

# EMAS Rutland Listening Event

(Hosted by Healthwatch Rutland)

## 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016



This report summarises the outcomes of a listening event hosted by Healthwatch Rutland on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016. It gave the opportunity to East Midlands Ambulance Service to describe current actions being taken to address issues in Rutland and for the public to contribute suggestions for improvement. Healthwatch Rutland will now work with EMAS to ensure these concerns are addressed.

August 2016

## Recommendations

- EMAS to investigate the possibility of adjustments to response time targets at a national level to make them more realistic.
- EMAS to publish actual response time for calls not just how many are on target and how many not.
- EMAS were asked to update Healthwatch Rutland as to the success of the modified rural model in reducing response times.
- Healthwatch Rutland to try and monitor whether better links were being made by a local paramedic team with other health and social care providers.
- EMAS to work with other emergency and out of hours services to produce educational material for distribution to Rutland residents on when to use 999 and when to use other services.
- Ask the Board of EMAS to develop a career structure which will address the problem of staff retention.
- EMAS to consider distributing this literature via parish councils and/or the Rutland County Council annual booklet.
- Healthwatch Rutland be available to assist EMAS in finding the best ways of accessing Rutland residents for the distribution of educational material.
- EMAS to consider ensuring that local defibrillator information is included in information distributed to Rutland residents.
- EMAS to consider a more robust educational programme through schools and community groups. This should include education for adults with LD.
- EMAS liaise with the post office to ensure the accuracy of Rutland post code information.

### EMAS response to this report

*We at EMAS have welcomed the opportunity to be involved with an event hosted by Healthwatch Rutland which has allowed for us to listen to local views and feedback directly from the local communities that we serve. We also welcome the recommendation and where appropriate, look towards implementation.*

*We look forward to a continued open and constructive relationship with Healthwatch Rutland and look forward to partnership working at future events.*

## Introduction

Healthwatch Rutland has been working closely with the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) over the last 18 months to highlight concerns raised by members of the public in Rutland. Residents speak very highly of the service they receive from paramedics, who are seen as professional, caring and competent. However, Rutland residents are concerned about response times in the County, which have consistently been, not only well below national targets, but also behind the rest of the region. People understand that this issue is part of a larger picture of rapidly rising public demand that includes other emergency care providers. Healthwatch Rutland continue to engage providers and commissioners of all parts of the system to highlight public concerns.



To enable the public to hear direct from EMAS, and for EMAS to hear the concerns of residents, an engagement event was organised on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 at Healthwatch Rutland. It was attended by approximately forty people. These included EMAS staff, Healthwatch Rutland members and members of the general public.

The event started with presentations by Mark Gregory (General Manager, EMAS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) and Tim Hargraves (Locality Manager, EMAS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland). The presentations included a lot of information on innovations being used by EMAS and how they are addressing challenges with the provision of their services. The presentations are attached at the end of this report. Participants then had an opportunity for discussion in small groups and to then participate in a questions and answer session. This report captures the discussions and makes recommendations for how suggestions made at the event could be taken forward.

## Response Target Times

Questions were asked as to whether the current response times were realistic. EMAS described how the 8-minute target for Red 1 calls was incredibly challenging as the timer started from when the call was answered. This meant that the vehicle would depart up to 2 minutes into the 8-minute response time, and with the rural nature of Rutland and its road network, reaching the destination in 6 minutes was difficult. In



addition, it was noted that because of the small number of Red 1 calls in Rutland monthly, even one missed target had a large effect on statistical data.

Current time-based ambulance response standards, applied in the face of rising demand, have led to a wider debate about national targets.

## Recommendations

EMAS investigate the possibility of changes to response time targets at a national level.

*EMAS Response:*

*NHS England is leading on a new Ambulance Response Programme (ARP) being trialled by some trusts which aims to improve response times to critically ill patients. It will make sure that the best, high quality, most appropriate response is provided for each patient first time. The Programme is expected to improve outcomes for all patients contacting the 999 ambulance service, with a generally reduced clinical risk throughout. By:*

- The use of a new pre-triage set of questions to identify those patients in need of the fastest response at the earliest opportunity*
- Dispatch of the most clinically appropriate vehicle to each patient within a timeframe that meets their clinical need*
- A new evidence-based set of clinical codes that better describe the patient's presenting condition and response/resource requirement*

*EMAS will be joining the trial, and we will ensure that Healthwatch Rutland is provided with the details.*

*It is worth noting that Healthwatch can lobby NHS England and the Department of Health regarding the issue of national targets.*

EMAS to publish actual response times in Rutland (at the 75<sup>th</sup> Percentile) not just how many are on target and how many not

*EMAS Response:*

*EMAS is currently providing monthly reports to all of our regional Healthwatch partners specifically localised for their areas. These reports were formatted following discussions with Healthwatch Leads. EMAS would be happy to engage in discussions with our Healthwatch partners to review the content of these reports.*

### **Modified Rural Model**

EMAS explained that a modified ‘Rural Model’ is currently being trialled in Rutland (commencing in May 2016) as a means to reduce response times. This meant that a paramedic in a car is nominated to stay within the county. If this resource is called out of the area, it should return as soon as possible. This model was described as having this resource on a ‘rubber band’ for the area, so that it should come back to Rutland rather than being called away from the area constantly.



EMAS also explained that it was hoped that having a Rutland paramedic will increase contact and integration with other local services such as GPs and social care services to better enable referral for patients to the correct service, not just A&E.

The question of whether paramedics on motorbikes are a useful resource was mentioned. EMAS responded that they were not seen to reduce response times and their use was not being investigated.

### **Recommendations**

EMAS were asked to update Healthwatch Rutland as to the success of the modified rural model in reducing response times

*EMAS Response:*

*EMAS to provide an update on this at our quarterly meetings with Healthwatch Rutland.*

Healthwatch Rutland would try and monitor whether better links were being made by a local paramedic team with other health and social care providers

## Communication and Education

There was much discussion on educating the public on when to use 999, and when to use other services as appropriate (111, Minor Injury Units, GPs etc.). The increase in the use of 999 was noted, and ways of reducing this were suggested. It was suggested that EMAS produce information for distribution (possibly in the form of a handout that people could keep handy at home/work) throughout Rutland to educate and inform residents on which service to use in different situations. A representative from a parish council suggested distributing this literature via parish newsletters. Another suggestion was distributing this information via the annual Rutland County Council booklet.



Discussion continued on the location of defibrillators. A number of parishes have invested in this scheme. EMAS were asked if their control room staff are aware of the location of these resources and whether this is being used when appropriate. It is understood that maps do exist as to the location of this equipment and EMAS are aware. It was suggested that

information about this equipment should be included in literature distributed to the public.

It was suggested that there is some evidence that the younger generation are using 999 services inappropriately when other services would meet their needs. The question of whether EMAS have an education programme was raised. EMAS told the group that they did have such a programme but that it was not heavily funded and they rely on volunteer paramedics to go into schools etc. to provide educational sessions. EMAS were asked if they had considered education to adults with learning disabilities (LD). This has occurred in the past using a volunteer paramedic.

## Recommendations

EMAS to consider working with other organisations (111, OOH, Urgent Care Centres, A&E Departments ) producing educational material for distribution to Rutland residents on when to use 999 and when to use other services.

EMAS to consider distributing this literature via parish councils and/or the Rutland County Council annual booklet.

*EMAS Response:*

*The remit for this publication lies with the CCGs including the System Resilience Groups, together with NHS England, and councils that lead on public health. They have the funding and capacity to produce materials that advertise all NHS services in the area. There are a number of publications which East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG have published (Choose Better) which provide a pathway to NHS services.*

*Some parish councils have requested EMAS posters and 999 guides, which we have provided. EMAS would be happy to provide any existing material that we hold to other parish councils should they wish to circulate or display in their areas, as well as provide articles for local mailings and magazines.*

Healthwatch Rutland be available to assist EMAS is finding the best ways of accessing Rutland residents for the distribution of educational material.

EMAS to consider ensuring that local defibrillator information is included in information distributed to Rutland residents.

*EMAS Response:*

*Automated external defibrillators (AED's) are funded and provided by local communities. There are approximately 3500 AED's in EMAS's geographical area. The location or storage of the AED's is not made by EMAS. If EMAS are advised of the existence of an AED in a particular location, we then have the responsibility of ensuring that it is noted on our systems, and advise accordingly in the event of a relevant 999 emergency in the vicinity. EMAS also need to be informed when an AED is temporarily inactive or no longer in existence. It would thus be impossible and inappropriate for EMAS to distribute information regarding AED's in any local area given that it is subject to local fluctuations.*

EMAS to consider a more robust educational programme through schools and community groups. This should include education for adults with Learning Disabilities (LD)

*EMAS Response:*

*EMAS are not funded specifically to provide an educational programme. However, where capacity allows the engagement team is endeavouring to raise awareness about the appropriate use of 999, NHS pathways, careers in the ambulance service, as well as training in basic lifesaving skills - to children, young people, community groups as well as service users with specific needs, across the geographical area covered by EMAS.*

## **Recruitment**

It was noted that EMAS did not have as well a developed career structure as other regions nor were their pay rates as high. The result was a

considerable wastage as staff moved to other Ambulance Services or other parts of the NHS.

People felt that this should be addressed as a matter of urgency

### Recommendation

Ask the Board of EMAS to develop a career structure which will address the problem of staff retention.

*EMAS Response:*

*The EMAS Board is working to formulate a career structure which falls in line with the wider national agendas. This will provide a refreshed view of the current pathway for staff and will be aligned to Health Education England and the College of Paramedics.*

### Rural Access Issues

There was discussion on the problems faced by ambulance crews with regard to access given the rural nature of most of the county. It was noted by a member of the public that there had been situations when ambulances struggled to find locations based on postcodes that appeared to be inaccurate. It is believed that the post office does not always update this information or ensure its accuracy. The issue of poor mobile phone signals was raised, and EMAS stated that although that could cause issues, they carried back up radios to alleviate this problem.

### Recommendation

EMAS to liaise with the post office to ensure the accuracy of Rutland post code information

*EMAS Response:*

*We serve a resident population of 4.8million across the East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, Lincolnshire (including North and North East), Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire), across 6,425 square miles.*

*The EMAS address database contains information obtained from the Ordnance Survey which uses post office data. EMAS are provided with an update to this information every 6 weeks. This is part of the Public Sector Mapping Agreement.*

*EMAS update the new information in its systems within 48 hours. This process ensures that we always remain up to date on the latest releases.*

*In addition, residents who want to provide specific directions to their property (for example: access to entrance via gate etc) can contact us to ensure that this level of detail can be noted on their address.*

*There is also the option of providing specific directions when the 999 call is being assessed.*