



London Ambulance Service **NHS**  
NHS Trust

**Policy and Procedure on Ambulance Response in Circumstances of  
Close Personal 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 Apr 2012.

**Document Status:** Final

<b>Amendment History</b>			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
08/06/09	0.3	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	Minor - added monitoring and training; s. 5 Duty of Care to Patients
21/04/09	0.2	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	Minor – second draft
16/04/09	0.1	Assistant Director of Operations (South)	Minor – 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.

<b>For Approval By:</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Version</b>
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The RIB	10/6/09	Director of Operations	Operations

<b>Links to Related documents or references providing additional information</b>		
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Version</b>
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 vehicle crew staff may be required to provide an emergency ambulance response to individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship.

This Policy and Procedure sets out the Trust's requirements in such circumstances. It is aimed at protecting the members of staff involved, as well as ensuring that such matters are appropriately managed and that there is consistent treatment of all patients.

## 2. Scope

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

It also applies to all types of calls in terms of EOC categorisation as well as location of the call, i.e., whether it is at the patient's home or elsewhere.

## 3. Objective

To ensure that both vehicle crew staff and EOC Staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as the practical steps they must take, in circumstances of vehicle crew staff being sent as providers of care/responders to individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship.

## 4. Definitions

### 4.1 Close Personal Relationship

The term 'close personal relationship' is used to describe a patient whose relationship with the member of staff who is sent to treat that patient, is either a family one or similar. The term is also intended to cover close friends or frequent acquaintances. It is recognised that a relationship may not be known by EOC staff.

It is impossible to define all relationships that may fall under this category - staff are asked to consider whether or not there could potentially be concerns raised (at any stage and either internal or externally to the LAS) in regards differential treatment to a patient because of a pre-existing relationship. If so, then staff must follow the Procedure below.

If in doubt then members of staff are asked to err on the side of caution and follow the Procedure.

Note that for the sake of brevity in the Procedure, the word 'relationship' is used to describe the circumstances of a 'close personal relationship'.

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## 5. 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.

## 6. Policy/ Procedure

### 6.1 Calls to EOC

An Operational emergency response must only be initiated by direct access to EOC using the 999 system or an alternative emergency number. Running calls and requests for assistance made by direct presentation onto Trust premises, e.g., Ambulance Station must be reported to EOC at the earliest opportunity and a CAD number should be generated for any such incident.

No requests for an emergency response or LAS assistance should be accepted or initiated through direct contact with EOC or on-duty vehicle crew staff through the use of mobile phones or alternative means of communication. In the event of any such requests the caller should be requested to call 999 for further LAS assistance.

### 6.2 Responsibilities of vehicle crew staff

When a response is dispatched to a call and it becomes apparent that a staff member responding has a 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.

### 6.3 Responsibilities of 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 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.

### 6.4 Other matters

If a member of vehicle crew staff who at that time is working, has a 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 be stood-down.

Once stood-down, 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 dispatched to the call and specifically to the senior clinician on-scene.

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## 6.5 At hospital

When a patient has been conveyed to hospital or other medical establishment then, as soon as practicable, a manager will be asked to attend the hospital to act as a liaison point on behalf of the Service 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.

## 6.6 Documentation

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

<b>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>	
<b>Intended Audience</b>	All Operational and EOC managers and staff.
<b>Dissemination</b>	Available to all staff on the Pulse and to the public on the LAS website.
<b>Communications</b>	Revised policy and procedure to be announced in a Medical Bulletin with link to Policy on Pulse.  Announcement in RIB
<b>Training</b>	Staff to be made aware of Policy through both electronic and other communication of Bulletin.  To be included in Training Course materials.
<b>Monitoring</b>	Local managers to monitor that the Policy is being applied appropriately.