

# Ambulance trusts flooded with with 42,000 hoax calls



## Overworked call handlers asked to order pizza and deal with a broken toenail

Ambulance trusts have been flooded with at least 42,000 hoax calls in just three years, a GMB investigation has revealed.

Responses to Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests by the union also revealed more than 2,000 calls that were classed as 'vexatious or abusive'.

One trust – South Central Ambulance Service – refused the request, meaning the true number could be even higher.



Examples of hoax or abusive calls given by ambulance trusts include:

- Caller asked me to order a Dominos
- Caller laughing said 'Momo is here'
- A man who had broken his toe nail
- Patient was verbally abusive in general and then said "I can hear you. Yes I'm breathing, you won't be breathing when I f\*\*\*\*\* get hold of you!"
- A woman needed an escort home to breastfeed – there was too much traffic.

Ambulance Trust Hoax calls				
TRUST	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
South Central				
West Midlands	466	707	1517	2690
North East	483	410	448	1341
South Western	709	785	785	2279
East Midlands	1,137	1,257	1,002	3,396
North West	1974	1717	1631	5322



East of England	588	531	385	1504
South East Coast	13841	8261	1010	23112
London	818	835	872	2525
TOTAL	20016	14503	7650	42169

**Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer, said:**

“Like paramedics and ambulance workers, our NHS call handlers are desperately trying to save lives while years of Conservative cuts leave them underpaid, overworked and underappreciated.

“Call handlers and emergency medical dispatchers do a hard job, under pressure and work to save lives every day. The last thing they need are tens of thousands of hoax calls making a tough job even tougher.

“This is a matter of life and death – it’s just not right for a minority to waste the time of those who are serving the wider public and working to keep people alive.”

## Press office

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