

Busiest week ever for life-threatening calls



Demand has increased significantly in the run-up to Christmas, with us experiencing our busiest ever week for life-threatening calls in mid December.

We responded to more than 9,600 patients with life-threatening illnesses and injuries during the week commencing 10 December; 12 per cent higher than in the same period last year.

Among the types of calls that we have seen an increase in are patients with breathing problems, chest pains and those who have fallen. Staff have also treated more patients with alcohol-related injuries and illnesses.

Alcohol-related calls add to pressure



We have been preparing for the festive party season as recent figures reveal that one of the top reasons 21-30 year olds call 999 is because of an alcohol-related incident.

We attended 4,800 alcohol-related incidents involving this age group between April and October this year, an increase of 5.5 per cent on the same period in 2011.

Our alcohol recovery centre in Soho, where patients suffering from excessive drinking are treated instead of being taken to A&E, is operating every night up until Christmas and over New Year.

[Find out more about how we are dealing with demand from alcohol-related calls.](#)

Providing fast access to lifesaving heart care



We diagnosed over 2,700 heart attack patients and took them to one of London's eight specialist heart attack centres for life-saving treatment last year, often by-passing local A&E departments.

More than 1,300 of these patients underwent primary angioplasty - a procedure where the blockage in the artery causing the heart attack was reopened using a small balloon.

The average ambulance journey time to a heart attack centre in 2011/12 was 16 minutes, and the fastest time from the 999 call coming in to us to a patient's artery being reopened was 42 minutes – well within the recommended 150-minute timeframe.

[Read more about the care we provided to heart attack patients in 2011/12.](#)

Parliament receives lifesaving equipment

Sixteen defibrillators – machines that can be used to restart a person's heart – have been installed in the Houses of Parliament, and we are training a team of MPs, Peers and members of staff in their use.

As many as 10,000 employees and visitors can be in Parliament on a busy day, and use of the new equipment will increase the chances of survival if someone has a cardiac arrest, and they collapse and stop breathing.

The defibrillators are part funded by the British Heart Foundation, and bring the total number of defibrillators that we have put in public places in the capital to over 800.



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