

No name, no number.....??

During the winter months our Community First Responders have been supporting our communities, especially rural villages, when directed to do so by East Midlands Ambulance Service. An "on call" CFR logged onto EMAS's Emergency Operations Centre which takes all the 999 calls for the region, is directed to attend a medical emergency when instructed to do so by EMAS when EMAS has no resource available, such as a fast response car with a paramedic, or an ambulance crew, to attend that emergency. As we all know, I'm sure, in our rural areas EMAS's response times are stretched well beyond the national guideline of 8 minutes to reach a 999 call. Our Responders live locally and so know the area and they can reach medical emergencies very quickly and render immediate, sometimes life saving, assistance.

The patient could be suffering from a medical condition requiring an immediate response. This could include chest pains, breathing difficulties, a stroke, heart attack or cardiac arrest, diabetic coma or fitting or convulsions, or a fall. Our CFR will attend with all the necessary medical kit, treat the patient, comfort and support the family and /or partner and hand over the patient to the care of the EMAS crew when they arrive. Our First Responders have attended quite a number of such emergencies in the district over the last few winter months.

Imagine then, in a case involving a cardiac arrest or heart attack where a rapid response time is absolutely critical, our CFR wastes precious time in trying to locate the property where the patient is because the house has no name or number, or, if it does, it is not visible from the road, or hidden by vegetation or a wall or obscured in some other way. In 2014 we mapped all the villages in the district to give our CFRs a local map of each village with each property listed in street order by left and right of the road by postcode, we found, surprisingly, that about a third had no name or no number at all, and in about 40% the names or house numbers were not easily visible from the road.

Imagine then too, that it is a dark, wet night in January. There is little or no street lighting in a small, possibly isolated, village, and a First Responder is trying to find the house that has no name or number, a person inside is suffering from a heart attack and our responder is wasting precious time trying to locate the property. You would want to be certain the Responder could find that house quickly if it was yours wouldn't you?

So, a plea: could you please ensure that your house name or number is clearly visible from the road so that a First Responder sent to attend the medical emergency, and the following EMAS crew, can easily identify the property to which they have been directed?

Because, you just never know.....

P Winter, Coordinator, Newark & Fosse Way First Responders