

PATIENTS' FORUM

FOR THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

Andy Trotter, Chair, London Ambulance Service
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18/7/23

Dear Mr Trotter,

Marie Gabriel suggested that I write to you regarding problems of accessing LAS performance data. I am grateful for your invitation to raise with you our concerns about access to this data.

We did receive high quality data packs each month until October 2021 from both the LAS and from the north-east London commissioners (attachment 1). Since that time despite repeated requests we have only been able to access poor quality data which is several months old, and virtually impossible to read. Together with colleagues in north-west London, we have repeatedly tried to obtain borough-based data from the LAS and commissioners, but this has been consistently withheld until your July 2023 meeting.

Rory Hegarty, Director of Communications and Engagement for NHS North West London/ North West London ICS informed us that the LAS have published borough response times as part of the papers for your board meeting. We were also told that you intend to publish this data on a regular basis. Rory kindly provided the data for your meeting to be held on July 20 2023, which is attached.

Obtaining access to high quality Performance Data in your July 20 papers (attachments 2,3, and 4) does represent an important step forward, but the report still only contains a fraction of the information which used to be contained in the LAS's Contractual Monthly Monitoring Report (attachment 5).

The C1 and C2 tables in your current omit performance data for October, November 2022 and although they contain a great deal of data up to June 2023, we need to have access to this data on a monthly basis, not just historic comparative data. In the past the LAS reported monthly borough level performance for each NHS ARP call category.

Attachment 5 contains examples from the 2019 pre-covid time when the LAS was achieving the NHS ARP performance standards in nearly every London borough. Performance values in green represent performance within the ARP standards, while values in red represent failures to achieve ARP standards. As the document states the LAS at that time was a collaborative organisation.

We have received monthly borough performance information for the following two NHS ARP standards, but we still need the missing performance for October and

November 2022 and presume that the validation process for this data has not yet been completed. Could you confirm that please.

- C1 and C2 - Mean -.

We are still missing similar borough level performance data for the following NHS ARP standards:

- C1 - 90th Centile
- C2 - 90th Centile
- C3 - 90th Centile
- C4 - 90th Centile

You will see from attachment 5 that the LAS also used to publish monthly borough level performance for the C3 - Mean

Examination of your most recent data has suggested a number of concerns:

- The residents of some London boroughs consistently receive poorer responses than the residents of neighbouring boroughs. This implicitly raises concerns over inequalities in provision. The safest place to live seems to be in central London near one of the major teaching hospitals. The boroughs in outer East, North and West London, generally have poorer response times.
- Existence of a cyclical deterioration in month-on-month response times when April, May, June 2023 are compared to the same months in 2022.
- The suggestion that the marked performance deterioration in December 2022 (we don't know what happened in October and November 2022) could be repeated this Autumn and Winter.

Attachment 6 shows the variations between borough response times, which are concerning and are potentially indicative of inequalities between boroughs in the provision of ambulance services. Monthly Borough level performance response time information for all six NHS ARP performance standards is essential if management time is to be focused on investigating and addressing the reasons why the residents of some boroughs have poorer response times than the residents of neighbouring boroughs.

There is a clear expectation that resource allocation in the NHS should be informed by transparent performance information, which reports both good and bad news.

Would you be kind to ask the Board to reinstate the data which is missing from your current data packs and arrange for this performance data to be published every month, monthly in arrears - as it used to be during the 16 years that we worked collaboratively with the LAS? Could the monthly data packs be sent to us as email attachments and also placed on your website and the websites of the London ICSs?

We find the statement on the penultimate paragraph on the third page of the LAS report (Report of the Deputy Chief Executive – July 2023) wholly unacceptable and we suggest it be withdrawn, i.e. " **It is not our intention to publish this data on a monthly basis**".

Could I also submit the following question to the LAS Board meeting?

Question for LAS Board Meeting - July 20th, 2023

While welcoming the publication of monthly borough level performance data for ambulance Call Categories 1 Mean and 2 Mean response times in the LAS Board papers - the LAS Board is asked to resume the monthly publication of borough level performance information for **all** the NHS ARP ambulance call categories.

The NHS ARP consists of six Call Category measures, but the LAS has only published performance information for two of those measures.

Questions to the last Board Meeting

We did put the following questions to the LAS Board on 25-5-2023 but have never been able to get responses to these questions. A recording was sent to us, but it was impossible to hear what was on the recording. We did ask for a response in another format but this was not provided.

- 1) When will the Board return to providing monthly performance packs so that the public can observe how effectively the LAS is operating?
- 2) Will the Board commit to providing monthly information about their borough level performance, to ensure equity of response to emergencies across London?
- 3) What plans does the LAS have to increase the number of ambulances and paramedic staff to ensure that the LAS can meet contractual targets and return handovers at ED to 15minutes?
- 4) By when does the LAS expect to eradicate over 60-minute handover delays?
- 5) What action is the LAS taking to achieve greater alignment of their 111 service with primary care services, to provide access to more effective clinical assessment, and expansion of 111 into Urgent Care Services and other appropriate alternative pathways.

Very best wishes

Malcolm Alexander
Chair, Patients' Forum for the LAS
07817505193

Copy to: Marie Gabriel, Chair, ICB – North East London
Daniel Elkeles, Dr Fenella Wrigley

Attachments:

- 1) Data pack provided monthly till October 2021
- 2) Cat 1 response times
- 3) Cat 2 response times
- 4) Report from Deputy Chief Executive
- 5) CCG response times for March and April 2019
- 6) Inequalities between London borough response times