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## 1.0 - INTRODUCTION

Safe driver, safe vehicle, safe journey.

### 1.1 - BACKGROUND

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) is committed to improvement in workplace health and safety. As part of this commitment, the Trust recognises that the management of occupational road risk and fleet safety is integral to the reduction of injuries, ill health and improved morale.

**More than a quarter of all road traffic incidents may involve somebody who is driving as part of their work at the time (Department of Transport) and for most Trust staff, their vehicle is their workplace!**

Under health and safety legislation, the management of risk associated with driving at work (occupational driving) is the responsibility of the Trust as an employer. The Trust must ensure that maximum support and protection is offered to its staff, patients, clients, service users, other road users and the general public through the application and maintenance of effective driving standards, processes and practices. NIAS will manage work-related road safety effectively by considering the following three areas of safety:

- Safe driver;
- Safe vehicle;
- Safe journey.

There are risks inherent in driving, however NIAS accepts this risk in the realisation that the benefits to patients can outweigh the risks.

*It would not be practicable to detail every single procedure and process concerning driving duties within this document. Therefore, there are additional arrangements in place such as in depth training packages, Drivers Handbooks (DTAG & Police Foundation) and a Driving and Care of Vehicles When Driving of Behalf of the Trust Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to accompany this document. **The SOP must be read in conjunction with this document to ensure those driving for and on behalf of the Trust have a full understanding of their legal duties and responsibilities when driving.***

### 1.2 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to set the required high standards of driving within NIAS and establish a framework to promote a pro-active approach to maintaining and enhancing safe driving standards and procedures throughout the Trust. This Policy will ensure that the Trust remains compliant with all current applicable legislation and meets all the legal requirements contained within. It aims to minimise risks to staff, patients, clients, service users, other road users and members of the public through the application and maintenance of effective driving standards, processes, training and practices.

### 1.3 - OBJECTIVES

- Provide a clearly understandable policy.
- Define 'at work driving' and 'occupational road risk'.
- To outline the legal duties of the Trust and/or staff working on behalf of the Trust.
- Clearly identify accountability/responsibility for the management of occupational road risk.
- To ensure a standardised approach in driving standards/development within the Trust, and to enhance driving standards in line with best practice, training and legislation.
- To ensure that all vehicles owned and operated by and on behalf of the Trust are in a fit for purpose state and maintained to safe standards.
- Improve health and safety, reduce driving incidents and road traffic collisions (RTCs).
- To ensure the appropriate use of Telematics to monitor and reduce the Trust's carbon footprint on the environment and to monitor and support driving standards.
- Improve productivity (due to fewer incidents taking vehicles off the road).
- Commence a drive to reduce costs to the organisation (reduction of fleet premiums and cost of repairs and replacements).

## 2.0 - SCOPE:

This Policy applies to all staff driving on behalf of the Trust, this includes:

- Drivers of all Trust vehicles (including bank staff).
- Casual and essential car drivers / motorcyclists (grey fleet\*).
- Contracted / external agencies (including taxis).
- Volunteer car drivers.
- British Association for Immediate Care (BASICS) Doctors.
- Community First Responders.
- Independent Ambulance Sector (IAS), including Voluntary and Private Ambulance Services (VAS / PAS) via agreed assurance arrangements.

\*In terms of casual and essential drivers who drive their own private vehicle for the requirements of their role, for example staff who drive to attend meetings, conferences etc., to carry out their job role (work-related journeys). These vehicles are known as the 'grey fleet' as they are privately owned vehicles being used for Trust purposes. There are clear responsibilities on both the driver and the Trust in this area (detailed later in this document).

Health and safety law does not apply to people commuting (i.e. travelling between their home and their usual place of work), unless they are travelling from their home to somewhere which is not their usual place of work.

## 3.0 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

### 3.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are suitable and sufficient arrangements in place for the full implementation of this Policy / SOP, including the necessary finance / resources, monitoring processes, and oversight coupled with the necessary Trust Board accountability arrangements.

- Ensuring there are suitable arrangements in place for the review and audit of this policy document to ensure that the Policy / SOP remains fit for purpose and that full Policy / SOP compliance is achieved.

### 3.2 Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with this Policy.
- Ensuring that only those staff within their Directorate who have successfully completed an approved emergency driving course are permitted to drive under emergency conditions.

### 3.3 The Medical Director is responsible for:

- Providing and ensuring oversight and accountability of all driver training within the Trust (including behavioural based driver safety training / assessment).
- Providing the Chief Executive and Trust Board with information and assurance pertaining to the management of driver training within the Trust.
- Ensuring the necessary competence and expertise of individuals assigned specific driving related roles and responsibilities.
- With regards to other groups of staff / volunteers driving on behalf of the Trust (i.e. Community First Responders, BASICS etc.), ensuring that arrangements are in place to monitor driving standards and that these groups of staff are clear on the requirement to adhere to Highway Code, national speed limits etc.
- The timely review of this Policy / SOP.

### 3.4 Operational Services Director, Operational Services Assistant Directors (Performance) & Operational Services Assistant Director (Control and Communications) are responsible for:

- Implementing this Policy, and the *Driving and Care of Vehicles When Driving on Behalf of the Trust Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)* along with any associated guidance based on risk assessments within their areas of responsibility.
- With regards to Operational Services, ensuring arrangements are in place for monitoring and compliance with this Policy / SOP.
- With regards to Operational Services, ensuring that there are suitable resources available for the implementation of this Policy / SOP.
- Ensuring the communication of the information within this Policy / SOP is cascaded to appropriate managers.
- Ensuring that crews have adequate time to carry out Vehicle Daily Inspections (VDIs), except when an immediate response is required for a confirmed CAT1 incident.
- Ensuring that only those staff within the Directorate who have successfully completed an approved emergency driving course are permitted to drive under emergency conditions.
- Ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place to monitor and assess driving with regards to volunteer drivers, in particular ensuring that volunteer drivers are clear on the requirement to adhere to Highway Code, national speed limits etc.
- Liaising with the Recruitment Team (Human Resources) to ensure that driving license information is passed to the Resource Management Centre and added to the Global Rostering System (Operational Services Assistant Directors (Performance)).
- Ensuring adequate contractual arrangements are in place for the use of commissioned services (Independent Ambulance Sector, taxis etc.). This would include ensuring that contracted organisations provide assurance that their drivers are competent and hold the

appropriate licence category for the vehicle that they are driving, the vehicles are road worthy and appropriately insured. The Trust will carry out inspections / spot checks as deemed necessary.

### 3.5 The Fleet Manager is responsible for:

- As far as reasonably practicable ensuring that all vehicles owned and operated by the Trust are roadworthy and fit for purpose.
- Ensuring that there are appropriate mechanisms and procedures in place to identify vehicle faults / defects and action as necessary to comply with this Policy / SOP.
- Ensuring all available safety enhancements are fitted, as far as reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that all vehicles procured meet the criteria for reducing the overall carbon footprint of the Trust as per Fleet Strategy.
- Regular issue of 'Motor Insurance – Duty To Disclose Material Facts', collating responses and advising insurance brokers.
- Issue of reminders to line managers to check driving licences bi-annually.
- Ensure vehicle specifications have suitable arrangements in place for the safe storage of medical gases (means to secure, signage etc.).
- Ensuring new vehicles are risk assessed on purchase and prior to commissioning.
- Ensuring vehicles are fitted with suitable fire extinguishers prior to deployment.
- Ensuring vehicles are not issued / loaned without assurances regarding adequate training.
- Ensuring that Fleet related data is captured, collated, and presented relevant to any driving activity within, or on behalf of the Trust.
- To ensure the appropriate use of Telematics to monitor and reduce the Trust's carbon footprint on the environment and to monitor and support driving standards.

### 3.6 The Director of Finance, Fleet & Estates is responsible for:

- Ensuring that adequate resources and funding is available for insurance, procurement, commissioning and on-going maintenance of Trust vehicles.
- Ensuring that adequate funding is available for provision of initial driver training course as well as regular programmed refresher training course.

### 3.7 The Risk Management Team is responsible for:

- In partnership with the Clinical Education Department (CED) and Fleet Manager, the development of suitable policies, procedures and arrangements to ensure that risks to staff health and safety from driving related activities are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Providing support and advice to managers on completion of risk assessments to identify any potential health risks from driving are apparent and to implement the correct control measures as required.
- Ensure adequate health & safety training is provided for staff and line management to facilitate them being able to carry out appropriate risk assessments.
- Ensuring that all relevant risk data is captured, collated and presented relevant to any driving activity within, or on behalf of the Trust.
- Liaising with other specialists, i.e. driving instructors, HSENI and other agencies to ensure the information contained within this Policy / SOP is correct and follows applicable legislation.

- Reporting to the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997.
- Providing a point of contact between NIAS and external parties such as HSENI.
- Ensuring this Policy / SOP is reviewed every three years, and updated if required to reflect changes in practices, procedures, training and legislation.

### 3.8 Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff / volunteers within their area of responsibility are supported, made aware of, and comply with this Policy / SOP (through local induction / team briefs and where changes occur). In particular ensuring only suitably trained staff drive under emergency conditions.
- Where reasonably practicable, ensuring the Policy / SOP and related driving procedures are adhered to and fully implemented as part of the Trust's integrated governance requirements.
- Being aware of all hazards associated with driving duties within the Trust.
- Regularly reviewing and monitoring risks and improvements achieved or planned.
- Intervening, reporting and escalating incidents where standards appear to be falling below those set out in this Policy.
- Actively promoting improving practices within their service on the safe use of vehicles.
- Ensuring compliance with Trust Incident Reporting Procedures.
- Ensuring driving licence checks are conducted on a six-monthly basis, e.g. 31<sup>st</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> September each year and recorded appropriately.
- Ensuring risk assessments including Driver Risk Assessments are in place and adhered to (support is available from the Risk Management Team and CED).
- If made aware, reporting any concerns regarding vehicle roadworthiness, defects etc. to the Fleet Manager.
- Taking action should it become apparent that a Trust vehicle is not roadworthy / fit for purpose, reporting all defects found.
- Reminding staff to ensure all driving related incidents are appropriately reported, investigated and/or reviewed as required (via DATIX etc.).
- Ensuring all notifications from staff about changes to their health or personal circumstances, that may affect their ability to drive, are actioned promptly and appropriately.
- Ensuring all Notification of Intended Prosecutions (NIPs) are reviewed and actioned accordingly.
- As necessary referring to and working in partnership with Clinical Education Department and Fleet Manager.
- Ensuring that CoSHH assessments are adhered to with particular focus on the storage of medical gases.
- Where applicable, ensuring that all vehicles in their control are presented for service, inspection, and repairs when requested.
- Where applicable, ensuring the presentation of relevant logbooks / records to the appropriate Line Manager / Supervisor for checking, sign off and filing.
- In conjunction with the Clinical Education Manager, arranging the completion of a Drivers Risk Assessment along with the production of a portfolio for staff employed prior to 1981.

- Monitoring staff / persons who are employed and / or contracted by the Trust and drive their own private vehicle for the requirements of their role. **As a minimum line managers should request to see a current driving licence along with evidence that the driver is insured for the vehicle they are using (business insurance) on an annual basis. Failure to adhere may result in the non-payment of claims for business mileage.**

**3.9 The Clinical Education Manager is responsible for ensuring that:**

- NIAS has a robust system and structure in place for the organisation and delivery of initial accredited ambulance driver training, periodic driving assessments, and review of driving duties within the Trust (including behavioural based driver safety training / assessment).
- During the pre-employment recruitment process, all new recruits joining the Trust undertake a relevant Driver Competency Assessment prior to joining the Trust.
- 5-yearly (maximum) Driver Competency Reviews are implemented for those staff who are required to drive ambulance vehicles, in accordance with awarding body requirements, national standards, best practice, legislation, policy and related procedures.
- All ambulance driver education and assessment is conducted in compliance with awarding body requirements, national standards, best practice, legislation, policy and procedures.
- When appropriate, assist in the conducting of investigations into driving related incidents carried out in accordance with the Trust's Incident Reporting Procedure and Risk Assessment Procedure.

**3.10 Driving Instructor / Tutors are responsible for:**

- The delivery of training and the ongoing development and review of driving standards in accordance with awarding body requirements, national standards, best practice, legislation and Trust Policy and related procedure (including behavioural based driver safety training / assessment).
- Ensuring that, during ambulance driver training and assessment, relevant staff are made aware of this Policy, the SOP and related legislation.
- Assisting in conducting investigations and adjudication into incidents / collisions involving a Trust vehicle.
- Conducting risk assessments pertaining to driver training and related circumstances.
- Keeping abreast of current requirements, relevant legislation, and best practice relating to driving and driver education.
- Providing expert advice to the Trust in relation to current legislation and driver training.
- Ensuring assessments of new drivers at six monthly intervals for the first year of driving or sooner if required.
- Mobile devices should only be used in accordance with applicable legislation which includes supervising driving students.

**3.11 All staff, contractors and volunteers where appropriate are responsible for:**

- Complying with this Policy / SOP, Trust Health & Safety Procedures and associated documentation relating to the safe and proper use of vehicles.

- Seeking advice from line managers for clarification on any information where required.
- Attending the relevant training and / or assessment commensurate with their job role (including behavioural based driver safety training / assessment).
- Reporting any injury sustained, which may affect their ability to drive, immediately to their line manager.
- Promptly reporting any disability e.g. defective hearing, visual impairment, diabetes, seizures, any heart complaint or any other illness which is notifiable to the Licensing Authorities to line management (an individual risk assessment may be required).
- Taking individual responsibility to ensure fitness to drive, including not being overly tired, and should take such into account when planning outside activities if they may impact on their ability to drive at work.
- Ensuring that any vehicles they are required to drive on behalf of the Trust are roadworthy and legal to drive by undertaking the vehicle inspection procedures (VDI) prior to driving.
- Ensuring every effort is made to always keep vehicles more than half full of fuel. On completion of shift, vehicles should be shorelined (see Vehicle Shoreline SOP).
- Using mobile devices in accordance with applicable legislation.
- Reporting any defects detected, completing the required paperwork, and taking necessary action regarding roadworthiness of vehicles. Failing to report damage either caused or found, may result in investigation under the Trusts Disciplinary Procedures.
- Not using any vehicle under NIAS control for any reason other than that of its intended purpose.
- Not driving any Trust vehicle that they have not been familiarised with.
- Ensuring the security of the vehicle and its contents as far as possible when unattended. At the end of the shift, keys must be returned to key boxes. EAC / line management must be informed immediately in the event of a lost or misplaced key.
- Ensuring driver fatigue is considered and reduced by alternating driving duties where practicable. Professional clinical responsibility, however, should take precedence should a paramedic be required to monitor the person being transported in an ambulance. It is recognised lone workers are the exception to alternating driving duties.
- Booking on the MDT from shift commencement time and then proceeding to commence the VDI. Operational staff should be aware that they will be tasked to a confirmed Category 1 call at any time from shift commencement (even before MDT book on is completed) via the Station Tannoy or phone. Staff must ensure basic roadworthiness of the Trust vehicle prior to driving it. These checks include, as a minimum, checking wheels, tyres, brakes, windows/wipers/washers, vehicle lights and, if driving under emergency conditions, emergency audible/visual warnings. Staff should ensure they carry out a full VDI at the earliest time after completion of Category 1 call.
- Reporting to line management, Human Resources and the Fleet Manager, prior to the commencement of the next shift, any convictions, licence suspensions, Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIPs), penalty points, licence expiry etc. Failure to do so may result in suspension of driving duties.
- Being aware of, and complying with, the rules of the road, current Highway Code and current Trust Policies, Procedures, SOPs and legislation.
- **Wearing seat belts at all times EXCEPT when providing medical treatment to a patient which due to its nature or the medical condition of the patient cannot be delayed (see relevant legislation / Trust Safety Alert 19-02 / SOP).**

- Ensuring that all seats are either forward or rear facing for seatbelts to function correctly.
- Being fit to drive and informing line managers immediately of any change to health that results in no-longer being fit to drive (this includes the temporary use of certain medication). If a driver becomes ill whilst driving, they should stop the vehicle as soon as it is safe to do so and report to their Supervisor/Line Manager/EAC.
- Ensuring that they never, under any circumstances, drive while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, solvents or prescription drugs that could alter their ability to drive.
- At each six-monthly check, on joining, or on request, having and producing correct driving licence/s to the Trust. Failure to produce the required documentation with two weeks may result in suspension of driving duties.
- Holding a valid driving licence and relevant qualification, appropriate for both the vehicle and the circumstances under which it is being driven.
- Ensuring the correct following position from the vehicle in front, i.e. not tailgating a crew or attempting to provide an escort for another crew.
- Cooperating with the Fleet Manager in relation to fleet issues.
- Meeting current driving eyesight requirements set out by DVA.
- Complying with all driving and parking regulations, except when claiming an exemption which the driver must justify.
- Ensuring compliance with current arrangements for working time and compensatory rest.
- Being responsible and accountable for the care, condition and treatment of Trust provided vehicles, and for privately provided vehicles that may on occasion be/or are used on Company business.
- Ensuring all vehicle incidents are reported in accordance with the Trust's Incident Reporting Procedure (DATIX), and completion of relevant documentation, e.g. insurance claim form.
- Only conveying passengers in connection with Trust business (other passengers may not be insured in the event of an accident).
- Not accepting an un-roadworthy vehicle or one that they cannot drive safely i.e. have not been trained to drive.
- Adhering to driver training and any manufacturer's instructions with regards to vehicle safety / maintenance.
- Ensuring that medical gases are correctly stored and suitably secured on vehicles.
- Adhering to the Trusts' Smoke Free Policy, i.e. smoking is not permitted in a Trust vehicle as set out in the Smoke Free Policy.
- Not eating and drinking whilst in control of a moving vehicle. This an offence under the Road Traffic Order.

In the case of members of staff / persons who are employed and / or contracted by the Trust and drive their own private vehicle for the requirements of their role (grey fleet), it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that their vehicle is fit for purpose, roadworthy, taxed, has a valid certificate of MOT, and that the driver is insured for the vehicle they are using, i.e. business insurance. Upon request, and on an annual basis, provide line management with evidence that the driver is insured for the vehicle they are using (business insurance). Failure to adhere may result in the suspension of driving on Trust business, and the non-payment of claims for business mileage etc.

### 3.12 The Health & Safety Committee is responsible for:

- Receiving reports from the Fleet Accident Reduction Group (FARG) and the escalation of any concerns as necessary.

### 3.13 Fleet Accident Reduction Group (FARG):

The Fleet Accident Reduction Group (FARG) is responsible for reducing the number of avoidable vehicle accidents within the Trust along with reducing injuries to patients, staff and others along with associated expenditure on vehicle repairs and insurance premiums (separate Terms of Reference available).

- Oversight of incidents and issues pertaining to driving duties within the Trust.
- Use of vehicle CCTV for the purposes of learning and improvement.
- The formulation of any remedial measures that may be required and to assist with the aim of seeking continual improvement of driving related tasks.
- Assessing any training requirements associated with driving roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring lessons learned from the outcome of incidents are communicated to all drivers and the recommendations are implemented throughout the Trust.
- Escalating matters to Health and Safety Committee, Education, Learning and Development Group, Audit and Risk Assurance Group (ARAC) and Trust Board as necessary.
- To ensure the appropriate use of Telematics to monitor and reduce the Trust's carbon footprint on the environment and to monitor and support driving standards.

### 3.14 Trade Union Safety Representative are responsible for:

- Consulting with their members on 'at work driving' including conducting workplace surveys and undertaking joint workplace inspections.
- Working in partnership with line managers to address risks from 'at work driving' as outlined in this policy.
- Encouraging their members to address risk and access the range of support services available.

## 4.0 - KEY PRINCIPLES:

### 4.1 Definitions of Driving Within The Trust:

Driving tasks can be broken into two categories: normal road driving conditions and emergency response driving conditions as detailed in section 4.2 and 4.3.

### 4.2 Definitions of Various Terms In Reference To Driving:

- **Emergency response driving** – is the driving action taken when responding to an emergency, which is considered an event that requires immediate preventative action to avoid the risk to life or health. These vehicles are fitted with blue lights and audible alerts. Only emergency response trained personnel are authorised to drive these vehicles under emergency response driving conditions.
- **Normal road driving conditions** – is the process of driving a vehicle to current legislation, Orders and Highway Codes.

- **High Speed Register** – is an electronic register held by the Trust, managed by the Clinical Education Department that contains the details of employees & Approved Volunteers permitted to undertake Emergency Response Driving (This will be necessary to fulfil anticipated legislative changes, and is under development at time of publication).
- **Grey Fleet Vehicles** – are privately owned vehicles used by a member of staff for Trust purposes. The employee is reimbursed for using their own vehicles on Trust related journeys.
- **Dynamic risk assessment** – is the constant and ongoing assessment of the changing risks. An example of this could be when applying the brakes as traffic lights change and/or seeing a pedestrian about to cross the road and keeping a visual on them.
- **Patient Carrying Vehicles** – are vehicles that are directly controlled by the Trust, or have been contracted in by a third party, that are designed to transport patients under normal road driving conditions.
- **Suitable/valid driving licence** – is a current driving licence indicating the holder has the appropriate category to drive the vehicle being driven.
- **Careless driving** – is an offence under part 2 of the “The Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995”. It is classed as: *“if a person drives a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road or other public place without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road or place, they are guilty of an offence”*. A person is to be regarded as driving without due care and attention if the way he drives falls below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver.
- **Dangerous driving** – is an offence under part 2 of The Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995. It is classed as: *“a person who drives a mechanically propelled vehicle dangerously on a road or public place is guilty of an offence”* A person is to be regarded as driving dangerously if (and only if) the way they drive falls far below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver, and it would be obvious to a competent and careful driver that driving in that way would be dangerous.
- **Satisfactory driving assessment** – is an assessment against the new Department for Transport ‘High Speed’ competencies supported by the Driver Training Advisory Group, where each competency is scored 3 or more.

#### 4.3 Driving Standards & Requirements: Normal Road Driving Conditions:

The Trust seeks to minimise risks to staff, patients, clients, other road users and members of the public through the application and maintenance of effective driving standards. The following requirements have been identified in accordance with national standards, best practice and legislation:

- Members of staff employed and/or contracted by the Trust that are required to drive a Trust vehicle must hold a valid driving licence appropriate for the vehicle that is driven.
- All personnel driving on behalf of the Trust MUST drive in adherence with the current legislation, road safety laws and Highway Code.
- It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure that all the necessary seatbelts / patient restraint systems are installed and used correctly prior to any journey.
- It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure that all ancillary equipment such as wheelchairs, stretchers, medical equipment etc. are stored and secured correctly as per Policy / SOP, prior to any journey commencing. See relevant legislation / SOP.
- Mobile devices should only be used in accordance with applicable legislation.

- Managers of operational staff will conduct driving licence checks on a six-monthly basis, i.e. on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> September each year.
- New recruits whose job role requires them to drive an ambulance vehicle as a condition of their job role must successfully complete an accredited ambulance driver education and assessment programme before driving unsupervised.
- Members of staff who are required to drive an ambulance vehicle as a condition of their job role are required to successfully complete a Driver Competency Review on a 3 to 5-year rolling basis.
- As a minimum, line managers of non-operational staff driving for business purposes (i.e. grey fleet), should request to see a current driving licence along with evidence that the driver is insured for the vehicle they are using (business insurance) on an annual basis. Failure to adhere will result in the non-payment of claims for business mileage etc.

#### 4.4 Driving Standards & Requirements: Emergency Response Blue Light Driving:

The Trust will provide an approved accredited emergency response driver training programme for any person who is required to drive under these conditions. No other person/s are authorised to drive any of the Trust's vehicles under these conditions if not trained to do so. There are no exceptions to this condition.

- **All of the terms within section 4.3 "Driving standards and requirements, Normal road driving conditions" are applicable for this section also.**
- All vehicles that are required to potentially be driven under emergency response conditions must be fitted with the appropriate visual and audible emergency systems. These must be fully functioning prior to any emergency response journey as per VDI.
- All drivers, driving under emergency response conditions MUST adhere to what was taught during the accredited training course programme, as well as adhering to supporting documentation such as Roadcraft, Drivers Handbook and current SOP.
- When responding to an emergency call, every effort should be made to progress appropriately, taking cognisance of the current weather and road conditions.
- When driving under emergency response conditions, various exemptions to normal driving legislations or highway code rules may be utilised, if justifiable to do so. These are outlined in the SOP in Section 2 of the SOP (v1.0).
- Emergency vehicles that are tasked to respond to non-life threatening calls will drive under normal road driving conditions.

#### 4.5 Use of Audible and Visual Warning Systems (AVWS):

- Responding ambulance crews will respond to emergency calls using either a HOT or COLD response, i.e. with or without the use of full Audible and Visual Warning Systems (AVWS).
- A 'HOT' response is defined as using full Audible and Visual Warning Systems (AVWS).
- A 'COLD' response is defined as a response **WITHOUT** the use of Audible and Visual Warning Systems (AVWS).

#### 4.6 Fitness To Drive / Medical Standards:

- If anyone driving on behalf of the Trust develops any medical condition(s) that will affect their ability to drive, they must inform their line manager for assessment, and approval

from senior management of their ability to continue driving. They are obliged by Law (depending on their medical condition) to contact the DVA and inform them of same. The driver, at the discretion of management, may be referred to occupational health for further investigation and approval to continue driving duties. A risk assessment may also be carried out to determine the level of risk from driving duties and implement sufficient and suitable controls as is reasonably practicable.

- All operational staff, who drive either in the emergency and non-emergency tiers of the service are required to satisfy Group 2 Medical Standards. The requirement to satisfy Group 2 Medical Standards is based upon driving licence requirements and/or occupational requirements of the job role.
- The Trust is committed to complying with its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination legislation, including making reasonable adjustments. Consideration of such matters in relation to individual members of staff in the context of driving will ensure reference to DVA guidance, Occupational Health advice and engagement with the affected employee and their Trade Union representative.
- Staff can also Contact Occupational Health, DVA, CED or the Risk Management Team for advice: [How to tell DVA about a medical condition | nidirect](#)

#### 4.7 Education & Training:

- All staff required to drive under emergency response conditions are required to complete and pass an approved and accredited emergency driver training programme and assessment prior to being authorised to drive a Trust vehicle under such conditions.
- All staff who are required to drive a patient carrying vehicle under normal road driving conditions are required to complete and pass a Trust driving course and assessment prior to undertaking driving duties on behalf of the Trust.
- Any other staff required to drive other Trust vehicles must undertake assessment and suitable training prior to commencing duties (agency, vehicle cleanliness, stores etc.).
- Anyone working on behalf of the Trust claiming mileage (grey fleet) may require a driving assessment. Requests will be made based on individual 'grey-fleet' driver's Driver Risk Assessment score (Appendix 1), to be periodically reviewed by relevant line manager in consultation with CED.
- Anyone transporting patients on behalf of the Trust, i.e. volunteer drivers, will have their driving standard assessed as deemed necessary by the Trust following driver risk assessment. These assessments would normally be conducted in the vehicle the volunteer driver uses for Trust purposes.
- All staff are required to complete the behavioural based driver safety training and assessment (Appendix 2) either during training programmes, or as a self-assessment exercise annually and / or as required as part of a Driver Risk Assessment (see Appendix 1).
- All third-party independent ambulance contractors, acting on behalf of the Trust, will be required to ensure their staff complete regular driving and health assessments, at least every five years, to ensure their competency. These requirements will be documented in all service level agreements with these organisations. Evidential proof must be retained by the contractors (and may be requested by NIAS during established quarterly audits) of compliance with these standards. It is expected that the driving assessments completed by third-party ambulance contractors is of similar standard to NIAS' own driver assessments. NIAS Clinical Education Department may request verification of

driver assessment standards from third-party organisations to judge standard of assessment.

- Regular and periodic driving assessments will be carried out for all staff driving Trust vehicles to ensure standards are being maintained. These assessments will be carried out by an approved accredited driving instructor. These assessments will be no more than 5 years from initial assessment, or from last review (N.B. at time of publication we acknowledge there will be lead time to develop position and resource to deliver this).
- Where possible, staff should notify their line manager if they have not received notification to attend training, or assessment in accordance with this Policy / SOP.
- The assessment of any driver can be brought forward from 5 years at the discretion of the Trust or, after an incident or a report of the driver's actions and behaviours.
- In certain circumstances it may be necessary to provide re-training and/or assessment to staff; this may be following an RTC, or a number of minor incidents, or may be associated to extensive periods away (6 months or more) from driving for NIAS related work purposes. The provision of such training or assessment will be determined on an individual basis.
- Any drivers who, after assessment do not meet the required standard will be suspended from driving duties and a remedial action plan created with training delivered. Reinstatement of driving duties will be subject to satisfactory re-assessment an approved and accredited driving instructor.
- Any appeals as to the decision of a driver assessment will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Clinical Education Manager.

Commented [PC1]: replace with minimum 5 years

#### 4.8 Mobile Devices:

- Mobile devices must not be used whilst driving as it is illegal. This includes messaging, and whilst stopped in traffic, unless the phone is being used to call 999 (or 112) in a genuine emergency where it is unsafe or impractical to stop.
- The Trust will ensure that when employees and volunteers are required to drive on behalf of the Trust and use a mobile device, this is done within the law and under the safest conditions possible.
- Drivers must be aware though that using a mobile device under any circumstances (including hands free) whilst driving may still distract attention from the road and must not be used without justification to avoid any unnecessary distraction. It remains the driver's responsibility to ensure that the standard of driving is not detrimentally affected by such activity (see SoP v1.0: 2.22 for advice on use of fixed in-vehicle radios).

#### 4.9 Fatigue:

- Driving when tired can greatly increase the risk of collision. Irregular work and shift patterns increase the risk of fatigue, and alertness is reduced if you drive at times when you would normally be asleep. Driving for long periods in monotonous conditions can promote tiredness. Drivers must ensure they are fit to drive before undertaking any type of driving, particularly emergency response driving.
- The Trust recognises the importance of guarding against fatigue and stress to protect the health and safety of those driving on behalf of the Trust, patients, other road users and third parties.

- The Trust will endeavour to ensure that staff receive sufficient time off throughout the working week to avoid excess fatigue and stress. There may be exceptions to this when the Trust is under extreme pressure, however all reasonable measures will be adopted by the Trust to avoid this. Staff should alternate driving duties during shifts where possible (see Section 3.11 regarding HCPC requirements).
- Driving for this purpose is defined as: being in control of a moving vehicle and does not include sitting in a stationary vehicle whilst on standby.

#### 4.10 Driver Assessments & Driver Risk Assessments:

For all staff driving Trust vehicles, the Trust will carry out a Driver Assessment under the following circumstances:

- A return to operational driving following a period of absence or alternative duties (6 months or more).
- A self-referral made by a member of staff.
- A transfer from another Trust/organisation.
- Any period of absence which has been due to a licence being revoked and subsequently reinstated by the DVLI for medical fitness to drive reasons.

A Driver Risk Assessment (Appendix 1) will be carried out at the following triggers:

- A serious incident causing substantial damage or harm.
- Two vehicle related incidences resulting in any exterior vehicle damage within a six month period.
- Six or more penalty points on the driver's licence.
- A near miss that had the potential for serious harm.
- A driving related complaint has been received by the Trust.
- A self-referral following the identification of a personal training need.

The Trust will determine the appropriate intervention from the details of the incident and the drivers complete driving history in conjunction with the Driver Risk Assessment and Behavioural Based Safety Self-Assessment. Driving history includes all driving, i.e. personal and at work driving.

The Trust recognises that personal circumstances can impact upon their quality of driving and where this is the case, the Trust will provide the appropriate health and wellbeing support.

In the first instance the line manager at a local level will carry out an information gathering exercise and commence the Driver Risk Assessment. The line manager may seek advice from the Driver Training Team / Risk Management Team or escalate to the Clinical Education Manager as necessary. Where further similar incidents continue to occur, advice should be sought from the driver training team on the appropriate intervention.

Assessments and reassessments will be recorded on the employee's file.

#### 4.11 Risk Management & Risk Assessment:

- The Trust will ensure that suitable and sufficient assessment of risk to the health and safety of its staff, including all risks to which they are exposed to while driving for work purposes are carried out. These risk assessments will be regularly monitored and reviewed for any required changes.
- A dynamic risk assessment must be carried out by the driver for each occasion where an emergency or non-emergency drive is to be conducted. Consideration should be given to:
  - The suitability and characteristics of the vehicle to be driven.
  - The ability of the driver and experience.
  - The nature of the journey.
  - Environmental conditions.
  - Road conditions.
  - Traffic conditions
  - Patient needs.
  - Staff/medical staff tending to patients in the rear of the vehicle.

**All driving-related accidents or incidents must be reported in order that the Trust can meet its responsibilities for investigation purposes to determine the cause, and what preventive or supportive further actions can be taken to reduce the risk.**

#### **4.12 Driving Licence Checks & Declaration of Endorsements:**

- Driving licence checks will be carried out on a 6 monthly basis (or annually for grey fleet drivers). This is applicable to all staff members who drive directly for, or on behalf of the Trust. This also applies to all voluntary and third-party contractors who drive on behalf of the Trust (as set out in contract documentation).
- Drivers must produce both parts of their licence upon request, within two weeks of being asked. Photocopies are not acceptable.
- If the drivers' licence has not been surrendered for inspection after the two-week time frame a second request will be made. Failure to surrender the driver's licence for a second time will result in the driver being suspended from driving duties. The only exception to this is if the licence has been lost or sent away for renewal/replacement. A reasonable timeframe will be permitted for surrendering the licence, dependent on current wait times/delays of the DVA.
- Drivers MUST declare any new endorsements or fixed penalty charges they receive. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings being initiated.
- Drivers must declare any bans or disqualifications, or changes to their driving category entitlements. Failure to do so may result in investigation under the Trusts Disciplinary Procedure.

#### **4.13 Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIP):**

- Staff must report any Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIP) to their line manager, Human Resources and the Fleet Manager, prior to the commencement of the next shift.
- Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIPs) will be reviewed by the line manager.
- Where NIPs are received and no appropriate rationale can be claimed or supporting exemption evidence is available, the incident will be investigated, and appropriate action taken.

- All NIPs received will be reviewed and audited against the Trusts Driving Policy standards. Where the policy standards are not met, an investigation will take place and appropriate action taken.

#### 4.14 Fuel Efficiency:

- Fuel efficient driving can reduce consumption by 15%. Driving fuel efficiently means; less stress for drivers, safer driving, better standards, reduced wear and tear on vehicles and reduced operating costs. Reliable and economical fuel efficiency is a mark of professional driving.

#### 4.15 Public Eye:

- Drivers must act in a courteous and considerate manner to other road users, portraying a positive and pro-active approach to members of the public and colleagues. Policy and Procedures in place for the management of complaints to be adhered to. Confrontation is to be avoided.

#### 4.16 Professionalism:

- All drivers are to drive with the utmost due care and attention within the law and use defensive driving skills to avoid any RTC. Many RTCs are caused by driving too fast, reversing and rushing. If you feel you require additional training or advice on driving techniques or health and safety, please advise a Line Manager.

#### 4.17 Environment:

- Drivers are to consider the effect on the environment and take every care to protect and minimise any damage against it. This includes pollution from fuel engines, noise, spillage, litter, damage to grass verges and trees.

### 5.0 - IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

#### 5.1 Dissemination:

With regards to dissemination this Policy will be:

- Issued to all Board Members, Chair, Non-Executive Directors, Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Directors.
- Disseminated to the required staff by Assistant Directors.
- Made available on the Internet and SharePoint so that all employees and members of the public / stakeholders can easily have access.
- Discussed during Corporate Induction.
- Provided to staff during any driving related training or assessment.

#### 5.2 Resources:

- Information contained within this Policy / SOP will be made available to new employees at the commencement of employment, at employee induction programmes, and via information leaflets.
- For existing employees, information and training will be available through clinical updates, Health & Safety Training sessions, Risk Assessment Training sessions and ESR annual mandatory training in accordance with Trust Policies.
- The development of a specific cohort of staff to conduct Road Traffic Incident Investigation is under consideration at the time of publication.
- Line managers will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Trust / organisation training matrix.

### 5.3 Exemptions:

There are no exemptions from the operation of this Policy / SOP.

### 6.0 - MONITORING:

- Regular monitoring and auditing of the Trust Driving policy will be undertaken.
- Managers of the Clinical Education Department will follow IQA (internal quality assurance) and EQA (external quality assurance) policy in relation to auditing driver training programmes for educational compliance against driving standards regulations.
- The 'High Speed' register will be monitored regularly by Clinical Education Department who will then escalate any issues/concerns to the appropriate Director or SMT for action.
- Audits and inspections of driving standards will be performed by approved driving assessors and/or driving instructors. The findings and recommendations will be reported to all relevant managers, who will then be reporting to relevant Directors for communication via SMT to Trust Board.
- Driving incidences and vehicle damage will be investigated / reviewed. Findings will be recorded and actioned accordingly, in accordance with this policy and other approved Trust policies.
- Responsibilities will be checked through performance review.

### 7.0 - EVIDENCE BASE/REFERENCES:

The primary legislation governing road safety is the Road Traffic (NI) Order (1995), which is supported by the Highway Code. Health and Safety legislation also places a legal duty on the Trust as an employer to provide employees with a safe working environment, and to assess any work-related risks. **This applies to employees driving on the road in the course of their employment.**

#### Legislation relevant to this policy:

- The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000.
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (NI) 1993.
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (NI) 1999

- Working Time Regulations 1998.
- Motor Vehicle Driving License Regulations (NI) 1996.
- Motor Vehicle Wearing of Seatbelts Regulations (NI) 1993.
- Motor Vehicle (Speed limits) Regulations (NI) 1989.
- Motor Vehicles (Speed Limit Restrictions) (Exemption) Regulations (NI) 1998.
- Road Vehicles (Traffic) Regulations 1933.
- Roads (NI) Order 1993.
- Road Vehicle (Display of Registration Marks) Regulations 2001.
- Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002.
- Road Traffic Offenders (NI) Order 1996.
- Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1994.
- Road Traffic Order (NI) 1995.
- A Guide to Workplace Transport HS(G)136.
- The Highway Code ([www.highwaycode.gov.uk](http://www.highwaycode.gov.uk)).

#### 8.0 - CONSULTATION PROCESS:

This Policy has been developed by the Clinical Education Department, the Risk Management Team and the Fleet Manager. Consultation took place with Trade Unions, Senior Managers, Assistant Directors and Directors within the organisation. The final content of the document was agreed at Health and Safety Committee (27/10/22), SMT (21/11/23) and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). Final approval of this document at Health and Safety Committee (25/4/24).

#### 9.0 - EQUALITY STATEMENT

9.1 In line with duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; Targeting Social Need Initiative; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Human Rights Act 1998, an initial screening exercise, to ascertain if this Policy should be subject to a full impact assessment, has been carried out.

9.2 The outcome of the equality screening for this Policy undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 is:

<b>Major impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Minor impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>No impact.</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### 10.0 - SIGNATORIES





APPENDIX 1 – DRIVER RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE:

Name:		Line Manager Name:	
Role:		Driving Tutor Name:	
Vehicle Type / Registration:		Date Completed:	
Further Action:		Yes (See Action Plan):	
	No		

  

DRIVER						
	Check:	Low (1)	Med (2)	High (3)	Extreme (4)	Score
1	Age	31-64	Over 65	22-30	17-21	
2	Time with NIAS / Other NHS Ambulance Service	24+ months	12-24 months	4-11 months	0-3 months	
3	Number of years licence held (C1 and / or B)	10+	6-9 yrs	2-5 yrs	<2 yrs.	
4	Penalty points/endorsements/convictions (last 5yrs.)	0	1-5 points	6-8 points	9+ points	
5	Number of driving disqualifications (drink / drug offences involved (last 5 years)	0	-	-	Yes	
6	Number of vehicle related incidents (non-fault / third party) in last 5 years	0-2	3	4	5+	
7	Number of vehicle related incidents / damage (at fault) last 5 years	0	1	2	3+	
8	Eye sight test within last 2 years / able to read a number plate at 20m	Yes	No	-	-	
9	Undertaken NIAS approved driver training / assessment	<5yrs	5-6yrs	6-7yrs	7yrs+	
10	Behavioural Based Driver Safety Self-Assessment Rating	0-6	7-15	16-24	25-42	
<b>Total Score</b>						

VEHICLE						
Check:	Low (1)	Med (2)	High (3)	Score	Considerations	
11 Vehicle type	Car / van (good response)	PCS	Response Car	A&E / NISTAR		
12 Reversing assistance / equipment	Rear sensors, reversing cam	Reversing camera	Rear sensors	None		
13 Active safety systems	Brake assist / lane assist	Brake assist only	Lane assist only	None		
<b>Total Score</b>						

ROUTE						
Check:	Low (1)	Med (2)	High (3)	Score	Considerations	
14 Miles per annum (both personal and business)	<10K	10-15K	15-30K	More		
15 Predominant driving environment	Entirely rural	Mostly rural	Mostly urban	Entirely urban		
16 Typical journey duration (excluding breaks)	<1hr	1 - 2 hrs	2 - 4 hrs	4+ hrs		
17 Typical total driving time per day	<2hrs	2 - 3 hrs	3 - 5 hrs	5+ hrs		
18 Typical time spent driving between 20.00 & 06.00 (%) per month	0	<25%	25% - 50%	>50%	The average emergency crew will drive 25-50% between 20:00 & 06:00	
19 Typical length of working day	<8 hrs	8 - 10 hrs	11 - 12 hrs	12+ hours		
20 Shift working	No	-	Yes	-		
21 Emergency driving	No	-	Yes	-		
<b>Total Score</b>						

**FINAL QUESTIONS**

Checks:	Yes (✓)	No (✓)	Please Comment:
Medically fit to drive (DVLA Medical Requirements)			Q&Q Health referral in the event of any medical issues
GP advice sought for any conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, cardiac, substance misuse, psychiatric illness?			Q&Q Health referral in the event of any medical issues
Have any other relevant health concerns been reported?			Q&Q Health referral in the event of any medical issues
Is there anything affecting your ability to drive?			
Is there anything else you would like to add?			

Element	Score	Risk	Score
Driver		Low (1)	21 – 36
Vehicle		Medium (2)	37 – 52
Route		High (3)	53 – 68
<b>Total Score</b>			<b>69 – 84</b>

**ACTION PLAN**

Item / Issue	Risk Rating			Action Required	Person Responsible	Date Completed	Comments
	Low	Med	High				

RISK LEVEL	POTENTIAL ACTIONS
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate suspension from driving duties.</li> <li>• Clinical Training Manager to assess driver's current standard.</li> <li>• Formal corporate and local monitoring (involving periodic re-assessment).</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driving instructor / Tutor assessment of driver's current standard.</li> <li>• Formal tuition / retraining as required</li> <li>• Local monitoring – may involve periodic re-assessment.</li> <li>• Driving instructor / Tutor assessment of driver's current standard.</li> <li>• Local monitoring by Line Manager.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action required at this stage.</li> </ul>

APPENDIX 2 – BEHAVIOURAL BASED DRIVER SAFETY SELF-ASSESSMENT:

Name:		Line Manager Name:	
Role:		Date Completed:	
Further Actions:		Yes (See Action Plan):	
		No	

  

LAPSES			
	Answer	Score	Total
1	Do you sometimes:		
1	Pull away in third gear?	Yes (1) No (0)	
2	Choose the wrong lane for your exit at a roundabout?	Yes (1) No (0)	
3	Forget where you left your car at a car park?	Yes (1) No (0)	
4	Have no recollection of the road you have just travelled on?	Yes (1) No (0)	
5	Select the wrong gear for the road speed?	Yes (1) No (0)	
6	Switch something on when you meant to switch something else on?	Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>ERRORS</b>			
	Answer	Score	Total
7	Do you sometimes:		
7	Fail to see a stop and give way sign?	Yes (2) No (0)	
8	Fail to see a cyclist?	Yes (2) No (0)	
9	Fail to notice a pedestrian?	Yes (2) No (0)	
10	Fail to look in the mirror before manoeuvre?	Yes (2) No (0)	
11	Incorrectly estimate the speed of oncoming vehicles when overtaking?	Yes (2) No (0)	
12	Brake too harshly?	Yes (2) No (0)	
<b>VIOLATIONS</b>			
	Answer	Score	Total
13	Do you sometimes:		
13	Disregard the speed limit late at night or early morning?	Yes (4) No (0)	
14	Proceed through traffic signals when on amber?	Yes (4) No (0)	
15	Drive close to the vehicle in front to speed them up when in a rush?	Yes (4) No (0)	
16	Drive even though you realise that you may be over the legal blood alcohol limit?	Yes (4) No (0)	
17	Indicate to other motorists, by gesture, that you are unhappy with an action they have performed?	Yes (4) No (0)	
18	Travel in excess of the posted speed limit?	Yes (4) No (0)	

  

<b>OVERALL TOTAL SCORE</b>	



