



# What happens when you call 999?



When you dial 999, the first person you speak to is the Operator who will ask you which service you need.  
If you ask for an ambulance, you will be put through to your local ambulance service.



An emergency call handler will then take the call and will ask you questions so that help can be arranged. The first thing they will ask you is if the patient is breathing and awake. They will then ask what telephone number you are calling from, the address of where the emergency is and the reason for the call.

As these details are being taken, the information appears on screens in front of our dispatchers, who will assign the response to that call. Answering these questions will NOT delay help being arranged.



At the end of the telephone assessment, the call is given a category based on the information given by the caller. The call handler may stay on the line, offering further practical help and advice where necessary.



## CATEGORY 1

Immediately life-threatening injury or illness  
- Cardiac arrest  
- Traumatic serious injury  
- Severe allergic reaction

### 7-15 mins

Patients will be responded to in an average (mean) time of seven minutes, and within 15 minutes at least nine out of 10 times (90th percentile).



## CATEGORY 2

Emergency  
- Acute breathing problems  
- Stroke / CVA  
- Chest pain  
- Fitting / convulsions

### 18-40 mins

Patients will be responded to in an average (mean) time of 18 minutes, and within 40 minutes at least nine out of 10 times (90th percentile).

## CATEGORY 3

Urgent calls  
- Assaults  
- Falls  
In some instances where patients may be treated in situ (e.g. their own home) or referred to a different pathway of care.

### 120 mins

These types of calls will be responded to at least nine out of 10 times within 120 minutes (90th percentile).

## CATEGORY 4

Less urgent calls  
- Minor lacerations  
- Non-recent injuries  
In some instances patients may be given advice over the phone or referred to another service such as a GP or pharmacist.

### 180 mins

These non-urgent calls will be responded to at least nine out of 10 times within 180 minutes (90th percentile).

## CATEGORY 5

Hear and Treat (ECAT)  
- Minor injuries  
- Back pain  
- Generally unwell  
Patients with conditions that are not urgent but require an assessment, via telephone by a clinician, in the first instance.

### 180 mins

These non-urgent calls will be responded to at least nine out of 10 times within 180 minutes (90th percentile).

## WHAT IS HEAR & TREAT (ECAT)?

Our Emergency Clinical Advice and Triage Centre (ECAT) is staffed by paramedics, nurses or ECPs (emergency care practitioners) who make further clinical assessments for less seriously ill patients, in order to establish the best care for them. This could lead to a referral to a better source of help for their needs, such as a GP, a walk-in centre, a midwife, another healthcare professional or even self help.

An on-scene response will be sent to those who need it.

