



Ambulance Services in Hampshire

JULY 2014

Healthwatch Hampshire are providing this report of comments received from people who use healthcare services and live in Hampshire. This report dates from April 2013 to July 2014.

Executive Summary

Healthwatch Hampshire found more negative issues for ambulance services than for the NHS 111 service. From the negative comments we received for ambulance services, 6 out of 10 commentators requested information on our NHS Advocacy services, or have been internally referred to these services, which is too high. We believe that four hours is too long to wait for an ambulance after having a fall, which was the case in two of our comments. A previous Freedom of Information request to South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) in 2012[1] reported by the BBC News suggest regional variations on response times for different districts in Hampshire for serious 999 calls.



Comments from people who use ambulance and NHS111 services

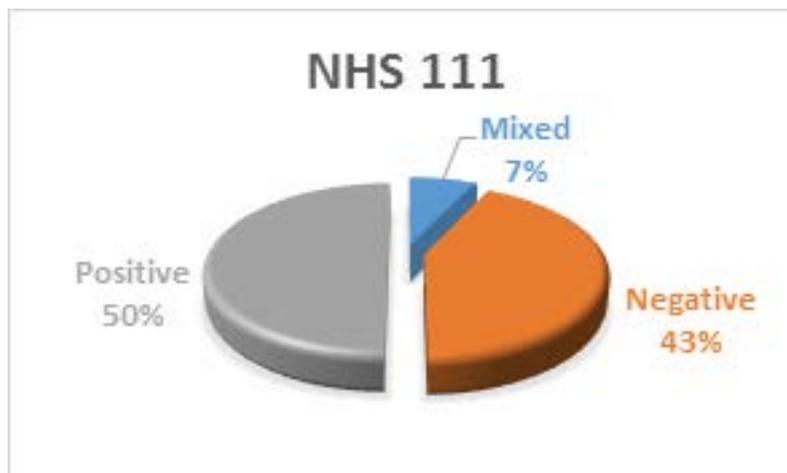
To date (up to July 2014), out of the 75 reports related to ambulance services in Hampshire, we report here from a selection of 40 comments in which the services are rated by Healthwatch Hampshire as either Positive, Negative, or Mixed (both positive and negative).

Table 1 below: Ratings of sentiment by number of comments, total = 40

Service	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Total
NHS 111	7	1	6	14
Patient Transport			2	2
Ambulance Services	14		10	24
Total	21	1	18	40



NHS 111 Service



Graph 2: Rating of Comments for NHS 111 services

A review of comments received for NHS 111 services show that a 'quick response' and 'good quality of care' were reported for NHS 111 services in Hampshire. We received seven positive comments which we report here. The number in brackets refers to the number of comments from individual people. These comments were rated by the following subtopics: Good quality of care [2], quick response time [2], good quality of treatment [1], rated very good, overall [1], and staff attitudes [1].

Poor quality of care was also reported as a negative issue for NHS 111 services. A poor quality of care example is provided in the stories below, when the "wrong ambulance" reportedly turned up to attend to a lady who needed a stretcher (example number 6). The comment supplied to us

suggests there may have been a failure to suspect broken bones, which may result from NHS 111 service rather than the Ambulance service. We received six negative comments which were rated by the following subtopics: Poor quality of care [2], Perceived deception [1], Poor response time [1], poor staff attitude [1] and one which was referred to our NHS Advocacy service, which we wait for further details [1]. Poor response time was reported for one comment in which the service user stated: "daughter taken in with high temperature. Used 111 - waiting 4 hours for a call back." Although the commentator does not state that the call back was from an out-of-hours service, this cannot be discounted.

Ambulance Services

A quick response time and good quality of care and treatment were common themes reported for ambulance services in Hampshire. One suicidal patient who criticised several aspects of healthcare stated that the ambulance staff were “respectable”, which was the only positive comment given for their healthcare during this episode. One comment was received by a lady who had complications with her pregnancy, who stated that: “the team were so caring”. Overall, we received fifteen positive comments* which were rated by the following subtopics: Quick response time [5], Good quality of care [4], Good quality of treatment [4], Dignity and respect [1], Staff attitudes [1].

Poor quality of care was a theme in

the negative comments that we received. Overall, we received ten negative comments which we feel warrant some attention. These comments were rated by the following subtopics: Poor quality of care [3], Misdiagnosis [1] Poor response time [1] Details not given [2] staff attitudes [1], non-specific comments [2]. The sentiment of these comments have led five of the individuals who contacted us to make a formal complaint and one individual to seek compensation. Several examples are given in the comments box, in detail, see comments 21-24.

* Note: one positive story contained 2 separate comments, and therefore rated twice.

Patient Transport

Two comments were reported for patient transport, and both of these were negative comments. One comment was rated by the subtopic: Poor safety [1], and the other comment was not rated by any subtopic as details were not given, however the commentator was happy to be contacted by us, if these details are needed [1]. Due to the time limits of this first report, the commentator was not contacted. The information we received by the other commentator states:

“Patient called to leave feedback on Queen Alexandra Hospital and her experience of patient transport. Felt hospital patient transport was poor service and did not feel safe in the back of an ambulance with staff who were

not belted in. The appointment was for distortion in her eyes which made her feel vulnerable. Said she told the staff she would complain and they said they would welcome it because they do not have enough time to pick up patients for appointments. Assures no confrontation occurred but ambulance staff informed ophthalmology consultant that she had been ‘verbally abusive’ and showed threats of ‘physical violence’. Patient feels this is ridiculous because she is an eighty year old woman and that the hospital transport staff knew they had been unprofessional and spoke to her consultant to ‘cover themselves’... Had received response but not happy with it.”

NHS Advocacy

Healthwatch Hampshire are the providers of free and independent NHS Advocacy service in Hampshire. Patients who contact us can request advocacy, are offered advocacy where appropriate, and we also provide signposting, including signposting patients who seek compensation?

Ambulance Services

Five of the individuals who provided their comments and sentiment have either requested information on our NHS Advocacy services, or have been internally referred to these services [1].

Compensation claim

One individual wished to make a claim for compensation against South Central Ambulance Service and was signposted to Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) [2].

NHS 111

Two individuals have either requested information on our NHS Advocacy services, or have been internally referred to these services [3].

[1] Our reference numbers on these five cases are: 00055017, 00046393, 00054104, 00055026 and 00055017.

[2] Our reference number: 00043951.

[3] Our reference numbers: 00054991 and 00054991.



Comments box

NHS 111 <i>Positive Comments</i>	
1	We required the services of the out of hours unit at Andover on a Sunday, we had an appointment within 20mins of making a call to 111. The doctor we saw was excellent, all together a fast and efficient service, well done NHS!
2	... initially contacted our surgery who advised us to call an ambulance. I thought this was excessive so contacted NHS on '111'. The young lady was very pleasant and asked me required questions. She then advised a Duty Doctor would call within an hour, which she did. After a chat she advised she had made an appt for me at out of hours service of which I attended. Thirty minutes after scheduled apt time I was seen by a Doctor who advised I needed to go to A&E for an ECG... within six hours of feeling unwell I was able to return home, reassured that I was not seriously ill, and with no price tag!
3	I had a health problem after having my baby. I phoned 111 service and received good advice and was told I would have a call back from GP. This happened within an hour.
4	NHS111 to book appointment rated very good.
5	Telephoned 111 on client's behalf and arranged an appointment for him at a dentist in Portsmouth tomorrow morning ... He was very happy with this.
NHS 111 <i>Negative Comments</i>	
6	My wife had a fall and broke her hip. I rang 111 when I found my wife at 1.30am. The next day I rang 999 at approx. 1.30pm, the ambulance came at 3.30pm and said they had the wrong ambulance and needed one with a stretcher. I didn't know that my wife's hip was broken when I phoned 111.
7	If you have to see Hants Doc [1] on more than one occasion then you end up getting told off, because Hants Doc is for emergencies only but when you ain't well in the night and the GP surgery is closed then you call 111 for general medical advice and the first thing they do is put you in a queue for a call back from Hants Doc which I ask them not to put me through to Hants Doc because I don't feel confident in Hants Doc anymore after being spoken to like that ...
8	This client called in wanting some support to make a complaint against the service she had received from the NHS111 Service. She felt that she had had her medical issues undermined by the assistant she spoke to on the phone, who was rude and impertinent. She was passed from various assistants and spoke to different doctors/clinicians. The general sentiment she felt was that they did not want to send someone out to her to see her. She says she has numerous medical issues including physical, mental health, agoraphobia and is registered disabled. She says she is isolated also. Eventually they did send out a doctor and she was diagnosed with bronchitis. I have made a referral for her to have some advocacy support in making her complaint...
9	Hospital - daughter taken in with high temperature. Used 111 - waiting 4 hours for a call back. They made appointment in Winchester but was sent home which left me angry and worried.
10	Stop 111, it's ****!

^[1]Hantsdoc provides the Out of Hours service co-located with the Emergency Department at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital.

	Ambulance Services <i>Positive Comments</i>
11	My partner dialled 999 as I had collapsed the response time was very quick. Great service very caring, very through and attentive. At 8.30am I had to call the ambulance back again and was then taken to A&E... Thank you all for your efforts you are not paid enough and we have amazing medical support available to us all for free in this country it's a blessing.
12	After my 22 month old daughter was taken in by ambulance from our surgery with breathing difficulties, I was left feeling very dissatisfied, first they could not find her on the system. I think it was around 11.30ish, my daughter had her obs done, then we waited and waited, no communication to tell us what was going on... I don't mind waiting please someone tell me what's going on. I must say the ambulance service were amazing.
13	... I could not have asked for better care and treatment by the whole of the CCU staff on duty. The response I received from the ambulance and paramedic teams stationed at Andover was exceptional following the 999 call who arrived within 2minutes, assessed my chest pain and conveyed me straight to Basingstoke where the theatre staff were waiting. I am now at home convalescing, sore but very grateful. Once again many thanks to a wonderful team...
14	My mother-in-law suffered a massive heart attack at home in Eastleigh. The first response arrived within 8 minutes to find her heart had already stopped. She began CPR, and didn't stop until she reached the hospitals A & E department, which was almost 30 minutes. Once there the staff continued the amazing work for over 2 hours and managed to stabilise her... I cannot commend all the staff involved enough. <i>[patient passed away later]</i>
15	I have quite a few health problems and i have been in and out of hospital quite a bit over the past few months and the staff on A & E are so friendly and caring and are very professional ... Also I have had a very good experience with the paramedics when I have had to have an Ambulance take me to hospital. I Definitely Would Recommend NHS to anyone who is looking for good care.
16	I had a car accident on 16/08/2013 and was taken by ambulance to Basingstoke A&E. my car was cut into pieces to remove me out of the car after the accident. Paramedics queried a spinal injury. I was treated throughout the incident by paramedics with the help of the fire brigade with great precaution, not allowed to move my neck etc. The paramedics, the fire brigade, the traffic police were all excellent. I cannot thank them enough. May they all be blessed.
17	My husband was taken into hospital with a suspected UTI. Ambulance crew very efficient and talked me through their decisions.
18	Friday 18 April I was taken to hospital with chest pains. The ambulance arrived and I had the best treatment by the paramedics, they gave me an ECG and recommended I go to hospital...

19	I was admitted due to having complications with early pregnancy. First to A&E via ambulance (the team were so caring and did their job - can't thank you enough) and then to the Early Pregnancy Unit (EPAU)...
20	Firstly, a heartfelt thank you to the three ambulance attendants, who came very quickly to attend to my virtually non-responsive 8-month old son. After the initial assessment and a continually rising fever (despite double doses of fever-reducing medication), we were taken to Basingstoke hospital, where my son was monitored for several hours until his situation stabilised... Overall, we were very impressed by the service we received and are grateful for those who attended to my son in such a caring and professional manner.
Ambulance Services Negative Comments	
21	<p><i>The researcher met this individual during a research project being conducted in Winchester Hospital. The individual was visibly upset and was offered NHS Advocacy Service by the researcher.</i></p> <p>In summary, the individual's father who is a terminally-ill 82-year-old had a fall in April 2013, rang ambulance service 999 which didn't come out for 4 and a half hours during which time he was left lying on the floor. She has two reference numbers for her calls. They said they were too busy with potential problems on motorway to pick up her father. Father was subsequently admitted to Winchester hospital, after his fall and they found he had broken ribs. Client wants to be contacted and Healthwatch Hampshire has initiated NHS Advocacy for her fathers lack of treatment and subsequent death in May 2013.</p> <p>Client writes: "On 2 April at approximately 8.15am, my father fell ... we were unable to move him. At this point (approximately 8.30am) I called 999 (call reference given) and explained Dad's condition. I was informed that the situation in which we found ourselves was NOT considered an emergency and that we would have to wait until an ambulance was in the vicinity as they were currently busy with more important callouts ... The District Nurse rang 999 at 10.00am and she too was told this was NOT an emergency ... During that long Wednesday morning, Dad kept asking me why isn't anyone coming?? ... I certainly didn't want to tell him that his situation was not considered important enough! At 11.50am I rang the GP Surgery and requested if the duty doctor could assist us by calling for an ambulance, and also if he could come out to check on Dad himself. I gave the receptionist the 999 reference numbers from the calls already placed to 999, and was told she would find out what the delay was and call us back ... Finally, at 12.45pm the Ambulance with two paramedics arrived. After checking his stats etc., the paramedics were able to assist in getting our Dad off the bathroom floor. In total, he had been lying on the floor from 08.15am until 13.00pm four hours and forty-five minutes ... I can safely and justifiably say that I am appalled at the way the Emergency Services have treated an elderly, vulnerable and terminally-ill patient." <i>[full details available]</i></p>
22	I put my hand through a glass window and cut everything in my arm apart from the bone. I had put a tourniquet on my arm and told the crew that came that I had done this 5 mins before their arrival and that I am trained as I am ex-military. They ignored this and removed it without covering my arm and I continued to bleed. The doctor at hospital said that I was within 10 minutes on dying.

23	<p>Caller was very upset that he has been treated so badly by ambulance staff on several call outs recently. He was randomly attacked in Gosport on a Saturday night and was assaulted with a metal pole. He was not given treatment immediately but was told to take pain killer and go home. Two days later he was suffering with breathing difficulties and pain and called the ambulance to request assistance. They logged down that nothing was wrong with him and suggested he take painkillers and rest. They did not take him in for an assessment/examination of internal wounding. He was still struggling with difficulties a day or so after this and went to his GP who immediately requested an ambulance to escort him to hospital for a full check up. The same staff member who had “fobbed him off” with pain killers was present and refuted the GP’s decision and mentioned that they were now not going to get their lunch, the ambulance crew. He took ages to assess the patient and carried out only minor obs and said he didn’t agree with the GP that he needed to go to hospital. Eventually he took the client anyway but the client was very distressed that he had been treated so badly on several occasions, not taken seriously and not treated with professionalism, especially by the same ambulance crew member. He feels he has lost faith in the ambulance service and that his life was at risk. He has a 6month old child now and his girlfriend is suffering from post-natal depression. He needs support to make a formal complaint and who to and is very cross that he was treated so flippantly when they should have taken him to hospital in the first instance for a full check up especially as wounds could be internal and it amounted that he did have a punctured lung and internal bleeding and lost 2.5 pints of blood. Requested NHS advocacy referral.</p>
24	<p>Recently fell down stairs and took four hours to wait for an ambulance. QA an hour wait in A&E trolley. Was going to send home mother-in-law. Said he couldn’t move his arm. They then discovered he had a mini stroke. Seven days in hospital.</p>

Reference

1. 'South Central Ambulance Service response times revealed' BBC News, retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-18302493>, accessed August 2014.





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