



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ambulance Response Programme – Definition & Overview

Since February 2015, three other ambulance services - South West, Yorkshire and West Midlands - have been involved in trials led by NHS England of the new standards. They focused on four main areas:

- Identifying the most seriously ill patients as early as possible through processes known as Pre-Triage Sieve and Nature of Call.
- Giving control room staff more time (up to 240 seconds) to assess incidents through a process known as Dispatch on Disposition.
- Developing new clinical code sets and response categories using the best available clinical evidence.
- Developing new targets, indicators and measures.

The trials have also been independently reviewed by the University of Sheffield.

Category	Percentage of calls per Category	National Standard	How long does the ambulance service have to make a decision?	What stops the clock?
Category 1	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 minutes mean response time • 15 minutes 90th centile response time 	<p>The earliest of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem being identified • An ambulance response being dispatched • 30 seconds from the call being connected 	<p>The first emergency vehicle that arrives on scene stops the clock. (There is an additional Category 1 transport standard to ensure that these patients also receive early ambulance transportation)</p>
Category 2	48%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 minutes mean response time • 40 minutes 90th centile response time 	<p>The earliest of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem being identified • An ambulance response being dispatched • 240 seconds from the call being connected 	<p>If a patient is transported by an emergency vehicle, only the arrival of the transporting vehicle stops the clock. If the patient does not need transport, the first emergency vehicle arriving at the scene of the incident stops the clock.</p>
Category 3	34%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 minutes mean response time • 120 minutes 90th centile response time 	<p>The earliest of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem being identified • An ambulance response being dispatched • 240 seconds from the call being connected 	<p>If a patient is transported by an emergency vehicle, only the arrival of the transporting vehicle stops the clock. If the patient does not need transport, the first emergency vehicle arriving at the scene of the incident stops the clock.</p>
Category 4	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 minutes 90th centile response time 	<p>The earliest of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem being identified • An ambulance response being dispatched • 240 seconds from the call being connected 	<p>Category 4T: If a patient is transported by an emergency vehicle, only the arrival of the transporting vehicle stops the clock.</p>

The new standards are intended to:

- Prioritise the sickest patients quickly to ensure they receive the fastest response
- Ensure national response targets to apply to every patient for the first time – so ending ‘hidden waits’ for patients in lower categories
- Ensure more equitable response for patients across the call categories
- Improve care for stroke and heart attack patients through sending the right resource first time.

Due to the nature and impact of these changes, the previous performance measures are not comparable. However, NHS England have published National Standard for a number of the key measures which are included here.