

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 9 OCTOBER 2020

1448 local hoax calls in three years putting lives at risk, Lib Dems warn

The Liberal Democrats have warned malicious calls to the ambulance service are putting lives at risk as they reveal 1448 hoax calls have been made across South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust over the last three years.

With the UK in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, Liberal Democrat Health Spokesperson Munira Wilson has warned Ministers must ensure ambulance services have “the resources they need to educate people over the dangers that malicious calls pose.”

Figures uncovered by the Liberal Democrats under freedom of information reveal there have been 23,942 hoax calls recorded by nine out of England’s ten ambulance services in the last three years.

Liberal Democrat Health Spokesperson Munira Wilson said:

“Anyone who maliciously calls for an ambulance is putting lives in danger. An ambulance that is diverted to a hoax is one that is unavailable to save a life elsewhere.

“With the Covid-19 pandemic, we all know the strain that our health staff are under. Ministers must therefore ensure ambulance services have the resources they need to educate people over the dangers that malicious calls pose.”

West Sussex Liberal Democrat spokesperson Cllr Kirsty Lord added:

“The Coronavirus crisis is an unprecedented threat. It is leaving the most vulnerable in our communities at risk and people are rightly worried about their loved ones.

“The people in our ambulance service are putting their lives on the line every single day to protect us. In turn, we have a moral obligation to do all we can to protect them.”

ENDS.

Notes to editors:

The table attached [attached here](#) details the number of hoax calls in 2017, 2018 and 2019, broken down by Ambulance Service.

*Please note that South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust does not record hoax calls.

The law:

Hoax calls are illegal under Section 49 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 which states that: 'A person commits an offence if he knowingly gives or causes to be given a false alarm of fire to a person acting on behalf of a fire and rescue authority'.

Where that person is found guilty of this offence, in England and Wales they will be liable to a fine of up to £2,500, imprisonment of up to 51 weeks or both.

In England and Wales a person who uses a public electronic communications network in order to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety, may also be issued with a fixed penalty notice for disorder of £80 under the penalty notice for disorder scheme provided for by section 1-11 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Councillor Kirsty Lord, West Sussex County Councillor for Hassocks and Burgess Hill South:

Email - kirsty.lord@midsussexlibdems.org.uk