

Operational Notice



West Midlands Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Trust

To: **All Operational Staff**
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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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