

Changes to the Ambulance Data from 5 December 2011

In March 2011, the Welsh Government published National Ambulance Performance Standards that are more focussed on improved clinical outcomes for patients. Only the most serious calls, classed as Category A (immediately life-threatening), will be guaranteed an emergency blue light response. All other calls will receive an appropriate response, either face-to-face or telephone assessment, based on clinical need. To implement this, there were changes to the ambulance services in Wales from 5 December 2011.

Summary of changes:

To comply with the National Ambulance Performance Standards, the following changes to the ambulance service in Wales were introduced:

- ◆ Category B (serious but not immediately life-threatening calls) has been removed;
- ◆ immediately life-threatening calls (where there is an imminent threat to life) will continue to be identified as Category A calls but will now include the most serious of the former Category B calls;
- ◆ urgent & planned calls (serious but not life threatening *and/or* neither serious nor life threatening) will be identified as Category C (urgent and planned) calls, but will now also include the majority of the former Category B calls; and
- ◆ calls to the ambulance service from health care professionals (HCP) to order an ambulance for patients on an urgent basis for admission to hospital (previously called 'GP urgent patient journeys') are now included in the calls data. These calls will be prioritised and classified as Category A or C in the same way as emergency 999 calls, although those classified as Category C will have additional time bands/standards.

As a result of these changes, users should note the following:

- ◆ data prior to December 2011 will not be directly comparable with data for this and future months;
- ◆ the total number of emergency calls will increase by around 4,000 for December 2011 onwards;
- ◆ the number of Category A and Category C calls will increase for December 2011 onwards; and
- ◆ variation in performance against the targets and / or calls in December 2011 is partially due to these changes.