



05 August 2019

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Dear colleague,

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RE. HCP/IFT REQUESTS FOR AMBULANCE SUPPORT FROM SOUTH EAST COAST AMBULANCE SERVICE, EFFECTIVE 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

As you are aware the Ambulance Response Programme (ARP) went live in October 2017 with new standards determined by NHS England. In line with service level enhancements made by other ambulance trusts, and in response to the national frameworks for [healthcare professionals](#) and [inter-facility transfers](#) from acute trusts developed by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) and issued by NHSE/I 24 July 2019, SECamb has reviewed the process for booking and managing HCP and IFT requests for ambulance support by telephone.

The changes come into effect from **10.30am, 4 September 2019**. Healthcare professionals should continue to use the same booking helpline number as before, dependent on where they are based:

Kent: 0300 123 5814
Surrey: 0300 123 9882
Sussex: 0300 123 9163

Please note:

- The healthcare professional line **is not** for use by members of the public. Healthcare professionals and the public should still call 999 in immediately life-threatening emergencies.

What will happen next

When HCPs call to make a request they will be asked a series of clinical questions about the patient's condition, so as to ensure all patients receive the appropriate level of escalated care in a timeframe consistent with the clinical need. The first question is designed to identify those with life-threatening illness or injury to ensure help can be arranged immediately.

Full details on what information callers will be required to provide and the categories of response (HCP 1 – 4) can be found in the AACE Frameworks and on the attachments supplied, but to summarise, the principal questions will be:

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

(If the answer is yes we will revert to 999 pathway, if no we move to Q2)

2. Is there a threat to life, limb or sight requiring immediate emergency admission?
(If answer is yes, we move to Q3, if no we move to Q4 – see attached framework)

3. What is the patient's NEWS2 score?

There are some key points within the national frameworks that HCPs need to be aware of:

- HCPs requesting an emergency ambulance for all patients who are aged 16 years or over and not pregnant will be asked for a National Early Warning Score (NEWS2). Where this is not available, the HCP will be asked to provide a clinical reason for the emergency response - this is likely to extend the length of the call while clinical validation of the category requested is confirmed.
- In a life-threatening situation or an emergency request, the attending clinician is required to make the call to ensure accurate information is given about the situation. Where delegation is unavoidable, the individual making the request for support must be able to answer basic triage questions about the patient's condition.
- Healthcare professionals are requested to remain with the patient when the condition is immediately life-threatening or requires immediate clinical care in a hospital setting.
- Bed bureau or single point of access arrangements that book ambulance transport on behalf of HCPs must have procedures in place so that they can provide all the clinical information needed to make the booking (see below).
- Life-threatening or emergency requests **should not** be made via a bed bureau or single point of access.

These new frameworks are designed to bring national consistency and provide HCP requested transport in a timeframe that is equitable with other patients accessing 999 ambulance services.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that all staff with responsibility for booking SECamb admissions are made aware of these processes, effective 4 September 2019.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Fionna Moore
Acting Chief Executive

Attached: *HCP checklist
 *IFT checklist
 *NEWS2 scoring system

*AACE/NHSE implementation letter
*AACE/NHSE posters x 2 and leaflet