



London Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Trust

Policy and Procedure on Ambulance Response in Circumstances of Close Relationships

DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

Purpose of the document: To ensure that both vehicle crew staff and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as the practical steps they must take, in circumstances of vehicle crew staff being sent to individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship.

Sponsor Department: A&E Operations

Author/Reviewer: Assistant Director of Operations (South). To be reviewed by December 2015.

Document Status: Final

Amendment History			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
03/01/13	2.2	IG Manager	Document Profile and Control update
19/12/12	2.1	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	Minor adjustments following ADG review.
19/11/12	1.3	Chair AOM Group Assistant Director of Operations (West)	Review and minor additions Policy name change to close relationships. Equality analysis assessment.
9/7/12	1.2	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	Policy review
07/08/10	1.1	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	Added responsibilities
08/06/09	0.3	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	added monitoring and training; s. 5 Duty of Care to Patients
21/04/09	0.2	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	second draft
16/04/09	0.1	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	first draft

***Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

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Published on:	Date	By	Dept
The Pulse	07/01/13 (v2.2)	Governance Co-ordinator	GCT
The Pulse	8/06/09	Records Manager	GDU
LAS Website	07/01/13 (v2.2)	Governance Co-ordinator	GCT

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LAS Website	8/06/09	Records Manager	GDU
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The RIB	08/01/13	IG Manager	GCT
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Equality Analysis completed on	By
18/10/12	A&E Ops South
Staffside reviewed on	By

Links to Related documents or references providing additional information		
Ref. No.	Title	Version
TP/003	Policy Statement of Duties to Patients	

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are not controlled nor substantive.

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1. Introduction

It is recognised that, on occasion, members of Operational and EOC staff with use of a service vehicle or lease car may be required to provide an emergency response to individuals with whom they have a close relationship.

This Policy and Procedure sets out the Trust's requirements in such circumstances. It is aimed at protecting both the members of staff and the patient involved from personal conflicts, as well as ensuring that consistent treatment of all patients is achieved.

2. Scope

The Policy and Procedure applies to all members of EOC staff, vehicle crew staff and others working on the Trust's behalf, for example as Community Responders.

Calls may be received via the 999 system but with changing technologies, staff may find out about the need for assistance by other methods. This policy applies to all types of calls in terms of EOC categorisation as well as the location of the call, i.e. whether it is at the patient's home or elsewhere.

3. Objective

To ensure that vehicle crew staff, EOC Staff and others working on the Trust's behalf, for example as Community Responders are aware of their responsibilities as well as the practical steps they must take in circumstances of being sent as responders or providers of care to individuals with whom they have a close relationship.

4. Responsibilities

Vehicle crew staff are responsible for notifying EOC when it becomes apparent that a staff member responding to a call has a close relationship with either an individual named or an individual at the call location.

EOC staff will ensure (as far as is practicable) that the next nearest and appropriately skilled resource is also dispatched to the call, once they have been notified that a member of staff has responded to a call who has a relationship with either an individual named or an individual at the call location.

It is the responsibility of EOC to inform the nearest operational manager to contact the staff member concerned to ensure that staff welfare is appropriately met.

5. Definitions

5.1 Close Relationship

It is not possible to be fully prescriptive on the term 'close relationship'. In the broadest sense, this is used to describe a patient whose relationship with the

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member of staff who is sent to treat that patient, is a partner, family or extended family. Other examples may include immediate work place colleague. The term is also intended to cover close friends or persons with whom he/she has an emotional attachment. It is recognised that a relationship is unlikely to be known by EOC staff when the call is generated.

Staff should notify EOC and their local management team if there could potentially be concerns raised at any stage, either internally or externally, to the LAS regarding differential treatment to a patient because of a pre-existing relationship.

Where doubt may exist, staff are to err on the side of caution and follow the procedure. Clinical responsibility for the patient would then transfer to the senior clinician on scene.

6. Duty of care to patients

It is recognised that the Trust has a duty of care to patients to ensure that they receive a medical response in line with the identified call categorisation. Any consideration made under this Policy and Procedure must not delay the response to the patient or any subsequent treatment to, or transfer of the patient to an appropriate care pathway.

7. Policy / Procedure

7.1 Calls to EOC

An operational emergency response must normally only be initiated by direct access to EOC using the 999 system. Running calls and requests for assistance made by direct presentation to a member of staff or onto Trust premises must be reported to EOC immediately and an event number should be generated for any such incident.

7.2 Vehicle Crew Staff

When a response is dispatched to a call and it becomes apparent that a staff member responding has a close relationship with either an individual named or an individual at the call location, then, whilst continuing to the call, he or she should notify EOC immediately of this fact.

7.3 EOC Staff

EOC staff will ensure (as far as practicable) that, in the case of a member of the ambulance crew alerting EOC of his or her relationship, that the next nearest appropriately skilled resource is also dispatched to the call. In the case of a lone member of staff in an FRU or Community responder calling, then an ambulance will be dispatched if this has not already been completed. The duty operations centre manager and the nearest operational manager must be informed.

7.4 Other Matters

If a member of vehicle crew staff who at that time is working, has a close relationship with a patient and has not been dispatched to the call (and becomes aware of the incident by whatever means) then he or she may make a request to EOC to discuss

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the matter of welfare with an operational manager. The decision on standing down for welfare reasons is that of an operational manager.

Where permission is given, he or she may travel to and be present at the patient's location – this will be in a personal capacity and not as a member of staff. The clinical responsibility remains with those formally dispatched to the call and specifically to the senior clinician on-scene.

Blue lights and sirens must not be used when attending an incident where the patient is considered to be in a close relationship under this Policy / Procedure. The only exception to this caveat is if an on duty member of staff is the primary or the clinically indicted subsequent core resource dispatched to such a patient. In these circumstances, it is compulsory for another member of staff to perform the driving duties. In the case of a solo responder, the closest available operational manager will be dispatched by EOC to collect and convey the staff member to the patient's address.

7.5 At Hospital

When a patient has been conveyed to hospital or other medical establishment then, as soon as practicable and where appropriate, a member of the local management team will be asked to attend the hospital to act as a liaison point on behalf of the LAS and as a welfare contact for the member of staff concerned. The manager concerned should record and log notes of the circumstances of the call and any actions taken in regards to the matter.

7.6 Documentation

All standard documentation, for example the LA4 ('patient report form'), and EOC logging must be recorded in line with the Trust's current Policies and Procedures.

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN				
Intended Audience	All Operational staff and managers, EOC staff and managers and other clinical staff working on behalf of the Trust.			
Dissemination	Available to all staff on the Pulse and to the public on the LAS website.			
Communications	Revised policy and procedure to be announced in the Routine Information Bulletin with link to Policy on Pulse.			
Training	Staff to be made aware of Policy through RIB To be included in Training Course materials.			
Monitoring	Local managers to monitor that the Policy is being applied appropriately.			
Aspect to be monitored	Frequency of monitoring AND tool used	Individual/team responsible for carrying out monitoring AND committee / group where results are reported	Committee/group responsible for monitoring / outcomes / recommendations	How learning will take place
Approval Process	To be routinely reviewed three yearly, or sooner if need presents.	Information Governance, ADG, Assistant Director Corporate Service and Information Governance Group	Risk Compliance and Assurance Group.	Any changes will be documented in a new version of the Policy and Procedure for Approval by ADG. It will then be announced in the RIB