



January 2025

Stakeholder Update

Here is our latest briefing for stakeholders from Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust (YAS), to share with you our latest developments and keep you updated on our work and achievements for our patients and communities.

Operational update

As a key part of the urgent and emergency care system, YAS continues to see high levels of operational demand, with particular pressures during the current winter season.

NHS England has reported that 2024 was the busiest year ever for A&E and ambulance services in England with December recording the highest number of ambulance incidents ever in one month. Response times in **A&E Operations** (the emergency ambulance service) are seeing some challenges, particularly for category 1 and 2 patients, who are the most seriously ill.

The national target for 2024/25 was for all English ambulance services to achieve a category 2 average mean response time of under 30 minutes (although the national response target is usually 18 minutes). Nationally category 2 ambulance response times have deteriorated during 2024 and for December, the average national response time was an average of 47 minutes 26 seconds (the longest for two years). Within YAS, the average response time for category 2 was 41 minutes for December (compared to 46 minutes in December 2023), against a trajectory of 39 minutes. For the year to 31 December 2024, performance for YAS is at 32 minutes and 54 seconds.

Another key measure of performance in urgent and emergency care is the time taken to handover patients at hospital Emergency Departments from the ambulance service. The national target for patient handovers at Emergency Departments is 15 minutes. Pressures across the health and social care system contribute to the hospital handover delays, and the Trust and its partners remain concerned about the impact of the delays on patients and their care. In particular, YAS is focused on reducing the significant impact these delays can have on the availability of emergency ambulances to respond to patients in the community and we are working closely with our system partners to resolve these.

We are currently working closely with partners in Humber and North Yorkshire in making changes to handover and have already seen improvements since implementation in mid-December, releasing our resources back into the community to attend patients and reduce delays and patient harm. We are planning to continue this rollout to all Emergency Departments.

The average handover time Trust-wide was 37 minutes for December, a worsening of nearly 5 minutes compared to December 2023 and for the year to 31 December 2024 it is 30 minutes, (with an average of 360 ambulance hours per day lost due to delayed handovers, the equivalent of 32 ambulances on a 12-hour shift per day).

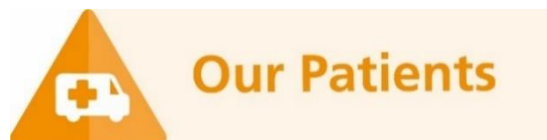
In our **Emergency Operations Centre**, (taking emergency 999 calls), we took 102,000 calls in December 2024, which was a small increase of 1.7% on December 2023. Despite the

increase in calls and demand, 999 call handling remains very good with an average call answer time of 3 seconds during December, an improvement from 7 seconds in December the previous year. This is against a national performance target of an average of 10 seconds.

Our 'hear and treat' rates, (where a clinician is able to provide treatment and advice over the phone and an alternative, more appropriate service is identified) remain good. The hear and treat rate has improved from 11.6% in December 2023 to 15.4% in 2024 and we continue to optimise alternative pathways for our patients, working alongside our partners.

Our **Integrated Urgent Care** (IUC) service, which provides our NHS 111 service, has continued to see improvements in call response times during 2024. During December 2024, the service received 177,540 calls, an increase of 6.2% on the previous December. The average call answer time during December 2024 was 37 seconds, an improvement of 44 seconds from December 2023. The busiest day during the recent holiday period was Saturday 28 December, with over 9,000 calls received and on New Year's Day, over 6,000 calls taken and all were answered within 60 seconds.

In our **non-emergency patient transport service**, (PTS) we continue to see high demand. Our timeliness of response remains good, with 84% of calls answered within 3 minutes, a 7.5% improvement on the same time last year. We provided 74,630 journeys in December, with our busiest period being the run up to Christmas, with over 400 discharges on Christmas Eve, just slightly under last year's figures.



Winter plan and campaign

Our winter campaign is underway and we continue to provide the public with health advice, including information on staying well this winter, and with a focus on making the right choices to access the most appropriate healthcare service for their needs. Our winter campaign has included a focus on how our A&E Operations, NHS 111 and Patient Transport Service operate, with staff providing the information.



We have also implemented our winter plan, which includes the review of our clinical safety plan throughout the day, prioritising our resources to where they are needed most. We implemented our adverse weather plans during the recent bad weather, ensuring we were able to reach our patients and that we had the resources in place to deal with the increased demand that we experience during adverse weather. Many of our staff faced challenging conditions in travelling to our stations and we are grateful for their commitment, which ensured they were available for patients.

We have seen an increase in the number of patients affected by flu and other winter and respiratory infections. We are ensuring that our staff and volunteers continue to implement infection prevention and control measures to keep our patients and colleagues safe. We are also extending our flu vaccination clinics for our own staff and continue to encourage the take-up of flu vaccinations. One of our key priorities during winter is the health and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers, with a focus on physical and mental health. We are continuing to provide support via our welfare vehicles at Emergency Departments across the region.

Specialist teams

The YAS Medical Emergency Response Incident Team (**MERIT**) Critical Care team provide support for trauma, medical, paediatric, obstetric or surgical patients and from the start of January, they have expanded their hours of operation and are now available from 10.00 until 20.00, seven days a week. The Trust's Specialist Paramedics Critical Care (SPCC) work alongside pre-hospital consultants (12 doctors in total) and the team are able to deliver a full range of critical care interventions, including emergency anaesthesia, blood products and surgical procedures such as thoracotomy and hysterotomy.

Based out of our ambulance station at Manor Mill in Leeds, when on duty the team will be positioned close to the motorway network to allow them to travel reasonable distances in a timely manner.

Another of the Trust's specialist teams, Hazardous Area Response Team (**HART**) has recently celebrated 15 years of service. HARTs were created after the July 2005 London bombings, when the ambulance service was unable to provide a service in the 'hot zone' or inner cordon. The need for the teams were identified and have developed from original Urban Search and Rescue paramedics to clinicians with skills in advanced trauma life support and emergency surgical techniques.



HART consists of eight teams of 56 staff in total and with their specialist skills attend and treat patients at major incidents, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents, working at incidents involving building collapses, large fires, in water and at height, as well as in confined space and supporting security operations.

The Circuit

The Trust is continuing to support The Circuit, run by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) by helping with the transfer of the region's community-based defibrillators onto the database, known as The Circuit. The project has just celebrated reaching the goal of [100,000 defibrillators](#) being registered at locations around the UK. In Yorkshire there are 7,738 registered defibrillators.



The Trust activates on average 1,700 defibrillators to emergencies every month and The Circuit has simplified the process for registering these, as well as sending reminders and notifications to the guardians that look after the devices. More defibrillators are available than ever before to help save the lives of people in cardiac arrest across the Yorkshire region. This means that when someone has a cardiac arrest and a bystander calls 999, the ambulance service can direct them to their nearest registered defibrillator while they wait for the ambulance to arrive.

16 days of activism

We have supported the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign with our safeguarding team providing guides on stalking, coercive control and Claire's law. We have encouraged all staff to embrace the White Ribbon campaign, helping to affect a positive behaviour change to transform harmful cultures and stop violence against women and girls before it starts. In conjunction with our Women and Allies' Network we held an event, sharing

the docudrama LOVE? about experiences of coercive and controlling behaviour to raise awareness and help to recognise the violence and risks that our patients and our colleagues could be facing.



New Year Honours recognition for Volunteer Community First Responder

Roy Farmer, a Huddersfield-based volunteer community first responder (CFR) with YAS, has been recognised with a British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to the community in West Yorkshire.

Roy signed up to be a community first responder in April 2015 and is approaching ten years of volunteering in his local area. During that time, he has clocked up over 11,000 hours and attended over 3,500 incidents, including 38 cardiac arrests where he has achieved 15 ROSCs (return of spontaneous circulation).



Roy embodies the ethos of many of our volunteers in giving something back to their local community and has said that he thoroughly enjoys being able to volunteer and provide immediate support to patients and reassurance to their families prior to an ambulance arriving on scene.

YAS is very proud of Roy and all he does to support his community and our Community Resilience Team in helping to test and develop additional elements of responding such as care for those who have fallen and blood sugar testing. You can read more about Roy's award on our [website](#).

Violence, aggression and staff safety

Every single day last year across the UK, a staggering 55 ambulance staff were abused or attacked and a [recent report published by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives](#) suggests that the number of physical attacks on ambulance crews alone is due to exceed 20,000 over the 2024-25 financial year. The abuse ranges from common assault to significant serious attacks.

At YAS in 2023-24, there were 1,645 reports of violence and aggression towards our staff members, compared to 1,441 the previous year. Reported physical assaults towards our staff have almost stabilised over the last five years, but we are seeing increases in reports of verbal abuse, threatening behaviours, and aggressive behaviours.

This unacceptable behaviour has a major long-term impact on the health and wellbeing of our staff who are simply trying to do their jobs and help save lives. The Trust encourages staff to report all incidents of abuse, aggression and violence conducted towards any member of staff whilst in the workplace.

Last week, our violence prevention team, working in partnership with the police, were able to bring a successful prosecution of an individual who has regularly displayed abusive and aggressive behaviour towards colleagues in our NHS 111 service. The offender was sentenced after pleading guilty to making abusive, harassing and distressing calls to our service.

Preventing and reducing abuse, aggression and violence is an integral part of providing a safe and effective workplace and we continue to support our staff and the national ambulance [#WorkWithoutFear campaign](#) to raise awareness of this issue and its impact on our staff.



At YAS we do not condone or tolerate any forms of, or threats of, physical, verbal, emotional, psychological or sexual forms of violence, abuse and aggression towards our staff. As in this case, we will work hard with partner organisations, no matter how long it takes, to ensure those involved are held accountable.

Staff and volunteer fundraising activities

Our staff and volunteers have been busy undertaking fundraising activities for a range of charities and causes. The annual Brass for YAS concert took place in the run up to Christmas raising funds for the important work of the YAS Charity and for Lofthouse 2000 Brass Band. The fundraising enables the [YAS Charity](#) to support YAS staff and volunteers as well as raising vital funds to provide life-saving equipment and training to the community

Three of YAS's [paramedics](#) from West Yorkshire are currently rowing across the Atlantic as part of a fundraising challenge to raise money for three charities; MacMillan Cancer Support, The Stroke Association, and The Ambulance Staff Charity (TASC). The charities were chosen for their focus on improving patient care and supporting ambulance colleagues across the country.



With just under 1,000 miles to go, we are looking forward to welcoming back our colleagues to Yorkshire after their amazing endeavour.



Our Partners

Apprenticeship levy partnership

The Trust works closely with NHS England and partners to identify and secure apprenticeship levy transfer opportunities and the Trust's partnership with Morrisons has reached a significant milestone. Over £2.5m has now been transferred by Morrisons to the Trust, providing funding for over 200 apprentices in a range of roles, including paramedics.



One of those benefiting was Michelle Lee, a former Morrisons employee who is now pursuing a career with Yorkshire Ambulance Service and has become a fully qualified paramedic thanks to the apprenticeship scheme funded by Morrisons. The Trust continues to partner with a number of organisations as part of its [award-winning apprenticeship](#) programme.

Recognition for practice educator at University of Bradford

Deborah Foster, Practice Educator at YAS, has received the 'Outstanding Supportive Learning Environment Award' at the University of Bradford Placement Awards ceremony.

Deborah was nominated by her student, Erica Martins, who is a third-year student at the university. Deborah supported Erica during her final placement in her second year, and will

continue to support her throughout her sandwich year. She was recognised for her encouragement and motivation of her students and Erica nominated her saying “Her supportive supervision and coaching have been an imperative part of my journey as a student paramedic. She instilled her resilience and ethics that I value and will take with me throughout my education and career path.”



Along with a large number of colleagues across the Trust, working closely with a number of universities, Deborah’s role as a practice educator provides support to student paramedics, helping them to put their learning into practice and supports them through their placements and learning to become newly qualified paramedics.

Community engagement activity

We have just published our latest quarterly community engagement report on our work in communities across Yorkshire. This has seen another quarter of successful engagement in 77 events, working with a range of people including those with a learning disability, vulnerable women and those with experience of the criminal justice system. We have been able to work with communities experiencing poor health outcomes and supported them in understanding how to access health and care services. Working with partners, we have been able to train and equip others to teach life-saving skills and run another successful King’s Trust event; our largest event of the quarter was our Restart a Heart event and launch of our Restart a Heart ambassador programme. You can read more about our work in our [latest quarterly update](#).



Investing in memorial gardens

Following the sad loss of colleagues in both South and North Yorkshire, we are currently supporting the development of memorial gardens at ambulance stations in Hoyland and Harrogate. Involving families, colleagues and local school pupils, improvements to the stations have included tree-planting and some landscaping to provide a space to help the physical and mental wellbeing of staff based at the stations.

Other updates

Non-Executive board changes

Our board meeting on 30 January 2025 will be the final meeting for our Non-Executive Director (NED), Jeremy Pease, who has been on our board since 2019. Having worked for the NHS for over 40 years, including at the former South Yorkshire Ambulance Service, his skills and experience have been incredibly valuable, as has his leadership of the YAS Charity, Freedom to Speak Up and on health and wellbeing. We wish him well for the future. We will very shortly be announcing a number of new additions to our board.

With best wishes

Peter Reading
Chief Executive