



**East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust**

Whiting Way  
Melbourn  
Cambridgeshire  
SG8 6NA

16<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to update you following the launch of the new Health Care Professional (HCP) framework on the 1<sup>st</sup> October. The framework is intended for patients who require an ambulance response in a community setting following clinical assessment by a healthcare professional. This change was brought in nationally for all HCPs calling for an ambulance response.

Following feedback from both EEAST staff and HCPs, this update clarifies some of the key issues and questions.

**Awareness and Cascade of Communication Material**

The material for HCPs was nationally produced, to which EEAST added the relevant local information. This was cascaded via CCG leads. Several HCPs are still not aware of the process and we therefore ask that your teams are briefed on the changes and what to expect. A full pack of information is available on our website as below.

**Question 1: Do you need our clinical help right now to deliver an immediate life-saving intervention / or are you declaring an obstetric emergency?**

We are seeing a high number of HCPs using this option for a blue light ambulance. Answering yes to this question means the HCP will be asked additional questions as part of a full triage process in line with the national framework to confirm coding which has caused some frustration. The following provides clarification:

- Answering yes to this question is designed for HCPs who need **immediate clinical assistance to treat a patient in need of immediate, life-saving intervention such as resuscitation or an obstetric emergency**. In these cases, triage would be limited so that we can confirm and immediately deploy resources to assist and provide advice if required. Given the nature of these patients, a solo paramedic (or potentially a community first responder) will be dispatched if they are the closest resource.
- Once coded, if the categorisation does not fit the definition, the call will be responded to in line with a normal HCP call, however the HCP will have been taken through a potentially longer triage system.
- If your patient does not fit this category, **do not answer yes. You will still be able to obtain a blue light emergency ambulance at the next stage through the shortened HCP questions**

**Using 999 or the dedicated HCP line**

- If you need immediate clinical help (as above) you can dial 999 for speed. However, the call will still follow the same process.
- You can still use the HCP line and respond to the first question with a key press, this will route

you to a 999-emergency call handler to process the call as above.

### **HCP Framework Questions and Checklist**

The national framework contains several mandatory questions which EEAST supplement at the end of the call. Following feedback and noting that a HCP should advise us of relevant information we will be removing some of these supplementary questions such as specific infections. We will continue to ask if there is any specific information we need about the patient and expect such areas to be raised at this point. We anticipate these changes will shorten the time HCPs spend on the call and therefore be of benefit to you.

### **Why is NEWS2 being used and what if the HCP hasn't got the score?**

NEWS2 is being used as it enables the clinical condition of the patient to be considered when categorising the call. For example, patients with suspected sepsis and a NEWS2 score of 5 or more should be offered a HCP Level 2 (Category 2) response as this predicts at least a twofold increase in the risk of adverse outcomes (Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee, 2017). If the HCP has not got the NEWS score, they will be asked the reason why an emergency ambulance must be dispatched immediately to confirm the Category 2 response is appropriate. We have noted a minor error on one of the national documents in terms of the NEWS2 table and an updated version is now available on our website.

### **Does this affect the A&E and patient transport service (PTS) contracts?**

No - the new framework does not change the definition of a "contracted" journey, only how we take the call. Therefore, PTS should still be used where appropriate for non-urgent journeys. There is also no change to funding mechanisms.

You can find information and all the national/local communication material on our website at:

[www.eastamb.nhs.uk/HCPtransfers](http://www.eastamb.nhs.uk/HCPtransfers)

Or for specific questions you can also email us at [HCPfeedback@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:HCPfeedback@eastamb.nhs.uk)

We are grateful for your support through this period of change and hope you will find the information in this letter useful and help us to get the right response for your patient whilst minimising your time on the initial call to EEAST.

A FAQ sheet is also be available on our website which summarises key questions.

Yours faithfully,



Gary Morgan  
Deputy Chief Operating Officer  
Ambulance Operations Centres and Community Response