



March 2025

Stakeholder Update

Here is our latest briefing for stakeholders from Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust (YAS), to share with you our recent 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 and continuing pressures during the recent winter season.

In our **A&E Operations**, we achieved an average response time of 29 minutes and 50 seconds for category 2 calls during February, which was an improvement on January and met the national target of a response time of under 30 minutes (although the national response target is usually 18 minutes). However, there continues to be regional variability in our responses, with South Yorkshire achieving an average of 26.5 minutes, West Yorkshire achieving 32 minutes and Humber and North Yorkshire at 32 minutes 6 seconds. For the year to 28 February 2025, performance for YAS is 32 minutes and 14 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 is 15 minutes. Close working with acute partners has seen a positive impact on delays at some hospitals and handover times reduced across the Trust from 31 minutes in January to 25 minutes 29 seconds in February; an improvement of over 5 minutes.

We saw significant improvement in Hull, where there has been a reduction in average handover times from 56 minutes previously to 30 minutes in February, thanks to the efforts of staff in YAS and Hull University Teaching Hospitals and the introduction between our two Trusts of the 'Transfer of Care' process. This new process aims to eliminate handovers that are longer than 45 minutes. Work continues to reduce handover delays across Yorkshire, with a particular focus on a number of hospitals where delays are particularly problematic, as these delays compromise the safety of patients waiting for treatment at hospitals and those in the community awaiting the arrival of an ambulance.

In our **Emergency Operations Centre**, 999 call handling remains very good, with an average call answer time of 4 seconds during February, with a year-to-date position of 5 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) remains good, with performance at 16.3% of calls in February, an increase of 0.3% on the previous month.

Our **Integrated Urgent Care** (IUC) service, which provides our NHS 111 service, has continued to see improvements in call response times and the service received 140,292 calls in February. The average call answer time in February was just over 30 seconds, with 96% answered within a minute, placing the service in a strong national position.

In our **non-emergency Patient Transport Service**, (PTS) we continue to see high demand, with 77,346 journeys operated in February. Our timeliness of telephone response remains

good, with 80.4% of calls answered within 3 minutes; an improvement of 8.6%. The service is focused on ensuring we are ready to implement the new eligibility criteria which will come into effect on 1 April 2025.

Sickness remains a challenge and although there is a downward trend, with a reduction from December and January to 7.5% in our operational areas, this remains a significant concern and work continues to support staff.

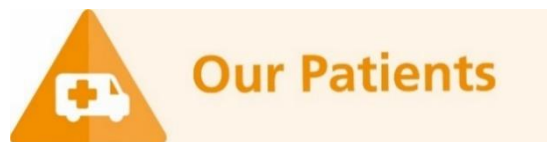
National NHS ambulance priorities for 2025/26

The planning guidance for the NHS for 2025/26 has been issued, with a number of national priorities for ambulance services. These are identified as:

- Category 2 ambulance response times should average no more than 30 minutes across 2025/26

To support delivery of this priority, ambulance services are required to maximize opportunities for managing patients without the need for conveyance to emergency departments. This includes increasing clinical capacity in Emergency Operations Centres to enhance 'hear and treat', 'see and treat', and 'call before convey' activities. Improving availability and access to urgent care services at home or in the community, such as Urgent Community Response and Virtual Ward/Hospital at Home services, is crucial. The guidance requires systems to position Single Points of Access as a cornerstone for streaming urgent care pathways and reducing avoidable conveyance. This will ensure that emergency ambulances are prioritised for the sickest patients and patients who do not need an ambulance can be referred into alternative services.

To address the issue of delayed hospital handover delays, which impact both patient safety and ambulance service efficiency, systems are required to develop cross-system Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) plans aimed at reducing hospital handover delays, with the goal of achieving hospital handovers within 15 minutes and ensuring no handover exceeds 45 minutes.



PTS eligibility

From Tuesday 1 April 2025, YAS will be implementing national eligibility changes to our non-emergency Patient Transport Service (PTS), which is commissioned through our three Integrated Commissioning Boards, (ICBs). NHS England have led this work by setting out a new national framework to ensure patient transport services are consistently more responsive, fair and sustainable. This has resulted in [revised national eligibility criteria for PTS](#).



PTS is a limited service designed for those whose medical conditions make independent travel to and from healthcare settings unsafe or impossible. Patients who can make their own way to and from healthcare settings using their own transport, family members, public or community transport or taxi services are asked to do so.

When this is not possible, we consider the needs of all patients, for example their physical health, visual impairment, mental health or learning disability for their eligibility for PTS. Staff in our reservations team will ask a set of questions, which will also be used when making

online bookings. This is to ensure the patient qualifies for PTS, and to assess their transport needs. We are working with ICBs to ensure that patients not eligible for NHS-funded transport will be signposted to use alternative transport and ensuring that those eligible for the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme are able to claim for their travel costs.

NHS Pathways – new triage tool for our 999 call centres

We are currently undertaking a transformation project to change the primary triage tool for 999 call handling in our Emergency Operations Centres to NHS Pathways, as part of the delivery of our 2024-29 strategy. This alignment with our NHS 111 service (which already uses 'NHS Pathways'), aims to streamline the patient journey, ensuring patients receive the most appropriate care early on, leading to improved patient outcomes. NHS Pathways allows for a broader range of questions during 999 calls, enabling more in-depth triage and accurate assessment of patient needs, focusing resources on higher acuity cases to save more lives.

An enhanced 'Directory of Services' will offer call handlers a much broader range of options for patients and we will work more effectively with our partners so that patients who do not require an ambulance response, reach the most appropriate care settings.

We have had support and mentorship from North West Ambulance Service, who have already undertaken this change to Pathways and we are engaging with our healthcare and emergency service partners to ensure a smooth transition in order to maintain the operational resilience of our services. We have taken a phased approach to training and go-live with four go-live points during 2025, the first of which is scheduled to take place in May.

YAS partners with GoodSAM to provide early CPR and defibrillation

YAS has partnered with GoodSAM, the world's most advanced emergency alerting and dispatching platform, to launch the service in Yorkshire, joining other ambulance services across the country. The GoodSAM app notifies trained volunteers of patients in their vicinity who are in cardiac arrest. This allows the volunteer to respond to the patient prior to the arrival of YAS staff. The earlier a patient can receive CPR and a shock from a defibrillator, the greater their chance of survival.

As well as YAS staff and volunteers, members of the public will also be able to apply to become a responder and choose to respond to alerts in their area, using the GoodSAM app. More information is available on the [GoodSAM website](#).

Research seminar

On Tuesday 4 March, the YAS Research Institute held its Spring 2025 Research Seminar. The seminar showcased great achievements by both YAS and our close collaborators, and it helped to demonstrate how research informs critical patient care.



The speakers gave insights into research projects including comparing the effectiveness of ketamine and morphine in patients who have suffered a traumatic injury; ambulance service use by patients experiencing back pain; and exploring the journeys of patients who end their 111 calls prior to triage by NHS 111.

Students from partner universities (two from the University of Bradford and four from Sheffield Hallam University) also joined the event, sharing the work they have been conducting as part of their paramedic courses.

Support during Ramadan

With Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar, currently underway, many Muslim colleagues are fasting from dawn to sunset, refraining from food, drink, and other physical needs whilst focusing on prayer, reflection, and community. Our clinicians are provided with

guidance on patient care for those observing Ramadan, which is supported by the British Islamic Medical Association.

To raise awareness of Ramadan and the challenges for Yorkshire's emergency workers working throughout the period, Zain Kazmi, an A&E Operations Team Leader, was featured as part of media coverage by the BBC, which is available [on the BBC website](#).



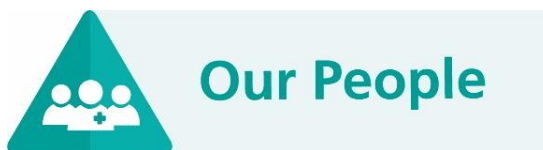
Neurodiversity Celebration Week

We are proud to support Neurodiversity Celebration Week (17-23 March 2025) which aims to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions, increase acceptance and understanding, celebrate neurodiversity and provide education. We have recently appointed a new Mental Health, Learning Disability and Neurodiversity Coordinator to lead on developing initiatives that support patients with learning disabilities and/or those who are neurodiverse.

From April 2025, we are rolling out a learning disability and neurodiversity training package that has been created in-house for our staff.



We are also promoting the use of [Health and Care Passports](#) which can make a huge difference for neurodiverse individuals and people with learning disabilities. It's a simple way they can share vital information with healthcare professionals, leading to better, more personalised care.



Apprenticeship week

We marked National Apprenticeship Week (10-16 February 2025) by celebrating the 700 apprentices who are working in clinical and support service roles throughout the Trust, as part of our multi award-winning apprenticeship programme.

Over the last year we have seen the number of apprenticeship opportunities increase, creating more pathways to rewarding careers within the Trust. We launched a new Enhanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship with Sheffield Hallam University in October 2024 with 46 learners now working towards becoming Specialist Paramedics in mental health, critical care and urgent care.



We also have an increasing number of non-clinical apprenticeships for existing staff. New programmes include Level 2 Recruitment Resourcer, Level 6 Project Manager (degree), Level 4 Improvement Practitioner and Level 7 Sustainability Business Specialist (degree).

Our apprenticeship programme is currently rated number 23 of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers, a list produced annually by the Department for Education. It was also assessed as good with outstanding features, following the latest full Ofsted inspection.

NHS Staff survey results published

The [results of the 2024 NHS Staff Survey](#) have been published and this year we are pleased to see improvements in the scores across all of the question themes, with the most improvement seen in the health and safety, working flexibly and morale themes.

We have also seen an increase in the number of staff who would recommend YAS as a place to work, up 2.7% from last year to 57.6%. YAS was the best performing ambulance service in England on this key question; however, the ambulance sector continues to perform lowest across the survey when compared to other parts of the NHS. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, there are still a significant number of staff who don't feel this way and we are committed to changing this with a focus on a range of initiatives to help ensure our colleagues are happy and healthy at work and have equal opportunities to develop and progress.

The survey has also highlighted our need to continue our focus on creating a safe workplace and providing colleagues with the right support and protection from physical violence, harassment, bullying or abuse at work, with too many colleagues experiencing this, which is not acceptable. Our focus will be on what more we can do to support our staff and help prevent this from happening, as well as support the national ambulance campaign, '[Work without fear](#)'.

The scores for the ambulance sector still remain some of the lowest in the NHS and there is always more we can do to make positive changes in the workplace for our colleagues.

National award – Volunteer of the Year

Dave Fenwick, one of our Community First Responders in Doncaster, was recognised nationally by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives at the Ambulance Leadership Forum in Leeds this month, for his exceptional contribution and commitment to volunteering.



The award was in recognition of Dave's exceptional contributions as a Community First Responder (CFR) and his dedication to the Trust. Dave has contributed as a responder in his local community in Doncaster for the last nine years and he regularly gives over 100 hours a month on call, having given an impressive 9,000 hours to date. He has responded to numerous patients and was recognised for his involvement in cardiac arrests that have resulted in eight successful resuscitations as a result of his intervention.

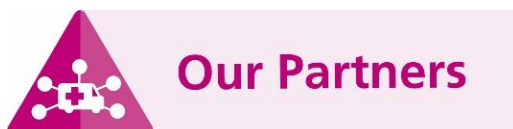
As well as the hours he gives to support his community as a CFR, Dave regularly offers his services to his local community defibrillation trainer, helping at CFR introductory sessions, speaking to potential new volunteers and assisting at training courses. He also helps within his local community by carrying out regular checks on the community public access defibrillators in his area. We know that everyone who comes into contact with Dave says what an absolute pleasure he is to work with and he embodies everything that is amazing about our volunteers and were delighted that he received this national recognition.

Board changes

We have seen a number of changes to our Trust Board, as we said goodbye to Jeremy Pease, who has left YAS after serving six years as a Non-Executive Director, and 44 years with the NHS. We welcomed new members to our board including Saghir Alam, OBE, a new Non-Executive Director and three new Associate Non-Executive Directors - Tabitha

Arulampalam, Katie Lees and Rebecca Randell. More information about changes to the Board is available on our [website](#).

Our Executive Medical Director, Dr Julian Mark, QAM, is also retiring at the end of March 2025. Dr Mark has made significant contributions to YAS and the ambulance sector nationally, including developing clinical programs for the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART), chairing the National Ambulance Services Medical Directors' Group, and coordinating efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as championing the creation of the YAS Research Institute. His achievements have been recognised with awards such as the Queen's Ambulance Medal and we wish him well in his retirement. Recruitment for his successor is underway and Dr Steven Dykes, Deputy Medical Director will be acting Medical Director.



Young live-saver

After successfully completing the YAS Achieve programme, 19-year-old Ben from Bradford put his training into practice when he phoned 999 and saved his father's life. Ben completed the course last year but recently had to put those skills into action when his father suffered a stroke at home. Thanks to Ben's quick thinking, along with help from family members, they were able to get his father the help he needed.

The Trust's Achieve programme has been running for two years with a range of partners. It is a practical skills course designed around values and skills important in the ambulance service and is delivered over six weekly sessions. Achieve teaches valuable life skills, including first aid, for people needing support to improve their lives. The programme is a key part of the Trust's [Community Engagement plan](#), which sets out how we will deliver targeted programmes of work to provide training and employment opportunities, while improving people's lives and teaching valuable life-saving skills.



Ben was recently invited to Bradford Ambulance Station where he was presented with a certificate and letter of commendation and his full story is on [our website](#).

Barnsley Wardens sign up to responder training

Six Barnsley Town Centre Wardens have trained as Community First Responders, so they are able to provide vital care, comfort and reassurance in medical emergencies before an ambulance arrives on scene.

The wardens will respond on foot and attend patients who become ill within their patrolling vicinity. They can be activated by YAS to attend patients following an emergency call being made, as well as helping those they may come across. You can read more about this initiative on [our website](#).



Restart a Heart registration opens

Secondary schools across Yorkshire are being urged to sign up for free life-saving CPR training on Restart a Heart Day 2025. Registration is now open for secondary schools across the region to sign up for free life-saving CPR training on Restart a Heart Day, Thursday 16 October. The event provides students with the skills needed to respond effectively to cardiac arrest emergencies and over 80 schools have already submitted their details.



The event is supported by the [Yorkshire Ambulance Service Charity](#) which is committed to providing young people with life-saving education. Volunteers will be able to register to provide the CPR training at the end of April once we have the final list of participating schools and partners are encouraged to sign up to support. Information is available on our [Restart a Heart website](#) or by emailing yas.restartaheart@nhs.net

Royal Patron for College of Paramedics

The College of Paramedics has announced that His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales has become Patron of the College. As a former air ambulance pilot who worked for East Anglian Air Ambulance, he has in-depth knowledge and understanding of the work paramedics do and the difference they make to their patients' lives.



Last February, the College was granted the Charter of Incorporation reflecting the rapid growth, development and value of the modern paramedic profession. With more than 20,000 members the College continues to work with governments and stakeholders across the UK, making sure the profession is represented and that our members have a strong voice. You can [read more about this announcement online](#).



YAS joins research on net zero emissions and health outcomes

YAS is participating in research to ensure the UK's transition to net zero also protects and promotes physical and mental health. As part of the HEARTH programme, hosted by Oxford Brookes University, the team will explore how transitioning to net zero emissions can benefit vulnerable populations by improving health outcomes, such as reducing heat-related illnesses and enhancing living conditions during extreme heat events. This research will assess these benefits in various settings, including homes, care facilities, hospitals, and prisons, with the aim of developing practical solutions that support climate goals while enhancing health outcomes.

Other updates

BBC Ambulance

We have recently agreed to a partnership with Dragonfly Productions to participate in the filming of the next two series of *BBC Ambulance*. This will involve filming with some of our staff both in our emergency operations centre and on the road from mid-February with the first programmes expected to be broadcast in Autumn 2025 on BBC One. We're working with partners to ensure the necessary agreements are in place around any filming and confidentiality and look forward to showcasing the work of our staff.

Ministerial visit

At the end of January, we welcomed Karin Smyth MP, Minister of State for Health. She met senior members of staff to hear about our challenges and operational performance, including improvements at Hull, with the introduction of Transfer of Care to reduce the length of delays in handing over patients and we discussed our challenges around accessing capital funding.

The Minister also visited our Emergency Operations Centre to talk to colleagues on our critical care desk and hear more about the work of our specialist paramedics in critical care. She was also able to meet with one of our specialist paramedics in mental health who gave her a tour of one of our mental health vehicles.

With best wishes

Peter Reading
Chief Executive