

West Midlands Ambulance Service urged to declare major incident over 'catastrophic' crisis



The Board of West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) moved to the highest risk rating in the service's history this week.

The move to the extraordinary 'level 25' (out of 25) means the service expects patients to suffer 'catastrophic consequences' - with repeated serious harm or death 'almost certain'.

Paramedics are calling the situation "the worst pressure we've ever experienced".



A report to the WMAS board on 4 October showed the average waiting time for an ambulance arriving at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital was four hours; at Worcestershire Royal it was two hours.

Across the region the average wait was more than an hour at five hospitals with nearly every hospital in the region seeing delays.

GMB Union is calling for the Trust to declare a major incident when the service experiences these significant delays.



Stuart Richards, GMB Senior Organiser, said:

“This is another sobering mid-pandemic example of the understaffing crisis in our NHS. The pressure is unbearable after a decade of ruinous cuts.

“Significant delays are catastrophic for patients and staff working in the ambulance service.

“GMB members are left to support patients for hours on end, even scrabbling around trying to find food for patients while they wait in the cold outside hospitals.

“West Midlands Ambulance Service must declare a major incident so incident centres can be set up and specialist doctors brought in to prevent disaster.

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