

GMB launch official dispute with Welsh Ambulance over unqualified military help



GMB union has launched a formal dispute with the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST), citing bullying and harassment from the management over underqualified military help.

Clinical staff have raised concerns surrounding the scale of military involvement in Emergency call outs.

Initially the Welsh Government **pledged military support for 'lower acuity, non-emergency' work.**



But trained ambulance crews have been split as untrained military personnel are used to try and plug gaps in the service.

Ambulance staff must undertake 'blue light training' to be able to drive an ambulance on emergency status, training that is not extended to military personnel who are instead given a two-day familiarisation course.

When members have raised concerns, management have threatened them with redundancies and registration status.

Most paramedics already believe that their status is under threat, with non blue light trained personnel unequipped for the job.

GMB union has formally lodged a dispute with the trust and written to the Welsh Government minister to raise its concerns about the extent of the Military involvement.

The union believes that the move further drives down staff morale, with the proportion of trust staff off due to stress and ill health over 11% and rising.

The dispute comes as GMB members are due to vote on the latest pay deal to come from the Welsh Government, with the ballot due to open on Monday.

Nathan Holman, GMB Regional Organiser said:

"Let's be clear, threats to our members will not be tolerated.

"Our members mental health and their safety is our number one priority, and we will not accept the bullying and cajoling from the management at WAST.

"We do not object to the military assisting in low acuity, non-emergency calls, but we cannot turn a blind eye, unqualified personnel assisting in emergency situations.

"You wouldn't bring a postman in to work with a GP or a midwife, so why would you accept an unqualified individual working alongside a paramedic.

"You cannot use underqualified staff to plug the holes in the service.

"At the end of the day it's not just our members jobs that are at risk, but the users of the service too."

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