

London Ambulance Service (LAS) Strategy

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets
January 2023

Feedback from engagement activities



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Activities undertaken

Survey

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets developed a survey with five other local Healthwatch organisations run by Your Voice in Health and Social Care (YVHSC). The survey covered 3 main elements – 999, 111 and working with partners with questions very closely aligning to the issues outlined by LAS in the project brief provided to Healthwatch.

The survey was posted online in December, distributed via available email networks across the Healthwatch staff team and supported by Facebook posts and twitter activity, including paid for adverts.

In January, the survey was additionally printed and distributed to GP practices as part of our regular attendance to engage with patients. We conducted patient interviews to gauge a deeper understanding of the public’s views on the LAS.

Discharge Lounge visit

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets visited the Discharge Lounge at the Royal London Hospital between 16th and 19th January. The officers who visited the lounge used paper copies of the online survey to collect feedback from patients waiting for their transport and medication in the lounge.

In total, we collected 12 completed surveys.

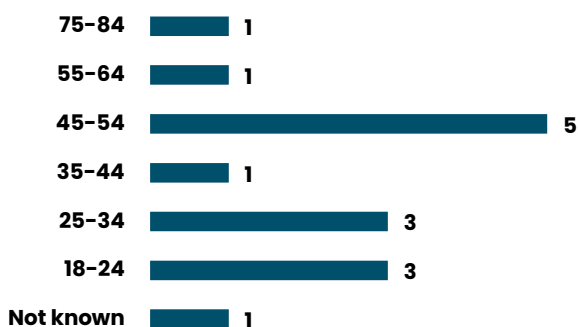


Demographics

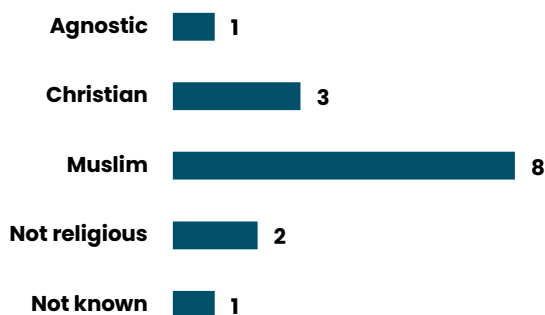
Survey – 15 responses

We received seven responses from people identifying as male and seven from people identifying as female. Majority of responses (n.10) came from Heterosexual/straight persons and one response from a Bisexual person. In terms of age groups, we received five responses from people aged between 45-54 followed by three responses from 25-34 year olds and three from 18-24 year olds.

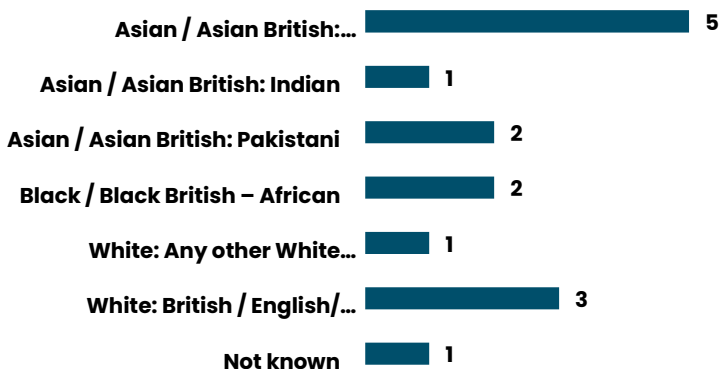
Age Group



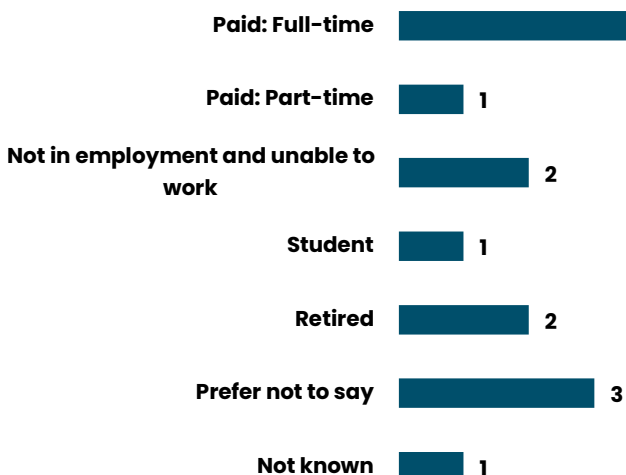
Religion



Ethnicity



Employment status

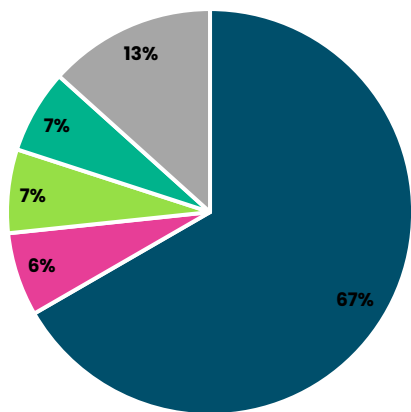


Six of the service users reported having a long term condition or health and social care needs, and three said they consider themselves to have a disability. None of the service users reported being carers. Six of the service users are in paid employment and two are not in employment and unable to work.

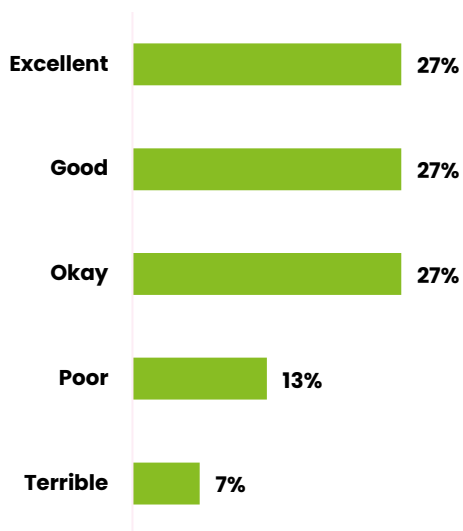
Overall Experience with LAS Services

When did you last use the London Ambulance Service?

Responses: 15

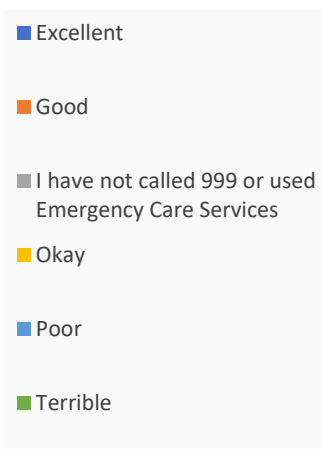
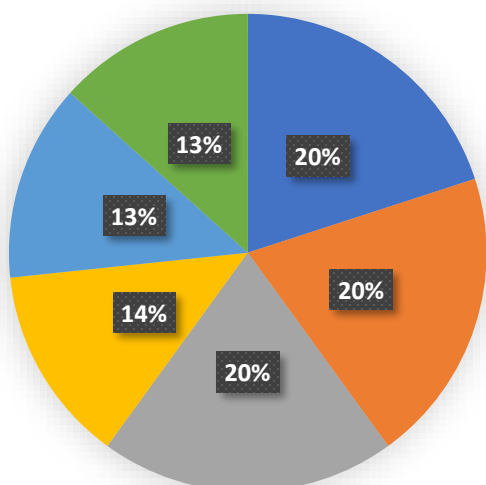


Overall Experience of 999 Service



54% of service users rated their overall experience with the 999 service as positive. 20% rated their overall experience as one that can be improved.

Overall Experience of 111 Service



40% of service users rated their overall experience with the 111 service as positive. 26% rated their overall experience as one that can be improved.

Feedback from Service Users

We gathered beneficial feedback from service users regarding the question, 'The patient journey can begin with LAS, but may not end there. We need to understand where we can best work with other parts of the health and care to ensure patients get the right care, in the right place at the right time. For example, working with mental providers, GPs or the voluntary sector. How could LAS work with other parts of the healthcare system to improve the care you receive?'

Responses include:

"Provide text based services with 111"

"They could improve by giving feedback to the GP from the hospital. They're not good at referrals."

"By working closely with GP's as half the time they lack communication with our GP's who don't receive the proper information."

"They could work with our GP more efficiently."

"Passing on maternity information to my GP."

Patient Recommendations:

The main focus of these answers reflected on how the LAS could build better communication with GP services so that service users will not need to repeat medical information that is already on record. Consequently, this will cut down waiting time for both the service user and LAS and result in the service running even more efficiently.

Summary of Findings

The table below highlights the key issues identified through the engagement work carried out in Tower Hamlets, and the key priorities suggested for LAS to take forward in their strategy for 2023–2028.

The subsequent pages highlight each priority in turn and present the evidence base for this.

Findings

Key issue /priority identified	Details
Quick response time	6 out of 15 patients mentioned a quick response time from the ambulance service.
Positive Staff Attitude	5 out of 15 patients mentioned staff members having a positive attitude.
Knowledgeable Staff	5 out of 15 patients mentioned staff members being knowledgeable and giving the appropriate treatment and advice.

Finding 1

Response time

6 out of 12 patients who rated the service either Excellent, Good, or Okay mentioned a quick response time from the ambulance service.

Positive feedback:

“When I wanted service, they came within half an hour. They did a proper check at home. They arrived at 6 and by 6:30 I was already at hospital.”

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Excellent

“I was taken to the hospital quick because I was in labour.”

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Okay

“I was told to go into UTC and was seen within 10 minutes which was great as I was in a lot of pain.”

- Service user used the 111 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Good

Negative feedback:

“Waiting times are quite long. Sometimes calls can be late at night.”

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Excellent

“They sometimes take too long with the assessments.”

- Service user used the 111 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Okay

Case Studies

A service user that used the 999 service in the last 12 months said, “The ambulance was quite quick upon arrival, however the care I received was satisfactory and slow. They take time to treat and diagnose and waiting times are long.” They rated the overall experience of calling 999 and using LAS emergency care as Okay.

- **Male, 18-24, Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi**

A service user that used the 111 service in the last 3 months said they received, “Good care but there are long waiting times. The handlers of calls listen well. But it can take many hours to get a call back. Faster waiting times would be better.” They rated the overall experience of calling 111 and using urgent care services as Good.

- **Female, 18-24, Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi**

Finding 2

Staff Attitude

5 out of 12 patients who rated the service either Excellent, Good, or Okay mentioned staff members having a positive attitude.

Positive Feedback:

"Lady was very friendly, [...], very nice & helpful, polite & helped in every moment."

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Excellent

"Always received 1st class help"

- Service user used the 111 service gave an overall rating of Excellent

"The staff were nice and friendly... The staff are attentive and kind."

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Excellent

Negative Feedback:

"Rude call handlers. Rude cruel ambulance crew."

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Terrible

"Refused to send an ambulance twice, rude person on the phone and denied care."

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Poor

Case Studies

A service user that used the 999 service in the last 3 months said, "The staff were nice and attentive to my needs, they gave me regular updates. They listened to me, gave me time." However, they gave an Okay overall rating for the 999 service as they had to wait 3 hours in the ambulance because there were no spaces in the A&E department.

- **Male, 35-44, Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi**

A service user that used the 111 service in the last 12 months said, "They have the rudest staff on the phone and do not cooperate. Such slow service. They can improve by hiring friendlier and helpful staff. They need better training. They need to stop asking irrelevant questions. They need to get back into contact quicker too." They rated their overall 111 service as Terrible.

- **Male, 18-24, Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi**

Finding 3

Knowledgeable Staff

5 out of 12 patients who rated the service either Excellent, Good, or Okay mentioned staff members being knowledgeable and giving the appropriate treatment and advice.

Positive feedback:

“They were helpful and gave the correct advice... Knowing what's best for people.”

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Good

Negative feedback:

“I could have just went to my GP for what they did.”

- Service user used the 111 service in the last 3 months and gave an overall rating of Poor

“The care I received was satisfactory and slow.”

- Service user used the 999 service in the last 12 months and gave an overall rating of Okay

Case Studies

During one of our visits to the Discharge Lounge at the Royal London Hospital, we spoke with a patient who credited the experience and knowledge of the ambulance staff for saving their life. The patient told us that they used the LAS within the last 3 months as they had a heart attack which did not show on tests. However, due to the experience of the staff members, it all worked out well and the service user rated their overall experience as Excellent.

- **Female, 45-54, Asian/Asian British: Pakistani**

A service user that used the 111 service in the last 3 months commented that the LAS explained to their daughter about the actions that needed to be taken and they sent the ambulance very quickly. They continued to say that the LAS provide the right care when needed and accommodated to their needs. But a means of improvement would be to recruit more staff and issue more training. They rated their overall experience of calling 111 and using urgent care services as Excellent.

- **Female, 75-84, Asian/Asian British: Indian**

Additional considerations

Slow response Time

Patients who had a negative experience with the service frequently mentioned slow response time.

Staff capacity

Patients that we spoke with felt that the service is not sufficiently staffed, and recruiting more staff members would improve the service.

Patient education

Improving patient education to reduce the number of unnecessary calls to 999 services and directing people to call 111 instead.

Limitations

This report is based on our observations and the views and residents that Healthwatch spoke with at Royal London Hospital, and that completed the survey through Smart survey. We recognise that it does not necessarily represent the views and experiences of all the residents in the borough who have used the London Ambulance Service.



Contact Us

If you would like to discuss this report or our work, please get in touch



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