

Membership Matters



Issue 34 • Winter 2024

The newsletter for SECAMB members

Hello everyone!



Welcome to the latest edition of our Members Newsletter!

This continues to be a busy time for SECAMB and we are pleased to share just some of what our people have been up to.

As I look back over the past few months, a couple of things stand-out for me in particular.

During November, we held our annual Staff Awards – our SECAMB Stars – where we welcomed more than 450 of our people and their friends and families to three events, where we recognised and celebrated their long service and outstanding achievements.

They were fantastic events where we were able to highlight just some of the tremendous work that our people put in across the Trust, every day. It was especially poignant that we were joined at each ceremony by some of the patients whom our crews had helped.

On 18 November, we welcomed more than 200 of our volunteers to our first-ever volunteers' conference – a really inspiring and uplifting event!

In SECAMB, we are fortunate to benefit from the commitment of a team of more than 400 volunteers

across a variety of roles including Community First Responders, Chaplains, Welfare Volunteers and Governors and the conference was a fantastic opportunity to recognise and celebrate the contribution they make.

As we look forwards, we have been working hard to co-develop our new Trust Strategy, which will shape how we will operate in the future.

We have spent the last three months listening to and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including our own people and it is this feedback that is shaping our emerging options.

This is an important time for SECAMB and I would encourage everyone to get involved in helping to shape our future if you can. You can read more about our emerging Strategy and how to get involved in this newsletter.

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And finally, on behalf of all of us at SECAMB, please may I end by thanking you for your support during 2023 and extend my very best wishes to everyone for the festive season and for a healthy 2024.

Simon Weldon

In September the nominations opened for new Governors to start with us in April 2024 and we received nominations for four candidates in the following areas:

1x Brighton and East Sussex (Lower East), 1x Surrey, Hants and West London (Upper West),
1x West Sussex (Lower West), 1x Staff Operational

And the results are in...

We are very excited to introduce our new Governors.



For the Lower East we have **Zak Foley**. Zak is not just representing the Lower East but also our youth following. Zak lives in Brighton and is at the beginning of his career in the vast healthcare world. In addition to studying Health and Social Care, he works as a lifeguard and volunteers for

St John Ambulance services. From a young age, Zak has admired the Ambulance service and all who are part of it – his future goal is to become a Paramedic. Zak is excited to work with his fellow governors and represent the local community with SECamb.



We also have **Martin Brand** who was re-elected for the Upper West (Surrey, Hants and West London) From 2004 to 2019 prior to retirement Martin was a senior manager in the London Ambulance Service. Having experienced ambulance services as not only as an employee

but also as a patient and relative. Martin was elected in 2022 to serve a two-year term as a Governor of SECamb. He has seen first-hand the difficult task dedicated paramedic and managerial staff have to cope with in providing service to the community in the face of increasing demand but constrained resources. He feels that Governors are needed who understand both the service's challenges and the negative impact on patients of poor performance and who can help by playing the 'critical friend' role, seeking assurance that action is being taken, while acting as the voice of the public in a constructive way. Martin believes his experience fits him to fulfil this role and he can make a post-retirement contribution to society in this way.



The Upper West has **Ray Rogers** as a new Governor – Ray was for 12 years a Governor at the Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust until his term of office recently came to an end including three years as Deputy Lead Governor. During that time, he experienced the value of the involvement of the public in a

Trust's affairs through its Governors. He also saw firsthand the importance of the ambulance service and the skills of its staff. Consequently, he decided to put his name forward to be a Governor at SECamb and was delighted to be elected. As for his background, he was first a medical physicist; then Director of a UK body responsible for all medical devices excluding medicines and finally a Director with the Department of Health, responsible for information management and IT in the NHS.



Chris Burton is our newly elected Operational Staff Governor – Chris was previously a staff Governor between 2020 and 2023 and has come back for another term.

This does sadly mean we are losing **Brian Chester** (Upper West) and **David Romaine** (Lower East). We would like to thank them for all their hard work and support throughout their terms and wish them all the best for the future. We hope they will continue to be valued members of the Trust.



Welcome

...to our newly Appointed Governor, Simon Dobinson

We are very pleased that we have Simon Dobinson joining us as an Appointed Governor from our blue light partners.

Simon has held a varied policing career split between Essex Police, Metropolitan Police and Sussex & Surrey Police serving in community related policing roles at all levels. Before joining Surrey & Surrey Police Forces, Simon was a commander in the Metropolitan Police. In 2022 he transferred to Sussex Police in a collaborated role with the Surrey Police. To read more about our newly and already appointed governors please click [here](#).



Get Involved!

Stand for election to our Council of Governors in 2025.

If you have an interest in, and commitment to, improving public health, increasing the public's understanding and awareness of the ambulance service, and want a challenging voluntary role that can make a difference, then becoming a SECamb Public Governor may be for you. You do not need to have a background in health services, just an interest in your local ambulance service and the NHS.

We will provide training, support, and guidance for carrying out this important voluntary role within the Trust. You'll have the opportunity to work closely with your fellow Governors and the Board and learn more than you ever thought you needed to know about your local NHS ambulance service!

We hold elections in our public and staff constituencies on a rolling basis.

We have upcoming elections for a three-year term of office (01 March 2025 - 28 February 2028) on the Council of Governors as follows:

- 1** x **Lower East** (East Sussex & Brighton)
- 2** x **Upper East** (Medway/Kent/East London)
- 1** x **Upper West** (Surrey, Hants & West London)
- 2** x **Lower West** (West Sussex)
- 1** x **Non-operational Staff**
- 1** x **Operational Staff**



It's the season to be healthy

As the Christmas season is fast approaching, now is the time to review your medicine cabinet and get your repeat prescriptions ordered. Remembering ordering and collecting prescriptions can take several days so it is important to order in so that the festive season can be enjoyed in good health. Also make sure you stock up on your over-the-counter medicines – a properly stocked medicine cabinet can help treat many common illness and ailments over the cold winter months.

If you do need help this winter but it's not an emergency, please think about other alternatives to 999. **Your GP, local pharmacist or NHS 111 online** can all help advise, which helps us focus on our 999 service on those who need us most.

There are also some other steps you can take to protect yourself this winter.

- ✓ Ensure your flu and COVID vaccinations are up to date, **Protect yourselves and others from flu – YouTube**
- ✓ Look out for any vulnerable family or friends – is there anything you can help them with?
- ✓ Wear appropriate shoes when outside especially in icy weather, we see an increase in slips and trips during the colder spells.
- ✓ Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F), you might prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer but keep your bedroom at 18°C all night, if you can. if you are under 65, healthy and active, you can safely have your home cooler than 18°C, as long as you are comfortable.
- ✓ Keep active when you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so.
- ✓ When you are out and about make sure you wear bright colours at night, will you be clearly seen as a pedestrian or cyclist? If you are walking at dusk or night use a torch to help you see and to help others see you.

Make sure you make the right call this winter

**HELP US
HELP YOU**
KNOW WHAT TO DO

NHS
**South East Coast
Ambulance Service**
NHS Foundation Trust



	Grazed knee. Sore throat. Hungover. Cough.	Self-care
	Diarrhoea. Runny nose. Painful cough. Headache.	Pharmacy
	Unwell? Unsure? GP surgery closed? Need help?	NHS 111
	Vomiting. Ear pain. Stomach ache. Back ache.	GP Surgery
	Choking. Chest pain. Blacking out. Blood loss.	A&E or 999 Emergencies only

Trust celebrates long service and special achievements



The long service and achievements of ambulance staff, volunteers and members of the public has been celebrated during November 2023 in a series of three SECambawards events, with award winners and their family and friends gathering at The Orangery in Maidstone, Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking and The Grand Hotel in Eastbourne.

Chief Executive Commendations were presented across a number of categories, including Clinical Excellence and Quality Improvement, Exceeding Expectations, and Voluntary or Community Service.



A public commendation was awarded to Emma Page from Sheppey for her quick thinking and actions providing CPR and saving the life of 77-year-old cyclist, Geoff Hollands, when he collapsed on Swale Way, Kemsley in May 2023. We were delighted that Geoff was able to attend one of the Award Ceremonies with his wife, Susan, to see Emma pick up her award.



Husband and wife, Gary Dawson and Nicky Prince received an Exceeding Expectations commendation for saving the life of a fellow competitor at a 10k running event in London in February 2022. Student Paramedic, Gary and Metropolitan Police Constable, Nicky, stopped, arranged help, and performed what proved to be successful CPR on Bob Booth, from Burnham on Crouch, Essex, when he collapsed at the 7k mark of the London Winter 10k.





Queen's Medals for Long Service and Good Conduct were presented on behalf of His Majesty The King.



Awards for 20, 30 and 40 years' NHS service were also presented, while our Chairman, David Astley received a special award to mark his 50 years' NHS service ahead of his retirement in May 2024. The volunteer community first responders were thanked for 10 years' dedication to the service.

A public commendation was presented to James Ward from Staines, for his actions as a passer-by in delivering life-saving CPR to James Boxhall from Ashford, Surrey. Mr Boxhall, 53, was in his garden when he collapsed and was discovered by his wife, Verena. With exhaustion preventing Verena from continuing to deliver CPR to her husband on

her own, the support of James ensured he was resuscitated. We were delighted to welcome James and Verena to the ceremony to see James receive his award.

Team of the Year was awarded to SECAmb's Safeguarding Team. The specialist team provides expert advice and support on a wide variety of often challenging and sensitive subjects right across the Trust. The team also plays a vital role in linking with other organisations across the region to protect the welfare of both staff and patients.

Operations Manager and Paramedic at Chertsey, Sam Garman, picked up the Employee of the Year award for his actions in managing the aftermath of a burst water main outside the Trust's Chertsey Make Ready Centre which forced the whole team to move all services to alternative sites. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service were recognised their support following the same incident, which included the sharing of premises following the flood and ensured that we could maintain response to patients in the local area.





Elsewhere, Gatwick Paramedic and Operational Team Leader, Ben Relf, was presented with a commendation for Demonstrating Compassion for his caring approach to supporting others going through difficult circumstances.

A special award was presented to Chertsey Emergency Care Support Worker, Richard Orme and Guildford Paramedic and Operational Team Leader, Neil Godden for their role in participating in the King's coronation parade earlier this year.



Adrian Dry, Gareth Hulin, Nicole Barrow, Nycki Bishop, Paul Dine, Martin Jennings, John Bennett, Richard Harker, Peter Cronk, Martin King



Paul Webber, Somer Viola, Sam Collis, Paul Duncan, Toby Hillier-Woods, Karen Andrews, Tanya Bridges, Wendy Sansom, Holly Finch, Charlotte Gale, Ellen Couzens

Chief Executive Simon Weldon said: *'I was honoured to attend my first ever SECamb awards ceremony since joining SECamb earlier this year. I would like to thank all those who were recognised for their long service and dedication. It was very humbling to think of all the people they have helped over so many years. I was also delighted to present commendations to so many worthy winners. Their actions further confirm to me the great work which is going on across our region day-in, day-out and I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single member of staff and all volunteers across our patch for everything they do.'*

Full details of all long service and commendation awards can be found on our website:

- **Trust celebrates long service and special achievements** – Kent
- **SECamb celebrates long service and special achievements** – Surrey
- **Staff, volunteers and public celebrate long service and special achievements** – Sussex

You can also watch videos from our colleagues with their nominations for awards such as the Public Commendation, Exceeding Expectations and Clinical Excellence [Here](#).

SECAmb holds its first ever Volunteers' Conference



The conference was held at East Sussex National Hotel and Conference Centre near Uckfield on 18 November 2023 to recognise and celebrate the contribution of all our volunteers, with more than 200 of them joining us on the day.

We benefit from the commitment of approximately 400 volunteers across a variety of roles including Community First Responders, Chaplains, Welfare Volunteers and Governors. Guest speakers at the conference included Helen Vine, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) National Volunteer Lead for Ambulance Services and the author of the National Ambulance Volunteering Strategy.

We were also pleased to welcome external speakers from North West Ambulance Service, East Midlands Ambulance Service, and the British Heart Foundation. Attendees also heard from cardiac arrest survivor, Graham Chaston from East Sussex, whose life was saved in 2021 by prompt treatment by CFR, Mark Walder.

Head of Community Resilience, David Wells, said: **"This was the first conference of this scale we have held for volunteers, and it was a real success. We were able to explore topics including the benefit and vital role volunteers bring to both patient care and their staff colleagues and how want to continue to expand the role of volunteers within SECAmb. We are extremely grateful for the commitment and dedication of our fantastic team of volunteers, be they Community First Responders, Chaplains, Governors or providing Welfare Support. I'm delighted that we are able to celebrate their contribution in this way and thank each and every one of them for their ongoing support."**

We would also like to thank UK defibrillator supplier, Wel Medical, for providing sponsorship towards the cost of the conference.

The Patient Engagement Team



Dear members,

You may have heard the news that the Patient Engagement team has been making some exciting new developments we would like to share with you.

► Focus Groups

The Patient Engagement team has been supporting several projects within SECamb and in July we facilitated a Focus Group for a Quality Improvement (QI) group called 'Keeping Patients Safe in the Stack'. We have two more focus groups coming up for members of the public to come along and share their opinions and feedback and help us to shape our service with their voice at the heart of everything we do.

► Community Forum

On 27 September we launched our virtual Community Forum to give members of the public the opportunity to share their experiences of using our 111 and 999 services. The feedback from this group is being used to identify areas we are doing well as well as areas of service improvement. This group takes place every other month and the next meeting has been planned for 29 November in which we will also be discussing our Trust Strategy.

► Patient Experience Questionnaire (PEQ)

We successfully launched our 999 PEQ on 9 November and have had over 50 responses since opening this up to the public. This will help us to understand the themes and trends of what our patients are saying and better understand what is important to all of our diverse service users.



Vikki Baldock,
Patient Engagement
Lead



Jo Turner,
Deputy Director of
Quality Improvement
and Patient Experience

► Next steps

The information from our engagement sessions like the Community Forum and our Focus Groups will identify Quality Improvement projects. Next on the agenda for the Patient Engagement team will involve inviting members of the public to work with us in a volunteer capacity to co-produce these projects as QI Patient Representatives.

Get involved

If you would like to get involved in our focus groups, Community Forum, the development of QI projects or would simply like some more information, please contact the Patient Engagement team on the email address below:

engagementteam@secamb.nhs.uk

Shaping our Future Together



Progress Update on Our Strategy Programme

As a critical part of our Trust's priorities for 2023/24, we have embarked on a journey to co-design a strategy that delivers outstanding patient care, enhances the experience of our people, and fosters integration and collaboration with our partners, responding to the evolving needs of our communities.

Phase 1: Diagnosing Our Current State

Completed in November 2023, Phase 1 diagnosed the current state of the Trust, examining the challenges with our current operating environment, evolving population health needs within our communities and anticipated changes within the health and care landscape. This phase was crucial in understanding the challenges we face and the future needs of our patients, our people, and our partners.

This involved a comprehensive series of engagement activities with a wide range of stakeholders, consolidating these findings in our case for change.

- **Public Engagement:** Over 350 responses have been gathered through a public survey and engagement activities, providing valuable insights from those we serve.
- **Internal Involvement:** We have involved our people through various channels, including a dedicated online portal, site visits, focus groups and drop-in sessions. This inclusive approach has ensured the voice of our people, including over 200 individual insights from our volunteers.
- **Partner Collaboration:** Continuous engagement with our commissioners and over 40 external partners through briefings, workshops, and interviews has played a pivotal role in shaping our understanding.

Key Findings:

- We will serve an additional 125,000 people by 2029, a 2.5% increase. Additionally, 130,000 more people will be over 65 years old by 2029; a 12% net increase. This will place increased demands on our service, as we already see 50% of our demand coming from the over-65s age group today.
- Our patients will increasingly become more complex, with 67% of our patients already having two or more medical conditions.
- Almost 30% of our activity comes from 20% of our most deprived communities.
- We are not sufficiently joined up with our partners to deliver integrated care; our role is not well defined, and we are not being used to our full potential.
- Increasingly our patients come to us with social, urgent, or unmet care needs with only 13% requiring critical or emergency care, however, we send the same response and skillsets to patients with vastly different needs.

Shaping our Future Together



Our Case for Change:

- The needs of our patients are changing and becoming more complex. Population growth, ageing and increased complexity will lead to a +15% growth over the next 5 years.
- The NHS is facing significant challenges. We have a responsibility to reshape our role to support the health and social care system.
- Our model of care no longer meets the full needs of our patients. This is adversely affecting their experience and impacting the wellbeing of our people.
- If we continue with our current model of care, we will need to recruit an additional 600 people over the next 5 years to respond to our most critical patients in a timely manner.
- Doing nothing is not an option, and we must radically change our approach.

Phase 2: Generating and Prioritising Strategic Options

Having moved into Phase 2, our focus has shifted to developing a range of strategic options, informed by the findings from Phase 1. We are assessing these options based on their impact on patient care, the experience of our people, service delivery, finance, and our integrated care systems.

Following extensive engagement and evaluation, our goal is to choose a direction of travel for the Trust that best meets the evolving needs of the communities we serve and supports our people in delivering care by January 2024. This chosen option will be developed and finalised during Phase 3 (February-March 2024), ready for publication in the Spring.

Your Role in Our Transformation

As we navigate these changes, your involvement is more crucial than ever. We invite you to join us in this journey to shape a future that delivers outstanding patient care, enhances the experience of our people, and supports our partners.

Please visit our website for more information on how you can get involved or contact the programme team at strategy@secamb.nhs.uk.



Shaping our Future Together



Examples of what great work our teams do

A 34-year-old woman from Sayers Common, West Sussex, has been reunited with the ambulance team who helped save her life in December 2020.

Sarah Edmonds was just 31 years old when she collapsed in her then 4-year-old daughter Arabella's bedroom, before receiving CPR from husband, James, under the instruction of 999 Emergency Medical Advisor, Owen Brown. Following Sarah's collapse, Critical Care Paramedic, Justin Carding and Paramedic, Sheena Moloney were first to arrive at the scene, closely followed by Operational Team Leader, James Rear, and ambulance crew, Paramedic John Waghorn and Trainee Associate Ambulance Practitioner, Hayley Nichols. Justin and Sheena began advanced life support, continuing the excellent CPR James had provided to Sarah for more than 10 minutes, with Justin establishing that Sarah's heart was in Ventricular fibrillation (VF). The team worked together at the scene for an hour to resuscitate and then stabilise Sarah before she was well enough to make the journey to Royal Sussex County Hospital. Sarah spent just under three weeks in hospital and was somewhat reluctantly fitted with an internal defibrillator or implantable cardioverter-defibrillator, (ICD) before being discharged in time for Christmas.



"I really wasn't keen to have it," said Sarah. "But James convinced me it was the right thing to do."

The decision proved vital as the defibrillator delivered a number of shocks, when required, to Sarah's heart, the first in June 2021, which in turn helped her cardiac team diagnose she suffered from Long QT syndrome – a conduction disorder associated with the electrical system that controls a person's heartbeat. Thanks to James's immediate CPR, the team's treatment at the scene and expert care in hospital, Sarah has returned to her work in recruitment sales and is enjoying life and Sarah and James are urging everyone to learn CPR and how to save a life.



A Brighton man, who suffered a cardiac arrest in October last year, has been reunited with some of the team who helped save his life. Steven Hawkes, 45, visited Brighton Make Ready Centre with his wife, Tracy and daughter, Sophie last week, on the eve of the anniversary of his collapse.

Steven, also father to Yasmine, Howard and Olivia, met and thanked some of the team who came to his aid when he collapsed at the wheel of his vehicle in Eaton Place, close to Royal Sussex County Hospital on

14 October 2022. Paramedic, Amy Brooker and Student Paramedic, Alex Carter, were in the same road close to coming clear from another patient when they heard a crash, as Steven, who was driving home from working away in Bath fitting hospital medical equipment, crashed into parked cars. Alex's GoodSam app and Emergency Operations Centre colleagues alerted the pair that the RTC involved a cardiac arrest and they were quickly on scene,

along with a nearby Patient Transport Service crew. Support arrived from paramedic colleagues Emily Payne and Paul Ellis, Operational Team Leader, Tom Graves, Paramedic Practitioner, Sarah Gilby and Critical Care Paramedic Andy Hitt.

Together the team were able to resuscitate Steven delivering four shocks with a defibrillator. He was amazingly already attempting to speak before his arrival at the nearby hospital. Steven spent two weeks at Royal Sussex County Hospital and was fitted with an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator, (ICD), which will deliver a shock to his heart if required in the future.



The Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Team at SECamb

You may have met some of the FTSU team – Lorraine Tomassi Deputy Guardian, Sarah Wadey Deputy Guardian, Kim Blakeburn Freedom to Speak Up Guardian – at this year's Annual Membership Meeting and during October, the team were out and about, celebrating FTSU month and encouraging staff to write their pledges of support. CEO Simon Weldon led the way, sharing his Speak Up pledge explaining why he feels speaking up is important for everyone no matter what your role or job title at SECamb is.



Kim Blakeburn said, our FTSU Guardian, said: **"We have had so many great discussions for Speak Up Month, thank you to everyone that contributed. Whilst Speak Up month is a good opportunity for some fun activities such as coffee mornings with cake, and competitions to encourage our people to come up with the best pledge, it is important to remember speaking up isn't just for the month of October, we need everyone to feel safe and able to speak up all year round."**

Below is an example of a concern that was raised to FTSU, it highlights the difference that can be made when staff feel able to speak up.



A concern was raised regarding an employee who had had their employment terminated and then their wellbeing provision was being withdrawn with immediate effect. The concern had nothing to do with the staff being terminated but solely that the Trust had withdrawn all wellbeing support at a time when the individual was most vulnerable and before they would have had an opportunity to make alternative plans and arrangements for themselves.



I PLEDGE TO...

To do all that I can to make SECamb a place where speaking up is welcomed and all our leaders think it is a core part of their roles both to speak up themselves and encourage their teams to do so.

Simon Weldon – Chief Executive Officer

SPEAKUPPLEDGE

Following discussions, the Wellbeing Hub will now extend the support available to staff under these circumstances for seven days from the termination of employment to allow individuals to seek help from their GP. Any existing mental health or physio appointments will still go ahead in the seven days after someone has had their employment terminated.



I PLEDGE TO...

To Champion speaking up through:

- My behaviour being open to challenge and being ready to call out behaviours and responses that do not match our values.
- Encouraging, and in fact seeking out diversity and inclusivity.
- Being there and present to listen.
- Truly valuing all people.
- Being curious and seeking learning.
- Supporting leaders and managers to respond in an accepting, open, compassionate, and fair way.
- Always seeking the best for our people and our patients.

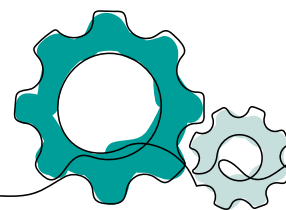
Margaret Dalziel – ED of Quality & Nursing

SPEAKUPPLEDGE



Please remember if you or a colleague or friend working for SECamb need to speak to a member of the team, please don't hesitate to contact us individually or on our team's secure email address: ftsug@secamb.nhs.uk.

Quality Improvement (QI) Team's update on Keeping Patients Safe in the Stack Project



In addition to delivering QI training across the organisation, the team have also been working on key projects with support from colleagues in various teams. In this edition we have provided an update on a project which is focussed on reducing harm to patients whilst awaiting a clinical callback from the service.

In January 2023, the QI team commenced the project utilising the DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control) framework. We know that the Trust are not consistently reaching patients within targeted time frames, and this was highlighted as a organisational risk during a Quality Summit. The project does not duplicate existing work but delivers in partnership an opportunity for us to step back, consider all root cause contributory factors and how we might manage these more effectively, utilising a QI framework to maximise our opportunity for success.

1. Define (What is the project about? What is the problem we are trying to solve? What does the customer want? (staff, patients, etc))

We know that:

- Whilst SECAmb perform well compared to other Ambulance providers across the country, we do not consistently meet the national Ambulance Response Plan (ARP) standards for all categories of calls. We are seeing a high volume of duplicate calls into the service and data from a recent harm review indicates that our poor performance is having a negative impact on our patients.
- We are failing to reach patients in a timely manner, and this is also having an impact on the wellbeing of our staff.
- We are not necessarily able to get to patients any quicker due to bigger, system wide issues so we need to focus on keeping them safe whilst waiting.

Stakeholder engagement is key to understanding the needs of the customer and so we spoke to both **staff** and **patients** about the problem:

We started off by engaging with 43 colleagues including Clinicians, Critical Care Nurses (CCNs), Emergency Operations Managers (EOCMs), CCDs, Dispatch and Paramedic Practitioner (PP) hubs. They gave us valuable feedback which was received and considered in the generation of improvement ideas. We also triangulated the information with other data reviewed. Key points from their feedback was:-

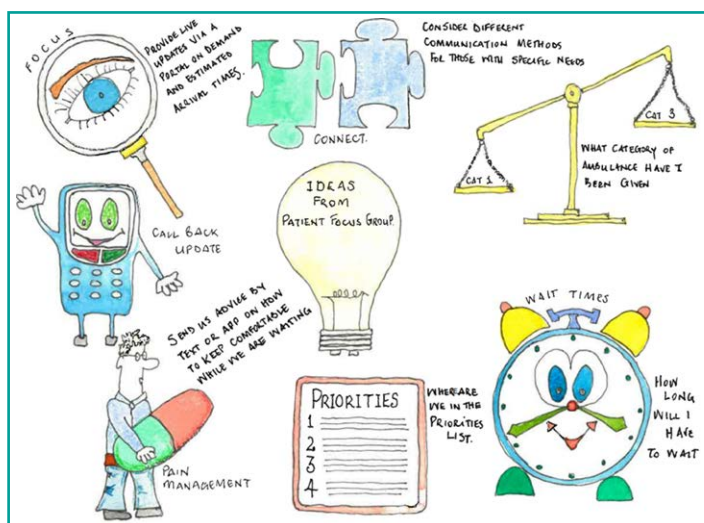
- They want to see improvement in patient safety in the clinical queue
- A large proportion of colleagues believe that the problem with the clinical queue is due to demand and the volume of calls in relation to the number of clinical staff available.
- The group gave a lot of suggestions for improvement which have been considered in the Improve phase of the project

We also engaged with our patient forum about the problem. In summary they told us that:

- It would be beneficial for patients to have more information relating to our service demand to allow them to make more informed decisions about whether to contact us / to continue with the disposition they were given following an assessment. This included the need for patients to understand what type of ambulance was being organised for them as they are currently not told the difference between a Category 3 and Category 1 ambulance, for example.

- They gave several suggestions including a text message with link to a secure portal with care advice, type of ambulance being organised, comms on social media about what happens when patients call the service. They also suggested different communication methods for patients with specific needs.

Figure 1. A Sketch note summarising key points from the forum



2. Measure

(What is the problem? When does it occur? Where does it occur? How will we measure improvement? What goals should we set?)

Having completed process mapping and identifying several opportunities for improvement the project team reviewed data between January to April 2023, and identified 3 key problems to be addressed:

- Clinicians were spending a significant amount of time on closing duplicate calls **(784 hours)**
- There was a significant amount of duplicate calls coming into the service **(85,838 calls)**. Highest number of duplicate calls were related to medical minors
- Staff from the service were spending a lot of time checking on patients whilst they were waiting for a callback from a clinician **(469 hours)**
- The following measures were agreed:
 - Reduction in time spent on closing duplicate calls
 - Reduction in number of duplicate calls to the service
 - Reduction in manual welfare calls

The group agreed that if clinicians could spend less time on the activities listed above they would be able to get to patients much quicker thereby reducing harm whilst waiting.

To find out more about the project you can reach us at: quality.improvement@secamb.nhs.uk.

3. Analyse

(What are the root causes of the problem? What are the possible solutions? Which solutions would provide us with maximum impact with the smallest amount of effort?)

During the root cause analysis event, at least 70 contributory factors were listed ranging from cultural issues to systems issues. Some staff highlighted the cognitive burden on staff with distractions in room potentially leading to longer hours closing down duplicate calls, staffing levels and workload, delays in call back to patient leading to the increase in duplicate calls, multiple witnesses in accident calling the service one after the other, unknown response times etc.

The team discussed potential high impact to low impact improvements to address the issues that had been highlighted including:

- Automating the closure of duplicate calls
- Implementation of interim care advice,
- Advising patients of ETA
- Automated welfare text messaging
- Review of call closure script for C3 & C4's

It was agreed that these improvements would be taken forward and a risk assessment of impact on patients and other areas of the service has been undertaken.

4. Improve

(What are the solutions and how am I going to implement these on a small scale to test if they work? How will I measure to validate the solutions? How will I monitor to check whether anything needs to be changed or amended?)

The project team are working hard to ensure that improvements are delivered by Q4 of 2023/2024. One of the key challenges in addition to resource and capacity constraints in delivering the improvements at pace is our dependence on an external organisation to deliver some of the systems changes.

The implementation of these improvements is only the beginning of many more positive changes that will positively impact the experience of care for our patients and also provide a better working environment for staff.

As part of the Control phase, we will be monitoring what impact the changes have had on the issues we identified at the start of the project.

What would you do...?

If you are driving and hear an ambulance siren or see flashing blue lights when you are parked up at a set of traffic lights what would you do?

The Highway Code driving rule, which came into force on 1 June 2022, could mean drivers get a fine of up to £1000, and/or receive several points on their driving licence, simply for letting an ambulance go past.

We don't want you to go through a red traffic light as you would be breaking the law and taking an unnecessary risk, however helpful you are trying to be. If you are the first in the queue at a red light, stay where you are and leave the ambulance to find a way around you. Our ambulance crews have had training and will know what to do.

If you are on the motorway or dual carriageway and see an ambulance coming behind you, what would you do?

You should move over to the left, if it is safe, and allow the ambulance to pass in the outside lane if it is clear.

If you are on a smart motorway and you see one of the lanes are closed on the matrix signs above the carriageway, do not move into these to make way for an ambulance. No matter how helpful you are trying to be it is illegal to drive in a lane showing a red X, the ambulance will use these if it can do so safely.

In slow or stationary traffic with all lanes being used, make way for the ambulance by creating an emergency corridor. Stay where you are until you are sure there are no more emergency vehicles to follow.



Highway Code – Rule 219

Emergency and Incident Support vehicles.

You should look and listen for ambulances, fire engines, police, doctors or other emergency vehicles using flashing blue, red or green lights and sirens or flashing headlights, or traffic officer and incident support vehicles using flashing amber lights. When one approaches do not panic. Consider the route of such a vehicle and take appropriate action to let it pass, while complying with all traffic signs. If necessary, pull to the side of the road and stop, but try to avoid stopping before the brow of a hill, a bend or narrow section of road. Do not endanger yourself, other road users or pedestrians and avoid mounting the kerb. Do not brake harshly on approach to a junction or roundabout, as a following vehicle may not have the same view as you.

Dates for the diary

- **Trust Board** – Thursday 8 February 2024
Banstead Make Ready Centre.
- **Council of Governors Meeting**
Thursday 14 March 2024
Nexus House, Crawley.
- **Trust Board** – Thursday 4 April 2024
Nexus House, Crawley.
- **Trust Board** – Thursday 2 May 2024
Nexus House, Crawley.