



ANNUAL REVIEW 2017-18



Inside this issue...	P5 Helping new mums 	P6 New ambulances hit the road 	P8 iPads improving patient care 
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'Good' news

We are officially GOOD! In March 2018 the Care Quality Commission inspectors called again and were impressed with what they saw. Our new rating is 'good' overall and 'outstanding' for patient care. Three years ago, the CQC rated us inadequate and we have been bringing in lots of improvements ever since.

Heather Lawrence, Trust Chair, said: "I am delighted that the CQC has acknowledged all the hard work and the improvements across the service. It has been a true team effort, and on behalf of the Board, I want to thank everyone who has made it happen; and for their continued focus on the work we still have ahead of us."

Garrett Emmerson, Chief Executive, said: "The quality of our patient care has always been highly regarded. The improvements have been about making sure

we have strong leadership across every level of the organisation and making sure all parts of the trust are working effectively together.

"There is a huge amount of behind the scenes work in making sure our clinicians have everything they need to give patients outstanding care. So many people have worked so hard to make this happen.

"But it is not the end of the journey. We want to be outstanding across all areas. That is what Londoners deserve. We live in a world class city and we want to give Londoners a truly world class ambulance service."

See page 2 for comments from the inspectors.



Thank you

This annual review gives you a glimpse into some of the great work that our teams have done between April 2017 and March 2018. Our success has only been possible thanks to all the hard work of our staff and

the essential support from our Patient's Forum and the many partners we work with across London and beyond. Find out more in our annual report and quality account available at www.londonambulance.nhs.uk

CONTENTS

P3 April – May

Welcoming our new chief executive

P4 June – July

Responding to major incidents

P5 August – September

Improving maternity care

P6 October – November

New ambulances hit the road

P7 December – January

Keeping going through winter's chill

P8 February – March

Mobile tech for our paramedics

Chair's introduction

The team at London Ambulance Service are at work and out on the capital's streets 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They do amazing work saving lives and helping people with every type of health problem.

I have been Chair of the service for two years now; and have seen the unfaltering commitment and professionalism of all our staff through some tough times. The stories in this review are just a snippet of what we do, but I hope they will give you an interesting insight into our world.

If you would like to find out more come along to our annual general meeting on 24 September 2018 (details on our website) or join over 120,000 people who follow us on Twitter every day.



Our latest report card

CQC report 2018	
Overall rating for this trust	Good ●
Are services safe?	Good ●
Are services effective?	Good ●
Are services caring?	Outstanding ★
Are services responsive?	Good ●
Are services well-led?	Good ●

You can read our full report from the Care Quality Commission on our website. But here are a few comments the inspectors made:

“Patients were treated with a calm and professional manner, with kindness and empathy.”

“Staff often went above and beyond their expected duties in order to meet patient needs.”

“In addition to highly trained ambulance personnel, staff with specialised skills and expertise including; maternity, mental health and safeguarding were available to advise and support staff.”

“At this inspection we found the trust had made significant improvements, in particular and of note were those related to well-led.”

“Infection prevention and control practices had been strengthened since our last inspection...”

“The processes for responding to and investigating complaints had been strengthened since the last inspection.”

A year in numbers



1.9 million
999 calls



5,300
staff



1.13
million
incidents
attended



1,100
vehicles



7.2
minutes
average
response time
for critical
incidents



£364.6m
budget



356,826
111 calls

New Chief Exec joins

In May 2017 we welcomed Garrett Emmerson as our new chief executive. Garrett joined us from Transport for London so is no stranger to leading services which span the whole capital. Reflecting on his first year with us Garrett said:

"I was very proud and honoured to join the London Ambulance Service. The quality of our patient care was already good, and we have continued to improve both how we care for patients and how we work as an organisation.

"Through a difficult year, with rising demand, a very busy winter and the terrible terrorist attacks and Grenfell Tower fire we have consistently performed. Following our inspection in March, we are delighted that the Care Quality Commission now rate us good overall and outstanding for patient care.

"We have developed a clear strategy for the years ahead. It will bring better care for patients with better use of technology to offer more ways to contact us and new services tailored to different people's needs. We will also be working with our partners across London's NHS to ensure a consistent approach to high quality urgent and emergency care is available regardless of which borough people live in.

"Our vision is to be a world class ambulance service for a world class city. I have seen the dedication and skill of our staff from my first day in the job; and it has been truly inspirational. We have come a long way in recent years, and from what I have seen in my first year we are only just getting started in terms of what the service is ultimately capable of achieving."



Heart patients benefit when treated by paramedics



An abnormally fast heart rate is one of the most common conditions treated in the UK's hospitals. It can cause palpitations, chest pain and shortness of breath and can be really uncomfortable.

To look at the potential to help more patients at home we ran a study with St Bartholomew's Hospital. Their heart specialists trained paramedics to give medication that slows the heart rate. Then the study looked at 86 patients, 44 of which were treated by our paramedics and 42 who went to A&E.

In May 2017, the results showed 81% of the patients treated by paramedics got the help they needed, with most staying at home and being "discharged" over an hour faster than those seen in A&E.

Richard Schilling, professor of cardiology and electrophysiology at St Bartholomew's Hospital, said:
 "In a time where emergency departments are facing considerable challenges, these findings may show a glimpse of a future path."



 Total calls in April / May

292,999



Busiest day

5672 calls on 22 May

Courage and professionalism during major incidents



The headlines in June 2017 were dominated by the terrorist attack at London Bridge and the Grenfell Tower Fire. With other terrorist attacks in Westminster at the end of March, Finsbury Park in June and Parsons Green in September it has been a year punctuated by major incidents.

Garrett Emmerson, LAS chief executive, said "Our thoughts remain with all those whose lives were changed forever following these tragic events."

"Our ambulance crews and call handlers worked tirelessly alongside emergency service colleagues to provide care to patients."

- **London Bridge terrorist attack, 3 June 2017:** Over 80 medics attended, and 48 patients were taken to hospital. A number of others were treated at the scene for minor injuries.
- **Grenfell Tower fire, 14 June 2017:** Over 100 medics attended, and 68 patients were taken to hospital for a range of injuries and smoke inhalation.

Garrett added: "We are extremely proud of the way our teams responded to all the major incidents in a quick, brave and professional way under incredibly difficult circumstances."

"Throughout these terrible events, many more of our staff continued to respond to calls from across the rest of London. Their commitment during these major incidents was equally essential."

"Of course, we hope there won't be further incidents; but Londoners can be reassured that our teams will respond with courage and professionalism whenever they are called on to do so."



Keeping our crews on the roads

Our ambulances need a lot of looking after to keep them on the road. In 2017 we completely revamped our approach to vehicle preparation, winning a national award for it.



More than 300 people now work through the night in 14 sites to clean, restock and refuel up to 300 ambulances. The new system keeps about 13 more ambulances on the road each day; and

has dramatically cut the amount of time crews are out of service due to missing equipment. With a new approach to cleaning we're also saving a quarter of a million litres of water a year.

 Total calls in June / July	311,555	 Busiest day	6618 calls on 19 June
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Baby named after paramedic

Hanwell Paramedic Callum Anderson will always have a good reason to remember the first baby he helped to deliver – as the little boy was named after him.

New mum Maya was so grateful to the paramedic for his calm professional help when her son was delivered in the ambulance, that she named her son after him. Maya also gave her baby the middle name 'Blue', after the blue lights of the ambulance.

Maya visited Callum in August 2017 to reintroduce his five-week-old namesake. Callum (senior) said: *“It is an amazing honour. It was a very memorable call, especially as it was my first delivery. I was really glad it went so well.”*

We attended over 12,500 maternity related calls 2017/18 and delivered a number of babies either at home or on the way to hospital. We already have midwives working in our clinical hub to give telephone support to mothers and our paramedics when there's no time to get to hospital.

Recognising how important it is to give the best possible care to mothers and babies we are developing a new service in 2018. It will see dedicated maternity teams with a qualified midwife and an ambulance crew member going to women in labour. Because paramedics don't have advanced maternity training we currently often send two crews or more to help. With midwives on scene we'll be able to give specialist care with a single crew; freeing up more ambulances to attend other incidents.

Having babies named after our staff has happened quite regularly over the years. We know of two others in 2017/18, including Emergency Medical Dispatcher Dean Abel who helped with a delivery over the phone in December 2017.



MH nurses shortlisted for awards

In August and September our mental health nursing team was shortlisted for two awards run by the Nursing Times and Health Service Journal. The team provides 'hear and treat' telephone support to patients and help crews on scene give the best possible care to mental health patients.



In 2017/18 the team helped 3,400 patients by phone without needing to send out an ambulance. Like maternity, we are developing a new service that will see mental health nurses attending incidents to provide more specialist care.

Twitter followers hit 100k

In August 2017 our @Lnd_Ambulance Twitter account reached 100,000 followers; making it the most popular NHS Trust account in the UK. Social media is an important communications tool for us. We use Twitter for health promotion campaigns; raising awareness about proper use of 999; updating during major incidents; and the odd bit of fun including our now infamous Nee-Naw tweet to mark Twitter's increase to 280 characters. Are you following us?



 Total calls in Aug / Sept	297,338	 Busiest day	5827 calls on 28 August
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New response times and new ambulances hitting the streets

In November 2017, new national targets were introduced that change how quickly we have to reach patients. The most serious incidents now have a target of 7 minutes. Other very urgent situations need a response within 18 minutes, whilst we have longer to respond to less serious calls.

Director of Operations, Paul Woodrow, said:

“The new approach is helping us get to the most important calls faster. The response times for the less serious calls can sound like a long time; but it is important to remember that only people who are not in immediate danger come under those categories. And our expert call handlers are highly skilled in identifying which calls need rapid responses.”



Our performance in 2017/18 was consistently amongst the best in the country, across both the old and new targets.

In October the first of 140 new ambulances hit the streets. They are modernising our fleet with benefits for both patients and staff and helping us to respond to the new ambulance targets.

A key feature is an external tail lift that allows the back doors to close with the tail lift down. This means better security on scene and at hospital, as well as improved infection and temperature control.

They are also lighter and more fuel efficient with improved suspension to give a smoother ride for patients and our crews; which is important, given they are people’s “office” for shifts of up to 12 hours.

We are also bringing in 29 new motorbikes, new fast response cars, and piloting electric fuel options for cars and ambulances as part of a longer-term aim of reducing emissions across our fleet of over 1,100 vehicles.



Simulance delivers real-world training



Training and developing our people is massively important to us. On the practical side of training we have built our own ambulance simulator (or simulance) in our Bromley training centre. Using the shell of a decommissioned ambulance it means crews can train in the real-world confines of an ambulance; whilst others observe through the cutaway rear door.

The feedback has been great. Paramedic Sonja Hibell said:

“It is a truly valuable experience for road staff as it best mimics some of the difficulties of the small working space in ambulances. It is a really positive approach, giving staff the opportunity to practice their skills in a safe and realistic environment and allowing new staff the chance to build confidence. It means when new crews are working in live situations little time is spent looking for equipment and how best to apply it.”



Total calls in Oct / Nov

315,952



Busiest day

5845 calls on 22 November

Feeling the pressure – winter months are our busiest

Winter is always a busy time for the NHS, but this year was exceptional. In December and January, calls to 999 and our South East London NHS 111 service were up by 4% compared to the previous year.

Despite the added pressure our crews, call handlers and dispatch teams did a fantastic job and our response times remained strong.

Planning for winter peaks is a huge team effort and we work closely with many other parts of the NHS. For three weeks through the Christmas period our winter planning team was working 16 hours a day.

A crucial area of work is how we can speed up the handover time when we bring a patient to an A&E. Our crews need to stay with their patient until they can safely handover their treatment to the hospital doctors and nurses. When hospitals are busy this can mean waits of over an hour and prevents the crew responding to any further 999 calls.



We have staff like Sean Brinicombe working with emergency departments to improve handovers.

Sean said: “*The work includes streamlining the process to make handovers as quick as possible. We also review if crews made the best choices about where to take patients. Some specialist units can take patients straight from the ambulance rather than going to a local A&E; and increasingly we want to help patients with less serious conditions by taking them to services like walk-in centres or minor injury units.*”



Expanding NHS 111 services

The NHS 111 helpline is now an essential part of NHS urgent care services; and we are very proud of the successful South East London service we have run since 2013.

In January 2018, we were awarded the contract to run an integrated 111 and clinical assessment service in North East London. The service joins us

from August 2018 and will include GPs, nurses, paramedics and pharmacists giving advice over the phone. The service will be integrated with urgent care centres, GP practices, mental health services, and pharmacies across the area. This is great news and will offer local people an improved ‘whole patient’ experience.



 Total calls in Dec / Jan

346,510



Busiest day

6911 calls on 1 January

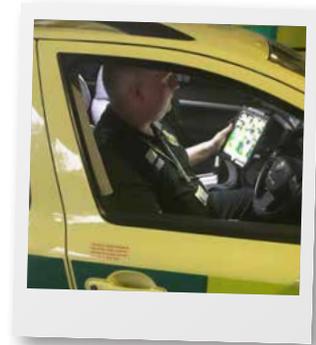
Rolling out iPads for better care

Making best use of technology to improve patient care is very important to us. In 2017/18 we have been rolling out iPads to all our front-line teams, thanks to extra funding from the Department of Health.

Aaron Lander is one of our team leader paramedics who is really seeing the benefits. Aaron explains: "The iPads currently have three apps that help clinicians when we're with patients. One helps identify the best treatment based on a patient's symptoms and history. Then there is a detailed service directory to help us find alternative services rather than taking people to A&E. We also now have direct access to Co-ordinate My Care, which is a national tool used by patients to store details of their urgent care needs.

"Being able to log into Co-ordinate My Care is a huge improvement. In the past we had to call back to the clinical support desk for someone to look up the information."

Aaron added: "The iPads are the service moving forward and embracing the technology that is now available, it will ensure that we can focus on patient care rather than paperwork especially with the development of an Electronic Patient Care Record."



The iPads also help our staff stay in touch whilst out on the road. They can connect to work emails and our intranet, and in future developments we'll be activating voice and video calling.

Chief Information Officer, Ross Fullerton, said: "This is just the first step in modernising how we work and putting more information at the fingertips of our clinicians whilst they're with patients."

New Physician Response Unit

In 2017 we teamed up with the London Air Ambulance and Barts Health NHS Trust to provide specialist emergency treatment to patients in East London. The physician response unit has an emergency doctor and an ambulance crew member responding to calls in a fast response car.



With a doctor on scene and carrying specialist kit they can treat more problems and help patients avoid trips to hospital. They can do instant blood tests, urine tests and stitch serious wounds. A review in February 2018 found that in the first 111 days of the pilot they saw 652 patients, treating 449 in the community of which 312 would have been taken to hospital if the doctor was not there.

We keep going, even when it's snowing

The late winter chill with the Beast from the East did not stop our teams hitting the streets. Despite huge disruptions in getting to work and then snow-covered roads to negotiate on every call, our crews kept on rolling and kept on smiling through the snow.

Perhaps bravest of all were our cycle response unit. Paramedic Kat McKenna's video of her cycling through the snow was seen over 190,000 times on Twitter. As well as being out and about on the streets the cycle response unit also took to the airwaves on BBC Radio 1 and Heart Radio to share cold weather advice.



 **Total calls in Feb / Mar**

328,306



Busiest day

6841 calls on 5 March