

# LAS Strategy

## Feedback from engagement activities

Healthwatch Bromley  
January 2023



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# Activities undertaken

## Survey

Healthwatch Hounslow 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.

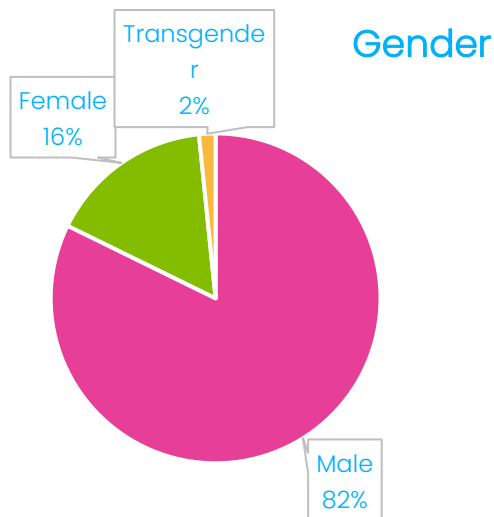
The survey was posted online in December, distributed via available email networks across the Healthwatch staff team and supported by Facebook posts and twitter activity, including paid for adverts.

## Discharge Lounge visit

On 13th December 2022 Healthwatch staff visited Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH), run by Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and located in Orpington. During this visit we spoke with patients in the discharge lounge and some ward areas of the hospital, talking to people about their experiences of LAS. We spoke with approximately 12 people during these visits and subsequently wrote up the conversations and experience detail provided. Where relevant we have included case studies under the appropriate findings section in this report.

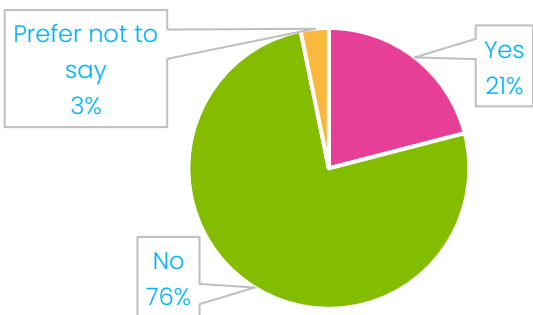
# Demographics

Survey – 62 responses



Age	Count	%
18-24	40	65%
25-34	4	6%
35-44	2	3%
45-54	3	5%
55-64	5	8%
65-74	5	8%
75-84	2	3%
85+	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Long term health condition or social care need

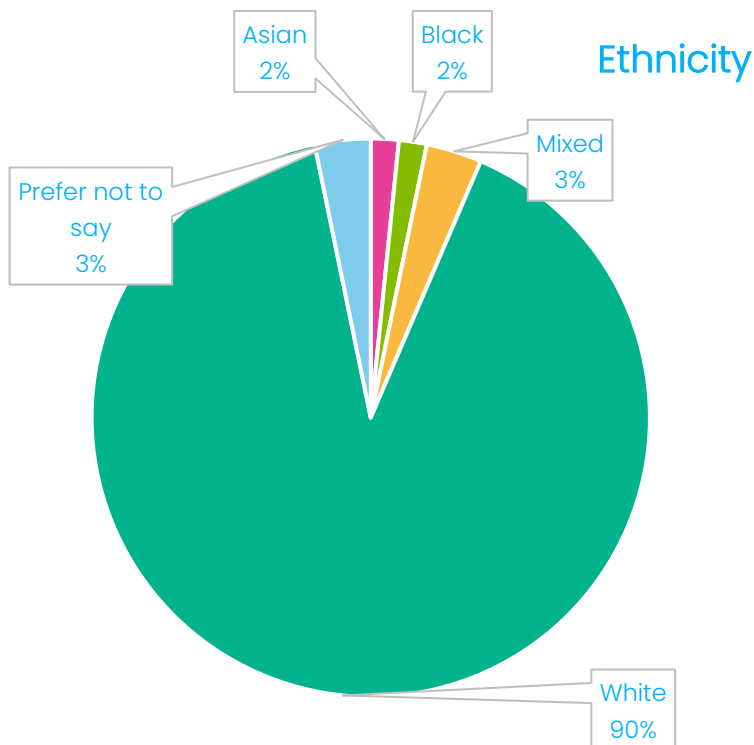


Disability	Count	%
Yes	6	10%
No	54	87%
Prefer not to say	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

Carer	Count	%
Yes	12	19%
No	48	77%
Prefer not to say	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Demographics

Survey continued



Religion	Count	%
Christian	51	82%
Hindu	1	2%
Not religious/Agnostic	5	8%
Prefer not to say	5	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Summary of Findings

The table below highlights the key findings identified through the engagement work carried out in Bromley, and should be used to feed into the development of key priority areas for the LAS to take forward in their strategy for 2023–2026.

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

## Findings

Key findings	Details
999 – Experience of 999 and LAS emergency care is positive	89% rated it good (69%) or excellent (19%). Patients report exceptional care, compassion and treatment and an efficient and effective service
999 – LAS needs to increase capacity to meet demands	Patients strongly support increasing capacity to meet demand and improve service provision. People recognise and experience issues in the service and a large majority feel more resources are needed. A smaller number of individual respondents mentioned issues with hospital handover, response times, trusting patients views/self assessment, and LAS knowledge around bringing a patient’s wheelchair to the hospital with them as areas to improve.
111 – Experience of 111 and urgent care is positive	82% rated it good (71%) and excellent (11%). Patients reported patient, reassuring and compassionate staff.
111 – At times call waiting is extensive and the triage process is frustratingly long.	Patients report waiting long periods to get through on the phone, lengthy lines of questioning, and experience script reading and delays in call backs. Generally, waits are accepted as the final result/support received meets needs. Individuals also reported better listening and respect/trust of the patients views/self assessment as areas for improvement.

## Findings continued

Key findings	Details
<p>Partners (health and care) – Patients need communications and joined up working between health and care partners to work better.</p>	<p>General communications and joined up working was mentioned repeatedly by survey respondents. Particular attention was focussed around mental health partners, GPs, social care and community care services. Police and transport services were also highlighted as key partners.</p>
<p>Partners (wider community) – There is a key role for LAS to play in impacting upon socio-economic factors.</p>	<p>When asked, the majority of respondents suggest that LAS can play a positive role in improving inequalities, including providing involvement opportunities/support for young people and schools, delivering training, focussing any aspects of their community or social value work on those experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges, and women who have experienced abuse.</p>

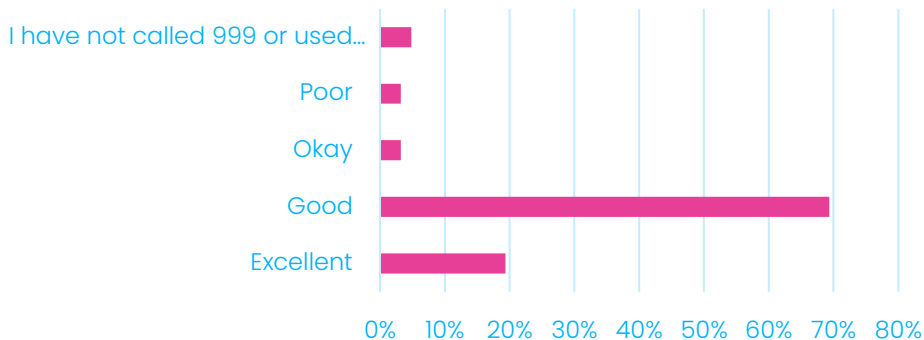


# Finding 1

## Experience of 999 and LAS emergency care is positive

89% rated it good (69%) or excellent (19%). Patients report exceptional care, compassion and treatment and an efficient and effective service.

### How would you rate your overall experience of calling 999 and using LAS emergency care?



#### Quotes

"I am giving the 'good' rating but it would be 'excellent' were it not for the actual call handling experiences. I had LAS emergency care twice in February 2022 because of problems with my heart...The two paramedics were superb in every way, they were kind and considerate, took several ECGs, explained what was happening (fast Afib), made sure I was comfortable, took me straight to the Emergency Department, phoned ahead so that I was expected and took me straight in. They even came to see how I was when they noticed me there later in the day." **Survey respondent**

"The ambulance staff came as soon as they could, showed tenderness, efficiency and knowledge.." **Survey respondent**

"Prompt response and compassionate professionals." **Survey respondent**

"Arrived in reasonable time and paramedics were first class." **Survey respondent**

"Competent, patient, good at explaining what is happening and that it will be okay." **Survey respondent**



## Quote

They would make me feel at ease, I was struggling to breathe, helped you feel dignified with how I was dressed and they cared for me. They were brilliant, polite, caring. Excellent quality and treatment. Waiting time was kind of quick as it was very busy and they came within 15 minutes. Brilliant communication, really friendly staff. When I got there I was at ease and at home I wasn't."

**Patient, female, 45-54, White Irish**



# Finding 2

## LAS needs to increase capacity to meet demands

When patients were asked how 999 and LAS emergency care could improve, patients strongly supported increasing capacity to better meet demands and improve service provision. People recognised and experienced issues in the service and the large majority feel more resources are needed. A smaller number of individual respondents mentioned issues with hospital handover, response times, trusting patient's views/self assessment, and LAS knowledge around bringing a patient's wheelchair to the hospital with them. Awareness training came up later in the survey.

### Quotes

"If it is the case that the LAS 999 answering service gets overwhelmed then no doubt more staff are needed, but that is easier said than done. It was very stressful holding on, repeatedly being told by an automatic voice that I should not hang up, while someone in Exeter with no knowledge of London or the current state of the LAS tried to help.." **Survey respondent**

"they need to take wheelchair using patients wheelchairs with them to hospital. We are unable to move around without our wheelchairs they are our legs!." **Survey respondent**

"The hope is that more medical services can be provided to reduce the number of patients suffering." **Survey respondent**

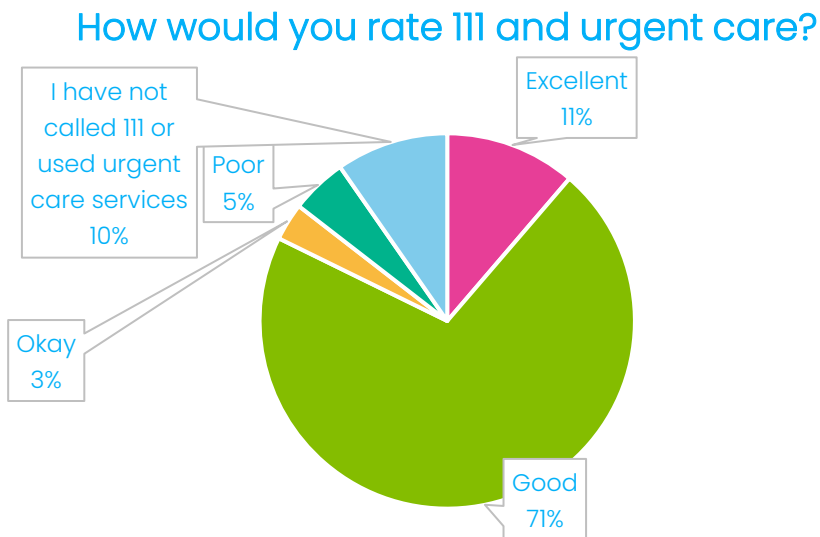
"Hmm a challenge that one as I recognise that you need additional resources in terms of numbers of workers but also equipment, hardware etc...My view would be change the government to one which have strong principles regarding keeping the health services free at the point of delivery and respects those who work within it." **Survey respondent**

"Front line staff need disability awareness training. Leaving our wheelchairs behind causes so many problems and stress for us. Our wheelchairs are our legs. They also need to listen to patients that have long term health conditions, not dismiss us out of hand." **Survey respondent**

# Finding 3

## Experience of 111 and urgent care is positive

82% rated it good (71%) and excellent (11%). Patients reported patient, reassuring and compassionate staff.



### Quotes

“Absolutely excellent, they’re always there and they give good advice.” **Survey respondent**

“Good customer service and the person gave their name which I felt was really personal.” **Survey respondent**

“Supportive and compassionate able to form a relationship with us very quickly.” **Survey respondent**

“My partner rates the experience very highly. I would too if I had to contact them because they need the support. Staff attitude over the phone was good. Quality of care and treatment over the phone was good.” **Survey respondent**

“The people are working well, on the phone, in the call centre, how they administrate it, it’s working well.” **Survey respondent**

“Waiting time was very good. They seemed to be knowledgeable about it being a heart attack. Good at deciding if you need an ambulance or not. Good service. It’s a good idea as it relieves the service on the hospital.” **Survey respondent**

# Finding 4

At times call waiting is extensive and the triage process is frustratingly long.

Patients report waiting long periods to get through on the phone, lengthy lines of questioning, and experience unsatisfactory 'script reading' and delays in call backs. Generally, call waiting periods, although frustrating, are largely accepted as the final result/support received meets needs. Individuals also reported that better listening and respect/trust of the patients views/self assessment would help support an improved experience all around. The feelings around reading from a script are likely to play a role within this.

## Quotes

"Condense what the automatic operator is saying so that you can talk to them faster." **Survey respondent**

"Employing and training staff with good communication skills, who are able to talk with callers rather than go through a script." **Survey respondent**

"LAS need to remember they are not gods, they are a last resort. They need to listen if a patient has come via 111 then there is a medical need." **Survey respondent**

"Better triage system." **Survey respondent**

In relation to suggested improvements..."111 timelines around callbacks by a nurse/doctor. Timelines around a GP visit from the out of hours service. The delays can cause people to default to A and E, particularly the elderly and young children. This has been the case for 3 friends. " **Survey respondent**

# Finding 5

**Patients need communications and joined up working between health and care partners to work better. There is much room for improvement.**

General communications and joined up working was mentioned repeatedly by survey respondents. Particular attention was focussed around mental health partners, GPs, social care and community care, the latter in respect of keeping people from having to use 999 in the first instance. Police and transport services were also highlighted as key partners where improved working could impact positively on patient experience..

## Quotes

**"Efficient information exchange." Survey respondent**

**"That is very difficult to answer as it may not be within LAS control. No doubt care would be improved if patients (and ambulances) were not waiting outside hospitals for hours because of pressure within. LAS cannot conjure care packages for people waiting to be discharged from hospital to make room for people needing access to hospital services. I'm not sure how much intel LAS has hour by hour, e.g. which EDs are under greatest pressure." Survey respondent**

**"The London Ambulance Service work as a complete team with the exception of doctors...More pressure on hospitals, used to be involved with local doctors but they are now behind walls.." Survey respondent**

**"They attended okay and dealt with the immediate problem but had no idea of my wife's problems which were stated on her health records." Survey respondent**

**"LAS attend a lot of calls where the patient requires treatment but is transported to hospital. Clearly some of these calls could have been prevented if primary and community care was more proactive in identifying and supporting people. LAS should have a mechanism to alert GP's etc to ensure these people are better supported and therefore less likely to call again.." Survey respondent**

**"My thoughts from my own family experience is that working with the police as well as social care more effectively - improving other services knowledges, skills and expertise in trauma and its effects." Survey respondent**

**"A&E is not the right place to bring people such as my daughter who has bipolar and other mental health conditions, bringing her to a room like this. LAS should have places where people with mental health conditions should go to that isn't A&E." Survey respondent**

**"Maybe work with the police department to help open the way." Survey respondent**

## Finding 6

There is a key role for LAS to play in impacting upon socio-economic factors and supporting better healthcare and lifestyle choices.

When asked, the majority of respondents suggest that LAS can play a positive role in improving inequalities, including providing involvement opportunities/support for young people and schools, delivering training, focussing any aspects of their community or social value work on those experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges, and women who have experienced abuse.

### Quotes

"I believe it is vital for LAS to continue and perhaps increase career and training opportunities for young Londoners." **Survey respondent**

"progress towards socio-economic and environmental goals." **Survey respondent**

"Homeless people and the mental health units." **Survey respondent**

"I think these services should contribute to the well-being of society." **Survey respondent**

"More money into protecting young women in abusive relationships and putting them in protection centres. Economic slavery needs addressing." **Survey respondent**

"Schools should all learn first aid. Vulnerable, homeless and people with mental health conditions could do with more support." **Survey respondent**

# Additional considerations

## Ethnicity

The data was analysed to identify any particular emphasis or sentiment experienced by those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, which may be noteworthy. Nothing over and above that identified collectively was apparent.

## Age

The majority of respondents were from the 18-24 age group, however there were no issues specifically identified by this younger cohort that weren't also mentioned by older age groups.



### Contact Us

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



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