



Information requested for Barnet Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to be held 5th December 2016

1. What was the total number of London Ambulance Staff who were injured by patients per year for the past 3-4 years?

Financial Year	Physical Assaults
2011/12	501
2012/13	395
2013/14	399
2014/15	391
2015/16 (unaudited)	447
2016/17 (to 22/07/2016)	105

2. Out of the total number, can we have a breakdown of the number of staff injured by people who had taken legal highs, alcohol etc - again per year over the past few years?

We don't specifically record the number of staff injured by 'legal highs', but we can provide a breakdown where drugs / alcohol was a factor. At the time of writing, this information had not been fed back from the relevant information team.

Key Facts

- Last year **439** London ambulance crew were assaulted (1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016), an **increase of 14%** on the previous year.
- On average **one staff member is assaulted each day** in London.
- Staff working in our control room also experience **abuse over the phone**. We do not tolerate abuse of any kind, physical or verbal.
- We **work closely with the police** to secure the most severe sentence for anyone who assaults our staff.

Drugs / Alcohol

- We do not tolerate any form of violence against our staff and alcohol and drugs are not an excuse for assaulting our staff.
- Historically, alcohol has been reported as the biggest contributory factor in assaults against paramedics / ambulance crews, but this isn't the case in every assault.

Legal Highs

- Illegal substances like these can be extremely dangerous and have potentially very harmful side effects and we would urge people not to take them.
- Substance misuse can pose a big problem for our Service especially at large public events where we treat many people who present symptoms having taken these types of drugs.
- Side effects can include seizures and people suffering injuries as a result of falls.



Financial Year	Legal Highs**		
	Calls	Incidents	Conveyed to Hospital
2011/12	12	11	9
2012/13	16	15	13
2013/14	61	50	37
2014/15	148	129	97
2015/16	329	271	178
Apr - Jun 2016	76	69	38

**Please note that we do not have an illness-code to record “Legal High” or “NPS” on the Patient Report Form (PRF) so a text search has been used to obtain these figures as this provides a more accurate reflection of the number of both calls and incidents. However, this may not have captured all such occurrences.

Measures we are taking to support staff

- Attacking our ambulance crews as they go about saving lives in the capital will not be tolerated.
- We work closely with the police to secure the most severe sentence for anyone who assaults our staff.
- All of our frontline staff receive training about what to do in a potentially confrontational situation. They are also equipped with stab vests to wear if they choose to. All staff have personal digital radios they carry with them at all times and can call for help if they need it. There is also an emergency button, which automatically requests police help.
- One of the measures we have introduced this year is spit kits. Around fifty members of our staff are spat on each year. The introduction of spit kits means that the police can process samples recovered from staff and send them for DNA analysis to help identify offenders and bring them to justice.
- We take patient confidentiality incredibly seriously. We are in a position of trust with our patients, and feel that cameras on our crews or ambulances would undermine that trust. However, we will continue to review how we protect our staff going forward.
- All staff are offered counselling and support following an assault. Each individual is different and the level of support required varies according to individual need. Everyone can access the same level of support, but not everyone needs it.

High risk register

- We put addresses on a flagged addresses list if there is evidence of a previous assault or threat of violence against our staff. This helps to protect our staff from being sent into a potentially dangerous situation.
- In 2015, 298 addresses were flagged as requiring police attendance with the crew. For this year, the number of addresses on the list is 218.



- We advise staff when they are sent to one of these addresses in order to help to protect them from being sent into potentially dangerous situations.
- Staff submit a report detailing the assault or abuse they experienced. A senior manager then reviews it and a decision is then made whether to put the address on the list or not. A letter will be sent to inform the person at the address that it has been added to the register and why. The information is also collated centrally.
- In all incidents, staff will carry out a risk assessment at the scene and make a judgement about whether to go into the property.

EOC Staff

- Staff working in our control room also experience abuse over the phone. We do not tolerate abuse of any kind, physical or verbal.