

# LONDON RESILIENCE



preparing for emergencies

## Strategic Co-ordination Group – COVID19

### Comms Hub

Monday 6 April 2020

## New teams set up in London to respond to Covid-19 deaths in the community

New specialist teams are being trained to respond to suspected Covid-19 deaths in the community across London.

The teams – made up of police officers, fire and health services staff – will confirm life is extinct, confirm the deceased's identity and establish there are no suspicious circumstances. They will also prepare the deceased to be collected by an undertaker to take them to a funeral home or mortuary, until arrangements can be made for burial or cremation.

The aim of the new units, called Pandemic Multiagency Response Teams (PMART), is to ensure a safe response to Covid-19 deaths that may occur in the community at home, in a care home or hospice and to help reduce demand on the London Ambulance Service, enabling them to prioritise emergency cases.

Calls reporting an unexpected death in the community to 999 or 111 responders will be assessed to determine if there is a high chance the death was as a result of Covid-19. Where that is likely, the PMART will be sent to where the death has occurred.

The teams will assist families in making arrangements for a funeral director and will prepare their loved one for collection to a mortuary or funeral parlour.

Families of the deceased will be asked not to visit register offices to notify the death of their loved one in person. PMART will take care of that process and register offices will contact families by telephone.

The new teams have been organised through the London Resilience Forum's Strategic Coordination Group, which is coordinating the capital-wide response to the pandemic on behalf of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly.

**Deputy Chair of London's Strategic Coordination Group, Eleanor Kelly, said:**

“These new teams will play a key role in helping ease pressure on the London Ambulance Service to allow them to concentrate on treating new emergency cases.

“At the same time, they will be helping provide families and loved ones with advice and assistance in the most exceptionally distressing circumstances.

“London’s emergency services, local authorities and other critical public and private sector partners are working resolutely to tackle the impact of the virus in the capital.

“We need Londoners to continue to play their part by staying at home, helping us to protect frontline services and save lives.”

**Superintendent Wayne Matthews from the Metropolitan Police Service said:**

“Since the start of this national outbreak, the Government have been very clear that they expect there to be a high number of deaths as a result of Covid-19. We are living in unprecedented times and are therefore having to take extraordinary measures to support our colleagues in the National Health Service and London Ambulance Service.

“Officers and our blue light partners volunteering to be part of the PMART have each received specialist training to fulfil this role and will be on hand to support families during what will likely be a very distressing time. I would like to thank everyone who has been part of the PMART process for their dedication and professionalism.”

**Dr Fenella Wrigley, Chief Medical Officer at London Ambulance Service, said:**

“Working with our partners across the capital has been, and will continue to be, an absolutely crucial part of responding to the coronavirus pandemic and this is another example of incredible support and collaboration from our emergency services and NHS colleagues.

“We know during the pandemic sadly people will lose their lives and this bespoke service will be a multiagency response involving the MPS and the LFB as well as clinicians to assist families and friends at this time.

“By partnering in this initiative it will also enable London Ambulance Service to continue to support the many patients who will need our urgent, lifesaving help in the coming weeks.”

**Richard Mills, Deputy Commissioner at the London Fire Brigade, said:**

“We are committed to doing all we can to support a joint emergency response in the capital to Covid 19. Firefighters will be working with health services and the police to form specialist teams to help with this essential work.

“It’s vital we have a professional emergency response team like this to deploy where needed and I thank all our operational staff who volunteered when the call went out.

“We’ve changed our operations to reduce non-critical training and some of the community safety work that we can’t do at this time, in order to maintain our full

emergency fire and rescue service response and provide support such as this, for however long the situation lasts.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors**

- For more information about PMART contact the Strategic Coordination Group media office on [COVID19CommsHub@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:COVID19CommsHub@cityoflondon.gov.uk).
- For more information about the Strategic Coordination Group and London Resilience Forum visit [London.gov.uk](http://London.gov.uk).

**The Strategic Coordination Group was set up by the London Resilience Forum. It is the central authority coordinating public services' response to the COVID19 virus.**