



Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Summer 2010

On board the 'booze bus'

A night shift dealing with the effects of alcohol

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Checked out

Stroke awareness day is a success

MORE than 2,000 Londoners were given free blood pressure checks as part of the Service's biggest ever health promotion initiative.

They were carried out at 19 venues across the capital to raise awareness of the danger of having high blood pressure, which is the biggest risk factor for causing a stroke.

Of the 2,173 people who attended the events, which were all held on the same day in April:

- 1,666 were found to have normal blood pressure.
- 502 were found to have high blood pressure and were referred to their GP.
- five were taken to hospital.

“It was a wonderful opportunity to get your blood pressure checked.”

Assistant Medical Director Daryl Mohammed said: “To see the numbers we did turning up at the health fairs was really encouraging. There are now hundreds of people in London who have taken a big step forward in preventing stroke by getting their blood pressure checked.”

“The numbers who were advised to make a GP appointment, or were taken to hospital, shows that there are many people out there with undiagnosed high blood pressure which needs checking.”

The events proved to be a success with staff and the public alike.

Paramedic Tony Eastley, who was part of the team

working at the health fair in Greenwich, said: “It was an enjoyable day and a very good way to help educate people. I think we should do a lot more health promotion work, as the only time we usually see anyone is when the problem has happened.”

Shan Rees, who attended an event in Lambeth, said: “It was a wonderful opportunity to get your blood pressure checked while doing your shopping and it was very quick.”



Photo by Tim Saunders

Testing, testing: Paramedic Mark Hodkinson checks a member of the public's blood pressure at an event in Brent

Welcome

INSIDE this edition, learn more about how the World Cup and warm weather could impact on the 999 call rate, how the Service is planning for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and a member of staff's experiences working in Afghanistan.

Setting the standard

THE Service has become the first ambulance trust in the country to gain a prestigious government award.

The Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence standard recognises the quality of the way in which 999 calls are answered and handled.

Assessors were impressed with the way in which callers are given advice before ambulance staff arrive and the creation of instructions on how to respond to and treat individuals with particular medical needs.

The Service receives nearly 1.5 million emergency calls a year, with 95 per cent answered within five seconds.

Trauma system live

SERIOUSLY injured patients in the capital now have the best possible chance of survival following the launch of the London trauma system.

Major trauma centres at St George's, The Royal London and King's College hospitals now offer high-quality specialist care, 24-hours a day.

In the first month, nearly 70 major trauma patients a week were treated at the three specialist centres.

A night in the life of the 'booze bus'

AS LONDONERS start to cheer on England in the World Cup, the Service is getting ready to deal with an increase in the number of emergency calls to revellers who will have one drink too many.

The response to these types of incidents will include the use of special 'booze buses'. The first of these alternative response vehicles (as they are officially known) hit the streets in central London in 2005. Since then more have been introduced to help manage the 60,000-plus alcohol-related incidents staff attend across the capital each year.

As well as helping to keep ambulances free for seriously ill or injured patients, they also have the advantage of being able to carry more than one person to hospital at a time.

Paramedic Toni Agnew (pictured) gives a run down of a typical night on board:

10:14pm A man has been found unconscious in the road outside a theatre – he's alone and we've been called by a concerned passer-by. He is the first of a number of patients we'll be taking to St Thomas' Hospital tonight.



During the next hour and a half, we attend two more incidents where people have fallen in the street and have facial injuries.

We will always start treatment – which can include setting up drips to help replace fluids – before we take anyone into hospital, and we also have to clean up the ambulance after each patient.

11:57pm The doorman of a pub is worried about a girl who is being sick and saying her drink had been spiked. We treat her and take her into hospital.

1:10am A woman in her late 40s with a known heart condition is ill after drinking all night and her friends are concerned. We check her over and, given her medical history, we take her to St Thomas'.

2:29am Back again to an earlier location following reports of an unconscious man, but he refuses to go to hospital.

We're called to three more patients in the following hour – all young men who have collapsed after drinking too much.

3:37am A call to outside a nightclub and a woman covered in her own vomit. We arrive to find she has sobered up enough to go home with friends in a taxi.

3:59am The final call of the night is to a young man who

is with friends and there is the potential that his drink has been spiked. We get him into the ambulance and start treatment before taking him to hospital.

5:35am It's time to go back to station to stock up the sick bowls and vomit bibs ready for the next shift.



SIGN UP A FRIEND

Invite your friends to sign-up to become a member of the London Ambulance Service.

Over 4,000 people have already joined and we are hoping to recruit another 2,000 members by the end of the year.

Membership is free and benefits include:

- quarterly newspaper updates
- taking part in focus groups and surveys
- influencing our future plans

Members will be able to stand for election to our Council of Governors, so if you want to represent your community or take part in voting then make sure you join today.

Sign-up online or by contacting the membership office:

Freephone: 0800 7311 388

Email: membership@londonambulance.nhs.uk

Website: www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/ft



Keep cool, keep well

TAKE care in any summer sunshine – that is the Service's message for Londoners.

Any significant rise above the average temperatures is likely to lead to an increase in 999 calls, with hot weather particularly causing difficulties for patients with pre-existing conditions such as breathing problems.

Young children and the elderly can also be more affected by the heat.

Deputy Director of Operations Jason Killens said: "On a particularly hot weekend in June last year, when temperatures reached 31 degrees, our calls increased by 23 per cent on the previous week.

"The World Cup and other big events such as the Notting Hill Carnival could also see more people out drinking in the sunshine, so we would urge

people to consider the consequences and look after themselves."

To help prevent Londoners becoming casualties of the weather, the Service echoes the common sense advice offered by the Department of Health:

- Try to keep as cool as possible – wear a hat when sitting or working outside and use plenty of suncream.
- Check up on friends, relatives and neighbours who may be less able to look after themselves.
- Patients with chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis should carry their prescribed reliever medication and those with hayfever should carry an antihistamine.
- People with serious health problems (for example heart

conditions) should avoid going out in the heat, especially between 11am and 3pm.

- Drink plenty of water and avoid drinking alcohol in the sun.
- Contact your doctor, pharmacist or NHS Direct (0845 46 47 or www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) if you are worried about your health. In an emergency, dial 999 for an ambulance.

33%

Rise in calls to patients with reported breathing problems on a hot weekend last summer

Jess' tour of duty

AN EMERGENCY medical technician is back on the road in south London after returning from supporting troops in Afghanistan.

Jess Smith, who is based at New Malden ambulance station and serves with the Territorial Army's 256 City of London Field Hospital, spent four months working as a combat medical technician in the accident and emergency department of a Camp Bastion hospital in the Helmand Province.

"Some of the time it was like a regular A&E, with tummy aches, chest pains and routine medical conditions," Jess said. "But obviously there were a lot of people with serious injuries, and many of them resulted in amputations. There were also a couple of

major incidents while I was there when we'd receive about 10 seriously-injured patients at once – that was tough."

Jess spent time in Iraq in 2004 and she thinks that experience stood her in good stead, but she still found it hard to be away

from friends and family.

She added: "We had the internet and access to phones so I could keep in touch with people back home, but there were communications blackouts every so often following the death or serious injury of a soldier. In that

situation, you just have to feel for the family who's about to receive some bad news.

"Overall, it was a great experience and I really loved being out there. I've learnt so many new things, made lots of friends and developed clinically and as a person."



On the frontline: Jess Smith worked as a combat medical technician in Afghanistan

Roger meets his lifesavers

A MAN who collapsed in his local pub has been reunited with the people who saved his life.

Roger Cornish, 54, was having a drink with a friend in Woodford Green when he suffered a cardiac arrest - his heart stopped beating and he stopped breathing.

Pub regular Cher Clarke helped to save Roger's life by giving him basic life support while ambulance staff were on the way. They used a defibrillator to give two shocks to his heart to start it again.

Roger, who was discharged from hospital two weeks later, said: "It was great to meet up with everyone and get the chance to say 'thank you'. If it wasn't for those people I wouldn't be here now."



Safety lessons

MORE than 800 pupils in east London learned first aid skills from one local ambulance crew.

Emergency Medical Technician Mark Bolding and Paramedic Teresa Groves were invited back to teach all the children at Barclays primary school in Leyton after a successful session with one class.

Their advice included not to touch blood and to find an adult to help in an emergency.

Mark said: "The children were all so proud of themselves. If we can stop them doing something that puts them or one of their friends in danger, or helps them to save someone else, then we're pleased."

In the news

THE work of the Service's cycle response unit made the pages of a national newspaper.

An article in the Mail on Sunday reported on how staff use bikes to attend calls in the West End, reaching patients quickly and freeing up ambulances when people don't need to go to hospital.

Cycle responders also work in the City and in Kensington, and at Heathrow Airport and Canary Wharf.

Counting down to the Games

The figures

- 10,500 athletes
- 6,000 coaches and officials
- 202 competing nations
- 2,000 judges and referees
- 5,000 Olympic Family members
- 20,000 media
- 7,000 official sponsors
- 200,000 accredited people
- 9,000,000 tickets

IT'S now just two years until the Olympic and Paralympic Games come to London.

Here, Ambulance News talks to Peter Thorpe (pictured) who is in charge of the Service's Olympic planning, about the challenges the Games will bring.



How long have you been planning?

We started in 2006 – a lesson we learned from other cities that have hosted the Games is that you can never start planning early enough.

What do you see as the main challenges of the Games?

It's the biggest sporting event in the world so will be an enormous test, with a

huge influx of spectators, athletes, officials and media into London. The challenge is not just providing medical care to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, but also ensuring that we maintain our normal day-to-day emergency service across the capital at the same time.

What have you done so far?

We've spoken to those who have held Games before to see what can be learned and have been working out what we will need in terms of staff, vehicles, equipment and facilities.

We've also been involved in consultation on aspects of design for the Olympic Park stadia and village, the transport plan, and security.

And we've had a role to play as the national co-ordinator for the UK ambulance services for the 2012 Games, and have been working closely with all the

Olympic and Paralympic organisations, emergency services and voluntary organisations that will support the Games.

Will extra staff be taken on?

We are currently working out the numbers we will need. Many of our staff have said they are keen to be involved and we will be getting help from other ambulance services as well.

What are the benefits for the Service of hosting the Games?

There are many – including the fact that our staff will have a once in a lifetime opportunity to work at the Games and will acquire new skills along the way. And there are many other long-term benefits – for example, we will be building a new control room to handle emergency calls and send staff to incidents not just during the Games but also for other big events.

Road runners



STAFF members Gary Robertson, Lynn Pearson and John O'Keefe are pictured just after finishing the Virgin London Marathon – and

helping the Service to raise nearly £10,000 for charity. They were among 18 staff to complete the 26.2 mile course in aid of MERU, which

designs and makes specialist equipment for disabled youngsters living in and around London and is the Chief Executive's charity.

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

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

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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.

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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

Canary Wharf

30 Marsh Wall,
E14 9TP
Tel: 020 7517 3300

Broad Street

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

Charing Cross

Charing Cross Hospital,
Fulham Palace Road,
W6 8RF
Tel: 020 8383 0904

City and Hackney

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

Croydon

45 High Street, Croydon,
CR0 1QD
Tel: 020 8714 2888

Edgware

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

Finchley

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

Hackney

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

Heart of Hounslow

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

Liverpool Street

Exchange Arcade,
Bishopsgate,
EC2M 3WA
Tel: 0845 880 1242

Middlesex (North)

North Middlesex Hospital,
Sterling Way,
N18 1QX
Tel: 020 8887 2680

New Cross

Waldron Health Centre,
Amersham Vale
SE8 4BG
Tel: 020 3049 2370

Newham

Glen Road, London,
E13 8SH
Tel: 020 7363 9200

Parsons Green

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

Soho

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

Teddington

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

Tooting

Clare House, St George's
Hospital, Blackshaw Road,
SW17 0QT
Tel: 020 8700 0505

Upney Lane

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

Victoria

63 Buckingham Gate,
SW1E 6AS
Tel: 020 7340 1190

Wembley

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

Whitechapel

174 Whitechapel Road,
E1 1BZ
Tel: 020 7943 1333

List correct as of May 2010