



Our Ref: ACM/AP/KAF

1 April 2020

Rachel Harrison
GMB National Officer – Health & Social Care

Via email: Rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk

Ambulance Service Headquarters

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Dear Rachel,

Thank you for your letter of 29 March 2020 requesting details of Ambulance Sector approach of the Personal Protective Equipment [PPE] needs of our staff during this unprecedented health emergency facing our country.

I, along with my Chief Executive colleagues across the ambulance sector, recognise the importance of ensuring our staff receive the right protective equipment and information concerning infection, prevention and control methods, to protect themselves, colleagues, family and our patients.

Please be assured that all ambulance services continue to comply with national guidance issued by Public Health England and that all matters relating to staff safety to include the provision and use of personal protective equipment remains our top priority. In my continuing support, I personally raised this matter on the national call to all ambulance service CEOs this week to ensure we share the same priorities of keeping our staff safe and allowing them to safely respond to patients and to save as many lives as possible.

You have asked whether we have sufficiently focused on ensuring the following are in place:

1. That risk assessments and COSHH assessments as required under health and safety legislation are in place across all ambulance services, or that provision of such assessments or revised assessments can be quickly made by competent persons, for all staff or work areas.
2. That risk assessments and planning includes all staff working on all sites – directly employed, contractors, agency workers, etc.
3. That regular, updated, clear and comprehensible information on work-related risks from COVID-19 are being provided to all workers on an ongoing basis. Clarity of messaging is fundamental as this is not 'business as usual'.
4. That suitable and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment will be provided to workers where exposure risk is identified, and suitable fit testing and training is in place for staff who need to use PPE.
5. How is essential PPE being distributed to the staff that need it?
6. Which staff are receiving PPE and an explanation of how staff have been prioritised to access it? GMB believes that all staff attending potential Covid-19 patients should be equipped with full PPE.
7. GMB is seeking an explanation, transparency of the science and the risk rating used in the making of the guidance being issued by ambulance services on the procedures for CPR and the necessary PPE.



I am confident that all the measures I have taken, both as the Chair of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, and in my role as the National Strategic Adviser of Ambulance Services, NHS England and NHS Improvement are making a difference. These measures include requiring all ambulance services to:

- continue to follow national guidance and they must continue to comply with these measures.
- continue with all PPE and IPC measures at the standard specified by national guidance
- enable staff and their representatives to raise local concerns with their Chief Executive Officer directly.

In addition, I have spoken with all other ambulance services CEOs to provide individual support, offer advice, guidance, and assistance with escalation where needed, and we are in regular contact through frequent telecon meetings to ensure the ambulance sector is best placed to provide the support necessary for national health emergency.

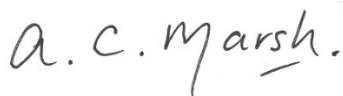
You also raised about staff testing. Following Sir Simon Stevens confirmation on Friday 27 March, Amanda Pritchard, Chief Operating Officer, NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to all NHS organisations on the 29 March 2020. Amanda's letter advises that critical care, emergency departments and ambulance services are being prioritised this week for staff testing. I will work with all ambulance service CEO's this week to ensure we maximise this opportunity to test and protect our staff

I offer my full assurance both as the Chair of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, and in my role as the National Strategic Adviser of Ambulance Services, NHS England and NHS Improvement that I will continue to do everything I possibly can to support all other ambulance services CEOs during the unprecedented and challenging times ahead whilst ensuring staff safety as a top priority.

I have produced a video, which will be shared with Ambulance staff across the country, explaining that I am taking all necessary action to protect them.

If I can assist further, please let me know immediately.

Yours sincerely



Professor Anthony Marsh
Chief Executive Officer
National Strategic Adviser of Ambulance Services, NHS England and NHS Improvement
Chair of AACE.

CC: Ambulance CEO's