



Northamptonshire Health and Scrutiny Committee
The impact of anti-social behaviour on the town

The ambulance service has seen a rise in anti-social behaviour linked to the increase use of both legal and illegal recreational drugs. These types of drugs combined with alcohol generally have an impact on a patient's behaviour. It may also render them requiring medical assistance.

Regular clinical bulletins are disseminated to front line staff regarding any new legal or illegal drugs, their impact and the appropriate management and treatment. Staff have access to wide clinical team for additional information and guidance. Based within ambulance control we also have a Clinical Assessment Team, which staff can assess 24/7 for additional support.

We have close links and direct contact with the local police and share intelligence. When required the police will attend scene with ambulance crews to maintain their safety. All ambulance personnel are trained in conflict resolution, which concentrates on verbal and non-verbal communication to defuse situations.

When situations are not containable using these methods and a situation may suddenly escalate. Staff have personal issue radios, which are equipped with an emergency button which allows them to request immediate help from the police via ambulance control. These radios are also tracked, so help can be directed to the correct location.

All ambulances are equipped with a similar emergency button with also activates CCTV, with a clear audible message that informs anyone in the vehicle that the CCTV is in operation. Access to the CCTV footage is limited to senior managers and is there is clear governance around access. This footage can and has been utilised by our Local Security Management Specialist (LSMS), working in conjunction with the police to seek prosecutions when appropriate.

For patients that became frequent high volume service users, we work closely with the wider health community to develop care plans to reduce and prevent inappropriate use of the ambulance service. Patients who behaviour in an anti-social manner, which are identified to the LSMS, may be sent an EMAS warning letter informing them that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated. A warning may also be added to the control system with ambulance control, to ensure staff safety.

Where staff have concerns about the impact of anti-social behaviour on others, they have 24/7 access to a dedicated safeguarding line to report accordingly and these concerns are signposted to Social Services and the wider health community to ensure the safety of those concerns.

On key dates, i.e. New Year's Eve, a Dynamic Emergency Care Centre is deployed in both Kettering and Northampton town Centre's. This unit is manned by the voluntary ambulance sector, EMAS and the police. These units aim is to maintain welfare, treat and support patients in a community setting to reduce hospital attendance. The majority of patients treated by these units are either affected by drugs, alcohol or have been assaulted. With the police in situ, any action around assaults or drug use can be facilitated immediately.

Some patients may develop short term mental health problems through the use of substances. EMAS are establishing in conjunction with Northants Police and Northants Health Foundation Trust (NHFT) to implement a mental health response car to support patients within the community. This could be a conduit for improving anti-social behaviour, as the patients will be signposted to the appropriate care and given support.

Blanche Lentz
General Manager, Northants

Martin Claydon
Locality Manager, Northants

Chief Executive: Mrs Sue Noyes

Chairman: Mrs Pauline Tagg