



London Ambulance Service



NHS Trust

Update to the London Assembly 7 July Review Committee Report

28 May 2007

This document updates the LAS response to the London Assembly recommendations following the bombings of 7 July 2005

1.1. Recommendation 5. *We recommend that the Metropolitan Police Service, London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service provide us with an update on the rollout of digital radio systems within their services in November 2006, May 2007 and November 2007, so that we can monitor progress towards full implementation of Tetra-based radio communications across London's emergency services.*

- 1.1.1. The London Ambulance Service has taken delivery of 200 Airwave radios in advance of the full roll out to all ambulances. The radios have been issued individually to the officers who would manage a major incident and in-car kits have been installed. The officers have been trained in the use of the radios and they are tested on a weekly basis. In the event of an incident, these radios would now be the primary method of communication between the scene, the ambulance control and the hospitals.
- 1.1.2. The full roll-out of Airwave radios to all ambulances is planned to commence in September 2007 and it is anticipated to be complete in September 2008. As with a project of this scale and complexity there is the potential for difficulties and delay, but at this time confidence remains high of achieving the overall project milestones as defined. The Project Board (comprising of senior managers) is committed to working with 02 to do everything possible to ensure that this project is a success.
- 1.1.3. The GLA is also reminded that all LAS operational vehicles are fitted with Mobile Data Terminals that use GPRS data system (proved very resilient on 7/7) and do not rely on radio communication alone.

1.2. Recommendation 7. *We recommend that emergency plans be amended so that, when an incident takes place in an Underground tunnel, the emergency services are deployed to the stations closest to the train in either direction.*

- 1.2.1. This principle has now been included in the LAS contingency plan for underground incidents. The contingency plans are used by the Incident Commander in the ambulance control as well as the 'Silver' officer in charge at the scene.

1.2.2. Working with London Fire Brigade colleagues, we have used their coding system to identify more precise underground locations. These changes have been added to the new version of our gazetteer, which we expect to launch in July 07. This system will allow us to quickly identify the precise location of an incident and the nearest access point.

1.3. Recommendation 17. *We request that the London Ambulance Service provide us with an update on progress in reviewing and improving its communications systems in time for our follow-up review in November 2006.*

1.3.1. A robust paging system is in place and tested daily.

1.3.2. Managers have the Tetra radio system. Full roll out to ambulances is scheduled from September 2007.

1.3.3. Each underground station holds two radios for the use of the ambulance service, to communicate from tunnels to ground level.

1.3.4. A new Incident Control Room has been opened, making it technologically and practically easier to manage multiple major incidents simultaneously.

1.3.5. A new Command Suite with enhanced communication facilities has been opened so that Gold Commander can keep an overview of the situation.

1.3.6. A back-up system of satellite phones is in place.

1.3.7. A back up system of motorbike 'runners' is in place in the event of complete communications failure across London.

1.3.8. As a final resort, the Major Incident plan has been rewritten to prepare and train managers to be able to run an incident independently in the absence of communications.

1.4. Recommendation 18. *We request that the London Ambulance Service provide us with details of its plans to increase its capacity to deliver supplies and equipment to the sites of major incidents in time for our follow-up review in November 2006.*

1.4.1. Twenty ambulances will immediately be sent to the scene of future major incidents, to 'front load' equipment.

1.4.2. Four large Equipment Support Vehicles are in place to re-supply mass equipment to the scenes.

- 1.4.3. A mass-casualty vehicle is in place to support the treatment of large numbers of patients.
- 1.4.4. Twenty five cars are in place around the capital which carry additional equipment to be taken to the scene quickly.
- 1.4.5. A facility is in place to bring mass-delivery oxygen to the scene.
- 1.4.6. NHS equipment pods are immediately available at ambulance stations around the capital to be taken to the scene.

1.5. Recommendation 19. *We recommend that the London Ambulance Service and London Underground review the potential for storing rescue and medical equipment at stations. We request that they report back to us by November 2006 telling us what progress has been made in conducting this review, and what options are under consideration.*

- 1.5.1. The London Underground now has in place Emergency Response Vehicles to take equipment to underground stations.
- 1.5.2. Key rail termini now have medical equipment in place, supported by London Ambulance Service.

1.6. Recommendation 22. *We recommend that London's emergency plans be revised to include an explicit provision for communication with people affected by a major incident as soon as possible after the arrival of emergency or transport service personnel at the scene.*

- 1.6.1. In agreement with LESLP partners, we have taken responsibility for communication with multiple casualties. This 'patient liaison' function is now the responsibility of a specific officer who is equipped with a loud hailer. The police will continue to hold responsibility for communication with the uninjured.

1.7. Recommendation 32. *We recommend that the London Ambulance Service review its mechanism for finding out and recording the identity of seriously injured patients who are able to give their names and any other details at the scene of a major incident. We request that the London Ambulance Service come forward with possible solutions in time for our follow-up review in November 2006.*

- 1.7.1. Patient details, where available, are recorded routinely by ambulance staff unless clinical urgency over-rides this priority.

1.7.2. London Ambulance Service staff are trained and practiced in the use of an effective triage product. We have previously considered systems offered by alternative providers and have reconsidered the specific product promoted to the GLA Review Committee. On balance we have decided that our existing product meets our needs.

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