

# Take 5 To prepare



## Resilience and specialist operations team briefing note:

### The Importance of the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) to EEAST

#### Legend

The Safety Advisory Group or SAG comprises representatives from key agencies to provide advice to event organisers around the safety of events. SAG is normally chaired by the Local Authority but not always so, and key membership consists of Local Authority, Police, Ambulance, Fire, Licencing, Environmental Health and of course the event organiser. Membership varies dependent upon the nature of the event being planned, and the SAG can be either Local Authority boundary specific or directly related to an event, i.e. football clubs or race courses. SAG member agencies provide free advice from within their field of expertise, and although there is no legal requirement for an organiser to comply with SAG guidance, it would be difficult for the organiser to justify ignoring advice provided by the SAG in a Court of Law or Coroners Court should an incident occur which could have been reasonably mitigated against.

The SAG provides a forum for discussing and advising on public safety at events, with the aim being to help the organiser in the planning and management of an event and to encourage the sharing of plans between all relevant agencies. The SAG itself is a non-statutory body and has no legal power, however many of the agencies present are empowered to prohibit an event from occurring if the SAG deems it to be unsafe or poorly organised. The SAG is an advisory body, and as such the event organiser retains the legal responsibility for ensuring public safety during an event.

Routinely, event organisers are invited to SAG if their event meets a set threshold, either requiring a licence to run, permission to use land or a TENS (Temporary Event Notice) which is required to sell alcohol or host live music. Events requiring road closures need to seek permission from the SAG at least six weeks in advance of the event. Event organisers are often requested to attend a SAG when their planned event presents a significant risk to the public, either in terms of numbers and profile of those attending i.e. a music festival; an inherent risk on site from dangerous activities likely to result in injury; or a difficult and challenging terrain where the event is being held.

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### The NHS Ambulance Service in the role of SAG

EEAST attendance at SAG plays a significant role in reducing 999 calls to events across the region. EEAST is generally represented by the County Resilience Manager or on occasion a Deputy. There is published National guidance and best practice around set levels of medical provision at an event based on varying factors and considerations, as well as the expertise and experience of the Resilience Manager attending. For example an organised event should not impact front line NHS resources to the public by drawing them away from their core function to deliver medical care or aftercare associated with an event. Events should be self sufficient in terms of medical provision with a call to EEAST only if additional specialist critical care or asset is required or the provider is overwhelmed.

All events should have medical provision suitable for the size and type of the event; this may be basic first aid cover or Consultant led care at large events. At events where attendance is expected to be over 25,000 there should be an NHS Ambulance Officer on site to act as liaison between the event medical teams and the 'outside world'. At events of this size, there is normally representation from all Emergency Services' on site.

There are many Private and Voluntary Ambulance providers with varying levels of expertise. All ambulance providers should be CQC registered and EEAST expect the provider to be able to convey patients from scene to a health care setting if appropriate. Many event organisers do not appreciate that some providers are not CQC compliant and as such it is the Resilience Managers' role to advocate use of a suitable provider based on the descriptors already discussed above. Some key points for consideration from an event organiser when selecting their medical provider are:-

- Medical provision should be provided by a reputable company with appropriate indemnity and public liability insurances
- A person qualified in FAW is not necessarily qualified to provide first aid to members of the public
- The role of First Aider is stand alone; in other words the holder cannot double hat or act as a steward/security. A small event should have a minimum of two first aiders.
- An ambulance provider **MUST** be CQC registered. Non CQC registered providers may bring paramedics and EMTs, but they are not legally allowed to transport a patient except within the footprint of the event. *(this often leads to a non CQC provider taking a patient to the edge of a footprint and then dialling 999 to transport)*

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- When providing ambulance cover, the provider should be able to utilise the ambulance as a patient carrying platform whilst still retaining medical cover at the event
- Reliance on the NHS Ambulance Service to transport routine patients is not acceptable.
- The NHS Ambulance Service will always respond to a 999 call; EEAST will provide additional clinical capacity if required or assist if a provider is overwhelmed, but the Trust is not funded nor able to undertake routine medical cover at an event.
- The contact name and number of the medical provider's duty manager is required for each event, along with a medical plan. This should include qualifications of staff and total numbers of resources utilised.

The SAG process also enables blue light partners to have a wider picture of what's happening within our Counties and Regionally; for example, an event organiser may not realise that when they intend to run their event there is a large event also planned for the same date close by thus providing additional traffic volume, potential impact to responders etc.



Latitude Festival is a prime example of the success of SAG and the benefit from EEAST attendance. Until 2014 medical provision on site was adequate at best; since EEAST

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attendance at SAG medical provision has been significantly enhanced at the instance of EEAST supported by SAG partners, resulting in a zero attendance by the NHS Ambulance Service to Latitude since 2014, with 987 patients treated on site by the medical provider in 2021 and only 4 transfers off site by private ambulances throughout a four day festival.

Routinely, the Resilience Manager during the SAG process will request a copy of the Event Management Plan (EMP) detailing all aspects of planning of the event including Major Incident procedures, RVP's etc, and a copy of the Medical Plan providing a comprehensive list of PAS/VAS asset on site, clinical capability and contact details. These are routinely shared with local management teams and Control Rooms so that should EEAST receive 999 calls to the venue, the medical provider can be contacted to ascertain if this is something already being managed on site or can be dealt with without EEAST attendance.

SAG will normally exist within each Local Authority within the County, and is an opportunity for information sharing between partner agencies as well as provision of safety advice to event organisers.

If you have any queries around the SAG process please contact the team at [resilience.managers@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:resilience.managers@eastamb.nhs.uk)

Ends.