

Station is to close in shake-up

Bridgnorth Ambulance Station is to close under a major £7 million shake-up of the service in Shropshire.

West Midlands Ambulance Service says the changes, which will see another six stations shut across the county, will improve efficiency and patient care as well as saving thousands of pounds.

But a local Unison representative said the move would reduce ambulance cover and response times would increase.

"A paramedic car will arrive at the scene and then establish whether the patient needs to go to hospital urgently," said the Unison rep, who wished not to be named.

Targets

"They will then request an ambulance but it will depend on whether they are ready. There are certain areas where responders have to wait anything up to an hour for an ambulance – the responder just stops the clock so we can meet our targets.

"The problem will occur when a patient who needs to be in hospital is stuck in a house. I just cannot see how

it is going to work. Common sense tells everyone we need more staff and vehicles, but they're telling us these hubs are the be all and end all."

WMAS spokesperson Chris Kowalik said the plan was to sell off the ambulance base in Bridgnorth and move it next door, to the fire station. "We are going to set up Community Ambulance Stations across Shropshire of which there will be almost twice as many in the county compared to the current number of stations," he said.

"In each market town where there is currently an ambulance station, there will be a Community Ambulance Station and this will be the case in Bridgnorth.

"There will not be a reduction in the number of ambulances, cars and ambulance crews; in fact we will introduce a dedicated 24/7 community paramedic officer who will be ringfenced to Bridgnorth and its immediate surrounding area.

"In addition, there will be two 'hubs' which will operate round-the-clock in the stocking and maintenance of ambulances, reducing the amount of time crews spend on the maintenance of their vehicles."
