

Visit by Care Quality Commission



The Care Quality Commission, with whom we have to be registered to provide care, recently carried out a routine inspection of the Service. We are awaiting the final report, but provisional feedback has not revealed any immediate concerns.

Areas of good practice observed by inspectors include the care we provide to mental health patients and those with learning disabilities, and our public education work. There is, however, scope for us to improve our recording of mandatory staff training.

Providing a timely response to patients



We recognise that our speed of response is important to the public, and we reached more of our most seriously ill and injured patients quicker than ever before last year.

We attended 390,229 patients with life-threatening conditions (Category A patients) – up from 347,675 in 2010/11; and we reached 75.74 per cent of them (295,551 patients) within eight minutes. This is the ninth year in a row that we have achieved this national target.

This achievement comes despite receiving 7.5 per cent more 999 calls last year, and the number of calls categorised as life threatening rising by 12.5 per cent.

New 999 call handling system up and running



A new system for handling 999 calls and sending staff and vehicles to patients was introduced at the end of March. CommandPoint was initially implemented in June last year, but had to be switched off because of technical problems. The faults were fixed, and following further developments and staff training, live tests were carried out before it was re-introduced.

The system, which has been running well since it was brought back in, will improve our ability to handle 999 calls and meet the challenges of population growth in the capital and the ever-increasing demand on our Service.

Sharing good ideas to improve patient handovers at hospital



We hosted a meeting with hospitals in the capital to discuss how we can work together so that patients who are taken to hospital by ambulance can be received more quickly into emergency departments.

This follows a year in which more than 1,998 patients waited over an hour to be handed over at hospital in London.

Learning was taken from Whipps Cross Hospital which significantly improved its turnaround of patients – with one hour delays down by over 100 on 2010/11 figures. This was achieved by introducing a clinical rapid assessment team for ambulance patients; adopting a clear policy for escalating delays; and developing a strong patient safety culture in the emergency department.

Hollywood star launches new charity

Dame Helen Mirren recently became patron of our Voluntary Responder Group charity, which



offers financial support to volunteers who respond to emergency calls alongside ambulances.

Charity funds are also used to place defibrillators – machines used to restart a patient's heart with an electric shock – in public places around the capital, and train people in their use.

Dame Helen visited the Service to meet the people behind the charity last month, and took the opportunity to learn to save a life. [Find out more about our Voluntary Responder Group charity](#)



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