NHS and ambulance

30,000 patients hit by ambulance delays of more than one hour



GMB, the union for ambulance workers, has warned lives are being put at risk as new figures show 30,000 patients were hit by delays of more than an hour so far this winter

Although the total number of patients arriving at hospitals by ambulance was similar to last year, the number arrivals delayed by more than an hour shot up by a staggering 75.9 per cent compared to last winter.

And a shocking 120,000 patient conveyances were delayed by more than half an hour, GMB's analysis shows.

Category	2018/19	2019/20	Change (%)
Arriving by ambulance	774,316	784,049	1.3
Delay > 60 mins	17,253	30,351	75.9
Delay 30-60 mins	68,524	89,088	30.0
¬ Total delayed by 30 mins +	85,777	119,439	39.2

The figures, which cover the NHS in England, are for the period from the start of December to the 26 of January.

The union said that the reasons for the rise in delays include inadequate funding, unmanageable workloads, cuts to social care, handover delays when a patient reaches a hospital, and an increase in calls that do not require urgent medical attention.

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer for the NHS, said:

'These shocking figures must be a wake-up call because patients' lives are at risk.

'Ambulance services are under incredible pressure but resources have not increased in line with rising demand.

'Our ambulance members are dedicated professionals but everyone has their breaking point.

'Urgent action is needed to address the crisis in ambulance services because staff and patients cannot endure another winter like this.'

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Member requiring help?

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