

# Members 'positive' over new ambulance chief exec



Members of GMB working at South West Ambulance Service are 'positive' over the appointment of the new chief executive.

Will Warrender, who will join the trust in June when current Chief exec Ken Wenman steps down, is known to have had an exemplary Naval career spanning over 30 years and that he is very much a people focused leader.

He joins a Trust that has performed reasonable well in response times for the highest category incidents in England.



But the trust has struggled with employee relations - it was found wanting in a 2018 cultural review commissioned by the trust itself in which it identified serious concerns over staff welfare and endemic culture of alleged sexism and bullying.

**Gary Palmer, GMB Regional Organiser, said:**

“Everything we are hearing back from members as they digest the news of the arrival of a new chief exec has been positive.

“His apparent track record of being a listener who cares about his staff sits very well with GMB’s hard working front line ambulance professionals.

“Expectations that he will want to see an improvement in frontline/managerial relationships for the benefit of both staff and patients alike will please GMB members.

“SWAS has become a difficult place to work in recent years - with the workforce feeling pretty unappreciated.

“The trust’s own cultural review heavily criticised the lack of communication and engagement staff within a systemic toxic culture of bullying and sexism. It also recommended GMB be formally recognised as part of the negotiating machinery.

“This recommendation, along with the majority of the others contained within the report, has of course largely been ignored by the departing chief exec so a change at the helm is very welcome.

“GMB hopes Mr Warrender will be forward thinking enough to pick up the phone and give us a call. As the union with UK’s largest ambulance membership, recognised by the majority of trusts throughout the country, were keen to help in turning around historical employee relations problems and perceptions within the trust.

“It’s the least our members deserve, so let’s start off from day one as we mean to go on - by improving SWAST’s staff welfare and GMB members’ working lives together.

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