

# Operational Notice



West Midlands Ambulance Service **NHS**  
NHS Trust

To: **All Operational Staff**  
Date: **04 August 2011**  
Document Number: **ON/077**

## Sharing Of Driving Duties Paramedics/Technicians/ ECAs

The Health Professions Council has been receiving fitness to practice allegations from across the Country which arise from or involve a decision by the paramedic to drive the ambulance and leave a patient in the care of a less qualified ambulance clinician.

The Trust and the Health Professions Council recognise that it is a long-standing practice for ambulance crews to share driving duties, but that practice began at a time when both crew members would have similar levels of clinical competence. Today, paramedics have clinical skills which exceed those of other ambulance clinicians by a significant margin.

Consequently, paramedics and technicians need to consider carefully, and justify decisions on a case by case basis, whether they drive or attend to patients.

The issue is encapsulated in Standard 1 of the HPC's Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, which apply to all paramedics:

***"You must act in the best interests of service users."***

*You are personally responsible for making sure that you promote and protect the best interests of your service users.....*

*You must not do anything, or allow someone else to do anything that you have good reason to believe will put the health or safety of a service user in danger. This includes both your own actions and those of other people.....*

*You are responsible for your professional conduct, any care or advice you provide, and any failure to act. You are responsible for the appropriateness of your decision to delegate a task. You must be able to justify your decisions if asked to..."*

***It is important to read this notice in conjunction with the letter from the HPC attached to Weekly briefing dated August 4 2011***

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Review Date: **August 2012**