



West Midlands Ambulance Service
University NHS Foundation Trust



MONTHLY Briefing

June 2023



Follow us on social media
by searching for
OfficialWMAS

HEROIC ACTS CELEBRATED AT ANNUAL TRUST AWARDS

The Trust's Long Service & Excellence and Excellence in the Community Awards took place in June with staff, volunteers and members of the public celebrated.....page 2



Also this month....New Ambulances on Order to Maintain Young Fleet; Trust Becomes First in England to Implement CRS; Clinical Validation Success; George Awarded for Actions at RTC and much more...

Trust us to care.

Top Stories.....

Heroic Acts Celebrated at Annual Trust Awards

Hundreds of guests, dozens of awards and many tales of heroism and bravery all helped to ensure the Trust's two annual awards ceremonies were outstanding events last month. The Staff Long Service & Excellence Awards and Excellence in the Community Awards were held at The Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill with the Deputy-Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Ian Sargeant, and the High Sheriff of the County of West Midlands, Wade Lyn, amongst the guests. Awards included Long Service, Chief Officer Commendations, Student Paramedic of the Year, Mentor Awards, Apprenticeship Awards, Community Initiative and Partnership Awards, CFR Long Service Awards and the CFR of the Year. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "In the aftermath of the pandemic, the continuing cost of living crisis and everything else that is presenting us all with challenges at the moment, it is fantastic to have the opportunity to celebrate some of the incredible achievements of our staff, volunteers and members of the public. There were so many stories of people going above and beyond, in all sorts of situations, and to everyone who was recognised at these fantastic events, I would like to say a big well done." Prof Ian Cumming, WMAS Chairman, said: "The NHS continues to face incredible challenges, which makes it all the more important we recognise our staff, volunteers and members of the community because they all do remarkable things every day. It was a great honour to attend both ceremonies and hear so many incredible stories."



New Ambulances on Order to Maintain Young Fleet

Last month, the Trust Board confirmed the commitment to continue to have no frontline vehicle over five years old by agreeing to order 85 new ambulances for delivery during 2023-24. These will be built under the national NHS England contract and will be identical to the ambulances delivered during 2022-23. They will replace vehicles that are five years old and are expected to start arriving during the winter. In addition, a number of the BMW X5s currently used by the service will also be replaced. Due to BMW pulling out of the emergency services market, a number of options have been reviewed for the Operational Manager (OM), MERIT and Tactical Commander roles, with the Volvo XC90 the preferred option, with six on order. The Trust will also receive another two Jaguar iPace electric vehicles for OM use following the successful implementation of the all electric vehicles at the two Birmingham hubs in 2021. A number of specialist vehicles are also on order including five replacement Hazardous Area Response Team vehicles which are due in February / March. Six specialist mental health vehicles have also been ordered as part of a national scheme. Again, these will be fully electric with a likely delivered in the Spring. Head of Fleet and Facilities Management, Tony Page, said: "I'm sure staff will welcome the continued commitment to provide the best vehicles possible. Work has also started on the next NHS England national tender. I am involved in that work and our vehicle design group has also provided input with a likely contract award during 2024."

Trust Becomes First in England to Implement CRS

As with all ambulance services, the role that control rooms play in the communication between crews and patients is a vital part of the overall operation. After around a decade of using the DS200 Integrated Command and Control system (ICCS), the Trust has become the first in England to introduce a new upgraded system. It is part of the Ambulance Radio Programme (ARP) to implement a significant new communication platform across the country. After a huge amount of planning and training, the Trust went live with the new Frequentis LifeX (ICCS) recently. Emergency Operations Centre Commander, Adrian Gibson, said: "The new ICCS is a state-of-the-art control room solution (CRS) which provides enhanced communication, using voice and data methods and provides greater resilience to the service. The communications links are quicker, are easier to use and it also gives us an enhanced major incident capacity which makes interoperability with other ambulance services much easier." Controller Abdul Rahman added: "It is much more intuitive than the previous system and is like using a tablet device. Everything that you need is there and we get a lot more information than we previously had." Integrated Emergency and Urgent Care & Performance Director, Jeremy Brown said: "Thank you to all of the staff involved across both control rooms, the trainers and the IT and Communications staff who made the transition run so smoothly. We are already seeing the advantages which will ultimately benefit patients."

Top Stories.....

Clinical Validation Success

Data released in June’s Trust Board papers shows just how successful the Clinical Validation Team (CVT) is. Their work to clinically validate Category 3 and 4 emergencies remains a key function to support the overall emergency demand and to ensure patients receive an appropriate response. The Trust achieved a Hear and Treat (H&T) rate of 16.6% during April. IEUC and Performance Director, Jeremy Brown, said: “When reviewing the outcome of those patients assessed by CVT clinicians, 61% received a H&T outcome and therefore were navigated to alternative services for their ongoing care. A review of the recontact rates for H&T patients demonstrates that only 9.3% of patients required further 999 assessment within 48 hours during April. The sustained low rate of recontacts demonstrates the safe practice of the team. This is reflected in the low number of serious incidents reported in relation to CVT triage. There is no question that the hard work and commitment from the CVT team is making a real difference to patient care.”



Call Assessors Extraordinary Efforts

Despite a significantly busier month, May saw the call assessing team step up to the mark. Only eight calls waited over two minutes to be picked up out of a total of 130,000! Nationally, there were over 17,500 such calls. We remain the best ambulance service in the country for speed of answering calls with WMAS accounting for just 0.26% of the calls in the category despite taking around 10% of the calls. Integrated Emergency and Urgent Care & Performance Director, Jeremy Brown, said: “Once again, this is a tremendous performance by the team. Whilst I know they will be disappointed there are any over two-minute calls, the data shows clearly just how hard staff are working. I am immensely proud of the team who keep performing despite the pressures that we face.”

Trust	WMAS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
May	8	482	66	5,180	906	15	3,813	4,432	455	2,214
YTD	8	865	247	10,445	1,745	42	6,785	6,754	504	3,637

National 999 Outage

As you may well have heard about, BT suffered a major system failure nationwide on Sunday, 26th June which meant not all 999 calls were connecting to the emergency system for ambulance, police and fire services. The Trust first became aware of a problem at around 8.00am and immediately put contingencies in place with patient safety at the forefront of the concerns. We followed advice to direct the public to dial 111 and, with the help of Telecoms Manager, Chris Butler, an interim number was also set up for the public to ring to connect them with us directly, to give members of the public the best chance at getting through; something we’re not aware that any other emergency service did. All of this advice was actively shared across social media to ensure the public were kept up to date. Head of Emergency Planning, James Williams, said: “This was an incident we hadn’t seen before but the situation was very quickly identified and escalated with appropriate command structures and support mobilised to oversee activity and provide messaging to the wider public. Thank you to everyone who provided support throughout the day, which ensured we were able to continue to provide a service to the community.” Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, added: “A huge thank you to everyone for their hard work in what was a difficult situation. It was a tough challenge to face, but thanks to our well-rehearsed plans we were able to cope as well as possible, making sure we continued to give patients the best care possible under the circumstances.” By 7.30pm, BT had restored the service and were investigating the cause of the issue.



Top Stories.....

Time of the Month? We've Got Staff Covered

With a workforce that is over 50% female, many will understand periods are part of life. Last month, containers with free sanitary products were installed in all Trust site female toilets. The products were sourced with external funding from the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) and made possible by Head of Human Resources, Lucy Mackcracken and Chair of the Trust Women's Network, Becky Godfrey. Lucy said: "I'm really pleased that we were successful in making this project possible. We know that there are lots of circumstances why staff will benefit from being able to access these products, whether they are struggling financially, are caught short and don't have any products with them, they have gynaecological health issues or are having irregular or heavy periods. No matter the reason, it's great to know that nobody will have to go without." Becky, added: "After receiving feedback from within the network, doing this was a real priority for us, particularly with 'period poverty'. While we have been able to secure funding for an initial stock, we really hope that when needed, staff who are able to will repay the generosity forward and will bring products to stock the boxes in future to ensure this fantastic addition continues to benefit anyone who needs it."



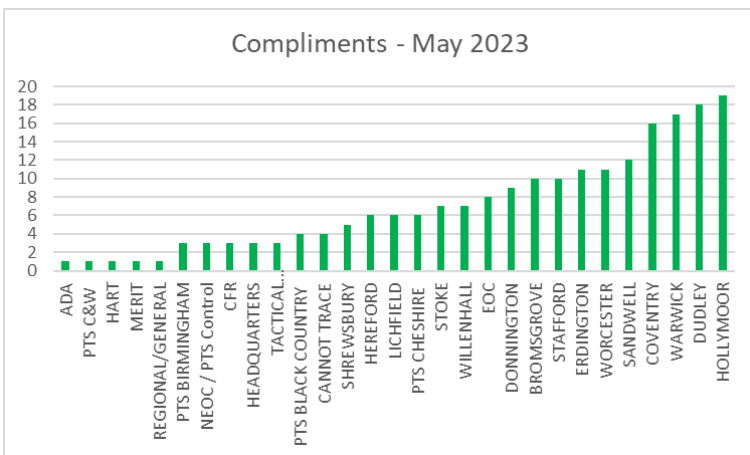
Body Worn Cameras Help Get Conviction

The importance of using body worn cameras to protect staff safety was once again shown when a man was sentenced in court recently following the Assault of an Emergency Worker. The crew activated both their body worn cameras (BWC) and vehicle CCTV after they became concerned by the actions of a patient who was under the influence of alcohol. The man had initially told the call assessor that he was suicidal and had self-harmed. After initially being compliant, the man became agitated and the crew activated the recording systems. After being transported to a place of safety, the man tried to walk away and in the process of trying to reason with him, the patient grabbed the shirt of one of the crew and attempted to swing a fist at him. Thankfully, the blow was blocked and the crew member was able to use the patient's own body momentum to take him to the ground where he was restrained until police arrived and there was no physical injury. The man appeared at Coventry Magistrates Court where he was given a two-year conditional discharge, £150 fine, £185 court costs and £50 compensation. The patient was reported to be remorseful and ashamed of his actions. Security & Safety Manager, John Kelly, said: "Had the CCTV and BWC footage not been so compelling, who knows if we would have got a conviction? Equally, it would have meant the crew having to attend court. The footage was enough for the man to plead guilty."

Over 200 Compliments in May

The value the public place on the work of staff within West Midlands Ambulance Service has once again been demonstrated with no fewer than 206 compliments during May. They come in via letter, email, the Trust website and social media. It takes the total for the year to over 1,000 already. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "What is so pleasing is that every area of the Trust is represented. While none of us come into the job to get such compliments, there is no question that it is a really lovely thing to receive. However, whether staff have received one or not, they should be assured that their efforts are very much appreciated by the public. Together, we save lives every day and that is priceless and they should all be immensely proud of the role they play in achieving that."

They come in via letter, email, the Trust website and social media. It takes the total for the year to over 1,000 already. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "What is so pleasing is that every area of the Trust is represented. While none of us come into the job to get such compliments, there is no question that it is a really lovely thing to receive. However, whether staff have received one or not, they should be assured that their efforts are very much appreciated by the public. Together, we save lives every day and that is priceless and they should all be immensely proud of the role they play in achieving that."



Trust us to care.

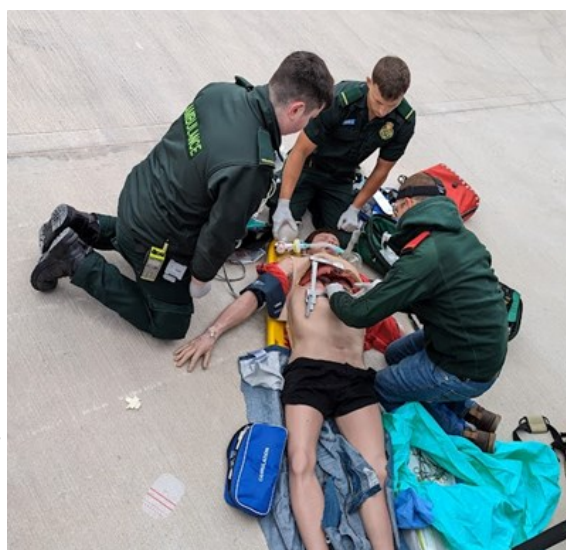
News.....

Board Pays Tribute to Work of ADAs

The Trust Board has paid tribute to the work of the Ambulance Decision Areas. The work of the teams at the three Birmingham hospitals along with Royal Shrewsbury and Worcestershire Royal was highlighted as good practice by the Care Quality Commission who commented that it was 'pioneering and ground breaking', when they carried out an inspection at University Hospitals Birmingham. Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer, Michelle Brotherton, said: "The teams have really settled in well since we introduced the schemes at pace over the winter. We get excellent feedback from the hospitals and regularly receive compliments from patients thanking the staff in the areas for the care that they have provided. There is no question that their work is having a very positive impact on patients, both those in the hospital and also those in the community who are waiting for an ambulance to arrive." Trust Chair, Prof. Ian Cumming, added: "As a Board, we know just how hard staff work within all areas of the service to help patients. We have been hearing how the Ambulance Decision Areas are helping patients on a daily basis and we cannot begin to say how impressed we are with the work of the teams who work in them."

MERIT Clinical Governance Day and Training Investment

Following the delivery of two new Zoll Z Ventilators for the Trust's MERIT team, the June Clinical Governance Day gave attendees an opportunity to get to grips with revisions in Standard Operating Procedures and the ability to get hands on with the new equipment. There are some added features when compared to the previous Oxylog 3000s, including the ability to ventilate using room air as they are turbine driven. They will also substantially reduce the maintenance costs by bringing servicing in-house, similar to the current Zoll X Series Monitors used by the Trust. Central venous access devices and Avanti Sheaths have been added to the MERIT capability. These devices will allow wide bore central access which may prove lifesaving when delivering pre-hospital blood products and fluid resuscitation in critically hypovolemic patients. During the day a thoracotomy demonstration was performed by MERIT consultant Jake Turner and MERIT Team Leader Jack Lewis, assisted by technicians Seán Sheeran of Sandwell Hub and Harry Sabberton of Lichfield Hub. The demonstration was also an opportunity to utilise a new state of the art, high fidelity thoracotomy and surgical skills mannequin, purchased last year by the Trust. Other skills stations included vascular access techniques and lung and cardiac wound repair. Head of Enhanced Care, Aidan Brown, said: "This investment by the Trust is getting good use. It is developing the surgical skills of enhanced care teams in the region to deliver life-saving interventions to some of the most critically injured patients the Trust cares for."



George Awarded for his Actions at RTC

George Vizor has worked for the Trust since 2021 having previously worked for West Midlands Police. He has recently been awarded for the actions he took towards helping to save a person's life following a road traffic collision that he attended. Call Assessor Supervisor, Natalie Murdoch, said: "The team are all incredibly proud of George's achievement and since he has joined the team, he's worked incredibly hard to become a mentor and has recently embarked on dispatch training. Well done, George." George added: "My colleague and I came across a collision involving a cyclist and a car, we were able to help the cyclist involved by giving basic first aid until an ambulance arrived. I later learned that her injuries were life-threatening and our quick intervention helped save her life. Knowing that the female involved is now alive and recovered, receiving the award was something to be proud of, although not something I ever expected to happen. I'm just glad we were in the right place at the right time to be able to help her on this occasion."



News.....

Ambulance Crew Praised After Finding Dumped Dog

They say you just never know what a shift will bring and that proved to be incredibly true for an ambulance crew who are being praised after looking after a dog that was dumped in their vehicle. Paramedic Linzie Moore and technician Alexandra McDonald from Willenhall Hub were treating a patient in Wolverhampton when they went back to the ambulance to find Jazz, a black cocker spaniel wet and covered in algae in the back. Alex took the dog to a local vet who scanned her to find a microchip, which confirmed she came from Powys in Wales and had gone missing eight months before! Owner, Emma Darling, had been left devastated when Jazz was stolen and now can't believe that she has her four legged friend back. She told her story to the media saying: "When my phone rang that day, never in a million years did I think it would be a call to say that they had Jazz. Alex really was an angel. That night, when she had a break from her shift, she took Jazz home and bathed her and looked after her all night until the vets opened the next day. Jazz was wet and tired, with algae on her coat, so Alex thinks she may have been dumped in the nearby canal. Although Jazz was quieter and tired the first day we got her home, she's been back to herself ever since. Alex truly is an angel, I will always be so grateful to her."



Swanning Around at Work

In another case of, you just never know what the day will bring, it was certainly the case for Luke Evans and Courtney Thompson from the Wolverhampton PTS base. They were in the Cannock area when they ended up helping Staffordshire Police recreate a real life 'Hot Fuzz' moment. In the film, Simon Pegg attempts to rescue a swan, and that is what Courtney and Luke did when they came across police officers trying to help the bird which was 'swanning around' on the A460 Lodge Lane. Luckily, the intrepid team were able to capture the feathered friend and return it to safety at a nearby lake.



Chief Meets Network Chairs

Chairs and members of the Trust's staff networks met with Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh to talk about how they have been getting on over the last 12 months. The meeting gave the opportunity for each Network to talk about positive steps taken, but also to raise any issues and concerns. Ash Deakins, Chair of the Proud, Karina Graham, Co-Chair of the One Network, Rebecca Godfrey, Co-Chair of the Women's Network and Sam Keeley from the Disability, Carers and Advocates Network, were joined by People Director Carla Beechey and Mohammed Ramzan, the Trust's Head of Diversity and Inclusion. Mr Marsh said: "It was fantastic to catch up with the Networks to hear about the great work they have been doing over the last year. I would like to thank all of the Chairs, everyone who helps run a network, Carla and Ramzan for all they do to provide continued support to our staff."



Trust us to care.

News.....

To Get to the Final Was Amazing

Sadly, it was not to be for the team who created a more inclusive uniform for the UK Ambulance Sector at the UK National GO Awards Ceremony. NHS Supply Chain worked with all ten English ambulance services to introduce a range of items that help meet the beliefs of staff such as Hijabs, Turbans and Kippahs. Colleagues will recall that WMAS staff played a key role in the programme which also saw the introduction of lighter polo shirts with underarm ventilation, trousers that fit different body types, helmets that can be used with cochlear implants and hats that allow space for hearing aids, and maternity clothing for staff who move into alternative duties in an office when pregnant. The work was nominated in the Collaborative Procurement Initiative Award category. Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Mohammed Ramzan, said: "While we didn't win, the very fact that we got to the final shows just how impressed the judges were with what we achieved. Better still, the feedback that we are getting from staff is the real prize. We are all very proud of the work which colleagues are telling us is making a real impact to their working lives." You can find out more by watching [this film](#). (L-R: Chris Jenkins (NHS Supply Chain), Mohammed Ramzan, Elisa Lamb (NHS Supply Chain), Karen Holdsworth, South West Ambulance Trust EDI Lead.)



Waving the Pride Flag in Birmingham

Staff from across the Trust were loud and proud in their celebrations at Birmingham Pride recently. The sun shone brightly for the staff, students and volunteers who donned their rainbows to show their Power in Pride at the parade while they represented all the LGBT+ community within WMAS, allies and also the Proud Network. Proud Network Chair, Ash Deakins said: "It was amazing see our LGBT+ staff and our allies come together, to stand side-by-side, with a vibrant display of colour, pride and individuality to show our support to the LGBT+ community and demonstrate that we are an organisation that celebrates inclusivity and diversity within our workforce."



UNITE Members Re-Start Strike Action

June saw members of UNITE once again take action in their on-going dispute with the Government as they continued their push for better pay and conditions. Although the NHS Staff Council accepted a pay offer from the Government, Unite members rejected it and they took action between 6.00am and midday and 6.00pm and midnight on Monday 12th June. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "Thank you to members and representatives for ensuring we were able to continue to provide a safe level of service to the public of the West Midlands. It is important we continue to work with staffside colleagues and members to ensure they have the opportunity to register their displeasure while protecting patients." UNITE Senior Rep, Steve Thompson added: "I'd like to thank our members for their solidarity and support on the day; our reps for their hard work across the region, helping to deliver well disciplined but good humoured picket lines; to our IEUC/EOC colleagues and members who ensured a professional approach to the derogations; and finally, to our respective management teams for respecting and supporting our members right to take industrial action, a lot of whom we appreciate are members themselves."



Trust us to care.



WMAS Round-Up

June 2023: The Numbers



Welcome to the latest monthly stats round-up where we look at performance and demand across the 999 emergency service, control rooms and the Trust's Patient Transport Service.

999 Emergency Service



134,392 emergency contacts (inc. all 999 calls, duplicates, events & 111 referrals). **3% decrease** on June '22

82,583 unique incidents
Average of 2,753 a day
6.1% decrease on June '22

12,122 hours lost due to regional hospital handover delays - **67% decrease** on June '22

Hear & Treat
15,930 patients treated over the phone
7.2% increase on June '22

See & Convey
43,640 patients conveyed for further treatment
6.6% decrease on June '22



130,658 999 calls received compared to 134,549, a **decrease of 2.7%** on June '22

0 mins 00 seconds, the mean answering time compared to 0.05 in June '22

77.2% of addresses matched in less than 60 seconds, compared to 80.3% in June '22

Patient Transport Service



71,495 journeys undertaken across all contracts
1.7% increase on June '22

34,955 Renal journeys (including aborted)
1.8 increase on June '22

3,952 aborted journeys
16.1% increase on June '22