

Improved performance in Ambulance Service

Speaking at today's annual public review with Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing, David Garbutt, Chairman of the Scottish Ambulance Service said:-“During the year we improved patient care in several key areas. We reached more patients with life threatening illnesses or injuries faster, we delivered more Patient Transport Service users to hospital in time for their appointment and we treated more patients at the scene of the incident, rather than take them to hospital.

“The Service achieved an average response time of 6.9 minutes for life threatening calls, compared to 7.2 minutes in the previous year. This is a commendable performance, particularly in a year where staff battled through the worst winter conditions for thirty years to help patients.

“Emergency teams answered over 800,000 calls and responded to more than 600,000 incidents. All 999 calls are prioritised so that the most serious conditions benefit from the fastest response and our crews reached 78.5% of cardiac arrest patients within eight minutes, which contributes to a recognised high survival rate.

“Alcohol continues to have an impact on operations, particularly at weekends and evenings. Sixty eight percent of life threatening 999 calls in city centres on weekend evenings are alcohol related.

“The Patient Transport Service undertook over 1.5 million journeys, ensuring that those with a medical need for transport were able to attend outpatient appointments at hospitals across the country.

“Our Air Wing continued to provide a vital lifeline to people

in remote and island communities, as well as providing essential support to serious emergencies on the mainland. Demand for the air ambulance service has again increased by 16% and our aircraft flew over 4,000 air missions, including emergency responses and planned transfers to hospital.

“These achievements are the result of the high standards of professionalism and commitment of our staff, who respond to patients day and night in often very challenging conditions. Earlier this year our staff demonstrated their high level of commitment, struggling through the most severe winter conditions, often at risk to their own safety, to reach patients and save lives.

“Within the context of increasing demand and a challenging economic environment, we have continued to manage resources efficiently for the benefit of patients and once again met financial targets for the year. The Service achieved efficiency savings of £4.1 million.

“At the beginning of the year the Service launched its national development strategy, ‘Working Together for Better Patient Care’, which was informed by a national consultation with over 2,000 patients and stakeholders. The strategy will deliver improved access to the most appropriate care, and the best standard of care for patients.”

Facts and figures (1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010)

- Average response time for life threatening call – 6.9 minutes.
- Total emergency incidents – 608,833
- Patient Transport Service journeys – 1,515,145
- Air Missions – 4,406
- Number of staff – 4,300

Top 10 Category A (Life threatening) conditions:

- Chest pain – 30,114
- Breathing problems – 26,116
- Unconscious/fainting – 22,841
- Convulsions/fitting – 13,693
- Falls – 12,831
- Traffic Accidents – 10,825
- Haemorrhage/lacerations – 5,396
- Cardiac/respiratory arrest – 5,111
- Assault/sexual assault – 3,746
- Overdose/poisoning – 3,083