

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Review of Emergency Operations Centres



KEY BENEFITS

- Determined the required staffing levels to achieve KPIs
- Secured funding for additional staff
- Identified potential efficiencies
- Reduction in workload variation between dispatch desks
- Understanding workload on specialist desks

“ Working with ORH has enabled the Trust to collate and understand complex data sets to make sound operational and financial decisions. The professionalism, knowledge and experience was second to none and has enabled our ambitious transformation programme to deliver on time. ”

Stuart Crichton, Director of 999 Operations

Appraising capacity in call handling, dispatch and the tactical operations centre

KEY FACTS

Population = 9.0 million

Area Covered = 1,600 km²

Calls = 4,600 emergency calls per day

Vehicles = 500

ABOUT LAS

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (LAS) is the busiest ambulance service in the world, providing emergency, urgent care and non-emergency patient transport services across the capital. LAS operates two emergency operations centres (EOCs) that manage calls and dispatch frontline resources from 56 ambulance stations.

THE CHALLENGE

EOC operations underwent considerable change in 2022, with the implementation of new call management and dispatch systems and relocation to a new control room in Newham.

New roles had also been introduced, with emergency call coordinators being responsible for call handling and the staffing of specialist desks. This included liaising with the Metropolitan Police, pre-alerting hospitals, intelligent conveyance and dispatch support. These desks were not consistently staffed, and their workload not fully understood.

The dispatch configuration had been unchanged for over ten years. The significant increase in call volumes and frontline resource levels over this period had resulted in unmanageable workload on some desks, and the busiest desks managing double the number of vehicles as the quietest desk.

LAS sought to address these issues by better understanding the workload across all EOC functions and identifying the staff requirement in each role to achieve KPIs and support service delivery.

ORH'S APPROACH

Through EOC observation, staff interviews and data analysis, ORH established the current pressures across call handling, dispatch and on specialist desks. Benchmarking parameters against other UK services enabled evidence-based decisions to be made on where efficiencies could be found.

Simulation models of key EOC functions were set up to identify the staffing requirements to achieve KPIs, with staffing being realigned to best match the demand profile. Modelling explored the staffing levels needed to achieve call answer times on an average day, as well as on the busiest 5% and 10% of days across the year.

Assessment of the dispatch configuration identified new areas of control that resulted in manageable workload, minimised variation between desks, and were

better aligned to patient hospital flows. Consideration was given to reducing desks at night, when workload is at its lowest.

RESULTS

ORH's modelling provided the evidence LAS needed to secure funding for all the staffing increases recommended by the review. This significant investment will provide:

- A call handling operation that is robust to demand increases
- Increased staffing for specialist EOC functions
- Capacity to consistently undertake patient welfare call backs
- A 23% reduction in workload per dispatch desk, with dedicated break cover



About ORH

PLAN. PREPARE. PERFORM.



ORH helps emergency services around the world to optimise resource use and respond in the most effective and efficient way.

We have set the benchmark for emergency service planning, with a proven approach combining rigorous scientific analysis with experienced, insightful consultancy.

Our expert team uses sophisticated modelling techniques to identify opportunities for improvement and uncover hidden capacity.

Simulating future scenarios ensures that solutions are objective, evidence-based and quantified.

Every organisation faces a unique set of challenges, so remaining independent and flexible allows us to deliver an appropriate solution every time. The outputs of our work enable clients to make robust, data-driven decisions and explain them clearly to stakeholders.

ORH's approach is always tailored to the needs of the client. Above all, we are committed to getting it right, for the good of our clients and the people who rely on their services.

ORH WORKS WITH AMBULANCE SERVICES TO:

- Quantify the impact of changes to response standards
- Optimise response locations
- Evaluate call handling, triage and dispatch arrangements
- Improve response times
- Devise optimal deployments by staff skill and vehicle type
- Identify operational efficiencies

For control rooms, ORH provides its DCT software to support dynamic decision making and enable effective and efficient resource use.

