following business plans they have set out;
- sharing the Service's plans with other members and seeking their views; and
- acting as a 'critical friend', both supporting and challenging the Service.

More details about the election process can be found at [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/ft](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/ft)

Voting papers will be sent to all members later in the year, but anyone with any questions should get in touch with the membership office using the contact details on the back page.

# Survivor speaks about life-saving treatment

AN emotional 'thank you' from a former patient was the highlight of an emergency heart care event in central London.

Steve Hodder was brought back to life when his heart stopped beating and he went into cardiac arrest at London Bridge train station three years ago.

He was speaking at the first of the Service's 'An evening with us' events for members in January.

**"My family and I will always be grateful for what everyone did for me."**

Steve, now 58, said: "My family and I will always be grateful for what everyone did for me."

Other speakers included frontline ambulance staff and clinical experts who talked about the work that is underway to improve the health of Londoners who



**Reunited: Cardiac arrest survivor Steve Hodder with Paramedic Sarah Barrow, who helped to save his life**

suffer from heart attacks caused by a blockage of blood flow to the heart, and cardiac arrests – when the heart stops.

Director of Corporate Services Sandra Adams said: "We hope this event gave members an opportunity to find out more about the ongoing developments in

emergency heart care in the capital, and to get involved with the Service."

- Details of the next 'An evening with us' event can be found opposite on page 2.



## InBrief

### Student visit



A GROUP of Norwegian ambulance students visited the Service's Waterloo headquarters in February.

They got the chance to talk face-to-face with experienced members of staff and visited the control room where the Service handles 999 calls from across London.

### Under the spotlight

THE London Assembly is carrying out a review of the Service's current performance and is looking at how prepared it is to meet future challenges.

The Assembly's Health and Public Services Committee held public meetings in mid March, and early April. Organisations that the Service works with were also invited to submit their comments.

A report on the committee's findings will be published in the summer. More details can be found at [www.london.gov.uk/londonambulance](http://www.london.gov.uk/londonambulance)

### Serious incident

AN investigation is being carried out following the death of a patient.

Sarah Mulenga, 21, was attended twice in the same afternoon at her home in east London and died after arriving at hospital.

The Service has met with Miss Mulenga's family and will share the findings of its investigation with them once it is complete.

### Kingston praise

STAFF have been thanked by the Mayor of Kingston for their good work at a large fire in the borough.

Councillor Chrissie Hitchcock awarded the commendation after crews helped to evacuate and treat dozens of patients at the blaze last July.

She said: "The emergency services were at the heart of the incident and stayed throughout the night supporting the council and its residents."

# Keep on running



## On your marks: Runners with MERU staff at the charity's headquarters in Epsom

STAFF are in the final stages of training for this month's Virgin London Marathon.

The runners will be raising money for MERU, the Chief Executive's charity. Last year over £12,000 was raised for the Epsom-based organisation that designs and builds tailor-made equipment for children with disabilities.

New Malden Student Paramedic Caroline Kelly is one of those taking up the challenge. She said: "I feel a range of emotions – excitement, anticipation, nervousness, happiness, self doubt, confidence and pride.

"It's always been one of my ambitions to run the marathon and I feel privileged

to be running for a really worthy cause."

The Service receives guaranteed entry places every year in recognition of the medical support provided along the 26.2 mile route.

To support the runners you can make a donation by visiting <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/lasmarathon>

## 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 3069 0240 (9.30am - 4.30pm, Monday to Friday) or email [patientexperiences@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto: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](mailto:membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

### About Ambulance News

If there are any stories or issues you would like to read about, please call us on 020 7783 2286 or email [communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk)

[www.londonambulance.nhs.uk](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk)

## Cuts. Strains. Itches. Sprains.

For slips, trips, skin complaints and everything in-between, choose an NHS Walk-in Centre, NHS Urgent Care Centre or NHS Minor Injuries Unit.

Use an **NHS Walk-in Centre**, **NHS Urgent Care Centre** or **NHS Minor Injuries Unit** to treat ailments that do not need a visit to A&E or a medical appointment. Choosing well ensures you receive the best possible treatment, leaving emergency services to those who need them most.

 Choose well.  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

 NHS London

## NHS Walk-in centres

Walk-in centres provide treatment for problems such as infections, small cuts or wounds, and sprains. No appointments are needed. For more information, please visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Bow

St Andrews Health Centre, 1-3 Birchdown House, Devons Road, E3 3NS  
Tel: 020 8980 1888

### Broad Street

Morland Road, Dagenham RM10 9HU  
Tel: 020 8596 4400

### Charing Cross

Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road, W6 8RF  
Tel: 020 8846 1234

### City and Hackney

Tollgate Primary Care Centre, 57 Stamford Hill, N16 5SR  
Tel: 020 7689 3140

### Croydon

Edridge Road Community Health Centre, Impact House, Croydon CR9 1PJ  
Tel: 020 3040 0800

### Dartford

Bexley North Health Centre, 17 Crayford High Street, Dartford, DA1 4HH  
Tel: 01322 429924

### Edgware

Edgware Community Hospital, Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware, HA8 0AD  
Tel: 020 8732 6459

### Enfield

Evergreen Primary Care centre, 1 Smythe Close, N9 0TW  
Tel: 020 8887 8300  
GP-led

### Finchley

Finchley Memorial Hospital, Granville Road, N12 0JE  
Tel: 020 8349 7471

### Hackney

Homerton University Hospital, Homerton Row, E9 6SR  
Tel: 020 8510 5342

### Hackney

19-21 Oldhill Street, N16 6LD  
Tel: 020 8806 6993

### Heart of Hounslow

92 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW3 3LN  
Tel: 020 8104 0810

### Islington

Ams Walk In Centre, Ritchie Street Group Practice, 34 Ritchie Street, N1 0DG  
Tel: 020 7837 1663

### Mitcham

The Wilson Health Centre, Cranmer Road, Mithcam, Surrey, CR4 4TP  
Tel: 020 3458 5100

### New Cross

Suite 3, Waldren Health Centre, Amersham Vale, SE8 6LD  
Tel: 020 3049 2370

### Parsons Green

5-7 Parsons Green, SW6 4UL  
Tel: 020 8846 6758

### Peckham

Lister Primary Care Centre, 101 Peckham Road, SE15 5LJ  
Tel: 020 3049 8430

### Rainham, Essex

Orchard Village Health Centre, Roman Close, Rainham, RM13 8QB  
Tel: 01708 793 900

### Soho

1 Frith Street, W1D 3HZ  
Tel: 020 7534 6500

### Streatham

Gracefield Gardens Health and Social Care Centre, 2-8 Gracefield Gardens, Streatham, SW16 2ST  
Tel: 020 3049 5030  
GP-led

### Teddington

Teddington Memorial Hospital, Hampton Road, Teddington, TW11 0JL  
Tel: 020 8714 4004

### Thamesmead

Thamesmead NHS Health Centre, 4-5 Thames Reach, Thamesmead, SE28 0NY  
Tel: 020 8319 5880

### Tooting

St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road, SW17 0QT

### Tower Hamlets

The Barkantine, 121 Westferry Road, Isle of Dogs, E14 8JH  
Tel: 020 7791 8000

### Upney Lane

132 Upney Lane, Barking, IG11 9YD  
Tel: 020 8924 6262

### Wembley

116 Chaplin Road, Wembley, HA0 4UZ  
Tel: 020 8795 6000

### Whitechapel

174 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BZ

List correct as of Mar 2011