

MONTHLY Briefing

ENTIRE TRUST STANDS TOGETHER TO MEET PANDEMIC CHALLENGE

Huge response from all areas of the Trust helps to maintain the highest level of service possible for patients across the West Midlands....page 2



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News.....

Even More Rainbow Drawings to Support the NHS

Children have been channelling their creativity skills while staying home and drawing rainbows as a symbol of their support for the NHS and frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. People have put their rainbow drawings on display in their windows to show their support, some have even made rainbow NHS flags! The Trust's Press Office has been flooded with pictures of rainbows for WMAS staff and people showing off their displays of support for the NHS in this incredibly difficult time. There seems to be no end to the support from the whole of the West Midlands for which we are very grateful.



WMAS Humbled by Acts of Kindness

Staff across the region have been left stunned by the number of random acts of kindness they have received during the last few weeks as members of the public have continued to show their support. They've ranged from free food deliveries, hot and cold lunches from local businesses to homemade cakes, hot drink supplies and bunches of flowers. Crews have also received chocolates, biscuits, sweets and hand written thank you cards which have been left on their windscreen.



Entire Trust Stands Together to Meet Pandemic Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to the Trust, but from the outset, our Chief Executive has been very clear; in order to meet those challenges, every member of staff across the Trust will need to do their bit. Everywhere you look, departments have stepped to ensure we continue providing the best care possible to our patients. Operationally, it has not been uncommon to see in excess of 500 ambulances out on shift at any one time, numbers exceeding the levels seen on New Year's Eve, traditionally our busiest night of the year. The Patient Transport Service has also taken on extra responsibility, increased its staffing levels and put more vehicles out on the road. To put such high numbers out, it takes extra effort from our Vehicle Preparation Operatives, Fleet and Logistics departments to ensure we have as many ambulances available as possible, 24/7. The increase in calls also means it has been a busy time for our 999 and 111 call centres. Staff in both have gone above and beyond, not only in working extra shifts and giving up leave, but by supporting an influx of new starters to get them ready to answer calls. Across the entire Trust, almost 1000 staff have been brought in during the last six weeks, representing a miraculous effort from our Recruitment and HR Teams. Our training team based at the National Training Academy in Brierley Hill has ensured that 440 of those new staff have been ready to start treating patients. Higher staffing numbers at sites has also meant an increased workload for the Estates Team, whilst the Stores Department has been distributing around 400,000 items per week, compared to 160,000 per week in January. The IT team has also had its work cut out, not only ensuring all of the new starters were set up and sourcing additional equipment where needed. They have also ensured large numbers of staff in corporate functions have been able to work from home. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "The response from every single member of staff has been incredible and I thank them all for their effort and dedication that they have shown during this pandemic. We have achieved some incredible things in terms of how many staff we have added, how many vehicles we have out on duty and all of the other work that is going on behind the scenes, and that is the reason we have been able to maintain such a high level of performance throughout this pandemic so far. Of course, there is still a long road ahead of us and a lot of hard work to come but I am confident we will meet and overcome the further challenges ahead of us with the help of our amazing staff."



Top stories.....

Trust Maintains Patient Safety Despite Demand Increases

Despite huge increases in the number of incidents, the Trust has continued to perform better than any other ambulance service, exceeding all of the statutory targets for 2019-20. The statistics come on the back of a recent Daily Mail article claiming heart attack and stroke patients having to wait more than two hours for an ambulance due to the COVID-19 crisis. Director of Strategic Operations and Digital Integration, Craig Cooke, said: "It is disappointing that the hard work of staff in the West Midlands was completely ignored in the Daily Mail article. As you can see from the figures below, even at the height of the COVID-19 cases, we were still getting to such patients very rapidly, ensuring they got the care and help they needed. The whole Trust should be incredibly proud of the way we have all come together to ensure patients continue to get a fantastic service. This really has been the whole organisation working as one. The figures speak for themselves; they are astonishing when you consider the huge rise in demand. A massive thank you to each and every one of you for helping to protect patient safety and provide excellent care."

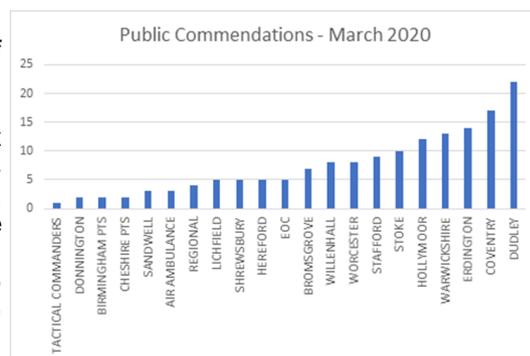
	Targets		March		April	
	Mean	90 th Centile	Mean	90 th Centile	Mean	90 th Centile
Category 1	7:00	15:00	7:08	12:38	7:00	12.06
Category 2	19:00	40:00	14:46	27:39	11:45	20.42
Category 3	60:00	120:00	50:11	113:18	23.23	46.19
Category 4	N/A	180:00	N/A	156:57	N/A	60.50

Tributes Paid to Staff for 'Heroic' Efforts

Despite significant workforce challenges and exceptional demand, the Service has continued to provide the best possible standards for our patients in the West Midlands." These are the words of the Trust's Lead Commissioner, Rachael Ellis in a letter sent to Chief Executive Anthony Marsh. The letter, on behalf of all the Commissioners of the West Midlands says: "I write in unprecedented times in order to share my sincere thanks in relation to the response to the current challenges by the 111 and 999 services. I would personally like to extend my gratitude and appreciation for the amazing work done by you and your staff since taking over the 111 service in November 2019. The commitment from WMAS staff has been truly outstanding and I believe we continue to offer the best possible care to our patients, in this increasingly difficult time. I appreciate the situation continues to unfold and there remain significant challenges ahead and I remain confident we will work through these together. I would like to take this formal opportunity to thank you for your outstanding efforts and continued support." The praise for our staff continued when the Trust's Board met as they spoke of the 'tremendous work' being undertaken by staff. Meeting for only the second time remotely, due to the current need for social distancing, Directors paid tribute to the work of staff in every role within the organisation and the way everyone has come together to make sure patients get the same high standards of care despite coronavirus. New Chairman, Professor Ian Cumming, said: "I'd like to put on record my thanks for the tremendous work taking place across the whole of the Trust. I want to thank all of the staff but also the Directors and senior management team for doing everything they have to keep staff safe." Finally, the Lord Mayor of Birmingham has added his thanks in a letter to Mr Marsh. Councillor Mohammed Azim said: "Please pass on my profound thanks and best wishes to all the ambulance crews, control staff and support staff who are doing such a brilliant job under extraordinarily difficult and dangerous circumstances. You are all heroes to me. Looking forward to brighter times in the future; please take care of yourselves."

Public Are Full of Praise for Staff

You have not had to look too hard to see just how much members of the public appreciate their ambulance service and the wider NHS lately, with #ClapforCarers being supplemented by endless donations of food and drinks as well as rainbow pictures reaching us by the dozen. That hasn't stopped people taking the time to send in thank you cards, letters or social media messages though, with 157 being received in March, more than 5 a day. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "The challenge facing our staff at the moment is incredible, so to see such messages of thanks from members of the public will hopefully help to maintain their spirits. It is always makes me extremely proud to see people say such nice things about our staff."



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Top Stories.....

WMAS Pauses to Pay Tribute to Staff Lost to COVID-19

At 11am on Tuesday 28th April, West Midlands Ambulance Service joined NHS organisations across the country to pause for one minute and remember those key workers who have sadly lost their lives due to Coronavirus. It was a fitting tribute, on what was also International Worker's Memorial Day. Of course due to the nature of the job, some frontline staff couldn't physically stand with colleagues and fall silent, due to being on calls, but we're sure all of the thousands of staff at the Trust took some time out of their day to reflect on those key workers lost to this horrible disease. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "Every death is of course a tragedy, but we particularly feel the loss of fellow health care workers. I want to say thank you to colleagues who took part in the silence outside their respective hubs, whilst also adhering to social distancing guidelines. During the silence, not only was I thinking about those the NHS has lost. I also reflected on how tirelessly my staff continue to work throughout this pandemic. For that, I am truly grateful."



Dragonfly Return to Capture Covid-19 Challenge

You will recall the success of the two series of 'Ambulance' which showed the amazing work of staff and resulted in a BAFTA Award for the BBC programme. The team from Dragonfly have returned to document the biggest challenge the Trust has ever faced; dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. For three weeks, the team, including a number of familiar faces, filmed staff across the service as they went above and beyond to protect patients and save lives. Cameras were once again in the Emergency Operations Centre and on ambulances, but this time they also saw a wide range of other departments including recruitment; stores and distribution; the Vehicle Preparation Operatives, mechanics, staff from the patient transport service; education and training; 111; and the Command team. Executive Producer, Tom Currie, who has worked on filming for Ambulance with North West Ambulance Service, said: "Our cameras captured the realities of WMAS' work as they managed the global pandemic. We want to show the lengths that they are all going to keep the service running during this once in a generation crisis. We feel enormously privileged to have been allowed back and to be able to show their brilliant work, keeping the people of the West Midlands safe during these difficult times."

Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, added: "I am immensely proud of the way my staff are going about their work which is saving lives every single day. Taking part in this programme will show the public just how dedicated they all are. We know the public are immensely proud of them, as we see every day, but these programmes will really show them the dedication and commitment that you show each and every day."



Man Pleads Guilty to Assaulting Paramedic

A Telford man has pleaded guilty to assaulting a paramedic and causing criminal damage. An ambulance crew from Donnington were called to assist a woman in the early hours in Telford when a man arrived on scene and assaulted one of the crew causing facial injuries which required wound closure in hospital. The man also damaged the ambulance by punching a wing mirror. Police arrested the man who pleaded guilty to assaulting an emergency services worker and criminal damage and is due to be sentenced on the 22nd May. Anthony Marsh, Chief Executive Officer, said: "Every Thursday we clap for our NHS yet there are still people who wish to assault my staff during a time of national emergency. It is simply unacceptable that one of my staff has been attacked whilst trying to help. I hope that the sentence passed is suitable punishment for such a crime."

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News.....

Man Jailed for Assaulting Ambulance Staff

A man who launched an unprovoked attack on ambulance staff who were trying to help him has been jailed for four months and ordered to pay compensation. Micu Mircea, of no fixed abode, attacked members of an ambulance crew after they were called to New Street Railway Station in Birmingham on 18th February. Mircea was initially reported as being unconscious after taking what was believed to be an illicit substance. British Transport Police were initially in attendance when the crew arrived but left as Mircea was polite and appeared calm. However, shortly after they left he became violent and punched a crew member in the face and attempted to throw the Zoll defibrillator at the crew. Police were immediately requested to attend along with an Operations Manager. Mircea was taken to City Hospital with four police officers restraining him. Due to the seriousness of the assault, the Court handed down an 18 week custodial sentence and he was ordered to pay £150 compensation. Trust Chief Executive, Anthony Marsh, said: "I am delighted that the court saw fit to jail this man; we need to see more sentences like this so that people understand that it is not ok to assault ambulance staff under any circumstances. It is simply horrific that staff are injured while simply trying to help people."

Robust Management of Vexatious or Malicious Callers

Despite the country being in the middle of a Level 4 national emergency, it seems that some people in the West Midlands still believe they have a 'right' to anything that they want, treatment wise. In April, the Trust wrote to a patient in Worcestershire who had repeatedly called out an ambulance in a malicious attempt to appear in more serious condition than they were. After a thorough investigation, the patient has also now been referred to West Mercia Police on the grounds of misusing ambulance resources. Consultant Paramedic, Rob Cole, said: "Sadly, we have noticed that several individuals have been behaving in a manner towards ambulance staff that is clearly unacceptable with regard to their demands for treatment. The Trust is continuing to manage these individuals robustly, as we are only too aware of the effect such actions can have on staff. We will continue to do support staff and will not hesitate to take tough action, including reporting individuals to the police to ensure demands are appropriate."

New Chairman Starts With WMAS

Literally hundreds of new staff have joined the Trust over the last few weeks; all will play pivotal roles during the current global pandemic. For all they are unprecedented times, but perhaps none more so than for our new Chairman, Professor Ian Cumming: "I recognise that I have joined WMAS where it has never more so been on the front-line of the response. It is so apparent to me that everyone in WMAS is working together with enormous flexibility to ensure that we always respond when needed and, through good planning and preparation, ensure that the highest quality of care possible is delivered to everyone who needs it in a timely fashion. Whether staff have only recently joined, been here for years, or indeed are one of the students who has volunteered to join us or a former staff member who has come back, every single member of staff and volunteer is playing a critical role in our response. You will also be aware that 'our Chief', Anthony Marsh, in addition to being National Strategic Advisor has now taken overall operational command of the ambulance services across the country. I can think of no better person to do this. I have one ask of each and every one of our staff, that they look after themselves, look after each other and look after their families. To each of them, I say 'thank you' for all that you are doing. We are proud of you; the NHS is proud of you; and the country is proud of you." The arrival of a new Chairman obviously signals the departure of our previous holder of the position, Sir Graham Meldrum, after 14 years in the post. In his final message to staff, he said: "We are often reminded just how precious a commodity time is and are often urged not to waste it as it can never be replaced; there is no doubt that as we get older this becomes a reality. I have never doubted that the 14 years that I have spent as Chair of WMAS has been time spent very well indeed. A great deal has changed since I took up the role; so many improvements have taken place leading the service to be rated as 'Outstanding' twice. To achieve such a rating, you have to be a well organised, well led and a highly professional service, with a workforce who are enthusiastic, dedicated and totally committed to their profession. We are very fortunate that we have such people working for the service in a wide variety of roles. I have found it to be a great privilege to have been part of West Midlands Ambulance Service; to have served with such amazing people, delivering such a special service to the community. As I reflect on the past 14 years, I am certain that I could not have used my time for any better, nor for such a rewarding purpose."

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News.....

The Passing of Andy Lightbody

Many staff in Worcestershire and beyond will have been left devastated by the news that their colleague Andy Lightbody had passed away suddenly. Andy, who was just 53, was based at Worcester Hub. He had been recovering from an injury so his passing came as a complete shock to friends and colleagues; it was not related to Coronavirus. Andy's 29-year career started when he joined Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service in 1991 after serving in the military. He leaves behind his girlfriend, Emma, and daughter, Erin. Liz Parkes, Worcester and Hereford Senior Operations Manager, said: "Andy was a well-respected member of staff who was known for his phenomenal sense of humour. His background was that of a military medic and he was instrumental in the implementation of 12-lead ECG and thrombolysis training for Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service. He will be greatly missed by all of his colleagues." Chief Executive Officer, Anthony Marsh, said: "It is clear that Andy was incredibly well liked and respected by his ambulance service colleagues. To have dedicated nearly 30 years of his life to helping save lives is an incredible achievement and something I hope his family are extremely proud of. Losing someone as dedicated as Andy is particularly tragic and I am sure everyone will join with me in sending our deepest condolences to his family and friends."

Sandwell and West Birmingham Begins New PTS Contract



The start of April was an important one for the Patient Transport Services in Birmingham and the Black Country as the Trust started providing services on the Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG contract. Claire Atkinson, Senior Operations Manager PTS Birmingham and Black Country, said: "I want to give a really big welcome to our new members of staff. This first day was a big success and

everyone has really helped in getting the final pieces in place at the base. I look forward to getting to know all the staff as we progress." Two of the new team are Nicola Cheatel and Neil Pedley. The Care Assistants said: "This is the new start that we all needed and we're really looking forward to a future with WMAS. Everything has been really positive!" Michelle Brotherton, Non-Emergency Services Operations Delivery Director, said: "The contract involves 60 staff and 26 vehicles, with a brand-new base at Kelvin Way in West Bromwich, along with controllers based at Frankley, which has been expanded. It's been an incredible team effort and although it's been an extremely fast turnaround, it's also been a very smooth one and for that I am thankful. From Ops and IT to HR and Estates, it really has been a massive team accomplishment. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all these staff joining, particularly in these unprecedented times. We look forward to working with you for many years to come." Good luck to all those starting this new chapter of their careers.

Renal Dialysis Success

Despite the current pandemic, and many colleagues working to deal with coronavirus patients, the vital day to day work of PTS has continued to its usual exemplary standard. Non-Emergency Services Operational Delivery Director, Michelle Brotherton, recently wrote to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kidney Patients' Association to provide an update on performance after it was raised at last year's Trust AGM. She wrote: "I am really pleased to report that we continued to deliver all of our quality standards for renal patients month on month for 2019-20. We have been actively co-ordinating with all Renal Units during our operational pressures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and I am extremely proud of our organisation and the staff who continue to provide an excellent level of patient care." during these challenges." The Trust continues to exceed every target it has, a remarkable record, particularly during the current situation.

Pan Birmingham PTS Renal Dialysis 2019-20	Target	Achieved
Inwards: Planned		
Not late for appointment (including being too early)	90%	95.1%
Outwards Planned		
Collection in under 30minutes of scheduled / ready time	90%	92.1%
Time Spent On Vehicle		
Less than 60 minutes within a distance of 15 miles	95%	97.8%

News.....

Erdington Technician Collects Community Achievement Award

Erdington Technician Paul Rowlands has been honoured by Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service for the part he played in supporting the Biker Down Project. Paul, who picked up a Community Achievement Award at a ceremony last month, explained the scheme, saying: "This is a project I have assisted the fire service with for several years now in a uniformed capacity in conjunction with ROSPA/ IAM and Warwickshire Police. The project aims to educate motorcyclists and reduce casualties on the county's roads. We have been delivering sessions to the public for around eight years on a voluntary basis, meaning the cost to the public is zero." WFRS Prevention Group Manager Tim Sargent said "In 2019 Biker Down welcomed two new partners, the Warwickshire Police BikeSafe team and the Coventry & Warwickshire ROSPA Biking Group, who both offer additional expert riding tuition after Biker Down and work with our Fire Prevention staff Saeed Sheikh and Darren Randle Morris to ensure Biker Down continues to grow."



Crews Praise Good Bystander CPR Which Saved Patient

Worcester paramedic Claire Evans and crewmate Jennifer Wilmott attended a cardiac arrest in the city in April. On arrival, two bystanders were already performing CPR, which ultimately helped save the patient's life. Claire was so impressed with how the two members of the public responded in this man's hour of need that she got in touch with the Press Office to help trace, thank them and put them forward for a commendation. Well, the patient's son had already be in touch with the Worcester News with nothing but praise for nursing student Ellie Howard (left) and nurse Cassie Dovey; both who happened to be at the scene to help this gentleman when he needed it most. Paramedic, Claire, said: "Cassie and Ellie undoubtedly played a part in saving the patient's life and I would like to



take this opportunity to say a big thank you and well done to them for that. Their quick thinking to start early CPR, which was of a good standard, saved vital time in the early stages of the patient's cardiac arrest which really is when every second counts." It's very encouraging to hear examples of when good bystander CPR has assisted our crews in helping to save a patient's life. It also emphasises the importance of championing early CPR. Please continue to encourage family and friends to learn basic first aid and life support - Cassie and Ellie are proof it can make all the difference. If you want to read the article from the Worcester News, click [here](#).

Shropshire Presenter Praises WMAS Awards on Air

Earlier this month, when doing a feature on the incredible efforts of key workers during the current pandemic, BBC Radio Shropshire presenter Eric Smith started reminiscing about West Midlands Ambulance Service Awards ceremonies that has hosted over the last couple of years. He thought it important to emphasise that while keyworkers like paramedics and call assessors are doing an excellent job now, they have actually always been doing incredible things. Eric said: "For the last couple of years I've helped present the West Midlands Ambulance Service Awards at Brierley Hill. I stand there and tell stories about what the nominees have done and the awards they get. I must say I have to read that script before the awards actually take place, because otherwise I'd cry on stage. It gets so emotional. Some of the jobs our paramedics go to and some of the things they've done to save lives really is just incredible, amazing."

