

To: All Chief Executives in Ambulance Trusts in England

*Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS*

Gateway reference number: 15355

*Tel: 020 7210 3000
mb-sofs@dh.gsi.gov.uk*

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Dear colleague

During the recent severe weather, my Ministerial colleagues and I have been constantly informed about how the NHS has responded. I want to convey our thanks and appreciation for the effective and committed way in which you and your colleagues have responded in often challenging circumstances. We have all seen the effect that the snow and ice have had on the country, yet the NHS and its partners have continued to provide quality care to their patients. Sir David Nicholson's letter of 23 November set out the importance of effective winter planning, strong leadership and joint working across organisational boundaries, and the last few weeks have shown that the NHS is more than capable of delivering against these criteria.

I have been very impressed by the dedication of NHS staff to keep services available. I know that many of you have made significant efforts to travel into work during this period, staying over at work as and when needed, to ensure that patient care is not disrupted. I am grateful for all of your efforts and am sure your patients and local community are too.

I am sure the icy conditions are making this time of year even more difficult than normal for ambulance services, yet your organisations are coping admirably. This type of severe weather can make it extremely difficult for ambulance staff to reach those patients who urgently require care, yet your staff have managed to maintain a high standard in responding to emergency calls, given the particularly challenging circumstances. All ambulance staff – PTS, frontline, and control room staff - play a crucial role all year round, but winter is traditionally one of the busiest times of the year. By continuing the excellent work that you do, I am confident we can continue to successfully manage our response to emergency calls this winter.

*From the Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health*



I am aware that many of you will be continuing to work throughout the holiday season and I would like to reiterate my thanks to you and your teams for all your hard work, and encourage you to keep working together with colleagues across the health and care system to keep up the excellent response to winter demands. I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Lansley'.

Andrew Lansley CBE
Secretary of State for Health