

# Ambulance workers told: Get lunch in McDonalds to improve response times



**GMB ambulance workers are furious after an ambulance trust told them to take their lunch break in the nearest McDonald's.**

North East Ambulance Trust (NEAS) has announced its paramedics will – from January – be told to take lunch breaks at hospitals or their nearest ambulance station, rather than returning to base. [1]



Workers were also told to head to their nearest McDonalds or to eat in their ambulance in a bid to improve response times.

GMB says ambulance workers heading to their local fast food restaurant is a covid risk and unprofessional – and the trust must address chronic understaffing and a demoralised workforce rather than dictating where they eat.

**Mickey Hunt, GMB Organiser, said:**

“Thanks to the perfect storm of the pandemic, staff shortages and the recent 3 per cent pay award, which in real terms is a pay cut, GMB members in North East Ambulance have never been so demoralised.

“This announcement is yet another kick in the teeth.

“Ambulance crews are waiting hours and hours to hand over patients over to hospitals.

“Telling them to go and eat in McDonalds won’t solve that. It’s deeply unprofessional and a covid risk.

“This new policy is being implemented without fully consulting workers and is potentially detrimental to our members, with regards to health and safety, infection and prevention control, mental health and physical well being.

“We urge the trust to reconsider.”

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