

UNION DEMANDS ANSWERS OVER AMBULANCE SERVICE FAILINGS



AMBULANCE BOSSES MUST EXPLAIN WHY OFFICIAL RECORDS SHOWING WHY AMBULANCES MISSED CALLOUT TIMES TO LIFE THREATENING INCIDENTS WERE WORTHLESS, UNION CHIEFS DEMANDED.

THE LIVERPOOL ECHO REVEALED YESTERDAY THAT NORTH WEST AMBULANCE SERVICE HAS LAUNCHED AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW IT MANAGED TO BUNGLE THE COLLECTION OF RECORDS INTO INCIDENTS WHEN AMBULANCES FAILED TO ARRIVE AT THEIR DESTINATION WITHIN THE EIGHT MINUTE TARGET BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL FAULTS.

THE NWS WAS ASKED FOR ITS RECORDS AFTER 10-YEAR-OLD KANE WADE CHOKED TO DEATH ON A SWEET LAST YEAR AFTER AN AMBULANCE WAS DELAYED BECAUSE HIS HOUSE COULD NOT BE FOUND ON A COMPUTER SYSTEM.

TODAY UNISON OFFICIAL CRAIG WILDE SAID NWS NEEDED TO EXPLAIN WHY SUCH VITAL STATISTICS WERE NOT BEING COLLECTED PROPERLY.

HE SAID: "WHAT CONCERNS ME HERE IS FOR THE AMBULANCE SERVICE TO BE PROVIDING INFORMATION AND THEN TURNING AROUND AND SAYING IT IS WRONG."

THE AMBULANCE SERVICE ORIGINALLY TOLD THE ECHO, IN RESPONSE TO A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST, THAT THERE HAD BEEN A HUGE INCREASE IN MISSED WAITING TIMES.

THE SERVICE SAID THERE HAD BEEN 53 SUCH CASES IN 2009, 120 IN 2010 AND 403 IN 2011. BUT WHEN ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION THE NWS THEN SAID THE INFORMATION WAS INACCURATE.

NWAS WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE FIGURES AND WAS ALSO FORCED TO APOLOGISE FOR SUPPLYING A RESPONSE 12 WEEKS AFTER THE 20 WORKING DAY DEADLINE FOR RESPONDING TO FOI ACT REQUESTS.

MR WILDE SAID THAT WHEN THE EIGHT MINUTE TARGET IS MISSED PARAMEDICS ARE REQUIRED TO MARK IT ON THE PATIENT'S RECORD AND LOG IT WITH THE AMBULANCE CONTROL CENTRE.

HE ADDED: "THE SYSTEM DOES NOT ALWAYS REGISTER WHEN STREETS HAVE BEEN BLOCKED OFF OR WHEN TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED.

"OUR ARGUMENT IS THAT LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IS THE BEST THING.

"I AM NOT AWARE OF A MAJOR PROBLEM, THERE ARE THE ODD GLITCHES, BUT I WOULD NOT SAY IT'S BEEN ANY WORSE THAN NORMAL.

NWAS SAID IT RESPONDS TO ONE MILLION 999 CALLS EACH YEAR AND USES A VARIETY OF TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEMS.

SINCE APRIL THE SERVICE HAS UNDERTAKEN A REVIEW OF ITS CURRENT MAPPING SYSTEM TO ENSURE IT IS AS ACCURATE AS IT CAN BE.

A SPOKESPERSON SAID: "WE HAVE SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN TO ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE NORTH WEST TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE UPDATED ON ALL NEW ROADS, CLOSURES AND DIVERSIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS AS A PRIORITY AND HAVE INTRODUCED A NEW NOTIFICATION SERVICE WHICH SHOULD SPEED UP THE PROCESS."



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