



# USE OF STANDBY POINTS

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## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	
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## Version Control

This policy is regularly reviewed and updated with the information in line with relevant national guidance and legislation. A full 'Review and amendment' is available on request

## Contents

DOCUMENT INFORMATION .....	2
1 Background and rationale for the policy .....	4
2 Equality statement .....	4
3 Performance management principles .....	4
4 Classification of standby points.....	5
5 Performance management and deployment .....	6
6 Hours of operation .....	6
7 Usage methodology .....	6
8 Pandemic response and social distancing .....	8
9 Review mechanism .....	9
10 References .....	10
Equality Impact Assessment Form Section One – Screening .....	10
Equality Impact Assessment Form Section Two – Full Assessment.....	10

## **1 Background and rationale for the policy**

- 1.1 This policy outlines the principles to be adopted in relation to Double Crewed Ambulance (DCA) and Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) in relation to the deployment and use of standby points. The policy covers all operational areas of South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS).
- 1.2 The use of drive zones and the location of emergency vehicles within those drive zones is a critical component of SCAS strategy to respond rapidly to patients. A great deal of analytical and planning work has been undertaken in designing these zones and determining the optimum position for a vehicle(s) within each zone. Drive zone analysis is reviewed periodically to ensure the drive zones remain effective, new drive zones are introduced and in line with maintaining the health and well-being of our staff.

## **2 Equality statement**

- 2.1 The Trust is committed to promoting positive measures that eliminate all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, marital status, disability, race, nationality, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, ethnic or national origin, beliefs, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, political affiliation or trade union membership, HIV status or any other basis not justified by law or relevant to the requirements of the post.
- 2.2 By committing to a policy encouraging equality of opportunity and diversity, the Trust values differences between members of the community and within its existing workforce and actively seeks to benefit from their differing skills, knowledge and experiences in order to provide an exemplary healthcare service. The Trust is committed to promoting equality and diversity best practice both within the workforce and in any other area where it has influence.
- 2.3 The Trust will therefore take every reasonable step to ensure that this procedure is applied fairly to all employees regardless of race, ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality; gender (including marital status); age; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; length of service, whether full or part-time or employed under a permanent or a fixed-term contract or any other irrelevant factor.
- 2.4 Where there are barriers to understanding e.g. an employee has difficulty in reading or writing or where English is not their first language, additional support will be put in place wherever necessary to ensure that the process to be followed is understood and that the employee is not disadvantaged at any stage in the procedure. Further information on the support available can be sought from the Human Resources Department.

## **3 Performance management principles**

- 3.1 SCAS will utilise the approved Trust method for refining the deployment to, the use of, and the dispatch from standby within the Trust. This could lead to changes in drive zones, standby points, and the System Status Plan. The overriding principle

is that standby is an integral part in enabling healthcare to be at the patient side in the shortest possible time.

- 3.2 The framework set by this policy outlines Trust standards which are expected of staff who will be managed and supported to achieve these standards working within the existing Trust policy framework.

#### **4 Classification of standby points**

- 4.1 Standby points are strategically placed locations that enable a rapid response to patients and are designated a star rating dependent on the amenities available. Staff may have to remain on standby ahead of their meal break if other crews are on their meal break (section 5.6 of the meal break policy). Some facilitated points may be used for meal breaks, however, use of these points for meal breaks needs to be agreed with Emergency Operations Centre and staff and stay in line with the meal break policy. Tea and coffee will be supplied by SCAS at all 1, 2 and 3 star standby points.
- 4.2 No standby points should be used unless risk assessed and the star rating has been agreed by management and staff side. Safe sign off of Zero-star standby points enables RRV to be utilised in conjunction with the lone worker policy.
- 4.3 A zero star point has no facilities and is generally a roadside location – one hour (60 minutes) maximum; this is the actual time at the standby point and does not include travelling time to the standby point. This can be extended through mutual agreement between the staff member(s) and CCC.
- 4.4 A one star point has basic facilities which include toilets and the ability to make basic refreshments such as tea and coffee. Examples of one star point are Fire Stations or a room in a co-located building. One star points have unlimited maximum standby duration.
- 4.5 A two star point has adequate facilities which include toilets and the ability to make basic refreshments such as tea and coffee. They may also have a communication link in the form of a telephone, IT access and a rest room. A limited number of two star points have the facilities to enable staff to take a meal break, however, only if agreed with CCC and staff and in line with meal break policy. Examples of two star points can be SCAS adapted industrial units or porta-cabins. Two star points have unlimited maximum standby duration.
- 4.6 A three star point is a Resource Centre with full dedicated facilities including communications and rest room. This is suitable for meal breaks, use of amenities, refreshments and vehicle check and restocking. Three star points have unlimited maximum standby duration.
- 4.7 Special: Some points have a variety of facilities and may be used for refreshments points and limited standby e.g. cafes or restaurants or proximity to the public. The standby time at points such as this will be agreed locally at the standby review

group following a risk assessment and reviewed in line with this policy, estate developments and the system status plan.

- 4.8 Incident Rendezvous Point (RVP): When dealing with substantial emergency events such as fires or major incidents, there may be requirement to set up ad hoc standby points. These will be communicated locally and used for the event/incident only.

## **5 Performance management and deployment**

- 5.1 Areas of high Cat 1 activity can be classified as priority zones. Full details of the deployment of vehicles from priority standby points are covered in the policy, covering dispatching principles and are subject to change. These will be reflected in the latest System Status Plan (SSP) employed and will alter depending on hour, day and season. SCAS will retain the right to employ the most effective performance management tool to enable them to modify dispatch protocols and drive zone prioritisation.

## **6 Hours of operation**

- 6.1 Standby points will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 6.2 Prioritisation (in line with point 7.10) will be given to staff being placed at serviced standby points between the hours of 02:00 hours to 06:00 hours Monday to Thursday and 03:00 hours to 06:00 hours on Saturday and Sunday mornings taking in to account the H&WB of staff

## **7 Usage methodology**

- 7.1 Crews will have logged on at the very start of their shift; this log on will be confirmed with the CCC during radio check. A fully made ready DCU inclusive of drugs will be available for deployment to standby 6 minutes after shift start time (critical medical equipment and roadworthiness check), an RRV 12 minutes after start time. A 'Non Made Ready' vehicle will be available for deployment 6 or 12 minutes after the log on time (critical medical equipment and roadworthiness check), a further 14 or 28 minutes will be allocated to complete a full equipment and medicines check where operational demand allows (the 'additional time' is only allocated when the vehicle has not been made ready for that shift if communicated with the CCC during radio test).
- 7.2 When instructed to do so by CCC, DCA and RRV staff will proceed immediately to their designated standby point. Only SCAS risk assessed standby points are permitted to be stood by at. Moving to other sites that may be near by is not in line with policy and as such could place staff and patients at risk

- 7.3 If a crew are dispatched to standby and find, for whatever reason, that they are unable to deploy they should contact CCC immediately to advise the reason they are unable to mobilise.
- 7.4 Any operational factors e.g. vehicle VOR that make a crew unavailable for any reason must be communicated to the CCC immediately.
- 7.5 The CCC will dispatch to the designated standby point to be used. On arrival the crew will book "at standby".
- 7.6 Resources will be rotated through standby points to ensure maximum coverage of the designated drive zones.
- 7.7 DCA and RRV that are on standby should be returned to their designated Resource Centre 15 minutes before the end of their shift, or a reasonable travel time to return to base for their end of shift.
- 7.8 Cover at zero star standby points will be restricted to one hour (60 minutes), excluding driving to and from the standby point. During times of extreme weather (definition of extreme weather: any environmental temperature that compromises the safe working temperature inside the vehicle to below 16 degrees centigrade), it is noted that it is unlikely to go below this temperature in a vehicle that is running, therefore, in periods of colder weather where the ambient temperature is below freezing for extended hours, particularly during the night, consideration will be given to reducing the period of standby at zero star points to less than one hour. Such provisions will be made in consultation between the Duty CCC Manager and the Duty Silver Operations Manager and will not be unduly withheld, due consideration being given to staff welfare and patient response needs. There is currently no HSE objective measurement of extreme heat; however, similar reasonable considerations will be given to periods of extreme heat. CCC in conjunction with staff may agree to reduce the length of time spent on cover at zero star standby points depending on the exigencies of the service.
- 7.9 If a crew leave their vehicle whilst at standby, they must take the radio handset and mobile phone (where issued) with them and remain within 30 seconds of the vehicle. Some standby points have logistical challenges that will make it difficult to achieve the target and this is recognised at a local level.
- 7.10 The CCC and staff will work together to ensure that vehicles on a zero star standby point are moved after one hour (60 minutes), to a one, two or three star point allowing staff to use the amenities. Vehicles are clear for deployment to 999 calls during this time. There is no limit in terms of the amount of time spent on standby, during any one shift.
- 7.11 CCC should avoid having multiple resources on any standby point with the exception of an incident RVP. The maximum amount of staff allowed at any standby point is available to dispatch staff within CCC.

- 7.12 Staff requests for facilities will be accommodated and honoured where reasonable (any Cat 1 response would not be considered reasonable); these will be at the most locally Trust recognised star facility in the area, unless specific requirements for welfare create a need to return to another suitable location: for example change of uniform or individual health requirements. A request for facilities use and welfare is a shared staff and CCC responsibility.
- 7.13 Staff may sometimes need to use facilities after consecutive jobs or a standby and then an incident where they have not conveyed the patients therefore; CCC will deploy crews as per 7.12 above to a designated facilities point that may be the nearest facilities point or on their way to the next standby or incident.
- 7.14 The CCC will make every effort to share workload and standby duties across all crews', however; it must be acknowledged that this is dependent on the current level of activity, availability of vehicles, distance to the standby point and skill mix of crew.

## **8 Pandemic response and social distancing**

- 8.1 All standby points have had an individual risk assessment completed in line with all SCAS premises to ensure they meet the National guidelines for "working safely during Covid-19 in Ambulance Service non-clinical areas". The main points are restrictions on the number of vehicles and staff that can be there at any one time as part of the Covid-19 Social distancing measures, providing cleaning equipment for all shared workspaces to be cleaned, all furniture in good condition and have a wipeable surface, robust cleaning regimes and implementing the use of face masks within the building in line with current guidelines.
- 8.2 All standby points will have the agreed SCAS CV-19 signage both on the main entrances and within the ASAP's to include social distancing signs and in particular maximum number of staff permitted within the standby point areas per room. CCC North and South are aware of the maximum number of vehicles and staff to be allocated to standby points and will be required to ensure these are **not** exceeded. If staff arrive at a standby point that exceeds the maximum number of vehicles or staff allocated, they are to contact their CCC and advise. CCC will review any further updates as and when required.
- 8.3 As part of minimising overcrowding or exceeding maximum occupancy numbers, all areas have allocated "Holding areas". These are normally within two miles of a resource centre and allow crews to be allocated to them when all other standby points have their maximum capacity or prior to their meal break when the Resource Centres have reached their maximum capacity. These holding areas are for short periods only and should not exceed 30 minutes from arrival.
- 8.4 Staff will be responsible for maintaining their own safety at all standby points and holding areas with Social distancing by positioning themselves 2m apart (front and rear of DCU vehicles), cleaning of shared workspaces and wearing of face masks.

As with all SCAS property or externally shared areas/buildings or rooms, holding areas **must** have a completed and signed off risk assessment prior to being utilised.

## **9 Review mechanism**

- 9.1 The Standby Review Group will be a SCAS staff / managerial partnership group comprising of management I operational staff (both CCC and Field Operations) and Union staff together with a Health and Safety and a Human Resources representative.
- 9.2 The Standby Review Group will ensure risk assessments are undertaken of each standby point on a regular basis. Risk assessments will use the SCAS Risk Assessment Template and assess the impact of the factors effecting safe standby utilisation to include: access, egress, CCTV, local crime rates, radio, phone coverage and time of the day. Please note this list is not exhaustive.
- 9.3 All SCAS standby points are signed off for suitability both for Day and Night use by the Unions and a standard SCAS Union sign off form is in use.
- 9.4 Standby points are routinely reviewed periodically for their suitability in line with the current SCAS standby point risk assessment.
- 9.5 For local experience and focus, there is a standby point Lead for the North (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) and for the South (Hampshire).
- 9.6 Terms of Reference for the Standby Review Group should include:
- Direct report to Operations Directors and local Union negotiating team.
  - Review safety of existing standby points.
  - Review Standard Operating Procedures for zero, one, two and three star standby points.
  - Review current utilisation.
  - Review risk assessments of all standby points in Division.
- 9.7 Although the group has ongoing responsibilities, please note that this group must convene to review specific standby points following specific concerns, Datix reports or incident at a particular standby point.
- 9.8 The performance management processes implemented by SCAS should periodically review the appropriateness of the standby locations as an ongoing part of any performance review.

## 10           **References**

10.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Health and Safety Policy on Lone Working.
- Dispatching Principles
- Divisional List of Drive Zones, Standby Points and Associated Facilities
- Areas Risk Assessment Template (SCAS)
- Daily Shift Working Policy
- Out of Service Procedure
- AACE Guidance on being COVID Secure in the workplace

### **Equality Impact Assessment Form Section One – Screening**

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy and is available on request to the public and internally via our [Staff Intranet](#).  
(see also section 4. Equality Statement)

### **Equality Impact Assessment Form Section Two – Full Assessment**

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy and is available on request to the public and internally via our [Staff Intranet](#).  
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