

**NHS****London Ambulance Service****NHS Trust**

By Email: patientsforumlas@aol.com

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Dear Malcolm,

Race Equality in LAS

Thank you for your letter dated 24 June in respect of our progress on improving workforce diversity, particularly in respect of EACs and Paramedics. Please accept my sincere apologies for our delay in responding. I'm afraid there was a misunderstanding in my office which led to our response falling through the gap. I do know that you've been in touch with Averil Lynch a couple of times since your letter so I am hopeful that you'll have continued discussions with her too.

Although we have come some way, increasing our staff BME representation, from 11% in 2015/16 to 15% in 18/19 (and currently 15.5% and 960 FTE; an increase of just over 36%), this is in stark contrast to the 41% BME staff representation across NHS Trusts in London and the 45% of people from BME backgrounds in London more generally. You will know that we've developed a WRES Action Plan and delivered a number of initiatives over the last year (summarised in our annual report), but I do of course agree with you that there is much more work to be done in this area and we must continue to look at all measures available to us to tackle workforce inequality right across the Service. To be successful, we cannot do this in isolation and we are working with colleagues across the wider system to learn lessons and fully implement our Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). This includes, for example, working with the WRES and London Regional Teams at NHS England and other London NHS Trusts on the development of a London WRES strategy and through the WRES Strategic Advisory Group. I and my colleagues remain absolutely focussed on making progress and Melissa Berry will continue to drive this agenda forward with our new Director of People and Culture, Ali Layne-Smith, starting with an update to our WRES Action Plan.

As you know, there is only a small proportion of BME students undertaking paramedic science degrees nationally (c7%), which means there is a very small pool of potential candidates from which we can recruit. A lack of ethnic diversity is not unique to LAS; all ambulance trusts are challenged in this area to varying degrees. The proportion of BME staff across Ambulance Trusts as a whole stands at 4.6%. We have met with the College of Paramedics to discuss how they can support us to work with universities nationally to improve BME admissions onto paramedic science courses.



You may have seen in my report to the Board, which was published earlier this week, that an updated job description for Emergency Ambulance Crew (EAC) was recently evaluated by LAS's job evaluation panel. This confirmed the role at a Band 5 level. Following extensive discussions with management and staff-side representatives we have agreed that all current Trainee EACs and EACs will be transition to a Band 5 role, with those in training receiving a percentage of AfC band 5. We have currently paused recruitment to the TEAC role to develop in partnership a new non-registered role for the front-line delivery model and we will be continuing discussions on our future skill mix and banding requirements. These discussions and our future operational skills mix requirements will of course be factored into our WRES Action Plan and wider recruitment activity.

However, we continue to support non-registrants into the pathway for paramedicine, and have been doing more than just the academy program. We have a fully funded access course available for staff wishing to return to / commence study that is helping them better prepare for the paramedic courses. There has been consistent uptake for this with a number of BAME staff taking up the opportunity after one-to-one discussions with the Deputy Director of Clinical Education & Standards.

We fully funded the paramedic degree program for 6 BAME students at St Georges. This gave them a higher qualification than the internal academy pathway and was seen as an important step to helping not only move to the paramedic role, but give them the foundation qualification to take on higher banded roles and potentially post-graduate study.

We are currently working with a university in the West to open another paramedic program, with the remit that it has been chosen for its high representation across BAME. The university is clear that they must work to attract greater representation into that program, given the diversity of the local community and their other courses, and they are confident they will achieve it.

We are in the process of tendering for the apprentice degree program that will offer greater opportunity for our non-registrants to transition to paramedicine, and we expect a high uptake from the BAME staff in LAS.

The skills mix discussions have included ways to increase application and offer of employment for BAME candidates, to address the lower than expected results with the current TEAC campaigns.

In respect of your recommendations, let me try to respond to each of these in turn:

- 1) To change the name of Emergency Ambulance Crew to Emergency Ambulance Practitioners. The word 'crew' has no positive connotations for this important profession.

The name of the role is currently under discussion and as per my update above, we are looking at skills mix requirements. We will reflect on your suggestion as part of this.



- 2) Ensure resources are available to fully cover the costs C1 training and licenses, without the trainee paramedic having to take out a loan.

All TEACs and Paramedics are required to have a C1 licence to work at LAS. There was a C1 incentive aimed at TEAC candidates last year, but the funding secured (£200K) is now exhausted. As such we have reverted to the C1 loan (ie LAS pays for C1 practical (£915) and candidates repay this upon joining LAS over 12 months). It is worth noting that there are limited numbers of providers / suppliers of this training so we are looking at other providers used by some of our partners such as the Metropolitan Police.

- 3) Publicise the very positive career trajectory for paramedics, compared to other professions, e.g. nursing. It is much easier for a paramedic to move from band 5 to 6, and there are now a wide range of job opportunities available for paramedics.

I am very keen that current and potential members of staff are able to see a clear career trajectory for themselves. As such, we have been developing a career pathways banner, which I pulled together earlier in the year and shared at my spring roadshows with operational staff. It is being refined by our People & Culture Team, with a view to sharing it internally and, eventually, as part of future recruitment activity. We are keen to continue to work with our partner and non-partner universities to explore ways in which we can raise the profile of the paramedic science degree programmes and increase the graduate places available.

- 4) Provide resources to expand Avril Lynch's recruitment team, so that they can actively and continuously promote the profession of paramedic science in Further Education Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges and school six forms across London. Boroughs like Newham, Tower Hamlets, Brent, Southwark, Lewisham, Lambeth and Hackney would be excellent places to start. A target should be to work with at least 20 schools and colleges each year. A highly specialised recruitment team would be needed for this development – but it is essential and will ensure that the diversity of the paramedic workforce will within a few years remove the need to recruit from Australia.
- 5) Develop recruitment campaigns in the boroughs highlighted above in churches, mosques and temples. Some of these places of religious worship have very diverse congregations of many hundreds of people who regularly attend services.

As you will know, and as has been reported in our Board papers, we are facing significant financial pressures and we are having to implement a number of mitigating actions to ensure delivery of our agreed control total by the end of the financial year and beyond. Whilst I would like to be in the position to expand our recruitment team and spend additional sums on resources, we are not currently in a position to do so.

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That being said, we do need to target our resources and campaigns carefully to ensure that we reach out to our diverse communities. I believe Averil shared details of our recruitment events with you, which included events in Hackney and Lewisham. We are also attending local community events in shopping centres, at temples, etc.

We do not necessarily agree that we need specialist recruitment teams for this. However, we are very keen to mobilise and support our staff (including giving them time off / TOIL, etc) from underrepresented groups and faith and ethnicity based network groups. The recruitment team can then work with them so they have a clear understanding of the different routes to joining LAS, provide materials, marketing collateral and social media access so that they can work as Ambassadors for LAS at events, schools and colleges. This approach has been used successfully by West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire police forces who increased their applications and retention of BAME staff through the recruitment process by the order of 25 – 35%. This is something our new Director of People and Culture, Ali Layne-Smith, will be looking at.

The attachment to you letter mentioned a further recommendation by the PFLAS in respect of the collection and monitoring of equality data from patients who make complaints. I believe this is something you have discussed previously with Trisha Bain and Gary Basset and Trisha has confirmed that we have an improved process for gathering protected characteristics of complainants and have worked with Melissa berry on this over the last year. Trisha would be happy to discuss with you further at your next meeting if that would be helpful.

I am sure we'll have an opportunity to discuss this further at our future meetings and I hope to see you and your colleagues at our Annual Public Meeting next week.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Garrett Emmerson', with a long, sweeping underline.

Garrett Emmerson
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Ali Layne-Smith
Antony Tiernan
Melissa Berry
Averil Lynch