



# Annual Review 2011/12

A look back over the year 2011/12

## Capital effort

### Heart patients' survival among best in the world

MORE Londoners than ever who suffer a cardiac arrest are surviving, figures for 2011/12 show.

Almost a third (31.7 per cent) of patients in the capital whose hearts stopped beating were brought back to life by ambulance staff – double that of just three years ago. It is the highest percentage recorded by any ambulance service in England, and one of the best published figures in the world.

The improvement is due to patients being given more effective care and staff quickly delivering electric shocks to restart the heart using a defibrillator, as well as an increase in the number of bystanders attempting cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) – or chest compressions and rescue breaths – before help arrives.

Immediately performing CPR when someone suffers a cardiac arrest effectively doubles a patient's chance of survival.

Medical Director Fionna Moore said: "These figures show a marked increase in the number of patients who have



Tim Saunders

left hospital after an event which previously was regarded as fatal.

"Our frontline staff are reaching patients quickly and delivering a high standard of patient care, while our control room staff are also better identifying patients with cardiac arrest and giving CPR instructions over the phone.

"Another factor is that since 2010 our staff have taken certain cardiac arrest patients directly to a specialist heart centre, rather than the local emergency department, for the best level of care.

"At the specialist centre a team of expert cardiologists will treat patients straightaway, and in the last year we've seen a 63 per cent survival rate in this group of patients.

"We've also seen more members of the public attempting CPR while an ambulance is on the way, which is crucial in giving patients the best chance of survival. In partnership with the British Heart Foundation (BHF), over the last year a dedicated team of our staff has trained 15,000 people in communities how to save a life if they witness a cardiac arrest."

**One patient whose life was saved during the year was 25-year-old Erica Payet, who collapsed and stopped breathing while jogging in March this year.**

Bystanders called 999 and began CPR. Three motorcycle paramedics and an ambulance crew – including Andy Stratton, Jonathan Street and Lee Davies, pictured above with Erica – attended and used a defibrillator to deliver an electric shock to restart her heart.

She was taken to St Thomas' Hospital and was allowed home three weeks later after having an internal defibrillator fitted, which would shock her heart should it stop beating normally again.

#### Quality of care

LONDON topped the table in eight areas of care delivered to patients by English ambulance services last year.

As well as providing the best care in the country to cardiac arrest patients – people who have collapsed and stopped breathing – the Service was rated top in measures relating to how quickly 999 calls are answered, and how long it takes to get to a patient and starting treating them.

#### Quality indicators

Twenty-three national quality indicators were introduced in April 2011 which, for the first time, compare the care provided by ambulance services across the country.

The Service focused on improving care to three other patient groups during the year; namely mental health patients, older people who fall at home, and patients who need end-of-life care.

During 2012/13, it is building on the work done in these areas, and is concentrating on reducing alcohol-related harm and improving care given to diabetes patients.

Another key priority has been to ensure quality of care is maintained across London during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

#### Royal treatment for wedding crowds

THE Royal Wedding was one of the big events that the Service had to manage during the year.

Around 200 extra staff were on duty in central London – alongside volunteers from St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross – to ensure that well-wishers could be given any medical treatment they needed.

### Cardiac arrest facts

- The average age of a cardiac arrest patient is 66, with 64 per cent of patients being men
- Cardiac arrests occur most frequently on a Monday (15.2 per cent), and most commonly between 8am and midday (22.6 per cent)
- Bystanders give cardio-pulmonary resuscitation in over 40 per cent of cases – up from under 37 per cent in 2010/11
- 67 per cent of cardiac arrests happen in the home



# Lifesaving lesson for Hollywood star



DAME Helen Mirren became the patron of a charity supporting volunteer lifesavers in London.

The Oscar-winning star visited the Service's headquarters in March to meet the people behind the London Ambulance Voluntary Responder Group and learn how to save a life.

The charity offers financial support to people responding to patients in the capital alongside a traditional 999 ambulance response.

The actress became involved in the charity after one of her friends was resuscitated from a cardiac arrest at the premiere of one of her films last year.

# Thoughts on a busy 12 months

Chairman  
**Richard Hunt**

## What were the key achievements last year?

We handled more calls, reached more patients more quickly and saved more lives.

We also hit all of our financial targets and were near the top of the new clinical quality indicators.

## What were the biggest challenges and how were these met?

We were tested as London hosted high-profile events including the Royal Wedding.

The 7 July bombings inquests were a challenging experience for colleagues who had to relive the events as they gave evidence. Our staff also faced a daunting task in

August's riots as they treated patients in difficult circumstances.

We also brought in our new 999 call-taking and dispatch system – a difficult project but it is now working well.

## What improvements have patients seen?

We have continued to take patients with life-threatening injuries to specialist centres and saved more lives of those who suffer cardiac arrests.

We're also referring more elderly people who fall in their home to their GP to reduce the likelihood of it happening again, and working with more mental health trusts to improve the care we give their patients.



## When do you expect to become a foundation trust?

We continue to work towards foundation trust status, which will give us advantages, including the opportunity to retain any surplus budget to reinvest in our business, and this brings with it greater freedom to shape our Service for the future.

## In brief



Ambulance staff took 8,680 patients diagnosed with stroke symptoms to a specialist stroke centre in 2011/12 where they receive life-saving treatment that can increase their chance of survival and reduce the risk of long-term disability. Just under 65 per cent of patients were admitted to a stroke centre within an hour of the 999 call being received.\*

\* Provisional figures, correct as of end of August 2012.

More information about national quality indicators can be found at [www.london.ambulance.nhs.uk](http://www.london.ambulance.nhs.uk) where 'clinical indicators' should be entered in the search box. The Service's quality priorities can be found in the quality account, along with the full annual report, by searching for 'quality account 2011-12' on the website.

# Patients receive timely response

STAFF dealt with a record number of emergency calls last year, but were again able to improve the response to patients.

The total of just over 1.6 million calls was a 7.5 per cent increase on the previous 12 months.

They included more than 390,000 patients who were reported to be in a life-threatening condition – up by 12.5 per cent.

However, the overall number of incidents attended fell slightly, with a greater number of patients with minor illnesses and injuries being

given clinical advice over the phone.

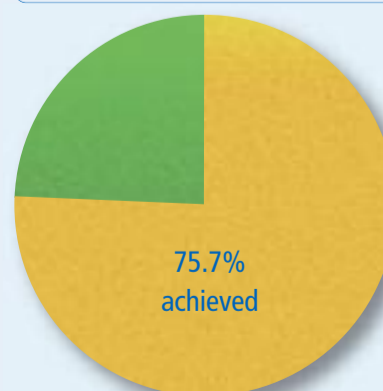
Deputy Chief Executive Martin Flaherty said: "Our staff worked very hard to provide the best care to all our patients.

"We also met our main target to respond to 75 per cent of those who were life-threatening within eight minutes. It's the ninth year in a row that we have achieved this."

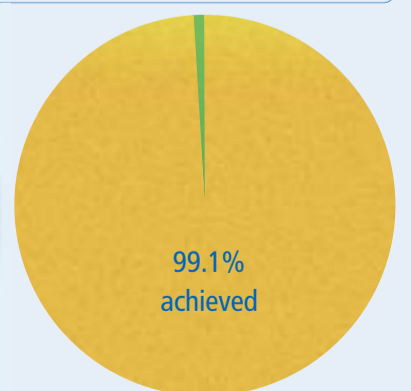
All other calls fall into one of four C categories. Of these, 91 per cent of patients were reached within the Service's own target of 60 minutes.



## Response time targets for 2011/12



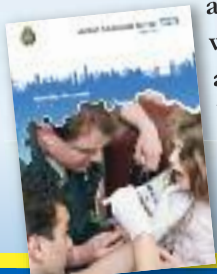
75 per cent of Category A (life-threatening) calls within 8 minutes



95 per cent of Category A calls within 19 minutes

## Demand in 2011/12

Total 999 calls received	1,605,956
Calls to life-threatened patients	390,229
Total incidents attended	1,041,739
Patients take to hospital	735,270
Patients taken to another care centre	74,127
Patients given clinical advice over the phone	70,842





## Chief Executive Peter Bradley

### What kind of year has it been?

Our busiest and one of the most successful ever, and we improved the quality of care we provide across a range of patient groups.

I feel proud to have led what, in my view, is the best capital city ambulance service in the world.



### How did the Service perform against the new national clinical indicators?

We have some of the fastest 999 call answering rates, and very few patients who call us back after we have given them advice over the phone or treated and discharged them at scene.

The care we provide to patients in cardiac arrest is of an exceptional standard, and we provide more clinical advice over the telephone than many ambulance services.

### How will you achieve £53m savings without compromising patient care?

We made £15m of savings without affecting patient care and we need to find another £12.5m this year.

We can work more efficiently and respond more appropriately to our patients. This includes reducing the number of resources we send to calls when it is not necessary, and working with hospitals to reduce the amount of time it takes our crews to hand over patients.

### What are your priorities for this year?

We will open a second call-taking room to provide more resilience, continue to work towards becoming a foundation trust and we will further improve our fleet.

We want to continue to develop our relationships with key stakeholders, including the new clinical commissioning groups who will buy our services.

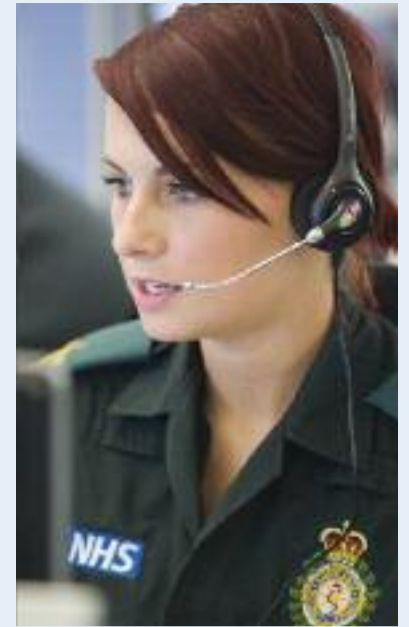
# It's your call

IN 95 per cent of cases, Londoners who phoned 999 for an ambulance last year had their call answered within nine seconds, and over half of all incoming emergency calls were answered immediately.

Of the total 1,605,956 calls received, the caller

hung up before their call was answered in just 0.1 per cent of cases.

In terms of patients with less serious illnesses and injuries who were given clinical telephone advice, only 5.2 per cent called again within 24 hours of making their first call.



## You should call 999 for an ambulance if someone is seriously ill and injured and their life is at risk.

### While help is on the way, you should:

- stay with the patient** until help arrives, particularly if you are in the street
- call 999 again** if the patient's condition worsens
- call again if your location changes
- ask someone to open the doors** of your house or office and signal where the ambulance staff are needed
- lock away any family pets**
- write down the patient's GP details if you can**, and collect any medication that they are taking
- tell us if the patient has any allergies**
- stay calm** – our staff are there to help. Violent or threatening behaviour against our staff will not be tolerated, and could delay help getting to the patient.

## International rescue

THE Service played a crucial role in the transfer of 115 casualties from last year's conflict in Libya for medical care in the UK. A team of staff arranged flights into the country and then organised for transfers to hospital for specialist treatment – including the fitting of artificial limbs.

It happened after the Government pledged that the NHS would provide medical care and rehabilitation to some of the people caught up in the fighting.

The first patient to arrive in November was 15-year-old Abdul Malik Elhamdi – pictured right – who was injured after a bomb exploded in his school playground. He was able to return home the following month after treatment to remove shrapnel from his legs.

The full cost of the care for all the patients was met by the Libyan government.



## Staff thanked for riots response

POLITICIANS and the Royal Family were among those who praised the way in which the Service responded to violent disturbances across London last August.

Around 250 people needed to be assessed and treated during three nights of trouble.

Some of the staff who were involved in the Service's response were among those invited to meet Prime Minister David Cameron and the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall when they visited some of the worst affected boroughs.



Photo courtesy of Daily Mail

### Alcohol initiative gets PM's backing

THE Prime Minister recognised the Service's efforts to manage demand from alcohol-related emergency calls.

Speaking in February, David Cameron described the 'booze bus' – which operates in central London – as one of the "innovative solutions" being used across the country to meet the pressures caused by excessive drinking.

His comments came at

around the same time that the Service secured extra funding from NHS London to open an alcohol recovery centre in Soho every weekend. It is used to treat patients who have had too much to drink, helping to free up hospital capacity.



# A 'tough' financial year

SAVINGS of almost £15m were made during 2011/12 – in line with the Service's financial plans.

Increasing demand with no additional funding meant the organisation needed to reduce spending while at the same time maintaining patient care.

This was achieved by carefully controlling staffing costs and reducing spending in other areas.

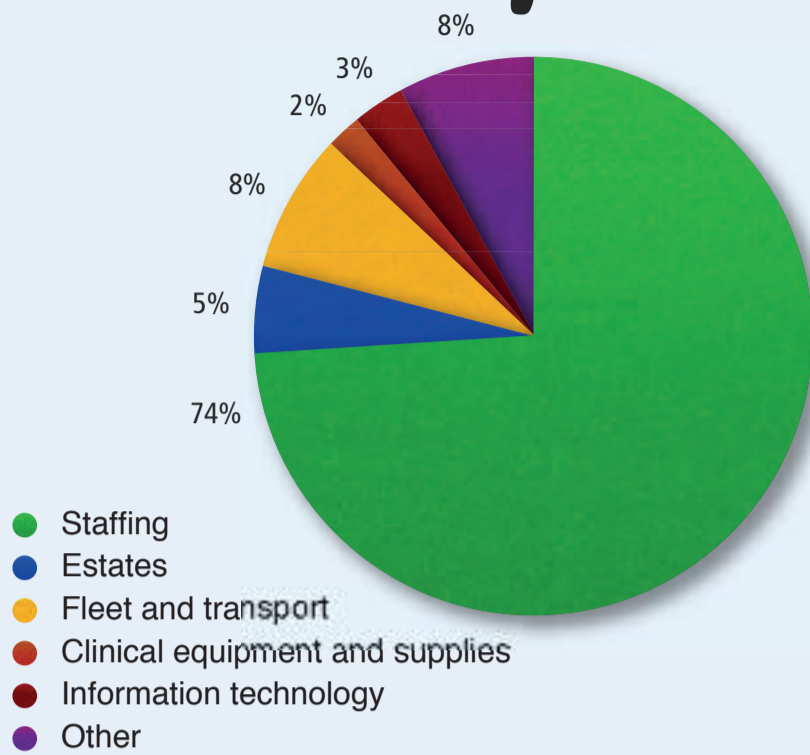
Director of Finance Mike Dinan said: "It was a tough year, but thanks to a lot of hard work by a wide range of staff, we managed to deliver on our agreed savings plans again while

maintaining a good service."

In total, 151 posts were removed from the workforce, mostly by not replacing people as they left the organisation. Spending on agency costs has also been reduced by £2m, while other savings have been achieved by reviewing contracts with suppliers.

However, the Service faces another difficult period as it continues to make savings in line with its five-year cost improvement plan.

Mike said: "We're expecting it to be another challenging year as savings of over £12m are still needed by March 2013."



## Money facts – 2011/12

**£282m**  
the Service's total budget for the year

**£250.2m**  
the funding received from the capital's 31 primary care trusts. Other funding came from the Department of Health, NHS London and other non-NHS organisations

**£14.97m**  
the amount saved in the year

**£6.7m**  
the total invested in new clinical equipment, technology, estates and vehicles

**£762,000**  
the cost per day of running the Service

**£235**  
the average amount it cost the Service to respond to an incident

**£30**  
the annual cost per Londoner for their A&E ambulance service

# Major incident plans put to test

OVER 40 ambulance staff were involved in a counter-terrorism exercise in February to test a multi-agency response to an attack on the Underground.

The exercise, Forward Defensive, took place at the disused Aldwych Underground station, representing Oxford Circus station in August during the height of the Olympic Games.

Paramedics were among the first emergency service staff on the scene and worked with police and firefighters to get passengers to safety and treat those injured in the incident.

There were 20 patients – all played by actors – who suffered a variety of 'injuries' ranging from cuts and bruises to two patients with life-threatening injuries.

Deputy Director of Operations Jason Killens said: "This was part of a series of exercises to test the response of the emergency services and Government ahead of the Games coming to London."

- During 2011/12, staff were also involved in a number of test events at Games venues including equestrian, cycling and basketball.



## Equality boost



THE Service was named as one of the country's most gay-friendly workplaces.

It was the first time that the organisation has made Stonewall's Top 100 Employers list and was the only ambulance service to do so during the year.

The Service took 94th place in the 2012 list, which was announced in January.

Joint Chair of the Service's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) Forum, and Ambulance Operations Manager, Steph Adams, said: "It was a massive achievement as it is a very sought after and prestigious recognition.

"It reflects the fact that people feel they can turn up at work and are happy to be themselves. This has a really positive impact on the patients we care for in London's diverse communities."

The Service has since also joined Stonewall's Health Champions Programme, receiving free advice and expertise from the gay equality charity.

## In brief



Over 2,700 heart attack patients were taken by ambulance to one of London's eight specialist heart attack centres for treatment last year.\*

Ninety-two per cent of these patients received primary angioplasty – which involves inflating a balloon inside an artery to clear the blockage that caused the heart attack – within two and a half hours.

\* Provisional figures, correct as of end of August 2012.

# Crash reporting proves popular

BBC journalists reported from the scenes of road traffic collisions in December in a unique 24-hour project with the Service.

Thirteen reporters joined ambulance staff for the day – titled 'Crash 24' – as they attended dozens of incidents on the capital's roads.

The BBC website updated information live from the scenes, attracting 600,000 web users. BBC London Radio and TV also covered the story.

