# 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.

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paramedic

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 |

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**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."

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## Press office

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