



19 December 2014

URGENT STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING - INCREASED 999 ACTIVITY

In view of the recent national media coverage with regards to the pressures being faced by the NHS, and in preparation for the coming weeks and in particular this upcoming weekend, we felt it was important to brief our stakeholders on the Trust's current situation.

As you may already be aware the Trust has been receiving an unprecedented surge in the number 999 calls. At the present time we are handling approximately 500 additional emergency calls per day, and all our staff are working incredibly hard in these very difficult circumstances to provide an effective service to the public.

Between Friday 5 December and 12 December, we responded to just short of 9,000 life-threatening or potentially life-threatening incidents and when compared to 2013's year to date figure at this time:

- 999 calls are up 5.9%
- All incidents attended are up 5.29%
- Red life-threatening or potentially life-threatening cases are up 9.4%

Last week alone saw:

- An extra 2,152 calls (full week) - 9.6% increase or an extra 307 per day.
- An extra 1,137 red incidents - 14.5% or 162 per

This rise in calls is not unique to the North West and has been replicated all across the country.

To help address this situation, we have introduced a number of initiatives to ensure as many as ambulances as possible are free to attend the most urgent cases, including:

- The use of volunteer services such as Mountain Rescue teams, Red Cross and St John Ambulance and the increased use of Community First Responders.
- Increasing staffing levels in control rooms as a result of recruitment and career progression.
- Increasing frontline resources with 130 clinical staff being deployed on a phased basis from now until the end of March 2015.
- A paramedic presence within three Police Control Centres (Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester) to co-manage emergency resources.

In addition to the above, we have been proactively issuing various public messages through the media and social media, taken part in numerous interviews with journalists from across the region and accommodated a BBC camera crew to enable them to report first hand the current pressures we are facing.

Our message to the public is to think carefully before calling for an ambulance, emphasising that 999 should only be used when someone is seriously ill or injured and there is a possible risk to life.

The Trust will continue to work very hard to ensure that we deliver the highest level of service possible to the population of the North West.

