# London Ambulance Service halves response times with remote assessment strategy



Response times for emergency ambulance services in London have significantly improved in recent months, with the London Ambulance Service (LAS) achieving its fastest times for attending to seriously ill patients in years. This progress is largely credited to the expanded use of a "hear and treat" strategy, whereby clinicians assess patients over the phone and refer them to the most appropriate care centres. By avoiding unnecessary hospital visits, this approach has freed up substantial ambulance crew time and resources.

Since the method’s wider implementation, the LAS reports having treated nearly 275,000 patients via phone consultations, accounting for over 20% of all cases—a notably high rate compared to other regions. The benefits of this approach include quicker responses to Category 1 emergencies, which involve life-threatening situations, and Category 2 incidents such as strokes and chest pains, where urgent treatment is essential. In April 2025, the LAS recorded its fastest response to Category 1 patients since April 2022, while Category 2 responses improved by over seven minutes compared to the previous year.

These trends have continued through mid-2025. By July, average response times for Category 2 patients had improved by around eight minutes year-on-year, despite the service handling an additional 12,200 999 calls compared to July 2024. Category 1 targets were also met, with the LAS routinely reaching the most seriously ill in under seven minutes. The organisation credits these gains not only to the hear and treat system but also to increased staffing levels during one of its busiest periods.

The new NHS ambulance response system, effective from November, categorises emergency calls into four priority levels, with hear and treat forming an integral element. This system enables more efficient use of ambulance services by delivering medical advice remotely when appropriate, thereby optimising the deployment of on-the-ground crews to patients in genuine need of emergency intervention.

Despite continuing pressures, including high call volumes, the London Ambulance Service’s strategy highlights the potential of remote clinical assessment to reduce unnecessary hospital attendances, enhance patient care pathways, and improve response times for emergencies. The improvements mark a significant operational success amidst enduring challenges within the capital’s healthcare infrastructure.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-ambulance-service-fastest-response-times-b1247280.html), [[2]](https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/04/10/hear-and-treat-frees-up-thousands-of-hours-for-ambulance-crews-and-help-londoners-get-the-right-care/), [[6]](https://londonsairambulance.com/new-ambulance-response-system-service-response-time/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/04/10/hear-and-treat-frees-up-thousands-of-hours-for-ambulance-crews-and-help-londoners-get-the-right-care/), [[3]](https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/05/15/london-ambulance-service-response-times-for-sickest-patients-fastest-in-years/), [[6]](https://londonsairambulance.com/new-ambulance-response-system-service-response-time/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2qxzkekkqo), [[5]](https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/08/14/london-ambulances-service-reaches-serious-emergencies-faster-than-last-year/), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-ambulance-service-response-times-cut-b1242897.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://londonsairambulance.com/new-ambulance-response-system-service-response-time/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-ambulance-service-fastest-response-times-b1247280.html), [[4]](https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2qxzkekkqo), [[5]](https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/08/14/london-ambulances-service-reaches-serious-emergencies-faster-than-last-year/), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-ambulance-service-response-times-cut-b1242897.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-ambulance-service-fastest-response-times-b1247280.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/04/10/hear-and-treat-frees-up-thousands-of-hours-for-ambulance-crews-and-help-londoners-get-the-right-care/> - In April 2025, the London Ambulance Service reported that their 'hear and treat' method, which involves clinicians providing medical assessments over the phone, has freed up thousands of hours for ambulance crews. This approach has reduced response times for the most seriously ill patients and decreased the number of patients transported to hospitals unnecessarily. Over the past year, nearly 275,000 Londoners have been treated over the phone, with 20.7% of patients receiving this service, one of the highest rates in the country. The initiative has also improved response times for Category 1 and Category 2 incidents compared to the previous year.
3. <https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/05/15/london-ambulance-service-response-times-for-sickest-patients-fastest-in-years/> - In May 2025, the London Ambulance Service announced that response times for the most serious emergencies in April were the fastest in several years. Ambulance crews reached Category 1 patients in the quickest time since April 2022, and Category 2 calls were responded to more than seven minutes faster compared to April the previous year. This improvement is attributed to the increased use of the 'hear and treat' method, which allows clinicians to assess patients over the phone and refer them to appropriate care pathways, reducing unnecessary hospital visits and freeing up ambulance resources.
4. <https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/cx2qxzkekkqo> - In August 2025, the BBC reported that the London Ambulance Service (LAS) improved its average response times for urgent treatments. Category 2 patients, including those with strokes and chest pains, were reached eight minutes faster in July 2025 compared to July 2024. Category 1 patients, facing life-threatening situations, were reached approximately 30 seconds faster. Despite facing some of its busiest weeks, the LAS achieved these improvements, highlighting the effectiveness of their strategies, including the 'hear and treat' approach, which allows clinicians to assess patients over the phone and direct them to appropriate care.
5. <https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/2025/08/14/london-ambulances-service-reaches-serious-emergencies-faster-than-last-year/> - In August 2025, the London Ambulance Service reported that it reached patients in need of urgent treatment more than eight minutes faster compared to July the previous year. Category 2 emergencies, such as strokes and chest pains, were responded to more quickly, despite receiving over 12,200 more 999 calls in July 2025 compared to July 2024. The service also met its target for reaching the most seriously ill or injured patients, known as Category 1 calls, in under seven minutes. These improvements are attributed to increased staffing and the effective use of the 'hear and treat' method.
6. <https://londonsairambulance.com/new-ambulance-response-system-service-response-time/> - The London Air Ambulance outlines the NHS's new ambulance response system, effective from 1st November. The system categorises emergency calls into four categories: Category 1 for life-threatening injuries, Category 2 for emergencies requiring prompt treatment, Category 3 for urgent calls, and Category 4 for less urgent conditions. The 'hear and treat' approach is part of this system, allowing patients to receive medical advice over the phone, potentially reducing unnecessary hospital visits and optimising ambulance resources.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-ambulance-service-response-times-cut-b1242897.html> - In August 2025, The Standard reported that the London Ambulance Service (LAS) reduced response times by up to eight minutes, despite facing one of its busiest periods. Category 2 incidents, including strokes and chest pains, were reached eight minutes quicker in July 2025 compared to the previous year. The LAS also met its target for reaching the most seriously ill or injured patients, known as Category 1 calls, in under seven minutes. These improvements are attributed to increased staffing and the effective use of the 'hear and treat' method.