



Ambulance

For people who live and work in the capital

Autumn 2009

Latest news on your views

Feedback on the Service's plans for the future

Page 2



Heart-warming reunion for baby Tynisha

Mum thanks staff for saving her daughter's life

Page 3



A new calling

Welcome

WELCOME to the first edition of Ambulance News, a quarterly newspaper providing people in the capital with news on what's happening in their ambulance service.

In this edition, find out more about London's biggest ever recruitment drive for paramedics, and about the outcome of the Service's foundation trust consultation. There is also advice on how to avoid getting the flu and what to do if you become ill.

Chief Executive's charity is chosen

CHILDREN and young adults with disabilities are set to benefit after a staff vote to choose the Chief Executive's charity for the next two years.

The Medical Engineering Resource Unit (MERU) designs and makes specialist equipment for youngsters living in and around London to use in their daily life.

For more information about the charity, visit www.meru.org.uk

Triple success at Commons ceremony

TWO members of staff have received awards at the House of Commons for the way in which they dealt with violent incidents.

Emergency Medical Technician Frank Samaras and Paramedic Madeline Basford-Herd both received the Ambulance Service Institute Bravery Medal at a ceremony in October.

Team Leader Rebecca Bedson was also honoured for her work giving clinical telephone advice to patients with less serious illnesses and injuries.



Photo by Tim Saunders

In training: hundreds of student paramedics have joined the London Ambulance Service

FROM farm workers to legal graduates – people from all walks of life are training as paramedics.

During 2008-09, 340 people from different backgrounds joined the London Ambulance Service as student paramedics. This year the Service is taking on another 400 trainees.

Chief Executive Peter Bradley said: "Increasing our frontline staff numbers by around a third will help us provide better care for patients. Not only will we have more staff available to respond quickly to the ever-increasing number of 999 calls we receive, but they will be highly-skilled paramedics who can assess and treat a range of clinical conditions, ensuring patients receive the best

care to meet their needs."

The student paramedic role was created last year and the training is done in-house by experienced staff.

"Every patient and situation is different, but the training we get means we're ready to deal with anything."

Once qualified, paramedics work on their own or as part of a team to assess and give life-saving treatment to patients at the scenes of medical emergencies. Often patients do not have life-threatening conditions but do need some kind of medical help. This can

range from treatment at home, to taking them to their local minor injuries unit.

The paramedic training is spread over three years, with students being paid throughout. Learning begins in the classroom before on-the-job experience with ambulance staff, where students put their training into practice.

Student Paramedic Joanne Wood, who used to be a farm worker, said: "You don't need any medical training to apply to be a student paramedic.

"Every patient and situation is different, but the training we get means we're ready to deal with anything"

Joanne added: "We do an

intensive driving course and 10 weeks of clinical studies including anatomy of the body and how to use all the paramedic kit.

"After that it's your first placement on an ambulance. It's daunting, but you're not on your own as you're with a paramedic instructor.

"We have to do assessments and exams too, and once you've completed that first 26

weeks of study you go back out on the road for a whole year before more exams."

The recruits joining the Service now will be fully-qualified by 2012, just in time for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

740
student paramedics recruited in two years

Your service, your say

EARLIER this year the public and staff had a chance to have their say on the future of the capital's ambulance service.

Over 1,800 Londoners attended road shows during a 14-week public consultation on the Service's plans for how it would be run as an NHS foundation trust. The proposals were also shared with all staff and over 2,000 partner organisations.

A total of 350 formal responses were received, prompting a number of changes to the original proposals.

"I'd like to thank those people who took the time to find out about our plans, and

feed back on them," said Chief Executive Peter Bradley. "We provide a service across the whole of London, and it's important for us that the people who matter most – local residents and patients – have the chance to have a say on the future of their ambulance service."

As a result of the feedback, membership of the Service will be extended to include people who work but don't live in London, recognising that they may need to use the 999 service.

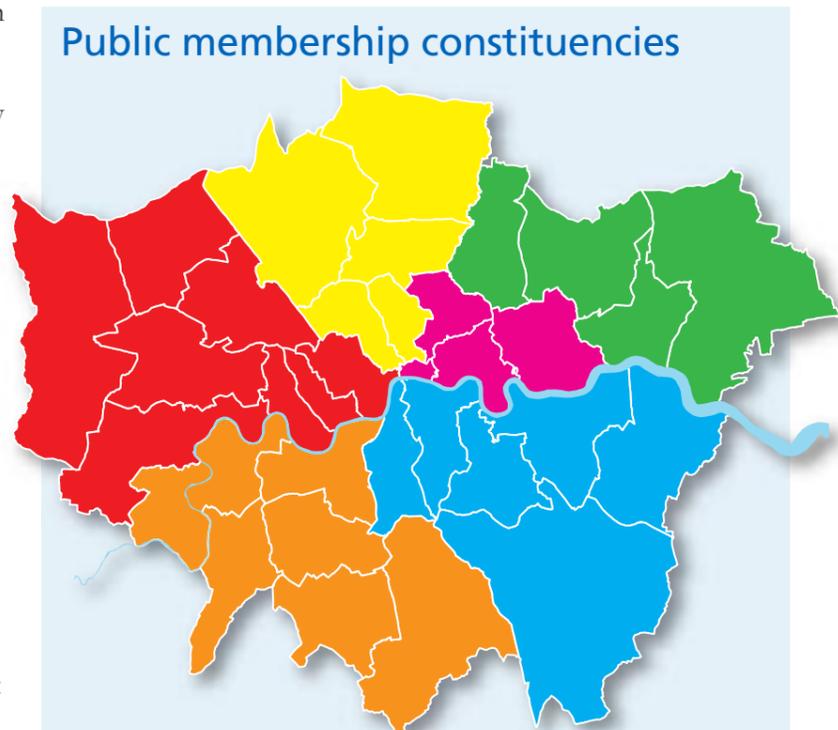
The make-up of the public constituencies within London has also changed from the original proposals. There will

now be six, based on the health sectors under which the Service's commissioners – the primary care trusts that buy local health services – operate.

The number of public governors – elected by members to represent their interests – will increase from 11 to 13. And the Service will have two staff groups on its Council of Governors – one to represent support staff and one for frontline staff.

There was support for the other proposals including the Service's long-term plans and arrangements for membership.

The full evaluation can be found at www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/ft



Public membership constituencies

North West London	
Ealing, Harrow, Brent, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow and Hillingdon	
North Central London	
Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Islington and Camden	
Outer North East London	
Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Waltham Forest	
Inner North East London	
City of London, Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets	
South East London	
Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, and Lambeth	
South West London	
Richmond, Wandsworth, Kingston, Sutton, Merton and Croydon	
Outside London	
Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Surrey and West Sussex	

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



Why become a foundation trust?

- Local people and staff can be more involved in how their ambulance service is run.
- Patients will benefit because the ambulance service will have more opportunities to invest in and develop its services.
- Longer-term planning with other healthcare organisations will be possible, helping to improve the quality of care provided to patients in the capital.

The Service will continue to be part of the NHS and provide free care to patients. It will still have to meet national standards and targets, and be inspected by independent bodies.

Stroke and trauma centres get green light

THE London Ambulance Service will play a key role in recently approved plans to take patients who suffer strokes or have life-threatening injuries directly to specialist centres.

Eight units will be equipped to deal with patients who have suffered a serious stroke – a type of brain injury. Four major trauma centres will treat patients who suffer life-threatening injuries, including amputations or gunshot wounds. At the moment, these patients are usually taken to their nearest A&E department.

Patients with a fractured hip or ankle, or minor head injuries, will be treated at local trauma centres, likely to be at A&E departments.

The decision was made by a

joint committee of primary care trusts and the first specialist centres are expected to open in April 2010.

Medical Director Fionna Moore said: "We welcome the new arrangements for taking patients straight to a specialist hospital where they will immediately receive the best possible treatment from experts."

The decision of where to site the new centres was made after a detailed study of current services offered to stroke and major trauma patients in London. This was carried out by Healthcare for London, which is leading a 10-year programme to transform healthcare in the capital.

When the centres open,

patients in London will be no more than a 30 minute blue-light ambulance journey from a hyper acute stroke unit or 45 minutes from a major trauma centre.

Fionna, who has also been appointed as London's first Trauma Director, added: "The ambulance journey may take longer than it would to a local A&E, but by being given the most appropriate care at these centres, patients will have a much better chance of survival and a reduced risk of disability."

The centres will be linked to local units where rehabilitation care can be given.

To read more about the plans visit the Healthcare for London website at www.healthcareforlondon.nhs.uk



Baby Tynisha's heart-warming reunion

A FIVE-MONTH-OLD baby whose heart stopped was reunited with the ambulance staff who saved her life.

Tynisha Johnson-Ballantyne was with her mother, Yvonne, in Boots on Islington High Street when she suffered a cardiac arrest, her heart stopped beating and she stopped breathing.

Boots staff called 999 for an ambulance while pharmacist Krinal Shah performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on Tynisha. This life-saving technique involves giving chest compressions to keep blood and oxygen moving around the body.



Tynisha with her mother Yvonne and the ambulance staff who saved her life

“I can't thank the staff enough – Tynisha wouldn't be here without them”

Emergency Medical Technician Jamie Frayne said: “When we arrived Krinal was giving CPR, which kept Tynisha alive while we were on the way. When a patient's heart stops beating it's vital to start basic life support as soon as possible to give them the best chance of survival.

“We used a defibrillator to deliver an electric shock to Tynisha's heart to start it again.

“It's a simple fact that if more people learnt basic life support then more people suffering cardiac arrests, young and old, would survive.”

Tynisha was taken to University College Hospital for further treatment. It was found that she suffers from

left ventricular hypertrophy, an enlarged heart, and she was discharged from Great Ormond Street Hospital two weeks later after being fitted with a pacemaker.

Yvonne said: “I can't thank the ambulance staff enough – Tynisha wouldn't be here without them.”

10,206

The number of people treated by the Service for cardiac arrest in 2007/08

10,282

The number of people trained in CPR and basic life support in 2008/09

Learn to save a life

A basic life support course teaches you the vital skills to keep someone alive whilst help is on the way.

For more information about free courses in your local area, please contact the Community Resuscitation Team. Telephone: 020 7463 3120 Email: resustraining@londonambulance.nhs.uk



InBrief

Annual report out now

THE Service's latest annual report is now available.

It features articles about all areas of the Service's work including in-depth case studies about patients and members of staff, as well as details on how the Service reached 25 per cent more patients with life-threatening injuries or illnesses than in the previous year.

The report is available on the Service's website at www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/annualreport



Verbal abuse man found guilty

A MAN who threatened and abused an emergency medical technician has been fined and given a community service sentence.

Brent-based technician Ian Maitland was parked at the side of the road in the early hours of the morning in May when the man began hammering on the window and kicking the back door.

John Ireland, 41, of Colindale, was arrested at the scene and was later given a sentence of 100 hours community service and ordered to pay £250 in costs and fines. He was also ordered to take part in a 22-day rehabilitation course.

Assistant Director of Operations Peter McKenna added: “We will not tolerate this sort of behaviour towards our staff.”

On the beat

STAFF in Camden have joined forces with local police to test a new system of responding to emergency calls in the same vehicle.

Paramedics are travelling in a police car to incidents on Friday and Saturday nights which are thought to require both services, such as road traffic collisions, assaults and fights.

The trial will run until January, after which the scheme could be extended to other parts of London.

Patient waiting times fall

MORE emergency patients across London are being reached quicker than ever before, despite increases in the numbers of calls being received.

Staff responded to an extra 21,000 seriously ill and injured patients within the national target times during the first six months of the new financial

year, compared to the same period a year ago.

Director of Operations Richard Webber said: “The targets that we are asked to meet are very challenging, but we know how important it is for our patients that we are able to get to them as quickly as possible.”

The government-set target

is to reach 75 per cent of life-threatened (Category A) patients within eight minutes of the call being received. These include people with serious breathing problems, suspected heart attacks, or those who have stopped breathing and are in cardiac arrest.

Between the start of April and the end of September

this year, the Service reached 74.6 per cent. The number of these types of calls was up three per cent on last year.

The Service should also reach 95 per cent of serious but not life-threatening calls (Category B) within 19 minutes. Up until the end of September, the figure stood at 85.2 per cent.

What response can patients expect from their ambulance service?

Director of Operations Richard Webber explains: “Not every call that we receive is to patients in an immediately life-threatening condition.

“The most seriously-ill patients will be sent an ambulance crew as soon as possible. Other patients with less serious injuries or illnesses could be treated by a single

member of staff arriving by car, or passed to our clinical advisors or NHS Direct to receive medical advice over the telephone.

“By introducing alternative responses, we are able to keep our highly-skilled ambulance crews available for our highest priority calls – to those patients who need life-saving care.”



What to do about flu

SWINE flu is widespread within the UK and, as it is a new virus, nobody has a natural immunity to it.

With the normal flu virus season also upon us it has never been more important to ensure you are vaccinated. You should contact your GP for guidance on how to access the seasonal flu and swine flu vaccines.

Protecting against flu

There are a number of steps you can take to protect you and your family from falling ill this winter:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the flu viruses
- clean hard surfaces (for example, door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product
- when you cough or sneeze, remember the simple slogan – ‘catch it, bin it, kill it!’ Always carry clean tissues to use when you cough or

NATIONAL PANDEMIC FLU SERVICE

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu
INFORMATION 0800 1 513 513
TREATMENT 0800 1 513 100

sneeze, bin the tissue immediately after one use and wash your hands with soap and water as soon as possible.

Symptoms

You may have flu if you have suddenly got a high temperature (above 38°C) and cough. Other possible symptoms include a headache, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles, sneezing, runny nose, loss of appetite, or diarrhoea and vomiting.

If you feel unwell

For most people, swine flu is a minor illness and you should start to feel better within a few days. Stay at

home, drink plenty of fluids, take paracetamol and cold remedies.

To check your symptoms and access anti-viral treatment call the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1 513 100 or look online at www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

If you think you have flu you should ring this number rather than going to A&E or to your GP's surgery where you could spread the virus. Only call for an ambulance in the case of an emergency.

However, you should contact your doctor rather than calling the National Pandemic Flu Service if:

- you have a serious underlying illness
- you are pregnant
- you have a sick child under one year old
- your condition suddenly gets much worse, or
- your condition is still getting worse after seven days (five days for a child).

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 the first edition of Ambulance News. Please call us with your views on 020 7921 5113 or email communications@londonambulance.nhs.uk

www.londonambulance.nhs.uk

Feeling unwell?

If you're feeling unwell, you can get expert help online at www.nhs.uk or call NHS Direct on **0845 46 47**. At your local **pharmacy** you'll find a fully trained health professional who'll provide quality healthcare advice instantly and locally. While your local **NHS walk-in centre** offers fast and convenient access to healthcare advice and treatment for minor injuries and illnesses.

Always call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured.

Go to the right place



www.nhs.uk
NHS Direct 0845 46 47

Pharmacist

NHS walk-in centre

