

# COVID-19 Notice

Wednesday 13 May 2020



## Conveyance during COVID-19 pandemic

Ambulance services across the UK have noted a drop in 999 calls for non-COVID medical emergencies over the past few weeks, which is felt to be due in part to anxiety amongst the public about attending hospital and the perceived risk of cross-infection. At the same time there has been concern expressed by both ambulance services and acute hospital services that some patients are delaying calling for assistance until a much later stage in their illness, even for conditions such as acute stroke or cardiac chest pain, and this phenomenon has been shown historically to cause a rise in non-pandemic deaths.

When determining the most appropriate outcome for patients, ambulance staff including frontline crews should never dissuade or discourage patients from attending hospital for appropriate assessment and interventions; instead patients should be reassured regarding the measures that have been put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection including the widespread use of PPE and in some cases the complete segregation of patients with potential COVID-19 symptoms. Staff should also advise patients that a delay in attendance for genuine conditions is likely to result in a worse clinical outcome. Any such advice should be documented on the patient report form.

Some specific pathways such as stroke lysis or primary PCI have put in place special arrangements in order to safely receive and manage acute conditions while protecting staff and patients alike; the contact points for these services remain the same but crews may be given specific guidance on the access to the cardiac cath lab etc. when contacting the service coordinator.