



## AMBULANCE TRUST DEFENDS CHIEF OVER TAXI EXPENSES

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service has defended the cost of its £232,000-a-year chief executive after it was revealed he claims up to £400 a week for taxis between his two jobs.

Bridgnorth-based Anthony Marsh splits his week between the West Midlands and the East of England after being asked to take over the struggling East of England Ambulance Service.

Sources had hit out at the cost of his post, which came with a £50,000 increase in salary after he agreed to work two days a week in the West Midlands and three in the East of England. The services have previously categorically denied that Mr Marsh has a driver after sources claimed he was being “chauffeured” around. But details have emerged of his arrangements to be driven between the West Midlands and Cambridgeshire. WMAS said the arrangement saved the taxpayer money because Mr Marsh was working in the car and the journey took less time than using multiple trains.

Last month EEAS and WMAS were asked about the arrangements for driving Mr Marsh. WMAS spokesman John Hawker said at the time: “Mr Marsh does not have and has never had a driver. When Mr Marsh attends meetings he will usually travel with other members of staff attending the same meetings so that he can continue to work en-route. “It would be a ludicrous waste of taxpayers’ money to have him drive himself rather than continue to work whilst travelling. A range of staff have driven him. At most that might happen one day per week; that member of staff also provides a wide range of business support such as drafting presentations and compiling reports.” But it has since emerged that he is allowed to claim up to £400 a week for a taxi service between the two areas.

WMAS spokesman Murray MacGregor said: “Mr Marsh uses the most cost-effective way of getting there. If he’s travelling into London, he’ll use the train. He uses a taxi firm so he can continue to work. “By doing the job of two chief executives, Anthony Marsh is saving taxpayers in excess of £100,000 a year. At East of England he has helped to turn the service around, taken £8 million a year out of back office costs and invested in the front line.”