

#YourCall

NHS
North West
Ambulance Service
NHS Trust



ISSUE 10 Summer 2020



BBC One Ambulance documentary returns



CEO Daren Mochrie talks about what it is like leading your ambulance service through the pandemic.



Paramedic Rob: "I was supposed to be getting married in Australia, instead I was battling coronavirus."



We're usually heading into summer, looking forward to events, light nights, warmer weather and holidays but for all of us now, summer 2020 feels very different. It is a strange time to be in but one we hope optimism and courage will prevail, as we continue to navigate the uncertainties of the impact of this virus. In the inspirational words of Colonel Tom Moore: "For all those people who are finding it difficult at the moment, the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away."

Like many others and as an NHS trust we have been hit hard by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as it has taken the precious lives of two of our colleagues and dear friends. Rest in peace Stuart Monk, our paramedic colleague from Wigan who for 28 years dedicated his ambulance service career to helping people and being there for them in their time of need. Rest in peace Phil Rennie, our patient transport service care assistant from Oldham who has been part of the NWS family since 2015, and who also dedicated his career to serving the public. We will never forget them and they will always be in our hearts.

We experienced an unprecedented amount of 999 calls as the pandemic broke - the highest we have ever had averaging in the region of 5,000 calls each

day. Our 111 service was also affected averaging between 8,000 and 9,000 calls per day. However we have risen to the challenge by boosting our workforce and ambulances with the hard work and help of our amazing staff, the unwavering and outstanding support of our volunteers and the kindness and generosity shown by members of the public who have helped to keep our spirits up.

Over the past few months there have been some positive changes to how we do things, which we plan to keep in place. This includes strengthening partnership arrangements, increasing our flexibility and clinical leadership and getting better access and use of new technologies. All of which will benefit everybody who has an interest in the ambulance service, whether it's our patients, our staff or our partners.

This special edition has been created to share with you our efforts during this pandemic as well as some amazing stories of resilience, bravery, courage and kindness from our staff, volunteers and public we serve. We hope you enjoy reading it, perhaps it is something you will keep forever to share with your grandchildren and their children as whatever part you have played in this pandemic, it will go down in history.

Communications Team

Our shared values

Working Together
for Patients



Respect and
Dignity



Everyone
Counts



Commitment to
Quality of Care



Compassion



Improving
Lives



How we coped with coronavirus



In early March 2020 the Chief Medical Officer for England announced a low number of patients had tested positive for coronavirus and that there had unfortunately been two deaths in the UK.

A short time later, conscious that the situation was starting to quickly escalate, one of the first key actions we took was to establish an Incident Command Team to operate 24 hours a day. The main priority of this team was to have a single point of contact for liaison and co-ordination for coronavirus patient management, alerts, referrals, transport and tracking.

The team also started to look at the potential impact of the pandemic to ensure we had extensive plans in place and we were able to continue to deliver a responsive and effective service to the population of the North West.

Of course, like the whole NHS and care system, we had significant challenges ahead and quickly confirmed our priorities which were:

- **Increasing the number of people on hand to answer 999 and 111 calls, dispatch ambulances and crews to those most in need and provide clinical help over the phone** – we now have 450 additional staff.
- **Increasing our emergency service ambulances** – we have added 60 ambulances to the fleet and converted 80 patient transport service ambulances to enable them to safely transport emergency patients.
- **Ensuring enough PPE and equipment is available** – we continue to work closely with the NHS supply chain to ensure there is enough PPE.

- **Looking after the welfare of our staff and volunteers** – we have put in place many health and wellbeing support aids for all staff and have ensured they are fully updated with daily briefings.
- **Increasing our capacity to transfer patients from one hospital to another, particularly those in a critical condition** – a regional coronavirus critical care transfer service, provided by ourselves along with North West Air Ambulance, was established to support 'intensive care unit to intensive care unit' transfers across the North West. We have also played a big role in the establishment of NHS Nightingale Hospital North West, located at Manchester Central Convention Complex.

What we have achieved over the past three months has been remarkable, and this is due to the hard work, dedication and commitment of all our staff and departments. Coronavirus is still presenting a significant challenge for the health and social care system but together, we will overcome it.



“The relentless nature of coronavirus really sets it apart from any major incident I’ve experienced in the past.”

We have all had to make some big changes due to the coronavirus pandemic and NWS is no exception. Speaking to Chief Executive Daren Mochrie, he talks about how staff and volunteers have risen to the challenge, how they’ve adapted to the ever changing situation and what he has learnt from leading the organisation during this extraordinary time.





Drawing on his years of experience of leadership and handling major incidents, Daren speaks personally about the challenge as Chief Executive of leading the trust's response during the pandemic: "The fact that this was not concentrated in one location, the pace, constant changes and relentless nature of coronavirus, really sets it apart from any major incident I've experienced in the past.

"I knew I had to do all I could to look after our staff and volunteers and make the right decisions for them. Ensuring we had enough people and supplies to continue providing the service our patients needed, communicating regularly and keeping everyone updated both inside and outside of the trust and across a very large regional footprint, all whilst continuing to fulfil our day to day statutory functions."

Realising early on that this is like nothing else that he has experienced in his 29 years with the ambulance service, Daren said: "It has been a colossal effort across the whole organisation and by quickly establishing a dedicated 24 hours leadership team, we have been able to put in place plans to bring different groups of staff together and mobilise in a way we have never had to do before.

"I am genuinely so proud of every single person within Team NWAS and I know, having spoken to a number of staff, volunteers and family members, just how difficult and challenging this has been for everyone, not just professionally but also personally. The feedback I have received from patients, MPs, NHS partners and other leaders from across the region and the UK about our response has been overwhelmingly positive. I cannot thank everyone enough."

"As Chief Executive it was devastatingly hard to hear the news that we had lost two of our dear colleagues and friends Phil and Stuart, it is a difficult message to have to share with staff that no leader wants to do. Phil and Stuart will always be remembered and will forever be in our hearts."

Taking learning from this unique experience, Daren looks to the future: "Working with other organisations and leaders in the way we have, NWAS is now very much seen as an integrated system leader and we have demonstrated that we have managed this incident well. However like all major incidents, there will be learning and things that we could have done better and we will ensure that all of the best practise and learning is captured as we move forward."

A huge thank you from us

Since the pandemic hit the North West, it has been overwhelming to see the generosity bestowed upon our organisation. Members of the public, local companies and large national companies have all been keeping us stocked up with meals, snacks, drinks, sweet treats, sanitisers, hand creams, vitamins and much more. We have also been inundated with discount offers from countless companies from shops to online food order and delivery services.

These donations, which continue to keep arriving at our sites across the region, are so very much appreciated and we are trying to ensure every individual and company receives a 'thank you' message from us for their kindness.

During these difficult times for us and the whole NHS, staff morale can be a little low, especially for those on the front line who are facing the challenges of coronavirus day in, day out. To be given a meal, treat or a small token of appreciation goes a very long way to help our staff through this challenging period.

Thank you to everybody for your support!



Your fundraising for our charity will help others

Our North West Ambulance Charity has had an influx of donations throughout the pandemic with fundraisers up and down the region taking on wild and wonderful challenges to give back to our dedicated Team NWA. To date, we have received over £120,000 in donations - an amazing amount.

This includes 100-year-old Win Page from Middleton in Greater Manchester, who raised an incredible £19,000 by walking 100 laps of her driveway before her 100th birthday, inspired by Colonel Tom Moore. Win has made a special request that the money is spent on our patient cancer support service.



Colonel Tom Moore donated £77,500 to the charity and has asked that it go towards enhancing the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers.

Northwich care home, Lostock Lodge raised £720 after completing their 'pedalling for paramedics' challenge which saw them cycle a total of 448 miles – the distance between Manchester and London's Nightingale Hospitals over the space of one month, all on their exercise bikes.

19-year-old Ryan from Cheshire dyed his hair blue to raise money for our charity. Ryan has special needs and autism and really stepped out of his comfort zone by making such a bold change. He's raised an amazing £500.

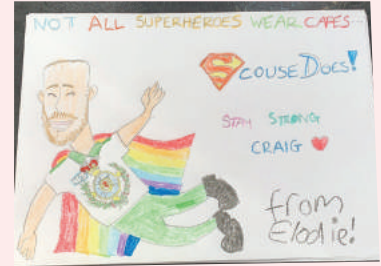


Head of Corporate Affairs Penny Harder, who looks after North West Ambulance Charity said: "We are extremely grateful to everyone who has fundraised and made a donation to our charity. The money will be used to make a real difference to people's lives by funding lifesaving equipment, education programmes and other projects to benefit the health, wellbeing and safety of patients, staff and our communities."

Thank you for your amazing efforts!



Sharing your love



Your messages and drawings of support have kept our spirits lifted through the pandemic. We have had thousands of them reach us either by post, on social media or in person (from a socially acceptable distance) and we appreciate each and every one. Whilst we would love to share them all, here are some of your beautiful creations and messages of support.



Barb Bee Thank you all, each and everyone of you are truly brave and amazing and you all have our utmost respect and appreciation. As a mum of a paramedic our family pray you all stay safe and say Thank You 🙏💚🌈❤️

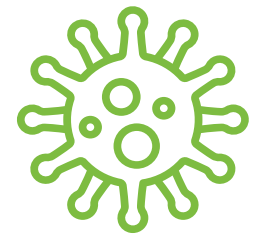


Susan Lomax from the mum of 1 of your green family thank you all so much for the sacrifices your all making you are each and everyone of you angels, nothing will ever repay any of you for what your doing



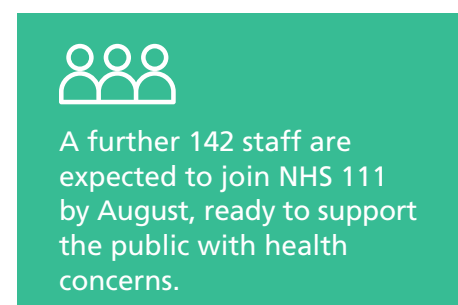
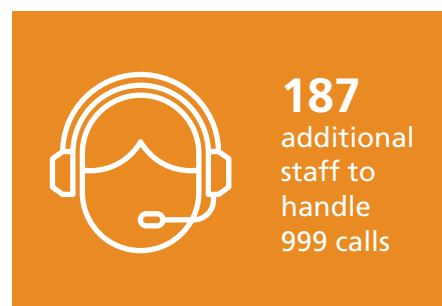
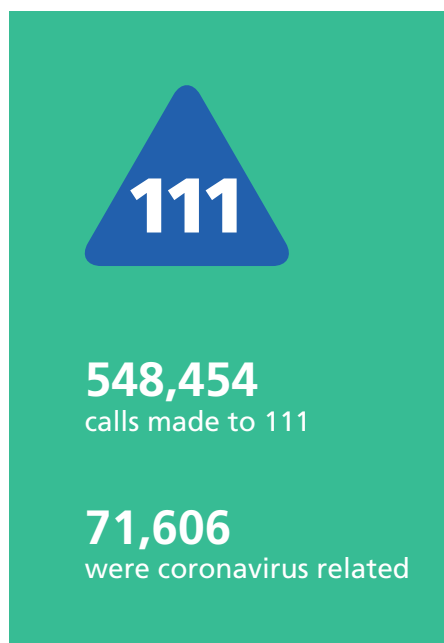
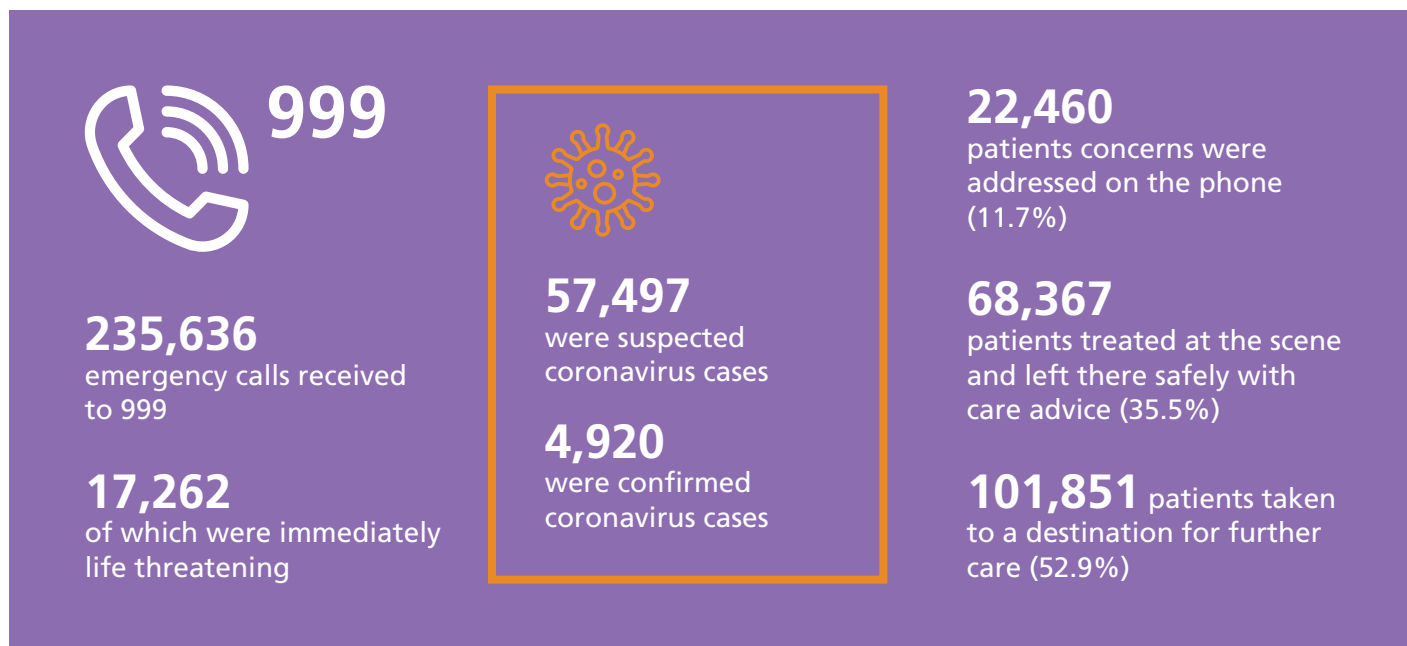
Shirley Wood Thankyou ,my husband has had two strokes and an ambulance was called, and it arrived within minutes..Well done N-WAS .Stay safe all .🌈❤️🌈❤️

Pandemic watch



Spotlight on the coronavirus pandemic

The below is a summary of calls to our emergency service and 111 service and our response to patients and the overall pandemic. It dates from when the World Health Organisation declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic on 12 March 2020 to 13 May 2020 when the government started to ease lockdown measures.



Temporary training centres were set up using empty local schools to help train the workers, which include student paramedics, apprentices, staff redeployed from other parts of the trust, and some agency workers.

We talk to our superstar 'superswitchers'

Across the trust we have seen all of our staff go above and beyond their usual duties to help with the coronavirus pandemic. Each and every single member of staff has been under pressure since it began but by working hard together we have kept delivering services we can be proud of.

We talk to two particular groups of staff that have made some extraordinary changes to their working day since the pandemic hit.

Student paramedics to NHS 111

A number of our student paramedics, who are at university studying to become fully qualified clinicians, stepped in to assist our NHS 111 service which at times had call volumes triple the usual amount. They worked alongside our dedicated call handling staff answering patient calls and arranging appropriate care for coronavirus patients – something different to what their regular placement should have been.

They have shown such enthusiasm and dedication during this time that we are looking to introduce a programme that sees future student paramedics undertake a period of training time within our NHS 111 service. Many students have enjoyed their time with the NHS 111 service so much that they have taken up part-time employment as health advisors whilst they continue their studies.



Katie Burns

"I am studying at University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and made the leap after working in health and social care for 13 years. Being able to help out in 111 through the pandemic has given me an amazing

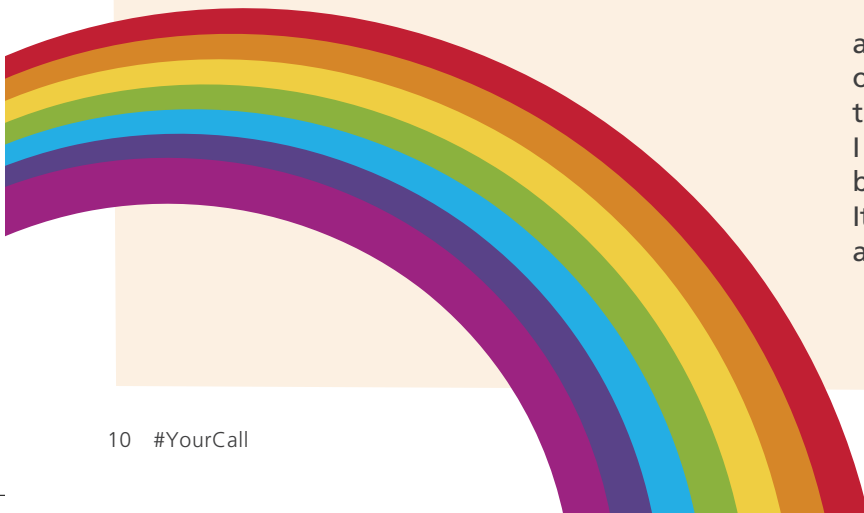
understanding of how this service works. I know I will take the skills and knowledge I have learnt on the road when I graduate and start life as a paramedic. Thank you NWAS and thanks to my lovely colleagues at Estuary Point in Liverpool who welcomed me."

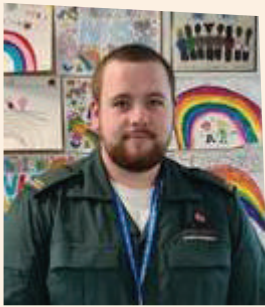
Abby Brown



"I am from Northern Ireland studying at John Moores University and I love my course. Due to the pandemic our normal ambulance placements had to be cancelled and so instead we were asked to help out in 111 as service

advisors. Although very different from being out on the road, I've enjoyed seeing another side of the NHS and feel it will really help with the way I help patients on the road. It has also led me to become more understanding of people's needs. It has been a pleasure to help out during what is a very difficult time for everyone."





Sean Hendrick

"I am studying at Uclan and chose this career to make a difference in my community. During the pandemic whilst working as a health advisor, I have been given the chance to practise talking to patients professionally

helping them by providing information in a way they can understand. Whilst I have enjoyed my time on the phones, I am also very eager to get back on the road and continue my training on the ambulance."



Finance to fleet

Since March some members of our Finance Team have supported our Fleet and Logistics teams in the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Initially they were helping fleet colleagues by driving operational patient transport vehicles around the North West to be converted to emergency vehicles as well as supporting colleague welfare. More recently they have been working in our ambulance workshops driving to collect parts or vehicles for repair. The team's effort has been amazing as they have worked outside of their comfort zones by driving vehicles much larger than they are used to and positioning themselves in departments very different to the finance office environment.

They have helped out wherever they have been needed, worked well with new colleagues and we think they should be really proud of their time spent outside of the finance department.



Sean Kavanagh Apprentice Finance Assistant

"I started my finance apprenticeship with North West Ambulance Service recently and I was really enjoying learning my new role however when

the pandemic hit, my course at college was temporarily put on hold and the opportunity arose for me to help out in other ways.

"During this time I've been picking up and dropping off ambulances for services and MOTs and helping the fleet staff where I can to help keep vehicles on the road. I'm really enjoying my time in the workshops and it's a great experience to see the other side of the business. I am used to working in an office with finance, numbers and data so it is good to see what those numbers go towards funding."

Sameer Shezad Assistant Management Accountant

"It has been an unforgettable experience and one which has not only given me a better understanding of the critical day to day functions of our workshops but also the opportunity to speak to and make friends with colleagues I perhaps never would never have met before."



Improving your care through technology



We're using technology to help us communicate with each other better and enable people to access the care they need quickly and easily, when it suits them.

Over the next five years our digital focus is geared towards finding digital solutions to solve every day problems, improve care and improve experience for our patients and staff.

One of the first signposts on our digital roadmap is to introduce electronic patient records (ePR). This means our skilled clinicians will work paperless when caring for our patients and their information can be securely shared with receiving hospitals electronically before a patient arrives. This is in the pipeline and is being rolled out across the North West this year, also helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

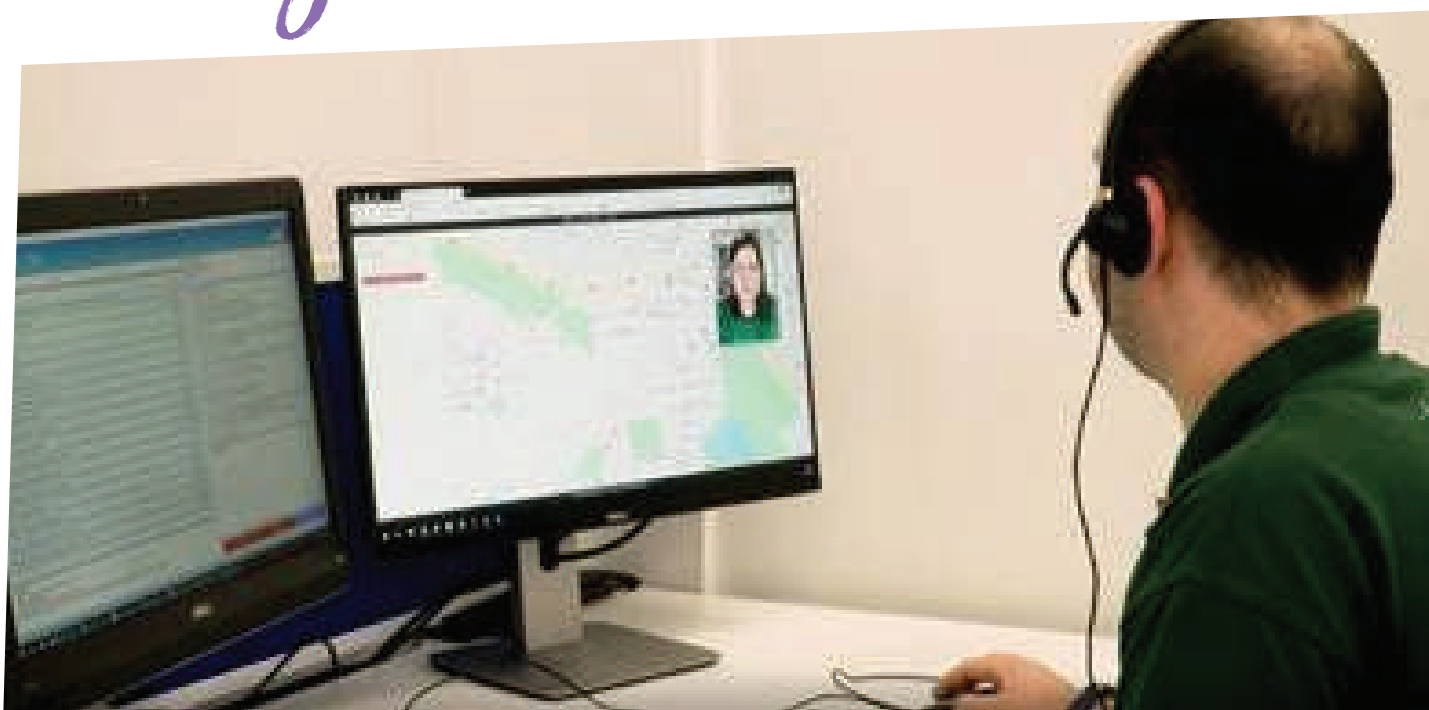
Speaking to Your Call, Abigail Harrison, Chief of Digital and Innovation says: "When speaking with our staff and volunteers it is clear that one of their biggest challenges is not having the right digital equipment or skills, at the right time or in the right place to support them to do their jobs effectively and we want to address that. We recognise that technology is changing public expectations for more immediate, joined-up and comprehensive

care which can be accessed through the use of digital channels which we are starting to tap into.

"We know that if we can improve the quality and resilience of our digital services, we will in turn make our service a more accessible service for our patients and a great place to work for our staff."



Video consultations to make your life easier



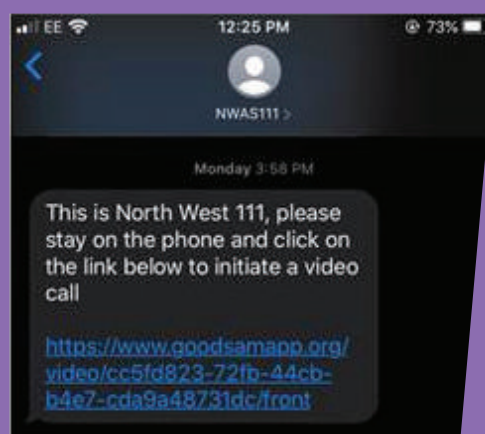
In April this year, our NHS 111 service was selected to run a pilot scheme for video consultation (VC) calls for NHS 111 patients. The pilot was quickly established in order to help with the pandemic work and took place over two weeks sampling 45 patients.

The trial demonstrated significant benefits to introducing one-way VC capability to an NHS 111 service, both for staff and patients. Here is what we found:

- In 43 of the 45 video consultations, our clinicians reported that VC increased their confidence in their clinical decision making.
- Our clinicians were able to get the most appropriate care for the patient with eight patient concerns being upgraded and 11 patient concerns being downgraded as necessary.
- For 28 calls, the patient's health concerns were fully addressed on the call resulting in them not having to go to any further face to face consultations.
- Our clinicians reported they were able to help the patient more quickly using VC in 42 calls. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some calls were completed almost 50 per cent quicker.

It is safe to say that our clinicians and patients loved the technology and we are looking to add it to our NHS 111 service as quickly as possible. Using two-way video consultation will help many patients, but specifically those contacting the service with mental health concerns, who, as studies have suggested, would benefit from a virtual face-to-face assessment.

Quick and easy link via mobile phone to patient with one click.



"I miss the physical people contact coronavirus has taken away from us."



LOOKING
FOR A FRIEND

Maria Bennett is a genuine 'people person' she loves to look after and care for people, it is something she has done all her life and keeps her anxiety in check. Nothing prepared her for the exacerbated and familiar feelings of loneliness the pandemic would bring.

Maria, from Runcorn talks to Your Call about loneliness, a feeling millions of us have been experiencing during the last few months and how she has coped through the pandemic.

"Being on my own is something I am used to as I was divorced by my mid-twenties and brought my children up singlehandedly whilst working in a busy and stressful office job so I could provide for them. I had always wanted to be a carer as being caring is in my nature but I couldn't afford to switch jobs supporting the children on my own.

"Through circumstance I have always had somebody in my family to look after. Once my children were grown up, my parents were a lot older and needed help so I spent my time outside of work caring for them. When my parents passed away my grandkids came along and I spent my time looking after them and when they grew up I felt this enormous void of having nobody to look after.

"I became really poorly with anxiety, something I had never experienced before and wouldn't wish on anybody. My anxiety was fuelled by the realisation of not having anybody to care for. The stresses of work combined with the feeling that nobody needed me anymore caused me to become really ill."

Maria had to retire from work earlier than expected and started volunteering with Age UK Mid Mersey about 18 months ago and became a member of their Expert Panel doing anything she could to help the senior citizens in her local area. It was something she loved and got a lot of satisfaction from and it really helped with her mental health.

When the pandemic hit, the country pulled together to stay safe and save lives, meaning our usual ways of seeing family, friends or just familiar faces were put on pause, something Maria really struggled with.

"It hit me hard as before the pandemic, I had got to a place in which my volunteering by helping people was keeping me busy and I was happy. When lockdown happened, I felt the same feelings of anxiety rise in me.



“Age UK Mid Mersey has been brilliant, whilst we have not been able to have our regular face to face contact, I have been able to help them in other ways throughout the pandemic. I have been calling clients of Age UK Mid Mersey who are on their own and having chats with them. I like the phone calls as the ladies I speak to are all older than me and live on their own and I can see they are coping with the pandemic so it fuels me to cope.”

“I miss the physical people contact coronavirus has taken away from us. My great granddaughter was born seven months before the pandemic and I have not been able to see her so I am missing all her milestones that I would usually see. We FaceTime every day but it isn't the same. ”

Maria has combatted her loneliness in the pandemic by chatting to her Age UK Mid Mersey friends and finding hobbies she never thought she would get into.

“If you stand still long enough near me at the minute I'll paint you. I have never been a painter but I've painted my home, my garden fence, plant pots. I have taken up walking and I am quite fit, I walk for hours each day to keep myself moving. It has been key to getting me through this.”

Common signs of loneliness

- They spend a lot of time on their own
- They are unproductive
- They get stuck on the negatives
- They seem sick or ill frequently
- They seem overly attached to possessions or hobbies

Where to go for help:

If you are struggling with loneliness, Age UK can help you. There are 26 branches of Age UK covering the North West. Call Age UK Mid Mersey who can direct your call to a branch in your relevant area on: 0300 003 1992 or by emailing: enquiries@aukmm.org.uk



“One minute we were getting married in Australia, the next I was living in a hotel room in Chester with coronavirus.”

We're reminded constantly of the devastating impact of coronavirus as it continues to claim lives across the country. But there are many stories of hope, strength and resilience as many people recover from the illness daily. Your Call talks to Paramedic Robert Love about his pandemic story. An experience which tested both his and his partner Beth's personal and individual resilience levels to the maximum.

When the pandemic hit, Rob like many other of our clinicians, emergency calls handlers and support staff, made the decision to move out of the family home he shares with his mum, Kath. He wanted to stay on the frontline helping those in need whilst protecting Kath as she suffers with asthma and diabetes.

Rob from Chester, was living with Mum whilst his Australian partner of 10 years and fiancée Beth was living in Australia, having returned there from England in September 2019. The pair were set to reunite for the first time in six months in Australia for their dream wedding which was due to take place on 11 April. However, the pandemic, had different plans for the couple and like most people, they had to cancel their wedding until further notice.

To make matters worse, on 22 April Rob woke up in his Chester-based hotel room and was



freezing cold, he was shivering but felt okay and thought nothing of it. The following day, he started with a cough which he had no control over and his temperature was slightly raised. He immediately booked in for testing which came back inconclusive. He returned for more testing by which point he really felt unwell after a series of coughing fits, a high temperature and a continuous fast heart rate.

Rob recalls: “The following morning I had missed a call from my relative and I was scrolling through Facebook and sadly saw that my uncle John had passed away from coronavirus.



“Minutes after reading this I took a call from a colleague confirming I had tested positive for coronavirus. It was a strange feeling knowing we had just lost my uncle from an illness that I now had, surprisingly I felt calm. My biggest concern was telling my mum and Beth as I knew their reaction would be totally different to mine, and it was. For the next three weeks I knew I had to take on a reassurance role with my family, particularly mum and Beth, whilst battling on with the illness.”

Those weeks were difficult for Rob, he was so poorly and was sleeping up to 11 hours each day and had relentless, uncontrollable coughing fits, a rapid heart rate and palpitations which sent him to the emergency department for additional testing on two occasions. He was stuck in a hotel room on the top floor with no home comforts and knew he had to fight it on his own whilst telling his family it would be okay.

“There was one particular night I thought this virus could be the end. I started to really worry about my family and wonder how they would cope. I started thinking about Beth and what she would do as if she lost me she wouldn’t be able to fly over here for my funeral. It was pretty dark.

“It’s been such an isolating experience and one which other people who have had this illness can relate to. Mum and Beth were desperately worried, it is hard enough isolating from your family when they are down the road but having Beth in Australia has been an added challenge.

I have since found out that my mum who was shielding was so concerned that she would lose me, one night she got in her car and drove to the hotel in floods of tears and parked outside and stayed in her car in case I needed her.

“It has been tough but early on I embraced the change as I understood the sense of purpose of what we all had to do. Accepting things are out of my control has been fundamental to my resilience strategy in coping with this. Instead of becoming too concerned with my symptoms I spent my time watching TV series, contacting friends and family and even playing video games. I’m definitely not a gamer but playing on them was oddly a great distraction.

“If it wasn’t for my career and the emotional and psychological resilience skills I have developed when helping other people who are often experiencing the most harrowing times of their life, I’m not sure what may have got me and my family through this.

“We’re on the other side of it now and I am getting better. There have been some residual effects on my body as pre coronavirus I was running 10k. At the minute even walking 2k is difficult as I feel breathless and get really dizzy walking up stairs, but I know it won’t be long before I get back there again. I am thankful that I am one of the lucky ones.”



Claire Linnane is an operations manager in a busy GP practice in Liverpool and is an influencer on our Patient and Public Panel*. Claire talks to Your Call about her pandemic experience of managing a busy practice whilst sadly getting coronavirus alongside her partner and how her tough resilience got her through it.

“The pandemic has certainly tested my self-resilience both in my home life and in my job. My partner and I have experienced coronavirus with him suffering symptoms and testing positive first, meaning I then had to self-isolate for 14 days and work from home. Despite our best efforts of trying to isolate in our own home, I tested positive nine days later which inevitably kept me away from going to work for a further two weeks.

“Like most others, I found this experience frustrating as I had to take almost four weeks out of the practice at a time where I was possibly needed most. The first week of self-isolating was

particularly stressful as I was effectively managing the practice from home alongside looking after my partner who was really ill with it as well as trying to avoid contracting the virus myself.

“We are both on the other side now and looking back I realise that throughout this pandemic journey, I was building resilience every day both inside and outside of work. In work it was always important for me to remain positive with the ability to motivate others to overcome challenges and problems we were faced with. It was and still is a particular testing time for all and the pandemic has created many positive changes within our general practice that we will take forward. Like with many other NHS trusts we have taken a massive leap with digital enhancements and have all adapted greatly to adversity. With each new challenge, we’re putting new plans into place to suit the needs of our patients.

“The pandemic has given me the ability to withstand, adapt to and recover from stress and adversity. I have also learnt how important it is to influence where you can, rather than worrying about what you can’t influence, this has then helped to find solutions to problems.”

*Our Patient and Public Panel gives members of the public a voice and the chance to have their views acted upon. Anybody can join as long as you are over 16 years of age. You can read more information on page 21.

Eight tips to build on your resilience:

- 1. Remember your strengths and accomplishments** – be confident about your own ability to respond to a crisis.
- 2. Find your goal** – participate in activities that are meaningful for you that give you a sense of being.
- 3. Build a strong support network** - having people you can confide in who can help you with solutions to your problems in time of crisis will really help you.
- 4. Embrace change** – being flexible is essential to self-resilience. Learning to be more adaptable will mean you are better equipped when faced with a life crisis.
- 5. Accept what you can’t control** – try not to dwell on the uncontrollable and instead focus your energies on the things you can control.
- 6. See the glass as half full** – being optimistic during difficult times can be hard but maintaining a hopeful and positive outlook about a brighter future is key to self-resilience.
- 7. Look after yourself** – taking care of yourself will boost your overall health and resilience and make you more ready to face life’s challenges.
- 8. Establish goals** – take a step back in a crisis and assess what you are facing and break them up into smaller manageable steps towards solving the problem.

Our volunteer army - we salute you!

We consider ourselves to be very lucky as for over 20 years we have been supported by a large group of people across the North West who selflessly give their own time to help their local communities in many ways.

The pandemic has magnified the feeling of social solidarity and community spirit we have always had but to an unprecedented level never before experienced in our lifetime. More than 300 volunteers committed themselves to helping us through the peak of the pandemic and still continue to do so, from making PPE deliveries, to helping with staff welfare and moving ambulance vehicles, the list is endless.

Salman Desai, Director of Strategy and Planning says: "I want to thank you for all the hard work over these last couple of months. My Board colleagues, our staff and I are well aware of the commitment, compassion and care you have shown by volunteering during the most challenging of times we have ever faced, despite concerns for your own families and loved ones. Every volunteer across the trust has been doing their bit in this combined effort to keep vital services running and our communities and ourselves safe. My sincere thanks to you all no matter what you have been doing, your kindness has shone through."

Your Call speaks to some of our volunteers from our Community First Responder (CFR) scheme, our Voluntary Car Driver scheme and our Patient and Public Panel and their amazing efforts over the last couple of months.



Community First Responders (CFRs)

Our CFRs are volunteers who are trained by us to attend certain types of emergency calls in their local communities. Their aim is to reach a potential life threatening emergency in the first vital minutes before the ambulance crew arrives and so are integral to patient care.

Many of them have increased the level of support they give us since the start of the pandemic, with some doing 12 hours days and nights to help. There have been more than 1,501 separate tasks carried out by CFRs through the pandemic which equates to more than 400 days of support and 9,685 hours volunteered!



Michael & Ed Thompson Audlem CFR Team

Father and son eCFRs (CFRs with extended skills), Michael and Ed Thompson have been busy supporting us with extra duties since the start of the pandemic. Clocking up 350 extra hours of duty between them, they began helping move patient transport vehicles to be converted to emergency ambulances.

When North West Air Ambulance (NWAA) joined up with our Hazardous Area Response teams (HART) to transfer coronavirus positive patients into ICUs across the region, they helped to drive ambulances and support vehicles. They have even helped with our testing programmes by moving samples from ambulance stations to hospital pathology laboratories. In their 'spare time' the duo continue to work with their CFR team in Audlem providing 24/7 cover for their community.

"It has been a privilege to work alongside frontline staff in responding to this crisis. They have made us feel a valuable part of Team NWAS and our respect for their dedication has grown even more."



Noel Boardman Blackrod CFR Team

Being a CFR for almost two years, Noel started supporting us during the pandemic in the last week of March by packing PPE at Bury station. Noel has spent 180 hours doing extra volunteer jobs including driving the staff welfare 'trucks' from Salford, Dukinfield and Bolton, alongside his fellow responders, around the emergency departments providing refreshments and friendly faces to the crews after they have handed over.

"This has been a great experience and massively different to my normal day job as a SKY television engineer. Meeting crews I'd met on previous 999 calls but this time in a more relaxed environment has been great for team building, chatting and getting to know people."

Like Michael and Ed, Noel also helped NWAA and our HART to transfer coronavirus positive patients between hospitals by driving the support cars from the air ambulance base at Barton. These particular shifts were 12 hour day and night shifts and are still on going.

Volunteer Car Drivers (VCDs)

Our VCDs play a big role in supporting our patient transport service by taking patients to and from hospital appointments. With the service being temporarily suspended for most of our patients at the start of the pandemic, this meant VCDs had to stop their usual volunteer work.

Some of our VCDs have been helping our CFR teams transport PPE around stations and in the last couple of weeks they have become active again helping CFRs to get 'care boxes' to staff in Lancashire and Cumbria. The care boxes have



Megan Stephenson Workington CFR Team

Team leader for one of West Cumbria's biggest CFR teams, Megan has clocked 123 extra hours of duty since the 1 April, volunteering in the pandemic and still continues to help alongside her responder volunteer role.

Megan began by driving across the North West to collect vehicles and PPE for ambulance stations in her area, including a 260 mile round trip to Haydock from Workington. She has been helping us with many other duties including face mask fit testing helping to keep our crews safe.

"When the pandemic hit I wanted to help in any way I could and when the opportunity came up that I could assist in other ways I jumped at the chance."

been donated to our staff by 'Salute the NHS' a charity set up by Ron Dennis, CBE former CEO, chairman and founder of The McLaren Technology Group. The charity is continuing to help fight the battle with coronavirus by gathering together business leaders and feeding NHS frontline workers with nutritious, balanced and tasty meals.

Ed William Tipping VCD, Cumbria

Ed, 71 had been a VCD for two years and gives one day per week to volunteering travelling around 300 miles across the whole of the North West, sometimes Newcastle, Leeds and Sheffield taking patients to hospital appointments.

In mid-May, Ed started to help CFRs deliver care boxes to ambulance stations containing meals for crews which will continue for three months.

"I volunteered to do this as I want to contribute to the NHS, with the pandemic still ongoing I feel it needs all the help it can get."



Maureen McQueen VCD, Cumbria

Maureen, who is in her 70s has been a VCD for over 15 years and before the pandemic hit was driving patients to hospital appointments in Carlisle, Barrow, Blackpool, Liverpool, Stockport and even further afield to Newcastle and Yorkshire. Maureen started helping in May and like Ed, Maureen is delivering care boxes to stations.

"Due to being over 70, I was restricted in what help I could offer the ambulance service initially so I volunteered as a 'phone buddy' in my local area supporting older friends who may have had issues they wanted to talk about.

"I worked in NHS for nearly 40 years and needed



to do something post retirement and so I went from being a CFR to a VCD. I'm doing my little bit and I believe every little bit eventually makes a difference."

Patient and Public Panel

Our Patient and Public Panel (PPP) gives members of the public a voice and the chance to have their views acted upon. It is made up of representatives from local communities, interest groups, the voluntary sector and partner organisations who get opportunities to influence improvements in our urgent and emergency, patient transport and NHS 111 services.

We have had to change the way we talk to our panel members during the pandemic and have embraced virtual engagement as opposed to face to face contact. As voices of our local communities we have been overwhelmed with their support and continued interest in our services. With many members asking questions about PPE, patient feedback, VCDs, and fundraising as well as how they can help us through the pandemic.

Linda Mages PPP member, Cumbria

Linda has gone above and beyond helping her local community during the pandemic by joining Brampton Acting Together to ensure vulnerable people are supported and looked after during lockdown.

Linda, her husband and others in the group have delivered essential food and prescriptions as well as posting leaflets with useful helpline information to all her community.

Linda recently retired as a senior lecturer in adult nursing at Cumbria University and had been working in the community as a health visitor for many years. During the pandemic, Linda was approached by her local hospital, Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle to lend support as a bank staff nurse using her skills and knowledge during the pandemic.

Thank you Linda and to all our volunteers, you really are amazing!



BBC One's AMBULANCE

BAFTA award winning documentary Ambulance is currently on our screens with a brand new series.*

The six, 60 minute episodes have once again joined our paramedics and staff for real insight into the complexities and life or death decisions involved in providing emergency medical care. If you have been watching you'll know that each episode has shown how the team from Merseyside treat patients with humour and kindness, as well as the deep pride they take in their city, as spring throws everything it has got at the service.

This series takes the viewer to the beating heart of our NHS by telling the real story of the ambulance service. It follows crews in real time and the shifts of the call-handlers and ambulance dispatchers as they make decisions in the highly pressurised environment of the control room, about who should get care and when. Once the decision is made and the ambulance is dispatched, cameras follow the paramedics and specialist air ambulance crews as they race to save lives on the ground.

Ambulance is the highest rating factual programme on BBC One, and has been since series one. It averages over 20% audience share and the consolidated figures per episode are consistently over 4 million (sometimes 5 million). By way of comparison, 24 Hours in A&E averages at 1.6 million and Love Island peaks at 3.4 million. Impressive!

*Ambulance was filmed in Spring 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic.



We are proud of our 'good' rating

We had an unannounced inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC)* on 25 to 27 February 2020. The inspection focussed on our emergency operations centres and urgent and emergency care service.

During an inspection we are measured against five key areas which determine if we are: safe, effective, responsive, caring and well-led. We have been rated as **good** once again, something we are proud of.

For our urgent and emergency care service, we were rated **outstanding** in the 'responsive' category and **good** in all the other areas. Here are seven reasons why we were rated **outstanding**:

1. We take account of patients' individual needs and preferences in the communities we serve.
2. We understand the needs and preferences of different groups of people including people with protected characteristics, people who may be approaching the end of their life, and people who are in vulnerable circumstances or who have complex needs.
3. We make it easy for people to give feedback and raise concerns about care received. We treat concerns and complaints seriously, investigate them and share lessons learnt with all staff and partner organisations.
4. We have 'maternity packs' on ambulances which are given to women in labour. They contain hand-knitted items such as a hat, jumper and soft toy.
5. We work in partnership with the local NHS hospital in Burnley (Lancashire) to provide a dedicated falls team. The team consists of a paramedic and an occupational therapist and attend falls calls in an unmarked vehicle.
6. We are piloting a specialist mental health first responder car in Blackpool. The car is staffed by a paramedic and police officer and aims to provide appropriate mental health support in the community to avoid unnecessary trips to hospital.
7. We apply a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach which involves local health providers and stakeholders to reduce the number of frequent callers across the North West region.

A well-led inspection was due to take place on 31 March 2020 but didn't take place due to the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic.

The full report is available to read on our website.



*The CQC is a public body of the Department of Health and Social Care and it regulates and inspects health and social care services in England.



HM Government

NHS



CORONAVIRUS **STAY ALERT TO THE** **RISK OF INFECTION**

Remember it's critical to keep washing
your hands regularly for 20 seconds.

For more ways to stay safe go to [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

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