



South East Coast
Ambulance Service
NHS Foundation Trust



Annual Report Highlight Summary

2025 - 2026



Saving Lives,
Serving Our Communities

2025-2026

A year of change and progress

At a glance:



968,960 calls to 999
911,000 NHS 111 calls



679,000
incidents
attended

More than 2.5 million
patient interactions



11.5% leading cardiac
arrest survival rate



Record 71%
staff survey
response



100,000
volunteer
hours



2,146
Compliments
received

Throughout 2025/26, we continued to improve the care and support available to patients across Kent, Surrey, Sussex and North East Hampshire.

Despite increasing demand, we delivered faster emergency response times, maintained strong 999 and NHS 111 performance, achieved nationally-leading cardiac arrest survival rates and helped more patients receive the right care, in the right place, first time.

Alongside improvements in clinical care, we strengthened the way we listen to patients, support local communities and work with our volunteers and partners. From increasing patient engagement

and community resilience, to investing in colleagues, digital innovation and sustainability, the achievements highlighted in this report reflect our commitment to delivering better outcomes for patients while building a stronger and more resilient ambulance service for the future.

Foreword from our Chief Executive



2025/26 has been a year of continued progress for SECAMB. Despite growing demand across our services and the wider health system, we have continued to improve care for patients while strengthening SECAMB as a place to work.

We exceeded our NHS England target for Category 2 response times, achieved nationally leading cardiac arrest survival rates and expanded our virtual care services, helping more patients receive the right care without the need for an ambulance response. Alongside this, our investment in digital transformation is helping to improve resilience and support frontline care.

We have also made important progress for our people. The 2025 NHS Staff Survey delivered some of our most positive results to date, with improvements across all nine People Promise themes and a joint-highest response rate of 71 per cent.

I am proud of the contribution made by our volunteers and extremely grateful for the role they play in supporting our patients, communities and colleagues.

Looking ahead, we will build on this progress as we continue to develop our Group model with South Central Ambulance Service. This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen collaboration, support our workforce and improve outcomes for patients across the South East.

I'd like to thank everyone at SECAMB for the compassion, dedication and professionalism they show every day. Their commitment is the reason we continue to make a difference to the communities we serve.

Jen Allan
Interim Chief Executive

Improving performance and patient care



Strong emergency response performance

As we continue to strive for improvements in response times across all categories of call, we were proud to have exceeded our NHS England target for Category 2 response times for the year, achieving a time of 27 minutes and 46 seconds, placing us among the strongest performing ambulance services nationally. The improved performance came alongside an additional 30,000 emergency calls during the year and our teams attending a total of more than 679,000 incidents.

Answering 999 and 111 calls

We answered 968,960 emergency 999 calls in 2025/26, maintaining an average answer time of four seconds. Performance remained strong throughout the year despite sustained demand and winter pressures, ensuring patients continued to receive rapid access to emergency care.

Our NHS 111 service plays a significant role in our Integrated Care offering with our 111 colleagues handling more than 911,000 calls during the year.

Alongside our physical face-to-face responses, this represents more than 2.5 million total patient interactions.

Improving performance and patient care - *cont'd*

Improving patient outcomes

During 2025/26, we continued to deliver strong clinical outcomes, with our cardiac arrest survival rate for the year (11.5%) among the best in the country. This reflects the quality of care provided by our operational and clinical teams and volunteers alongside the continued contribution of community initiatives, including CPR training and defibrillator access and use.

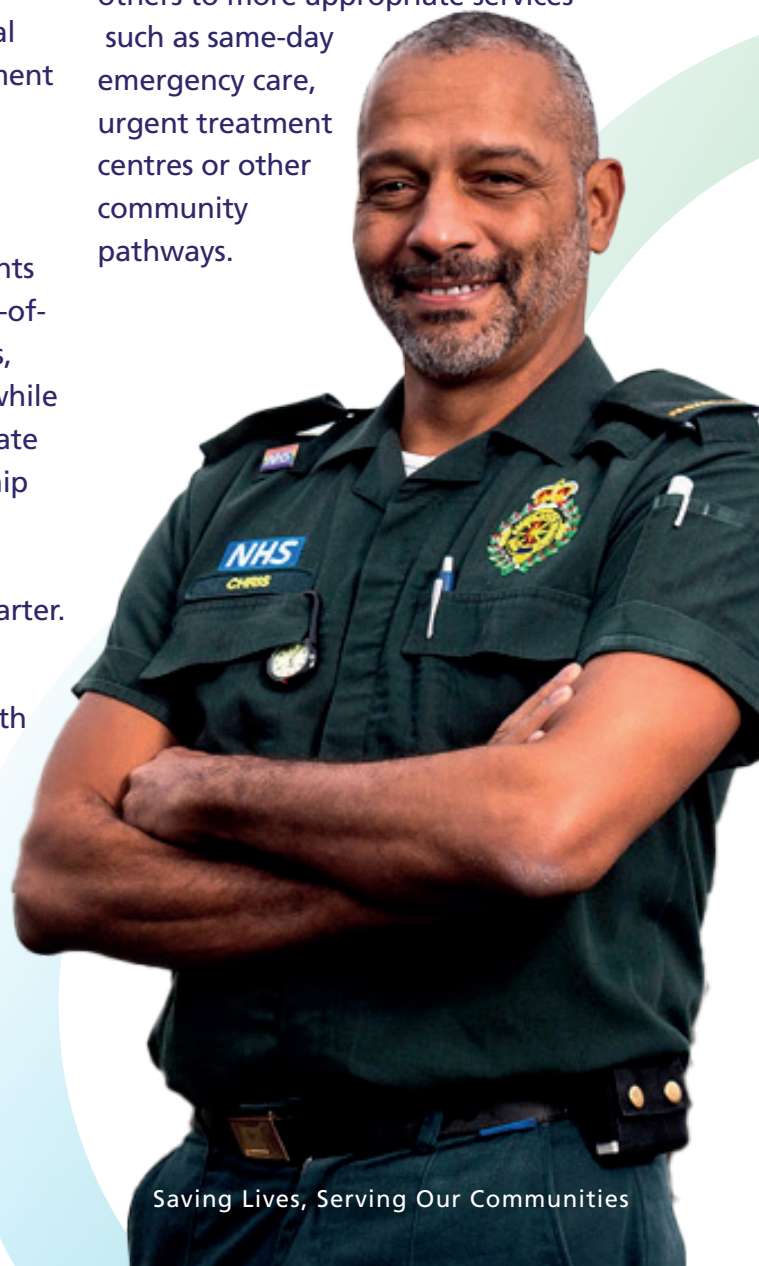
There was also progress in the care provided to heart attack patients experiencing ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) with faster treatment times, and care bundle compliance showing sustained improvement above the national average.

We also improved support for patients who had fallen, those receiving end-of-life care and residents in care homes, helping reduce avoidable demand while ensuring patients received appropriate care closer to home. Close partnership working with previously high call volume care homes resulted in a reduction in calls of more than a quarter.

We also strengthened support for patients experiencing a mental health crisis through new clinical guidance, improved local care pathways and enhanced staff training to support safer decision-making and care.

Expanding virtual care

In line with our clinically-led strategy, we're continuing to transform how we deliver care to our patients. Our virtual care clinicians, based in our clinical hubs and emergency operations centres, are enabling more patients to receive timely advice and assessment over the phone without the need for an ambulance response. By March 2026, our hear and treat performance had increased to 17 per cent, helping ensure ambulances remain available for our most seriously ill and injured patients by directing others to more appropriate services such as same-day emergency care, urgent treatment centres or other community pathways.



Improving performance and patient care - *cont'd*

Listening to patients

We continued to strengthen the way we listen to and involve patients, families and communities in our work with the first year of our Patient and Public Engagement Strategy focusing on building strong foundations.

Patient feedback collected through our Patient Experience Questionnaire showed consistently high levels of satisfaction while the number of compliments received (2,146) was more than twice the number of complaints.

Engagement with local communities was expanded through public events promoting CPR awareness, appropriate use of 999 services, defibrillator education and wider health promotion. We also strengthened our network of Patient Engagement Ambassadors, with 37 ambassadors recruited to help ensure local voices influence service development.

Learning from patient feedback remains central to our service improvement. We use complaints to identify opportunities for change at individual, team and organisational level, ensuring lessons are acted upon and shared. One such example saw patient feedback lead to improved provision of equipment for transporting assistance dogs, demonstrating how patient experiences can directly influence service improvements and help us to deliver more inclusive care.



Saving Lives, Serving Our Communities

Supporting our people

Record staff survey results

We continue to place a strong focus on making SECamb a better place to work. One of the clearest signs of organisational improvement was evidenced in our most recent NHS Staff Survey results. Not only did we outperform the ambulance sector average across all nine People Promise themes, we also heard from a record 3,625 SECamb colleagues – a joint-highest sector response rate of 71 per cent.

Areas of improvement included staff confidence in speaking up, inclusivity and flexible working. The results reflect the substantial work undertaken to strengthen the leadership and culture of SECamb to ensure staff feel valued and listened to despite going through a period of major organisational change.

Education

Education continued to play a vital role in developing our workforce throughout the year. We launched a new Education, Training and Development Strategy. 'Clinical' was removed from the education department's name to better reflect its remit across the organisation.

We continued to advance the Safer Learning Environment Charter (SLEC), embedding learner safety, inclusion and positive culture across education and operational practice.

We expanded CPD opportunities and supported close to 600 apprenticeships. Colleagues achieved strong academic outcomes across both higher and further education programmes.

We also delivered a redesigned key skills programme which received positive feedback from colleagues on content relevance, learning objectives and delivery. We also maintained a strong statutory training compliance rate of above 90 per cent.



Supporting our people - *cont'd*

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We continued to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the organisation. During the year we developed an EDI plan focused on staff networks, inclusive recruitment, staff development and data insights.

Our staff networks continued to grow in influence, helping shape policy, recruitment and development opportunities, while providing valuable insight into colleague experience and supporting a more inclusive culture.

Progress was supported by stronger board-level accountability as well as executive sponsorship for all staff networks. We were also given an overall Equality Delivery System rating of "Achieving".

Volunteer impact

Our volunteers made a significant contribution during 2025/26, supporting patient care, staff wellbeing and community resilience. Our Community First Responders and Emergency Responders contributed more than 100,000 hours and attended nearly 18,000 emergencies, many of them life-threatening Category 1 calls.

The year also saw the launch of our Volunteering and Community Resilience Strategy, setting out a long-term vision for growing and developing volunteering across the Trust. Our volunteers also supported colleagues through chaplaincy and welfare services, while also helping to improve cardiac arrest survival through CPR training, defibrillator awareness and the promotion of the GoodSAM app.



Creating a sustainable future

Working better together

The formation of the South Central and South East Ambulance Group marked a significant milestone in 2025/26. Following a year of increasingly close collaboration with South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS), both boards formally approved the creation of the Group in October 2025.

By working together, we aim to standardise clinical pathways, align commissioning relationships, share expertise and deliver greater efficiencies that can be reinvested into frontline care.

Innovation, Improvement and Digital Transformation

Innovation continued to flourish across SECamb. More than 1,500 staff have now received quality improvement training, supported by a network of more than 20 Quality Improvement Ambassadors helping deliver meaningful change. Projects included a targeted improvement programme resulting in a reduction of more than 50 per cent in lost equipment.

Our Innovators' Den continued to empower colleagues to develop new ideas. Funding projects ranged from redesigned medicines pouches to volunteer e-bike response units.

Meanwhile, digital transformation also accelerated with milestones including the expansion of access to shared care records and a trial of AI technology in our Emergency Operations Centres to turn clinicians' conversations with patients into structured medical notes.



Creating a sustainable future - *cont'd*

Improving environmental sustainability

We continued to make progress towards our environmental sustainability goals through the delivery of our Green Plan. This focuses on reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and embedding sustainable practices across the Trust. Key achievements included expanding low and zero-emission vehicles, completing the first phase of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and securing funding for energy-efficient LED lighting.

Sustainability was further supported through our Green Network made up of more than 100 members and closer collaboration with regional partners, helping to build a more environmentally responsible and resilient organisation.

Financially responsible

Recognising the importance of acting responsibly with our public finances, we maintained a stable financial position throughout 2025/26, ending the year with an adjusted surplus of £1.7 million against a planned break-even position.

We continued to invest in our frontline services while carefully managing costs and maintaining financial discipline. We also successfully delivered our planned efficiency programme, helping to ensure resources were used effectively to support patient care.

Alongside our day-to-day operations, we invested £37.6 million in our fleet, estates and digital infrastructure, strengthening the foundations needed to meet future demand. We ended the year with healthy cash reserves and submitted a break-even plan for 2026/27, reflecting our continued focus on financial sustainability alongside improving services.





Looking Ahead

As we progress through 2026/27, we do so with strong foundations and a clear sense of direction. The year ahead will be an important period of further transition as we continue to develop our Group model.

This work provides us with opportunities to build on the improvements already made, strengthen collaboration, reduce duplication and create more consistent, sustainable services.

While challenges remain, we look ahead with confidence, committed to delivering high-quality care for the patients and communities we serve.





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