

## **Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB\_492\_23**

### **You asked:**

As indicated we are a remote border community and often this is overlooked when looking in the Wales context rather than the UK. From what I have gleaned there appears little consideration of an overlap of service to the border towns – many of us use services across the border as these are often more readily available and accessible. I would therefore like to request the following information as a freedom of information request:

1. Impact analysis of the reduction in welsh bases on rural border communities.
2. Reports on the potential provision of services to these rural border communities from the adjacent counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire, and the West Midlands region.
3. Cost analysis of providing these essential and potentially improved services from across the border.

Your thorough review is appreciated as you are no doubt aware of the potential irreversible decisions this far reaching service review could have on remote rural communities who are most in need of this valued life critical service

### **Our response:**

Thank you for your questions related to the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS Cymru) Service Review.

We can confirm that we do not hold the information you request specifically on border areas but refer to 'out of area' calls in the Review documentation which is available on the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee (EASC) website <https://easc.nhs.wales/>.

The Review related to the whole population of Wales, circa 3.1million people across the 7 health board areas as health is a devolved area of responsibility of the Welsh Government and the Minister for Health and Social Services.

It may be helpful to know that the purpose of the Review was to ensure that as many people as possible across all of Wales benefit from the excellent clinical outcomes that the critical care teams of EMRTS deliver (in partnership with the Wales Air Ambulance Charity).

This is a particularly complex clinical service, which is why this information was set out as clearly as possible by listening to the public feedback in Phase 1 (of the formal national engagement process) which shaped how the documents were presented in Phase 2 to make them as helpful as possible.

The EMRTS Service is an all Wales service and it does not take into consideration providing services in England. However, mutual cross-border arrangements are a common feature of emergency services. These are a very small part of what the service does. The current cross-border arrangements will continue, it is not anticipated that this activity will change. This was referred to as 'out of area' in the Chief Ambulance Services Commissioner's Report (CASC) and in the supporting documents. More information is available here:

<https://easc.nhs.wales/engagement/sdp/engagement-documents-phases-1-2/>

Importantly, this means that those who receive the service now, will continue to receive the service in the future as this is not a service change, nor a service closure but rather it is about building on the success of the service for more people to benefit from the critical care interventions delivered at scene for life and limb threatening emergencies.

The Phase 2 engagement shared the work that had been informed by Phase 1 of the public engagement and sought comment on the options modelled in the Commissioner's Report. Please note that the supporting documents were factual - the options modelled had not been assessed or interpreted. This meant that there was no 'preferred' option, and therefore no 'recommendation'. This was why, public and stakeholders were encouraged to comment on the options developed where feedback would be considered before going through an evaluation process that would eventually lead to a recommendation for the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee to consider and ultimately decide on, potentially at the Committee meeting on 21 December 2023.

### **Additional information**

Engagement Documents for Phases 1 and 2 here:

<https://easc.nhs.wales/engagement/sdp/engagement-documents-phases-1-2/>

And supporting documentation here:

<https://easc.nhs.wales/engagement/sdp/sdp2/>

Issues related to the border within the Frequently Asked Questions

<https://easc.nhs.wales/engagement/sdp/frequently-asked-questions/>

#### **Phase 1**

Q: Does the air ambulance provide services across the border to patients in England?

A: If all EMRTS Cymru teams are already busy, English air ambulances may respond across the border to help, EMRTS also do this when English critical care teams are busy. This happens less than 2% of the time so it is quite rare. In all cases across the border, this is only done at the request of the neighbouring ambulance services. Calls across the border are not visible to the Welsh control room automatically, and vice versa.

#### **Phase 2**

Q: Will a change of base from Caernarfon and Welshpool affect the cross -border arrangements? Will the service be pulled into England more?

A: Mutual cross-border arrangements are a common feature of emergency services. These are a small part of what the service does. The current cross-border arrangements will continue, it is not anticipated that this activity will change.