[Waiting times for Ambulances and Emergency Department care](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fparliament.us16.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3D3ad7e4c57a864f07e4db008c4%26id%3Dd5fd8a8c91%26e%3Dcd88fd1f31&data=05%7C01%7C%7C0593458076ff4833401d08da5e716aa8%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637926138732011873%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=E8KcMm0m5Di9CytGTC2wEQrahYmzNrMb%2B4zBHYpA9no%3D&reserved=0" \t "_blank)

There will be a debate on Waiting times for Ambulances and Emergency Department care in Westminster Hall on 6 July 2022. This debate will be led by Wera Hobhouse MP.

DELAYS in transferring patients from ambulances to Truro’s Royal Cornwall Hospital were described as “utterly dire” by a Labour MP, following a debate in Parliament.

Ambulance waiting times at the county’s main hospital are now the worst in the country, topping the list for the proportion of arrivals delayed by more than an hour.

Queues of ambulances parked up outside the hospital’s emergency department have become a common sight since the coronavirus pandemic, with one anonymous paramedic warning last year that patients were dying needlessly as a result of the delays.

Cherilyn Mackrory, Conservative MP for Truro and Falmouth, instigated a debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday night, calling for a “whole-system approach to tackle this issue”.

She said: “Ambulance waiting times at the Royal Cornwall Hospital are an increasing concern, with the hospital topping the list for the proportion of arrivals that were delayed by more than an hour, at 41%; this represents 10% of the wait times in the whole of England.

“There is widespread consensus that ambulance response times are slow in Cornwall due to handover delays,” she added. “The Royal Cornwall Hospital has the highest percentage of handovers over 60 minutes, at 25%.

“That is particularly concerning, given that the NHS standard contract states that all handovers of patients between ambulances and accident and emergency should take place within 15 minutes, with none taking more than 30 minutes.

“These handover delays of over 15 minutes have contributed to an average of 255 ambulance hours lost every day in May. Constituents have told me that they have waited 13 hours for an ambulance and that they have called many times in the interim to chase an update on the expected arrival time.

“Let me be clear – these delays are not to do with ambulance service call handlers, they are a whole-system issue and are impacted by acute challenges elsewhere in the system, particularly with hospital capacity and patient flow. The issues include delayed discharges to social care and other services, as well as bed occupancy. As such, a whole-system approach is needed to tackle this issue,” she added.

Plymouth Sutton and Devonport Labour MP Luke Pollard – who dubbed it an “utterly dire situation” on Twitter – said the delays were having a knock-on effect in Devon. He replied to Mrs Mackrory: “This issue is important not only in Cornwall but in Plymouth, because Derriford Hospital serves part of Cornwall, providing some of the ambulances she mentioned.”

Mr Pollard pointed out the three worst waiting times were in Westcountry hospitals. He added: “According to the South Western Ambulance Service, three of the five hospitals in the country with the longest ambulance waiting and handover times are South West hospitals – Derriford, Bristol and Royal Cornwall.”

Mrs Mackrory told fellow MPs: “We must advertise care as a profession and a career path, not just a job. We should look at creative new measures to make the profession more attractive, improve the workplace culture, tackle burnout and offer higher salaries. We must also ensure staff can afford to rent or buy affordably in the area by tackling the housing crisis and promoting key worker housing.”