
Use of police vehicles as ambulances

Version 3

1. Policy statement

PFEW believes that members of the public who are ill or injured should be cared for by appropriately trained NHS staff and, where necessary, transported to hospital in an ambulance. A police officer and police vehicle is not an appropriate resource to care and transport members of the public to hospital.

While the Police Federation of England and Wales understands and appreciates only too well the strain that the Government's public service reforms have placed on all emergency services, any time spent by police officers transporting casualties to hospital is time they are not preventing or investigating crime. It is officers' duty of care to the public that results in them taking casualties to hospital when they are left with no other option.

Police officers are being called to incidents where emergency medical care is needed but are left waiting for long periods of time for paramedics to arrive, often only to be told that there are none available. Officers then have no choice but to convey the casualties to hospital themselves.

The issue can be particularly prevalent at peak times such as busy town and city centres during weekends – a time when all emergency services commonly find themselves stretched to capacity. Figures from nine forces in England and Wales reveal that police officers have taken sick and injured people to hospital 2,012 times in 2015, an average of 223 times per force.

2. Responsibility

The Interim National Board is responsible for all policy formation.

3. Summary

PFEW supports the provision of an efficient, professional and dedicated National Health Service in England and Wales that is appropriately resourced to deal with members of the public who are in medical need. Too often, however, in recent years the Police Service has been left to fill the gap when professionally trained NHS resources are unable to attend an incident within appropriate timescales. At a time of decreasing police officer numbers and an increase in demand on police services, the deployment and continued use of police resources to incidents involving members of the public who are ill or injured is adding to the strain on an already stretched and burdened service.

PFEW agrees with the advice given by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) that police officers should not convey members of the public who are ill or injured to hospital. A police officer and police vehicle is not an appropriate resource to care and transport members of the public to hospital. PFEW supports the work being carried out by AACE and the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) to eliminate occasions where police officers convey members of the public to hospital.

PFEW believes that members of the public who are ill or injured should be cared for by appropriately trained NHS staff and, where necessary, transported to hospital in an ambulance. Police officers accept that a primary function of their role is to preserve life and to act in the wider interests of the public, with this being the case a police officer dealing with a member of the public who is ill or injured is duty bound to 'do the right thing'. PFEW believe that officers who act in the best interest of the medical needs of a member of public in the absence of appropriate NHS resources, should not be subject to undue investigation.

PFEW believes that police officers should be trained to an appropriate level to deliver immediate and effective first aid to members of the public.

4. Procedures/implementation

PFEW will work with the National Police Chiefs Council, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Home Office, the Welsh Assembly, NHS England and NHS Wales to ensure that police incidents involving a member of the public who is ill or injured receive a timely response from the NHS and to eliminate occasions where police officers convey members of the public to hospital.

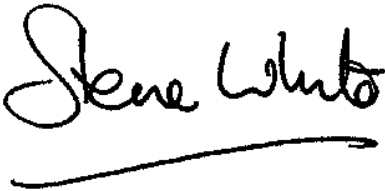
We will work with the Independent Police Complaints Commission to ensure that officers, who act in the best needs of a member of the public, in the absence of appropriate NHS resources, are not subject to undue investigation.

We will press Chief Officers to provide first aid training to all police officers so that they can deliver immediate and effective first aid to members of the public.

Responsibility is delegated to the General Secretary and/or the appropriate sub-committee.

	Author	Date	Review date	Change
Version 1	KP/EP	June 2015	June 2016	
Version 2	KP-EP	June 2016	June 2017	Minor change
Version 3	KP-EP	June 2017	June 2018	Included figures for 2015 from FOI request by Mirror Group newspaper

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. G. H.", written in a cursive style with a horizontal line crossing through the middle of the letters.

General Secretary