



# **BLUE LIGHT OFFICER RESPONDER VEHICLE POLICY**

## **DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

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## 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

To provide access to a conveniently located fully equipped emergency response vehicle with the purpose of rapid deployment of clinical and other expertise with the purpose of responding to a categorised emergency call or response to an incident as Duty on Call Officer.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) operates a Blue Light (unmarked) vehicle scheme to allow designated staff to operate the vehicle for both business and private mileage.

This policy will outline the objectives, scope and general procedure of the scheme.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide clarity with regards to who can apply for a Blue Light vehicle
- Ensure that staff who claim business/private mileage use the correct format
- Provide appropriate transport to ensure that employees are able to carry out their roles as required by the Trust

## 4. SCOPE

- 4.1 This policy is applicable to all Blue Light vehicle users with reference made to the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations Act 1989, the Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations Act 1986, the Road Safety Act 2006 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- 4.2 Secondment roles less than the period of 6 months are not entitled to participate in the Trust's Blue Light Scheme but will be given an appropriate vehicle to cover the secondment. If this vehicle is used privately then this vehicle will be classed as a benefit and personal taxation will be payable on this.
- 4.3 Vehicles available for *Blue Light* use will be assessed as suitable for the role by the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the Trust.
- 4.4 The Trust retains the right not to offer participation in the scheme, withdraw an offer of participation or terminate participation based on employees continuing to meet the eligibility criteria.

## 5. EQUALITY STATEMENT

- 5.1 The Trust is committed to promoting positive measures that eliminate all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, marriage and civil partnership, disability, race, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity or any other basis not justified by law or relevant to the requirements of the post. The Trust will therefore take every possible step to ensure that this procedure is applied fairly to all employees regardless of the

aforementioned protected characteristics or any other basis not justified by law, length of service, whether full or part time or employed under a permanent or a fixed term contract or any other irrelevant factor.

5.2 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.

5.3 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 Resource Department.

A full 'Equality Impact Assessment' has been carried out and is available on request or from our [Staff Intranet](#).

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Policy Owner**

The Policy Owner is the Chief Operating Officer.

### **Policy Lead**

The Policy Lead is the Director of Operations who is delegated by the Chief Operating Officer to operate within the scope of this policy. In the absence of the Director of Operations, the nominated deputy document lead is the Assistant Director of Operations (Support Services).

## 7. ELIGIBILITY

7.1 Eligibility to participate in the Blue Light vehicle scheme will be determined by the Director of Operations and approved by the Chief Operating Officer.

7.2 In the event that there is disagreement over the application of the policy, the Chief Operating Officer will make the final decision.

7.3 The following is the eligibility criteria for participation in the Blue Light vehicle scheme:

- Operational Managers who are required to respond to 999 calls as
- part of their routine duties
- Clinically trained staff who operate within the Operations Department and are/on a Trust approved silver/gold call rota
- The Community Engagement Team. Other than those who are on

- a Trust approved silver/gold call rota, the Team will be issued with a magnetic/siren light unit only
- Any Blue Light user MUST be Clinically Trained (IHCD or equivalent trained Technician or HCP registered Paramedic/ECP etc).

7.4 For officers who are designated Operational staff and/or Clinically trained staff who are on a Trust approved silver/gold call rota, the Trust will offer the option of a vehicle (Mitsubishi Dynamic Outlander Hybrid). Terms and conditions of issue will mirror that policy except for the private use contribution which will be as outlined in section 8 of this policy. These vehicles will be equipped with what is in effect detachable equipment sufficient to meet the demands of an operational on call rota.

7.5 For the Community Engagement Team, other than those on an on-call rota, the Team will be able to select a suitable vehicle within the lease car policy which is agreed by the Chief Operating Officer which as a minimum has the capacity to convey and transport the equipment required for the post holder to fulfil their contractual duties. The Chief Operating Officer may at their discretion approve a vehicle with a Co2 level in excess of the thresholds with the policy as a result of operational requirements.

7.6 The Trust retains the right not to offer participation in the Blue Light Vehicle scheme and to withdraw an offer of participation where the employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria or any other valid reason at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer.

7.7 The eligibility of the policy to employees who are contracted to work less than full time contractual hours will be assessed on a value for money basis and reviewed by a panel chaired by the Chief Operating Officer.

## **8. STAFF WHO DO NOT USE THE VEHICLE PRIVATELY**

8.1 Staff can opt to undertake their operational on call rota duties in a vehicle that is not used privately. These vehicles should be left at a Trust's operational base when the employee is not on duty.

8.2 Where an operational requirement has been defined, an employee can opt to use this Trust allocated vehicle which will be either a rapid response estates-based vehicle and/or a 4 x 4 vehicle. Depending on operational requirements this will be either equipped to meet the standards of an operational on call rota, in addition be fitted to meet the requirements of a clinical response or meet the requirements of the Community Engagement Team.

8.3 The above vehicles can be used for on duty commuting from the employee's home to a Trust designated base. The employee must book on as available to respond and will be required to sign disclaimer clause prohibiting private use. Otherwise known as operational on call commuting employees will be required to complete form enclosed at Appendix 1.

## **9. COSTS BORNE BY THE EMPLOYEE**

- 9.1 The employee will be issued with a Fuel Card and will reimburse SCAS for any private mileage based on the cost per mile as stated by HMRC. This amount can change, and staff will be notified of any HMRC changes. All mileage forms and payments for private mileage must be completed and forwarded to SCAS finance department monthly. Failure to forward mileage forms and payments for a period over 3 months may result in the agreement being terminated until payments have been received. The Trust reserves the right to terminate the vehicle altogether if repayments extend beyond this period.
- 9.2 The Trust will only pay for mileage that is deemed business which follows HMRC guidance which does not normally include ordinary commuting or private travel. There are two exceptions to this rule:
- Employees who have a blue light fitted to the vehicle and are responding to an incident on their journey to and from work, the actual mileage undertaken in responding to that incident can be claimed as business mileage for that journey.
  - Employees who work geographically which is deemed as their official base. This is determined by application to the Chief Operating Officer.
- 9.3 For staff who fall within the categories of Operational Responder Managers and or officers on a recognised on call rota (see para 6.3) and undertake to use their blue light responder vehicle privately, an annual charge of £300 per annum will be levied for private use. This is subject to the vehicle being electronically charged fully at home overnight prior to the day that the employee is shifted to work. This private use contribution is also subject to HMRC advisory rates (as advised on 19 December 2019) and the Trust reserves the right to amend this rate if the basis of the current HMRC advisory rate is changed.
- 9.4 For staff who do not have the option to charge at home, they can opt for the Mitsubishi Outlander, but the private use charge will be £600. Every effort should be made to charge the vehicle at Trust premises if this option is available.
- 9.5 The current selected based vehicle for this policy is the Mitsubishi Dynamic Outlander Hybrid. Eligible applicants will be given the option of selecting the Mitsubishi Exceed Outlander Hybrid which is more expensive than the Dynamic. If applicants opt for the Exceed, they will pay the difference in annual lease costs between the Exceed and the Hybrid (currently an additional amount of £604 per annum).
- All applicants who avail themselves of this policy should complete the form in Appendix 2.
- 9.6 The private use charge to the Community Engagement Team will be as per the Trust's approved Lease Car Policy.

## 10. APPENDIX 1

- 10.1 Many of our policies have an 'Internal staff form' attached that is relevant to the document. The 'Application For Issue Of A Trust Vehicle' form is included with this policy but for security and accessibility reasons it is only available on our [Staff Intranet](#).
- 10.2. Many of our policies have an 'Internal staff form' attached that is relevant to the document. The 'Agreement for use of Trust issued vehicle for operational on call commuting only' form is included with this policy but for security and accessibility reasons it is only available on our [Staff Intranet](#).